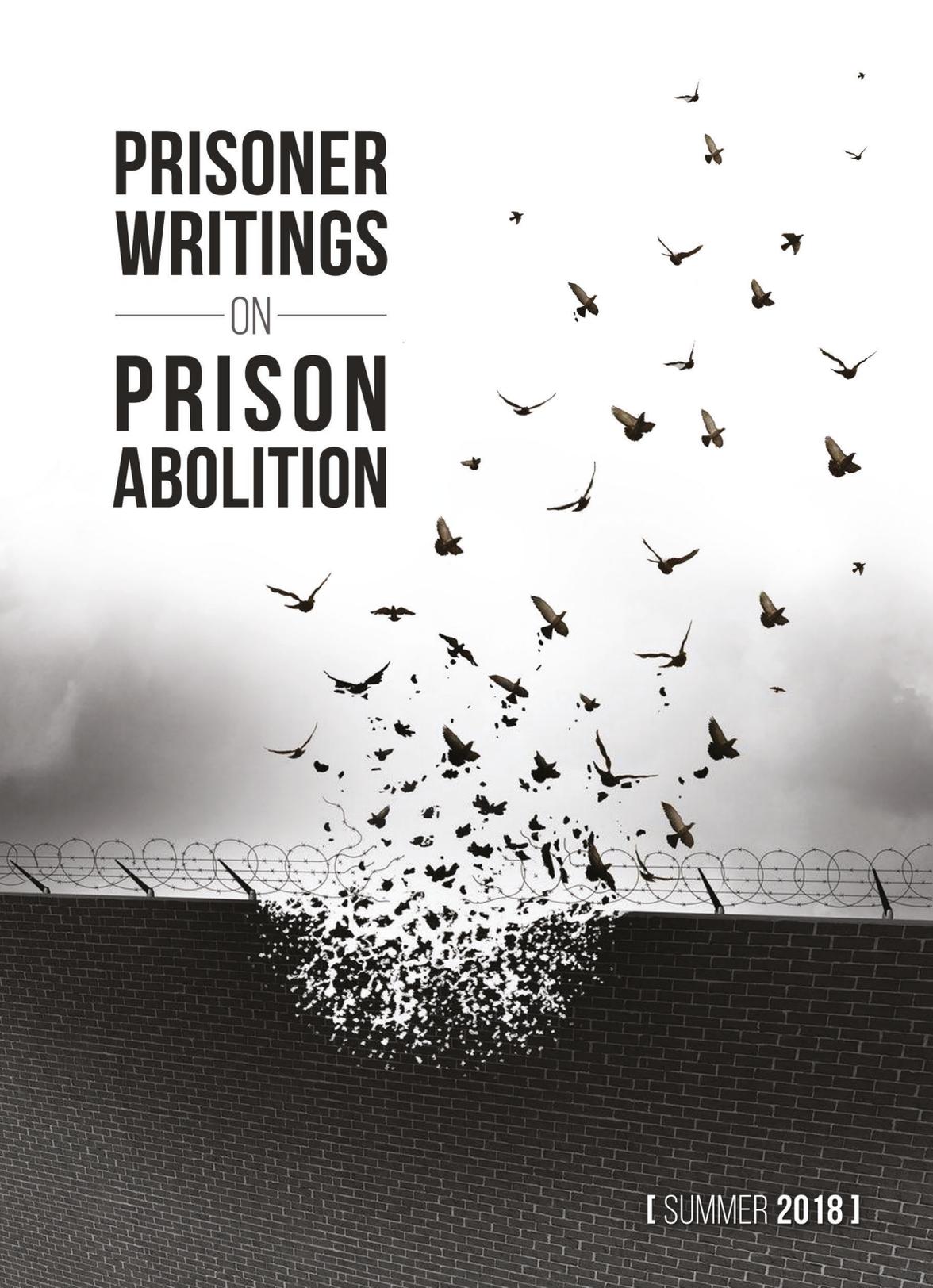


**PRISONER  
WRITINGS**

— ON —

**PRISON  
ABOLITION**



**[ SUMMER 2018 ]**



# INTRODUCTION

This publication has been created to share prisoner voices at the International Conference on Penal Abolition (ICOPA) in London in June 2018. It aims to centre the experiences of people in prison and their ideas on questioning, resisting and dismantling the prison industrial complex – as well as building a world without prisons. Our call-out for contributions was broad. Many prisoners have mostly written about the injustices of their own sentences and their own experiences. We believe listening to these stories is a central part of organising to dismantle the prison system. We have published every single contribution we have received in full.

In this zine, you will find stories of solitary, self-harm, and abuse at the hands of screws, as well as case-after-case of injustice. However, you will also find inspiration, rage and strategic ideas on how to fight back. In the words of Keith "Malik" Washington: **Dare to struggle, dare to win.**

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## ABOUT OUR COLLECTIVES



The Empty Cages Collective is a collective of people in England and Wales who have been imprisoned or engaged in prison-related struggle and prisoner support over a number of years. We focus on movement building to dismantle the prison industrial complex. [www.prisonabolition.org](http://www.prisonabolition.org)

**Write to us:** ECC c/o BASE, 14 Robertson Road, Bristol, BS5 6JZ



We are a prisoner-led section of the Industrial Workers of the World. We struggle to end prison slavery along with allies and supporters on the outside. We welcome new prisoner members. We are active in North America and Wales, Ireland, Scotland and England. [www.iwoc.iww.org.uk](http://www.iwoc.iww.org.uk)

**Write to us:** IWOC c/o IWW, PO Box 5251, Yeovil, BA20 9FS

# UNTITLED

*- MIGUEL PERALTA BETANZOS, MEXICO*

I begin to undress the shadows.

Nights of hope.

In the cell my days and nights mature.

My spirit in the fog

I was awoken by the whistles of the people in my town, they begin to gather.

I see the mighty river, slightly.

It is not enough that the firewood is consumed in the fire and the tortilla is burned. Against the oppressor it is necessary to sharpen the hatred, and machetes.

The solitude also guards me.

There is too much silence in the journey.

The night is darker when the day breaks. My sad routine every day consists of never- ending dreams of freedom and justice! Patiently, my spirit waits, dances, grows and rebels.

# ANARCHIST VOICES FROM PRISON

- *ROD EARLE, ENGLAND*

## **Anarchist voices from prison's past and convict criminology: Part 1 - Kropotkin**

The Russian anarchist Peter Kropotkin is widely recognised for his contributions to political theory but his first-hand experiences of being imprisoned also feature in his writing. Between 1882 and 1886 he was confined in "one of the best prisons in France, and as far as my information goes, in Europe" (Kropotkin 1887). This was not his first time behind bars. Between 1874 and 1876 he was incarcerated in a Russian prison. These experiences as a prisoner provide Kropotkin with "an opportunity of obtaining a personal insight into the results achieved by detention".

Published in 1887, *In Russian and French Prisons* is probably the first published work that could legitimately claim to be a form of convict criminology – academic analysis of crime and punishment that combines personal experience of imprisonment with conventional academic training. The book draws not only from Kropotkin's own experiences but also extensively from the personal testimony of prisoners and ex-prisoners through a careful analysis of their writing in the form of letters, diaries or notes. It is a foundational document in Kropotkin's anarchism, and deserves wider recognition among abolitionists. In it, his early experiences as a young army officer sent to report on Siberian prison conditions are combined with his later experiences on the other side of the bars.

Unsurprisingly, in his extensive survey of prisons he is appalled by everything he sees and is determined to expose the bankruptcy of the ideas and institutions he encounters. The scope of the book is astonishing. It stretches from the most barbaric conditions of Kharkoff Central prison in Eastern Russia, which he says, chillingly, makes 'Siberia look like paradise', to the new and enlightened French model he finds himself in as a prisoner in southern France. His study compiles quantitative data on prison populations but emphasises the varying qualities and range of prisoner's experience. Through the pervading inhumanity and horror he identifies resistance and community, hypocrisy and humour. It is a detailed and nuanced account of prison life, written by someone with more reasons to know about prison than many people who write about them. Even then, back in 1887, he comes up with most of the questions you would find being asked today about prisons:

- Why are rates of recidivism after prison so high?
- What are the causes of crime?
- Why do reforms of prison fail to deliver what they promise?
- Why are rates of suicide in prison so high?

- What can be done about overcrowding?
- How can prison be researched?
- How overlooked is the collateral damage on prisoners families?
- What is the most suitable form of prison labour? How should it be paid for?
- What is a reasonable wage for prisoners?
- How can illegal drugs (tobacco) and contraband be regulated?
- What are the difficulties and limitations of comparative penal analysis?
- How are prison camps implicated in colonial projects (in Siberia)?

Perhaps that last one might escape the mainstream, but in every other respect the questions he posed then are more than recognisable now. Over one hundred years later, the answers he provides from back in the 19th century are also painfully familiar to 21st century abolitionists. Prisoners reoffend because they arrive from harsh environments into one that prides itself on being even harsher. The brutalism of prison conditions and the stigma attached to it condemns the condemned rather than redeems them. The causes of crime that prison so obviously neglects are complex; they are 'social', 'anthropological', and 'cosmic' - as in environmentally pervasive.

In his book Kropotkin even confesses that in the early stages of his research into Russian prisons he was too easily seduced by the imperfections he discovered. There was so much that was so obviously wrong with prison that he thought it would be a relatively straightforward task to list the faults, prescribe remedies and witness the reform. Unlike many contemporary advocates of prison reform, he is quick to recognise his false pragmatism as merely youthful idealism: "I was only 20 years old". Then, as he discovers more of the perennial features of prison dysfunction he becomes more critically circumspect and radical in his analysis. How these wise words echo down the centuries!

*"From time to time, somebody acquainted with prisons starts an agitation against the bad state of jails and lock-ups. Society recognises that something ought to be done to remedy the evil... A few kind hearted and energetic men and women continue, of course, amidst the general indifference, to do their work of improving the condition of prisoners, or rather of mitigating the bad effects of prison on their inmates. But guided as they are by merely philanthropic feeling, they seldom venture to criticise the principles of penal institutions; still less do they search for the causes which every year bring millions of human beings within the enclosure of prison walls."*

In Russia he discovers prisons built for 200-250 people housing 700-800. Overcrowding is already normal, he discovers, anticipated and expected. But while the numbers and bare data on meagre prison budgets, casual sadism, routine undernourishment and fearful mortality rates are readily available to any committed prison researcher, as they are now, Kropotkin recognises another problem he knows he must wrestle with: whose stories are told? Prisoners' voices are largely ignored in the conventional research, but not Kropotkin's. He quotes from a prisoner's memoir:

*"On one occasion" (the writer says) "we were visited by an inspector of prisons. After casting a look down the scuttle, he asked us if our food was good, or was there anything of which we could complain? Not only did the inmates declare that they were completely satisfied, they even enumerated articles of diet which we had never so much as smelt. This sort of thing" (he adds) "is only natural. If complaints were made, the inspector would lecture the governor a little and go away; while the prisoners who made them would remain behind and be paid for their temerity with the rod or the black-hole."*

Prisoners are wise both to the conditions of their incarceration and the terms on which it is managed, inspected and reviewed by the authorities. This inside knowledge is dangerous and not readily exposed or shared with inspectors or researchers. As Kropotkin is quick to point out, to see through the veils thrown over the darker parts of prison life, or to get around the obstructions placed in the researcher's path, there is a simple remedy: "To know the reality, one must oneself have been a prisoner". This injunction is no simple, solipsistic reference to the relevance of his own prison experience, but a broader methodological one: "Records of actual experience are few: but they exist." And he then proceeds through the course of his remarkable book to make extensive use of prisoners' letters, diaries and memoirs. He contacts relatives to corroborate stories, or to provide further details, and quotes from their revelations and reflections. The account thus becomes rich, vivid and insightful. Highly personal.

Would another researcher, who hadn't spent involuntary time inside a prison cell, so fully appreciate the significance of the fabric lining and double layered walls he finds in Trubetskoi House of Preliminary Detention where he himself spent two years awaiting trial in Russia? Would anyone who has not spent time as a prisoner be so sensitive to the sounds and sensory register of cell life?

*The floor of the cells are covered with a painted felt, and the walls are double, so to say; that is, they are covered also with felt, and, at a distance of five inches from the wall, there is an iron-wire net, covered with rough linen and with yellow painted paper. This arrangement is made to prevent the prisoners from speaking with one another by means of taps on the wall. The silence in these felt-covered cells is that of a grave. I know cells in other prisons. Outer life and the life of the prison reach one by thousands of sounds and words exchanged here and there. Although in a cell, one still feels oneself a part of the world. The fortress is a grave. You never hear a sound, excepting that of a sentry continually creeping like a hunter from one door to another, to look through the "Judas" into the cells. You are never alone, as an eye is continually kept upon you, and still you are always alone. If you address a word to the warder who brings you your dress for walking in the yard, if you ask him 'what is the weather?', he never answers. The only human being with whom I exchanged a few words every morning was the Colonel who came to write down what I had to buy – tobacco or paper. But he never dared to enter into any conversation, as he himself*

*was always watched by some of the warders.*

Never alone, always alone! Kropotkin unerringly finds the quintessential features of how a prisoner experiences prison. I think anyone who has spent time in a cell will feel that connection to being reached by 'thousands of sounds... here and there...' and your sensitivity to the prison's effort to suppress them to reinforce your isolation.

Kropotkin is perhaps the first, of many, to note with consternation "how so many improvements in the penitentiary system, although made with excellent intentions of doing away with some evils, always create, in their turn, new evils, and become a source of pain for prisoners". He is almost definitely the first to report his personal experience as a prisoner of such reform. He describes, as an example of this perverse process, how a new wagon was developed in his French prison to transport prisoners, such as himself, to and fro from the court house back to the prison. The old, open and crudely adapted wagons were replaced by purpose built ones with small, lockable compartments. Locked into one of these 'cupboards' in the new, 'improved' transportation Kropotkin finds the air cannot circulate properly around the confined space leaving him gasping for breath and on the verge of fainting for lack of oxygen. Such direct and physical encounters with the perverse outcomes of penal reform fuel his critique of its persistent failure. Anyone who has spent time in the stifling vans G4S use to transport prisoners between court rooms and prisons will appreciate the irony of Kropotkin's account of the 'new evil' he experienced.

The most unexpected revelation in the book is that his research and experiences of penal confinement affirm Kropotkin's faith in human decency and provide evidence for his later thesis on innate human predispositions toward mutual aid. He finds among all the institutional violence of prisons a perversely revealed affirmation of human sociality:

*I never cease to wonder [that]... so few of those who grow up in absolute neglect declare open war against our social institutions. These good feelings, this aversion to violence, this resignation which makes them accept their fate without hatred growing in their hearts, are the only real barrier which prevents them from openly breaking all social bonds, not the deterring influence of prisons.*

Prisons are remarkable to Kropotkin not because they demonstrate the efficacy of deterrence – they don't – but the resilience of sociality they contain. Prisons themselves represent the antithesis of this sociality and he notes in his later writing how prison 'kills all the qualities in a man which make him best adapted to community life'. And he is not just talking about prisoners. Prison guards are victims of its corrupting power as well: "it is the institution which makes them what they are – petty, mean persecutors".

the start of my sentence. I don't think he had read Kropotkin but he said it was a sad fact that prison officers spent more time in the institution than most prisoners ever would and were thus more susceptible to being 'institutionalised'. He took his job seriously, but revealed that, in his opinion, 'over half' his colleagues 'shouldn't really be doing this job'. He didn't divulge his reasons but shared his thoughts as he accompanied me back from the prison library where I had been called to collect a book that had been sent in to me. I told him the prison officers in the library had been suspicious of the title 'Union Street', and they had asked me if it was about organising a prisoner's union. I said I doubted it, but since I hadn't read it, I couldn't really say. I read the cover description and reassured the officers it was a book about women's lives in a northern town. The officer bringing me back to my cell told me he was a trade unionist but that it only made his job more difficult, and hence his disclosure. It made me realise prison officers also struggle to live against what prison does to people. Kropotkin was not the first to see this but having seen the insides of many prisons he became convinced that nothing short of "a complete transformation of the fundamental conditions of Russian life" would be an adequate response. The prison system, grotesque as it is, is merely a symptom of a deeper malaise.

Kropotkin is known more for his political philosophy, anarchism, than his criminology but he was an accomplished social scientist, declining the offer of becoming a professor in Geography at Cambridge University. His contributions to criminology after the completion of *In Russian and French Prisons* take the form of a piercing critique of law and authority, and their combination as the political architecture of the state. His political activism in the turmoil of the late 19th and early 20th century justifiably overshadow his study of prison life. Kropotkin presents us with an analysis that declines the simplistic and distancing reductions of crime:

*"Society as a whole is responsible for every anti-social act committed. We have a part in the glory of our heroes and geniuses; we also share in the acts of our assassins. It is we who have made them what they are – the one as well as the other"*

Kropotkin insists on the social construction of criminality, problematizing the conjuring tricks of social science and news media that are forever presenting us with new criminals to be locked up and treated, or locked away and forgotten. He devoted much of his life to a wider political philosophy that focussed on the harms of institutionalised authority and laws, and took for granted the implied necessity of prison abolition. His work has inspired political movements throughout the 20th century, and survives into the 21st. They have inspired me to try and establish a convict criminology group in the UK with like-minded academics who work in universities and want to make their prison experience count for something. We are not all abolitionists, but we all have accounts of prison life worth hearing, and like Kropotkin we want to combine them with our work rather exclude them. You are welcome to join us.

# THE LAST RESORT

- *MIKOLA DZIADOK, BELARUS*

'Why do you have scars on your arms? Did you try to kill yourself?' people ask me from time to time. Many people don't understand why inmates harm themselves while in prison and what the meaning of it is.

In the prison etiquette there is a concept: 'the last resort'. This includes hunger strike and self-harm. According to the informal prison rules, the last resort is applied in three cases: danger to life, danger to health and danger to personal dignity. The logic of such actions is simple: by putting his life in danger an inmate forces the administration to hospitalise him and thus temporarily avoids staying in a critical situation, since for a dead con the authorities of prison can lambaste a screw or other staff: take them to task, de-bonus, sometimes even fire them. It was danger to health that forced me to use the last resort in 2015. From the very beginning, things didn't click with the administration of Gorky colony No. 9 where I was brought after the conviction under art. 411 and a new one-year sentence. This was not surprising - they didn't bring me there to quietly do my time. Among cons the Gorky colony is considered 'a jawboning colony', where inmates who stand out from the general crowd (politicals, unruly crime lords, enthusiasts that like to complain about the incarceration conditions) are jawboned particularly harshly.

Hardly had I come to the colony, when vexations started: I went to bed too early (30 minutes before the lights-out), refused to clean the toilets (meaning that I refused to perform the task of a 'petukh'), didn't greet the staff properly and so on. 'Ten days in the de-seg', this is what I heard from the governor. But I should say that things didn't go smoothly in the de-seg either. I spent my first term with other inmates, and already there was astonished by the aloofness and cynicism of the administration in regard to everything that concerns the needs of inmates. I thought that after four and a half years in prison nothing could surprise me. It turned out to be not true. For example, after the first ten days in the de-seg a duty officer took me out not at the exact time when my punishment was to be over - around 7pm - but almost three hours later. I spent a long time in the de-seg in different colonies, and I've never faced anything like that. The screw didn't react to my concerns about the fact that my punishment was over. Thus, I should have gotten to the section, shaved, washed myself (because I could not do any of this properly in the de-seg) and made it until the lights-out scheduled for 10pm. If I hadn't made it, I would have received a ticket in the morning for not being shaven, and generally it's not so nice to go to bed without washing yourself. So I decided that cleanliness was more important than the routine and because I was freshening myself up, I went to bed a bit later than 10 pm. This is

what the screws were waiting for and came to the section five minutes after the lights-out and wrote me up for 'not following the lights-out command'. And now they had a violation of the rules, for which you can be sent to the de-seg again! Such impudence made me angry. Not only had they kept me in segregation three hours longer than I was supposed to stay there, but they also stealthily set me up for committing another violation!

Another unpleasant experience had to do with Gorky's medics. According to the law, a doctor was to make his round in the de-seg twice a day, to make sure everyone feels well. In the de-seg of colony No. 9 the doctor did the round only once every day apart from Sunday. On Saturday, staying in the de-seg, I caught a cold and on the following day started to ask for a doctor, because it's not so comfortable to sleep on the plank floor with a fever and cough. To all my requests the screw had one reply: 'The doctor is not here, today is Sunday!' Cons also con rmed that the doctor doesn't do the rounds on Sundays. But I knew it was lies. In every colony on any day of the week and at any time there is a duty doctor, and only by lousy custom of this facility he couldn't be bothered to get out of his office in the infirmary and walk five hundred metres just to bring some pills to some con - perhaps, the latter won't die till tomorrow!

But even all this is an insufficient reason for the last resort. The reason appeared after I was sent to the de-seg for refusing to work. That time I was staying alone in a very peculiar cell - it was situated a metre away from the seat of the guard. This was done allegedly to control me better. But the main thing was that it was a corner house situated in the corner of the barrack. One might wonder, what is the difference? A cell is a cell everywhere. But a regular visitor to the de-seg knows the difference very well. The cops know it too. The thing is that corner cells are the most damp and cold. They are cold even in summer, let alone winter<sup>1</sup>. When back then, on May 19, I was locked in cell 16, I immediately closed the window, hoping that by the night-time my breath will have brought the room to a more or less acceptable temperature. But these hopes were misplaced.

The most difficult night in my life began. After the lights-out I lay down on the oor and realised it wasn't plank at all. It was so cold and rough that I first thought it was concrete. But having picked it open in one place I realised the floor was made of chipboard, which is also a law violation, because according to the regulations, the floor in the de-seg and SHU must be plank.

The first 'round' of sleep lasted for about thirty minutes. It was the longest one as well. Later I wasn't able to sleep longer than fifteen minutes, the omnipresent feeling of cold would not allow it. That night I realised how biting and relentless the cold can be: taking every grain of warmth one by one from your body, it forces the mind to think of nothing else other than how to get warmer. This compulsive idea pulses in your head like a woodpecker who never finishes his work; it feels like an always hungry predator whose hunger cannot be sated.

Cold, really cold.

The cold is in your arms, legs, back, nose and ears. Trousers tucked into socks and jacket tucked into trousers don't help any longer. Around the middle of the night traditional 'warm-ups' - push-ups and squats - stop helping as well. The body doesn't have any free calories in stock to process them into warmth. On top of that, after a few hundred push-ups and squats there was no energy to do them any longer. The situation became desperate. Closer to the morning (this is how it felt, though I didn't have a watch) I started experiencing peculiar 'sleep hallucinations': I was dreaming that I was asleep at home under a wide warm blanket. I feel very good and comfortable, pleasant and light... A thought pierces my mind: why would I worry so much, jump, do push-ups and squats, if I sleep so well? Here my brain gives a command to wake up. I open my eyes and my whole body is shaking with heavy and painful shivers: I finally understand where I am and that I need to stand up again and try to squeeze some active movements from myself to increase the temperature of the body and sleep for at least a few more minutes. The atmosphere and general experience was enhanced by bright electric light of two bulbs hanging from the ceiling. The lights were left on in the de-seg, and I felt like I was in some amalgam of madhouse and torture chamber.

Finally, the morning came. I ate and was hoping to sleep in order to somehow compensate the hours I wasn't able to sleep at night and get back to normal. The guard, of course, wrote me up for that (and that ticket added several more days to my segregation), but I didn't care anymore.

After the morning check round I lay down and realised that I was naively mistaken: even the daytime temperature in the cell didn't allow for normal sleeping. So it turned out that I couldn't sleep either during the day, or at night. I remembered the agonising night and realised that there were at least nine nights like that ahead and, most probably, even more, because the governor for sure would add more punishment. Then I realised that something was to be done.

During the day I was constantly demanding from the duty associate governor who sometimes came by to the de-seg to move me to another cell. The arguments were that the temperature here was lower than should be according to the law, and the floor was from chipboard, while it should be plank, and that was another violation. He would listen to my requests and drop indifferently: 'We'll see...' or 'I'll clarify...', but the situation didn't change. Meanwhile, I understood that if I spent nine more nights like this in the de-seg, I would leave it with a multitude of ills in addition to the ones I had. I needed to leave by any means necessary. I prepared a razor blade that I brought on me to the de-seg despite the shakedown (thanks to the advice of old-timers) and started to make a plan. Originally it was the following: just after the evening check round I would cut my veins on both arms and the stomach. The main thing was to cut properly, not just scratch myself: I had seen a lot of those who 'harm themselves' by

scratching their arms and the cops just laughed at them - they would bandage you right in the cell and wouldn't even ask what you wanted. In order not to freeze in this house, I had to cut myself seriously, but at the same time not too much, because if I did, I could freeze forever. I decided to do the following: first I reach the veins on my arms, scarify them, pour the blood out into my half-litre mug until it's full (a man can survive after losing up to half of their blood, and I have ve litres inside), then I empty it out under the door of the cell (right after the check round there will be the duty assistant governor and a guard - they will notice it for sure), and then I cut open my stomach (two fingers down the belly-button, this is how I was taught), ideally all the way through to the abdominal cavity, depends on the pain limit.

For the hundredth time I asked to be moved to another cell and understood they would not do it and I had to get onto action.

My schemes from the very start were foiled by an unexpected shift in the check round, as a result of which I decided not to wait and started to cut myself earlier. I hid behind the 'armour' (a screen between the toilet and the rest of the house) so that they couldn't see me through the peephole, crossed myself, took the razor blade and made the first cut on my left arm. Was it scary? Of course, it was. But I understood what I did and why. Contrary to expectations, blood didn't come out in fountain, but instead a few drops appeared and then fused into a tiny trickle - I spilled just a little into the mug. Then I began to make not simple cuts, but cuts-strokes, so that the thin blade penetrated as deep as possible. A few times I had to strike twice in the same cut to make it wider. Some cuts turned out quite successful: a good half centimetre deep and a centimetre wide. But there was still too little blood. Maybe it left the periphery of the body and flew inside from excitement? They say there is such a biological mechanism of adaptation to danger... Finally, cops lingered at my house - the check round! I hid my arms behind my back, came out of the 'armour' and stood at attention like an obedient con. Now the most important thing was that they didn't notice it - it's too early!

'Good evening', said the duty assistant governor.

'Good evening. Dziadok. Everything alright!'

'You sure about that?' I see distrust in cop's eyes.

'I am', I smile.

The cop looks around the cell fishily...

'Why are you not wearing a uniform?'

Before they entered I didn't manage to put on the jacket and was in a t-shirt.

'I didn't manage to put in on, you entered so fast!' I smile again and think to myself, 'God, I hope they don't spot the drops on the floor!'

Finally, the door closes and I'm laughing inside at how I made fools of them. Dorks!

But the alertness of the guard let me down. I immediately went behind the 'armour', and the guard, probably instinctively, sensed that something was

wrong and continued looking into the peephole instead of going to another cell. He obviously saw either blood, or my arm that showed itself from behind the 'armour'. I heard the scream behind the door, 'He's cutting himself!' In a few seconds the cop unlocks the first lock. I realise that the time is up, take the razor blade in the other hand and quickly, with all my might cut my right arm. The cop begins to open the second lock, on the bar. I'm so lucky it is a screw lock! This gives me a few seconds more, I lower down my trousers and with the greatest possible pressure strike with the blade over my stomach. I manage to do that three times before the cops burst into the cell. I throw the blade into the sink, and it is quite successful, because it goes into the drain at once.

The duty assistant governor and the guard stand and watch. Blood is coming down both my arms and stomach. They take out hand-cuffs and put them on me. They bring me to the exercise yard, it's walking time actually. I sit and find myself a bit shocked... Now the most important thing is that they fulfill my demands. But I regret that everything went against my plan. Well, so it goes - it worked out in some way.

Ten minutes pass. I hear the conversation of inmates who call to one another from different yards:

'Listen, what's the fuss? Why are cops bustling?'

'Dziadok has cut himself!' 'Who?'

'Dziadok!'

'Who's that?'

'A political!'

'Dziadok is here!' I enter the conversation.

'Why did you cut yourself?'

We fall into talk. I explained to them my general situation in the colony, listened to their advice...

Finally, a 'triplet' comes into my yard: head of the operative department, head of the security department and head of the medical wing. The security officer tells me to undress - they start to search me. They are only interested in one thing: how did I smuggle the blade? Of course, I don't tell them that. They probed everything, including the elastic webbing on my underpants, looked at my heels (what if I have something stuck there?) to make sure I don't have any razor blades and only after that they asked what the reason of my action was.

I lost patience: very emotionally I told them they really overdid it with carrying out the KGB orders and voiced my demands: I need to be moved to any other cell. They listened. The operative asked everyone to leave and ordered the removal of the handcuffs. We were left one on one. The door to the yard closed and he asked me with irritation: 'What do you want?'

By virtue of his operative nature he can't believe that my demands are the ones I've just mentioned, he thinks I have something else in mind.

Such a question confuses me at first.

'I will not tell you what I want, because you will always do your best for me not to get this', was my answer. I didn't see a point in asking him for more, anyway, I will not be granted acceptable incarceration conditions.

I heard wordy unfinished hints from the operative, like: 'Don't you understand who you are?' (meaning they will jawbone me anyway), 'There are certain rules of the game...' (I still can't understand what he meant by that). He also attempted to convince me to live according to their rules: the operative said that even a former crime lord Galey - 'a respectable man' - goes to the industry area to work. I didn't hear a definitive promise to move me to another house from him.

Finally they brought me to the doctor. They ripped off the clothes from my arms and stomach which had almost dried on, and then started counseling whether they needed to stitch the cuts or a simple bandage would be enough. They decided to apply a bandage: then the incident can be qualified as a slight accident, because if they had stitched me, it would have meant that the wounds were serious. This was detrimental for the local administration who, as I later learned, reported this situation to the top officials - the Minister of Interior.

After the dressing I was brought to the house... The same house. And there I made another mistake. Instead of refusing to enter it, I believed the duty assistant governor who said that the matter of my transfer to another cell 'was being decided'. The cell was turned upside down: my entire modest belongings were ransacked, the rubbish bin was turned over right on the floor. They were looking for the blade. It was about 7 pm...

Approximately every half an hour I began to bang at the door and ask why I wasn't transferred. They palmed me off with promises to do it 'very soon'. But when the lights-out time came, I realised that I had been deceived: they decided to turn high-minded, like, 'he is being uncompromising, and we will not surrender'.

I had a 'plan B' for such developments. In cell 16 before me there was a former crime lord Dima Galejev (Galey) who was extradited from Sweden to be put into a Belarusian prison. The Ministry of Interior wanted something special from him in their criminal games. As a result, the cell was stuffed with different things that you can't usually find in the de-seg. One of them I noticed from the very beginning: near the toilet there was a crooked stick of uncertain origin and purpose (probably for 'working together' through the disposal system between cells). I took a cloth and covered the peephole in the door so the guard couldn't see what I'm doing. I took the stick, pushed it through the grating surrounding the bulb under the ceiling. With the stick I hoped to crash the bulb, cut myself with a glass fragment and cut my legs as well - there are more veins on them and they are more dense. This time they will transfer me to the infirmary, there is no way around it! After a few strikes the bulb started swinging (it hung on a cable),

but wouldn't crash. A strike on the grating, another one, it clings but still is not smashed! I couldn't get enough swing on the stick either, it is limited by a 'square' of steel bars through which I had pushed it. I hear the duty assistant governor shout, 'He is swinging the "accordion"! Unlock the door!' The officer and two guards run into the cell and quickly understand what I am up to. They grab my arms and put me against the wall. I'm angry at their deception and because my plan didn't work out again, I can't control myself and start shouting at them and threatening with all deadly retributions. The duty assistant governor commands, 'Get the handcuffs!' They try to round me up. I resist as much as I can. But there are three of them. They literally tap my hands into the handcuffs: in this tussle the fresh bandaging came off and I started bleeding again. The duty assistant governor wants to handcuff me to a metal stool. There are no sharp objects in the cell, but even if there were, I realised that being handcuffed I will not reach them, so I have to promise not to cut myself again.

The cops leave, and I stay in the cell handcuffed. The battle is lost, but not the war. In half an hour the doctor comes and applies another bandage. The lights are out, I go to sleep as is; 'chained'. After some time cops come and take off the 'bracelets'.

That night I slept really badly again - apart from cold, pain was torturing me. And I couldn't really do push-ups with cut arms. But nature made me a present - right on the following day the weather got much warmer and the rest of my time in the de-seg was more or less bearable.

In a few weeks I they had another file on me. Apart from a preventive record categorised as 'inclined to hostage taking' I became 'inclined to committing suicide'. Bullshit, if I wanted to kill myself, I would cut my veins lengthwise, not crosswise.

On the following day there had been a new development: they locked up the 'enforcer' of the pen and his assistant, and they made a shakedown in the entire barrack of the de-seg and SHU.

They threw away unsophisticated 'forbidden items' of the inmates: pills, magazines, 'extra' clothing, threads, cords and stuff like that, and didn't forget to remind that this was happening because 'the political had cut himself'. In such an unsophisticated way cops were setting other cons on me.

What is the moral of the fable? The is only one moral: if you go to the de-seg, bring two razor blades.

1. It was actually in winter that I had to spend a month and a half in a corner cell in Mogilev gaol. Condensation appeared on the walls because of dampness. Flowing down the walls it produced a piece of ice in the corner of the cell which was growing fast if you didn't remove it. We wore body-warmers 24 hours a day.

# ABOLITIONIST OR DEMOLITIONIST? (WORDS CARRY MEANINGS)

- *MICHAEL KIMBLE, US*

During the 19th century those who were against chattel slavery were called "Abolitionists" and they organized what was called The Underground Railroad, a vast conspiracy consisting of slaves, escaped slaves, free-Blacks, whites, Natives, secret codes, routes, safe houses, defense forces, etc. and actively fought to free those being held as chattel and end chattel slavery in the U.S. Chattel slavery was eventually "abolished" after the Civil War and the enactment of the 13th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, except for those who was to be "duly convicted of a crime" in a court of law.

The point is that those "Abolitionists" of the 19th century didn't attempt to destroy the state, only the institution of chattel slavery, but left the oppressive government intact, thereby allowing the state to continue slavery as enacted by the 13th Amendment, denying the right of individuals to hold Blacks in slavery, but allowing the state the right to enslave anyone.

Today, there are those who call themselves "Abolitionists," even some anarchists. But there are other anarchists who have begun to use the term "Demolitionists" instead, and for good reason.

"Abolition" depends on the good will and supposed humanity of politicians to enact more laws to end prisons. So they say...but most of their actions only bring about reform (more humane prisons). The real deal is that as long as government (the state) exists, there will be prisons. It's in the state's interest to erect prisons. The state uses prisons as a tool for social control, business uses prisons to reap obscene profits, and politicians are funded by big business and administer the state through the making of laws.

So, logic instructs us that if we desire to end prisons and truly live free, we must totally destroy the state and turn this world and the social order upside down. And that is why some anarchists have begun to use the term "Demolitionists" as opposed to "Abolitionists."

The term "Abolitionists" as used is a major contradictory strain among anarchists who should know better, but obviously do not and need to be reminded of this.

The state and its proponents attempt to persuade us to subdue our passions and desires and accept the logic of submission to authority and domination, and the necessity of prisons, police, courts, and slavery by another name.

We can't rely on the same institutions of oppression to rectify the problem and to do so is anathema to anarchy. Learn from the past.

TEAR THE WALLS DOWN!

# PRISONS HAVE NO PLACE IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

*- JOSIAH FAURÉ, ENGLAND*

Hello and thank you,

Thank you for taking the time to read the thoughts of one of society's forgotten men and thank you for the opportunity to share.

I am currently 15 years into a life sentence for murder under the Joint Enterprise "law" for which I must serve a minimum of 18 years. I was sat in the car while my co-defendant got out and shot and killed a 17 year old. I could say a lot more about the injustice of Joint Enterprise but I'll leave that to our JENGBA supporters who have been doing such a fine job so far.

For the most part prisons are cesspits which cultivate societies most dysfunctional members and by the time they are ready, sorry not ready but simply up for release they are bigger and stronger if they engage in the gym which many do. Alternatively they might be hooked on highly addictive drug with a habit they can barely afford to support without putting family under pressure for the little they have. (Nowadays spice is the worst, Green Crack epidemic).

While moving around the prison estate or staying in your local prison, connections can be made with criminals all across the country even across Europe and most countries around the world actually gaining access to weapons, large quantities of drugs and criminal acquaintances to call in when the job requires some anonymous heavies.

And what do most prisoners talk about all day everyday? What they've got (a million pounds, a car, jewellery and designer clothes) if it's not that then it's how

they managed to get this nice stuff (the crimes they committed and how they commit those crimes).

On top of that they no longer fear the consequences of being caught because they've just done jail and it was a piece of piss, as most of them say, if they last a month outside they've done well.

There are the prisoners who have choose "A Life of Crime" they get out more dangerous than when they came in, is this a good use of taxpayer's money? So yes, society is safer for a period of time while it gets some respite from us dangerous and disruptive people but the person that usually comes out is usually worse than the one who went away.

On the other hand if an individual has a hunger/passion to change (let go of criminal beliefs/transform the person you are) there are opportunities out there in the prison estate, great amazing opportunities you will never get outside and won't cost you a penny. Problem is they are usually poorly advertised so unless you happen to hear others talking, see something interesting happening or ask the right person the right questions you will never find out about them. And let's not forget if you do find these opportunities there will most likely be a waiting list as spaces are limited and you will need to have a minimum amount of time to serve on your sentence ranging from 12-24 months before anyone will even look at you. So for those positive, self-change individuals if they're inside long enough and a number of factors happen to fall into place and they get on some courses they might actually be rehabilitated while others are ticking boxes.

This is not how prison is supposed to work but it is exactly what is happening in prisons up and down the country.

So that's two versions of half the story because the other half is that opportunities are being taken away due to cuts in government funding and over the past 8-10 years the majority of prisons have become little more than human warehouses with focus on level 1's and 2's in maths and English rather than rehabilitation.

More and more young offenders are being sent to adult establishments and the level of immaturity, bravado and disrespect towards staff and older men by them is shocking, this in turn leaves them at risk of being severely hurt by men who don't realise they are just kids. As for the staff most of the new recruits are little more than kids themselves; fresh from college, uni or a supermarket job however let's support them not undermine them as everyone has to start somewhere right. And if these new recruits didn't turn up we'd be on 23-24 hr bang up. I do question the logic of sending two 18-23 year olds armed with a baton, pepper spray and a body cam onto a spur of 60-80 dangerous men. What happened to all the ex-military who would traditionally join the prison service as once armed with a little compassion and empathy these guys are actually the best officers I've ever come across, believe it or not they could relate to our situation whilst

maintaining self-discipline to do the job in a professional manner. Based on what I've said you may think I agree with prisons, I actually think they are a necessary evil for the evil which is allowed to exist in society.

I just don't think prisons in their current form have any place in contemporary UK society and if globalisation is what we are led to believe it is then same goes for anywhere in planet earth.

So what instead, I hear you ask, it already exists and it works I am living proof of it and there are many others too. The answer is TC (Therapeutic Community) and believe me these places are hidden havens of hope within the prison estate. The only prisons that should be allowed to remain open are TCs because they are humane and all they are concerned with is rehabilitation but remove fixed terms, it should take as long as it takes however quickly or longer it takes for the individual to understand themselves. Release them when the clinical staff feel they are ready always holding the possibility of return/recall whenever they re-offend.

TCs provide a safe space for group therapy where the residents (that's what they call prisoners there) are the ones who challenge each other's view, beliefs, morals and stories. Whilst challenging others you are constantly challenging your own view and beliefs it's impossible to avoid the process of self-questioning once you have been exposed to this new way of thinking. A common phrase in TC is "you can't blag a blagger" (lie to a liar) and for the most part this is true but the biggest truth is you can't lie to yourself once 'the truth' has been exposed.

The bigger problem and main solution is what to do before people come to prison, wouldn't it be wonderful if we as a society could prevent the numbers ever getting close to what they are now and stop the injustice of so many of our young being criminalised and produce some outstanding contributors to society instead.

And how could we possible achieve such a thing? My vision for the future is this, as the world embraces automation and most jobs of a manual labour sort are increasingly done by robots we would naturally become a society of carers and creatives (note that criminal are some of the most creative minds in society). As society actually takes the time to truly become a community and care for the wellbeing of one another due to no longer being caught up in the individual rat race concerned only with accumulating personal wealth it will be much easier to notice the tell tale signs of a troubled youth. They would be enrolled in a therapeutic academy where they are given time patience and listened to until their issues are understood and worked through allowing them to put their creative skills to positive use rather than to find a way of making money illegally. This is my hope for the future of our youngsters, hope which manifested in T.C.

Thank you again for taking the time.

# HOW DO BLACK LIVES MATTER?

- *JAH BAGGS, ENGLAND*

How do Black Lives Matter?

(Does it matter, does it matter, does it matter, does it matter, Noooo...) x3

How do black lives matter when we're locked in the slammer

They don't care if they were right or wrong

Who are the victims? They fight a wrong with a wrong they know, they don't need a witness

They wanna lock us up and break us down

Open your eyes there is a difference

(They know they can not fight the truth with truth they'll lose!)

So, they'd rather lie and see us die inside, our lives...

If our lives really mattered someone tell me where's the justice?

Cause at the scene of the crime they found prints but NONE of those were mine!

NO DNA, NO MOTIVE BUT THEY GIVE ME A LIFE SENTENCE!

And now my kids are crying they're dying they need me by their sides

But does it matter, does it matter, does it matter, does it matter, noooo...

How do black lives matter if they were locked in the slammer and they don't care if they're right or wrong!

# IN THE WARS WITH THE PRISON SYSTEM

*- KYLE MAJOR, ENGLAND*

Since 2012 I have been seriously harassed and stalked by the Ministry of Justice. It all started when I was accepted into the CSC system (close supervision centres) within the high security prison estate for an alleged allegation of assault which I was later exonerated of. I was not in prison for a violent crime defined by law, I was in prison for (blackmail x 2) and received 9 years reduced to a six years on appeal

I spent over 19 months within this system and believe me now I have never experienced so much abuse, corruption, sick and evil treatment of people in my whole life. I suffered abuse at the hands of these so called professionals I can assure you now that system is another way for the prison service to extort the British taxpayers and the government of money. They breed violence and encourage it they target prisoners and inflict psychological abuse upon them in some circumstances leading to self-mutilation, also warehousing mentally ill patients to increase the budgets from the government as well as physical and sexual abuse they are predators trust me.

In May 2011 a prison officer named Mark Gilbert attacked me it was unprovoked on camera with 3 other officers and they subjected me to a brutal, violent and sexual assault Gilbert only being the sexual predator. This complaint was investigated by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman and upheld Mark Gilbert is referenced in this report which is a legal document please remember this is the victim's account for legal reasons.

The prison failed to involve the police however I did write to the IPCC (Independent Police Complaints Commission) and complained about Thames Valley Police not investigating a crime I complained about who then did a turnaround and recorded my complaint as of date nobody has still been to take a statement or investigate the crime which was on camera clearly protecting this animal who needs to be locked away he also resigned before the disciplinary hearing could take place evading capture from both the prison service and the police.

This is criminal and was condoned and supported by the prison service. The reports which evidence what I am stating can be obtained from either

Miscarriages of Justice UK (MOJUK) or Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! (FRFI), I believe they will be uploaded online for all to read.

I suffered a number of attacks by these officers and witnessed a significant amount of assaults on others within that system which needs shutting down it does absolutely nothing but breed more violence how many successes it has had!

Since all of this I have had nothing but stalking, harassment, targeting and abuse by the Prison service, Probation service, NHS, as well as the police trying to abuse processes in order to try and put me in prison.

I've found myself in a position where I'm suffering significant and severe levels of corruption and I don't seem to be getting any help I have been suffering with a very bad injury to my left foot and ankle since 2013. I am being constantly denied medical care and treatment I am genuinely suffering in pain and discomfort in a bad way I cannot walk on my foot it's that bad.

But this is taking place in my opinion because my solicitor has lodged a personal Injury claim against the MOJ for creating the injury. It's my belief that the NHS (who's in big business with the high security prison estate who controls the high secure mental hospitals) is being influenced by the MOJ into covering up the true extent of my injury so the MOJ doesn't have to pay for the damages it's very sick evil and depraved staff have created. In March 2017 at HMP Doncaster, I was attacked again unprovoked on CCTV by a prison officer Dan Gregory who is referenced in the internal report completely by the prison who was subsequently dismissed from the prison service. It needs to be recognised the management were professional in this respect.

I was then sent to HMP Lindholme where after 8 days of my arrival I was assaulted by another prison officer on camera again unprovoked. The police prisons investigations team for South Yorkshire investigated and failed to submit the evidence to the CPS for a charging decision they basically covered up a crime to protect the officer. Whilst the investigation was ongoing I was transferred to HMP Wealstun where six officers greeted me upon my arrival it needs to be noted I arrived in a wheelchair due to my foot being so bad I was then told by six prison officers including to senior managers to get out of the wheelchair.

I was going to the segregation. I explained I could only walk a short distance aided with a crutch and long term I had to use a wheelchair for mobility. I was told no you can walk you're going to the segregation. I said could I please speak to healthcare as I could point them in the direction of the information which would outline my injuries. I was told no you can't I said I need to speak to healthcare before I could say another word literally six officers attacked me dragged me out of the wheelchair smashing my head off the floor then kneeling me and punching me at no point was I resisting I was the picked up in midair above the heads and

carried to the segregation and put in a cell around ten minutes later four different officers came into the cell not small guys they surrounded me and said we want your trainers.

I explained I needed to see healthcare I had just been assaulted also that my trainers were prescribed medically I was told give us your trainers before I could even finish asking for healthcare again they assaulted me again punching and kneeling one officer tried to break my back with some UFC body slam I was then stripped naked and they left the cell.

I was in a cell with no toilet, sink or bed just four walls and a floor it I went to the corner of the cell to empty my bowels. Whilst in the corner naked knelt down the officers tried to come back into the cell again. So I threatened them so they would leave the cell in fear for my life genuinely.

After ten minutes or so five officers came running through the cell door without warning with a (shield and helmets) into an empty cell with no moveable objects and just a naked man they rammed me into the corner and beat me severely, fractured my ribs and smashed my head off the floor I was dragged around into another cell and then had some six foot eighteen stone meat head kneel down on my back and try his hardest to try and snap my shoulder blade off my body by prizing it out and pushing my shoulder in he then started to push his fingers into the back of my ear with real force trying to stop me breathing they then ran out of the cell and left me naked with no food or medical assistance or pain relief that's 3 assaults in one hour. A human body is not designed to take that much trauma.

5 days later when all the bruising and swelling went down I was taken to Harrogate and district hospital where I was told my ribs were fractured and my rotator cuff in my shoulder was broken, as well as further trauma to my back, foot and ankle leaving me unable to walk and in a lot of pain. All the prison staff did was provoke and abuse me.

A few weeks later I was transferred to HMP Moorland early December with six outstanding hospital appointments which I had in print black and white. I was kept at HMP Moorland until April the 20th, on my release I was not allowed to attend one hospital appointment. I'm told it's been assessed and I no longer fit the criteria for those appointments, they just disappeared. Basically it's just more criminality and corruption to cover over my injuries and protect the animals, bullies and predators they created them.

I am wheelchair bound cannot stand and suffer in agony with my shoulder as well as a lump on my spine it makes me sick. How is it that this treatment of a human being is allowed to happen in a country that values humanity and human rights.

The week before my release the prison told me a special van would pick me up to take me to the hostel probation have put me in due to me being wheelchair

bound, I said fine they told me this 3 times. On the day of my release I get pushed to reception, whilst being processed I was asked how I would be getting to the hostel. I said the prison had sorted it as far as I was aware of. They told me nobody had arranged this and I had to make my own way back. I said how is that possible I cannot walk I am awaiting a social care assessment. They said it's not our problem once you go out of those gates we don't care. I said can you ring me a taxi, they told me no, you can go round the corner to the shop it's five minutes down the road. I said what is this you know I can't walk you've just provided a carer for the last 3 months it's not our problem if been told by the governor to push you out and leave you.

That's exactly what they did how evil. I had to with one leg and one arm push myself up a little hill and then down the road suffering in pain they had the cheek to laugh at me struggling until a maintenance man working on the road helped me I then got in a wheelchair friendly taxi and took to the train station where the Virgin train staff really helped me, very nice and decent people which needs to be recognised.

I then got a taxi at the other end to the probation hostel once I got to the hostel I had the same reception as the leaving from prison no help and told we are not here to push you around you will have to get residents to help you I'm basically being isolated and left to suffer with no help it's just corruption and abuse of somebody who's vulnerable and disabled.

Everything I'm stating can be checked factually against evidence (paperwork) which I have copies of all my complaints to NHS England and other healthcare providers. I can prove corruption and criminality by legal and supposedly professional government bodies. The assault is currently being investigated by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman and again as of yet no police have been to see me.

The corruption is clearly going to quite a senior level because I have all my complaints prison, NHS, probation and police. What you are reading is real and does not contain any lies. I am suffering serious levels of abuse (real abuse) my health is really bad I cannot walk. Please spread this story and article to spread awareness and expose these corrupt and criminal animals so they cannot carry on targeting and abusing people such as myself.

You have probably read articles from people such as Kevan Thakrar, Ross McPherson and George Black let me tell you now if spent time with all 3 of these people and they are receiving the same levels of abuse as me just in different ways I can promise you that I witnessed it first-hand but all they are doing is picking certain individuals it's very weird and strange.

Thank you for taking your time to read this it's very much appreciated  
#spreadthestory.

# THE DROP (A STORY)

- *MIGUEL PERALTA BETANZOS, MEXICO*

One day Leisure felt very restless; he was completely imbalanced inside, he lacked a gear, longing to kill Time. But Time, always so insightful and astute, knew that Leisure was plotting his disappearance without leaving a trace. With this in mind, Leisure set out on a long trip to find Time. In his search, he crossed various galaxies, salt deserts, kilometers of frozen water. He searched for Time in his dreams, in cosmic valleys, in deep caverns. He utilized heat and movement sensors to find Time and he did not find him.

Until one night, due to exhaustion and a dream he had, he walked very slowly beginning to doze off. Soon he closed his eyes and he bumped into a cement box. He picked it off the ground, observed it carefully and shook it. To his astonishment he heard weird sounds coming from the box, sounds he'd never heard in his life.

He realized that there was life inside the box and decided to enquire. Leisure, schemed on how to enter the box. With a little bit of magic he made himself small, very small, the size of a drop of water. He seeped in little by little until he was able to completely enter the box. Once inside, he returned to his original size but he was now invisible. He began to walk inside the box without being seen. He was able to observe different spaces, all divided by steel bars and locked with padlocks. He also saw that there was a diversity of fauna; buzzards, crickets, beetles, mice, dragonflies, fireflies, butterflies, fleas, many bed bugs, flies, spiders, ants, cockroaches and birds.

Other beings could be seen everywhere. They were the majority. They took on different forms: sometimes human remains, guards, other criminals, accused, prisoners. That is how they had been classified amongst all of the fauna that lived inside the cement box. They spoke different languages and they were of different cultures, some whistling to communicate. Surely they were in this place for various reasons. One reason is because destiny had put them in the wrong place without them knowing of their immediate future. Many others were there because some wealthy and powerful beings wanted control of their lives and had sent them there to try to severely punish them. Injustice is the rule of law.

They nearly all had the same activities, everyday was monotonous. They had not seen the rain nor felt the wind, harmony didn't exist. Of the various activities that consumed their lives, there was something they called work or self-exploitation. They worked sitting down. They created artwork that was taken outside the box to be sold at very high prices, not comparable to what they were paid.

The vultures were those in charge of surveilling each step, each blink of the eye of the inhabitants of that box, those who could enter and leave, those that had keys. Their toenails were very long, some skinny and others fat, their mouths were large and ugly, they smelt rotten. They always wore black vests and brought with them a kit that consisted of a tear gas canister, a short club and handcuffs. They wished for the death and decomposition of every inhabitant, for the flesh and consciousness to be devoured centimeter by centimeter of those beings that they had incarcerated.

In the cement box there were many illnesses and they didn't have healthy food. Everything was controlled. Their emotions crisscrossed everywhere: sadness, anger, rage, euphoria, hate, vileness, disdain and exhaustion. Surfeit. All of these emotions compounded and were eating at the beings until they became cement. That is why the box was growing and growing.

But something more evil existed inside the box. The vultures sang a hymn of war and worshipped a three colored cloth every Monday. Furthermore, they made them repeat a phrase, "It is always better to be quiet than say too much when it comes to criticism". They all kept silent, nobody dared to say anything, much less rebel. Nobody.

After seeing this, Leisure furthered his journey even deeper into the box taking stock of all of the beings as they struggled day in and day out to survive. He discovered that some saved capsules that they ingested when their emotions were mixed causing a very weird effect, what they called "laughter". It was some type of mental intoxication. Others, held inside a small light which would guide them to the exit of that place. But they were always waiting to act.

He continued his journey and came across a place they called the "punishment cell". He walked slow as it was a very dark place, humid and quieter than the other spaces. Soon, he crossed sight with two very intense eyes that gleamed in the dark. He still did not know how this being could see him, but he was asked to make no sound and to enter the cell slowly. He then realized it was Time, whom he was searching for before entering the box.

Time asked not to be destroyed and began telling Leisure how he had his freedom taken away and ended up in that place. He said: "I found out you were tracking me. I searched for transportation to leave far away from the universe, but in my escape I was intercepted by a command of vultures who were surveying the space. They brought me here without my understanding of why. They beat me during the whole journey, and after many punches, they told me it was my turn to sicken inside this place. They said that I had to get into their thoughts and make sure that at every instant they were thinking of me. In the box, I have known many beings. We have talked. You too have seen what happens in this place. I have lived here and I cannot obey the vultures, you have to help us leave".

"Look", Time said to Leisure, as he showed him some very tiny seeds that he removed from his bag. "Take these above and search for those who bring the light inside. They will know where and when to plant them".

Leisure was confused by the situation. Seeing so much injustice, he sympathized with Time and with the other beings in the box, helping them plant the seeds. He waited for the seeds to sprout and grow into giant trees. Their roots began to overreach the cement. Little by little the clouds condensed causing intense rain. The box was flooded and destroyed into pieces. At first, those who didn't know of the seeds, were frightened as they had never seen drops of water. This was because the dragonflies, in charge of making it rain, were also in the box. But those who carried the light, encouraged them to leave. They managed to leave unharmed, thinking that they were already free.

Some went away, initiating their lives and journeys individually. Others began to search a pathway together with Time and Leisure. However, as they advanced, they realized that there were other beings that were called "society" who were not free. They lived as prisoners in a giant magnetic bubble. They had security cameras everywhere. Furthermore, they were enslaved by television, greed, and power, blinded by money and their daily diet consisted only of junk food.

Like that, they decided to search other beings with light to initiate not a flood, but a great fire, to invent a new freedom...

## THE STRUGGLE FOR PRISON ABOLITION CONTINUES: BATTLEGROUND UK AND AMERIKA! - *KEITH "COMRADE MALIK" WASHINGTON*

What follows is an essay written by political prisoner Keith Washington, a member of IWOC and the New Afrikan Black Panther Party, about ongoing prison struggles in the UK and in the US.

"To rise beyond the limits of protest, we must chart out our political intentions, organizational goals, and a larger vision about our direction. First, and foremost, militant self-defense, and the capacity for larger militant actions must be addressed at the inception of the organizing process. While we must defend people from captivity as well as our political centers, we must also be astute enough to realize that we cannot be on the defense indefinitely. The state is in a weaker position today than it has been in decades, and since the moment we go into action is up to us, the government invariably remains in a defensive position.

WE CAN ACT WHEN WE CHOOSE, AND WE SHOULD ACT WISELY."  
Revolutionary Greetings, Comrades!

We opened here with some powerful words. I suggest you read the opening statement again and fully understand and grasp the meaning of the message we are trying to convey to you.

In Florida we have witnessed with our own eyes the lengths the state will go to in order to sabotage the effectiveness of our pre-planned direct actions. Our actions seek to shed a discerning spotlight on the corrupt practices of the Department of Corrections. However, preemptive lockdowns have been the go-to tactic of numerous prison agencies across the United States.

Like President Trump, they (the corrupt prison agencies) don't want to be exposed, they want to continue on, in a business as usual manner. It is our duty to disrupt and destroy these slave kamps and gulags.

As illustrated and explained by our comrade Kevin "Rashid" Johnson, the "lay-down" in Florida prisons was called for extremely valid reasons:

A) forced slave labor – FDOC prisoners are forced to work without pay.

B) grossly overpriced commissary and package system – Florida is extorting the poorest cross-section of society!

C) murdering and abusing prisoners with impunity and then covering it up!

Florida is sanctioning and condoning the outright murder of prisoners in their care. A horrific case in point is the case of Darren Rainey.

On June 23rd, 2012, Darren Rainey was locked in a scalding hot shower by corrections officers who had rigged the shower so they could punish prisoners who "acted out." These were mentally ill prisoners housed at the Dade Correctional Institution. In late January, 2018, the State of Florida announced that it would award \$4.5 million to Darren Rainey's family. Nevertheless, Miami-Dade State Attorney, Katherine Fernandez Rundle, refused to prosecute former corrections officers Ronald Clarke and Cornelius Thompson. So in essence, these pieces of trash have been allowed to get away with murder!

One of our key organizational goals in Florida should be to force the resignation of State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle! Fire her now! There is no way in hell that the State approves an award of \$4.5 million and no-one is held accountable for the loss of life! What kind of message do you think is being sent to the pigs? "We protect our own," that is the message. I want to explore this phrase, "we protect our own," more thoroughly, but before I delve deeper, allow me to remind all of you that our struggle for prison abolition is a protracted struggle and the

state targets the most advanced political elements.

Florida is attempting to place an inciting to riot charge on Comrade Rashid, but this smacks of an elaborate plan to retaliate against Rashid for exercising the same protected free-speech rights as reports and journalists at the Miami Herald!

Compare Rashid's piece, *Florida Prisoners Are Laying It Down*, to Monique. O. Madan's piece which was published by the Miami Herald on January 3rd 2018, entitled "Florida Prisoners to Protest Again..." Florida is blatantly violating Rashid's constitutional rights!

### **We Protect Our Own – The Texas Way!**

It is strange to me when I see members of the Attorney General's office in Texas conspiring to harm a prisoner who witnessed a murder! The pieces of the puzzle are slowly falling into place.

Christopher Woolverton, Thomas Schmerber, Arcade Comeaux and Alton Rodgers, all of them abused and/or murdered by prison employees at the Bill Clements Unit located at Amarillo, Texas. Attorney Jesse Quackenbush is representing a couple of the families here in Texas who have filed multi-million dollar wrongful death lawsuits against the State of Texas. (See: August 2017 issue of *Prison Legal News* as well as *The Intercept*, *Amarillo.com*.)

Comrade Kevin "Rashid" Johnson exposed the pattern of abuse and murder which regularly takes place at the Bill Clements Unit. In 2017, prison officials conspired with members of the Texas Attorney General's office to get some "payback" for Rashid's courageous journalism.

First, they planted a weapon in his cell, then they stole all his legal materials, and when these actions generated a public outcry, they conspired with the State of Florida and spirited Rashid off to a Florida prison, deleting all information which would help concerned friends and supporters find Rashid! If it wasn't for the passionate work of National Lawyers' Guild Attorney Paul S. Holdorf Esq, Rashid may have never been successfully located.

The point I want to make is this: there is a systematic and pervasive problem in US prisons where members of State Attorney General officers collude and conspire with members of their various prison agencies to cover-up the abuse and murder of prisoners and shield murderous prison employees from being held accountable for their actions.

Furthermore, we are also seeing a pattern in which prisoners who identify as humyn rights activists and jail house lawyers are literally being marked for

death and systematically targeted for co-ordinated retaliatory actions. Attorney General of Texas Ken Paxton is complicit in these collusive acts and the FBI and Department of Justice seem to be 100% on board with the 'We Protect Our Own' strategy.

## **Focusing in on Our Demands**

Comrades, in each state and country there are prisoners and victims of modern-day slavery perpetrated by agents of the state! As a proud member of the Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee (IWOC), I am keenly aware of the problems that prisoners everywhere face. I would like to highlight some of the specific issues our imprisoned comrades face with the hope of promoting greater unity and understanding among our free-world supporters and imprisoned allies – so we can address these issues.

## **United Kingdom**

Comrades, please let me be perfectly clear when I say that the pigs in London are just as corrupt as the pigs in Amerika – period. Chairman Mao Tze Tung said "no investigation, no right to speak." With that in mind, I'll let all of you know I've done my research on the pigs in the UK:

Joy Gardner – murdered by the police in Britain! 1994

Sean Rigg – died at the Brixton Police Station in August 2001

Azelle Rodney – murdered by police marksman Anthony Long in April 2005!

Mark Duggan – murdered by police in Tottenham!

Shiji Lapite, Brian Douglas, Ibrahima Sey, and Roger Sylvester, all victims of the murderous police in the United Kingdom! The common thread which connects all of these humyn beings? They were minorities, and for the most part they were poor!

If I were to come up with a list of demands for our free-world comrades in the UK, the first would be:

- Tell the pigs to stop murdering our people – or else!
- Replace every member of the Independent Police Complaints Commission!
- Fire every member of the Crown Prosecution Service!

Radical demands? Well, guess what? I'm a radical – surprise!

## **UK Prisons**

The criminal justice system in the UK is racist to the core! This is actually supported by information published in a government report and reviewed by

Labour MP David Lammy. Lammy found a clear, direct link between ethnicity and the likelihood of receiving a prison sentence if you are Black or Asian and living in the United Kingdom!

Remarkably, the number of Muslim prisoners more than doubled between 2002 and 2016, going from 5,502 to 12,663. Muslims now represent 4.4% of the total UK population, but 15% of the prison population in the UK. Can you say "Islamophobia," Theresa May?

The prisons in the UK are overcrowded and violent, and the Ministry of Justice has decided to ratchet up the stress and discontent levels by banning tobacco in all closed prisons by the summer of 2018! Many of the prisons in the UK are suffering from deterioration and infrastructure decay. Prisons such as Long Lartin in Evesham, Worcestershire. Long Lartin is the oldest of the prisons designated as high security in the UK, and the only prison in which prisoners on some wings don't have toilets and they still have to "slop out"!

In other words, humyn beings are forced to urinate and defecate in a bucket in their cells, and if the guards decide to not allow them to "slop out", then they are stuck in a toxic environment. This is just one of the reasons that I made an international call for solidarity to end prison slavery on June 19th, 2018.

Nothing more clearly illustrates modern day slavery in the UK than the ultra-corrupt Indeterminate Sentence for Public Protection (IPP) policy. This scandalous policy, which was supposed to be abolished in 2012, continues to allow over 3,300 prisoners to be held hostages years after serving their minimum tarriff (sentence). Release IPP prisoners in the UK now! End prison slavery in the UK now!

Before I move on, I am officially inviting prisoners in the UK to join the Incarcerated Workers' Organizing Committee, and as Deputy Chairman of the New Afrikan Black Panther Party (Prison Chapter), I am sending out a special invitation to UK prisoners to join the Black Panthers now!

Be advised that under the banner of the NABPP (PC), we have mass organizations for White Panthers, as well as Asian Panthers, and under the auspices of the United Panther movement I invite all street tribe members in UK prisons to consider joining the movement which seeks to abolish prison slavery.

To join the IWOC, contact:

UK: IWW/IWOC, PO Box 7593, Glasgow, G42 2EX

USA: IWW/IWOC, PO Box 414304, Kansas City, MO, 64141-4304

To join the NABPP (PC), contact:

Comrade Malik, c/o Twitch, PO Box 7907, Austin, Texas, 78713, USA  
Amerikkka – the slave state!

Comrades, without a doubt there are common issues which plague every prison population in the world, but now I will list some specific issues and challenges we face here in Amerika!

Indiana – In Indiana, comrades Kwame Shakur and Khalfani Malik Khaldun struggle hard against "legalized" slavery in Amerika. In retaliation to their efforts, and the efforts of numerous other politicized prisoners in Indiana, the Indiana Department of Corrections (IDOC) has instituted a new correspondence policy which forbids prisoners to receive or send materials and literature on blank paper!

Not only is this an infringement on their 1st Amendment rights, it infringes on their ability to litigate and receive information of any kind! The agency's main goal is to isolate and silence the voices of all Indiana prisoners.

Alabama – Free Alabama Movement spokespersons have initiated a Campaign to Redistribute the Pain in 2018.<sup>12</sup> These boycott campaigns, spear-headed by FAM, seek to defund and bankrupt the capitalist pig corporations which prey on the poor masses who are trapped in prisons all across the "great" slave state of Amerika.

I am in full support of Bennu's campaign, and this is one of the many tactics and strategies employed by the IWOC to end prison slavery in Amerika. I would like to add that many of the high-ranking prison administrators and prison employees who abuse and oppress us are black. Yes, it's true! So when you think it's all about "whitey" keeping us down, think again – in ole Alabama there are many Uncle Toms and jeffin-ass House Negroes hurting the people. Remember that.

California – In California, Heshima Denham of the Amend the 13th Movement and Fati Yero Kamboon of the WL Nolen Mentorship Program (WLNMP) have been pushing a dynamic initiative entitled: A Proposal for Developing a Community Release Board.<sup>13</sup>

This would be paired with another initiative referred to as Strategic Release. The bottom line is this: prisoners in California, especially New Afrikan prisoners, are actually creating realistic avenues for freedom which can be utilized by all.

Kijana Tashiri Askari is the chair of the WLNMP, and he is committed to providing quality education and life skills to a new generation of aspiring freedom fighters and community leaders. Something wonderful is happening inside and outside of California prisons.

On the outside, prison abolitionist Nube Brown of California Prison Focus has

teamed up with Marissa Garcia, Anna Marillo and numerous others to form a coalition known as the New Abolitionist Movement. It is important for all imprisoned activists and freedom fighters to know that, without a dedicated cadre of outside supporters like Nube Brown, Kim Pollak, Mary Ratcliff, Dr Willie Ratcliff, Julie Sands, Noelle Hanrahan, Carole Seligman, Justin Adkins, Victor Wallis, Jamani Montague, and last but not least Brianna of the IWOC, nobody in the free world would hear our voices!

And then there are the unsung heroes and heroines! Julie Schneyer, Sam Rosen, Ryan Policht, Michael Novick, Twitch Entropy, and our European comrades Annabelle from Prison Watch, Heinz Leitner and Alina Dollat – abolitionists!

Before I end this piece, I want to give a clenched fist salute to Calvin Burnap and Professor Dean Spade in Seattle, Washington.

## **Texas**

In Texas, we face numerous problems, and dedicated members of the IWOC have helped us assemble a list of demands we will be requesting our family and friends to present to Texas legislators this year. On Juneteenth (June 19th, 2018), I am calling for all Texas prisoners and all prisoners throughout the US, and our free-world supporters, to take time to meditate and reflect on past struggles for the abolition of slavery, as well as preparing for the struggle we have ahead of us. The most important thing I am requesting prisoners in Texas to do is contact their family and friends.

We want to provide Texas prisoners with the email addresses and fax numbers of key Texas legislators so prisoners can urge their family and friends to contact them and provide them with our core demands, which are:

- 1 The Right to Habeas Counsel – Every indigent prisoner in Texas should be appointed Habeas Counsel when filing their 11.07 Habeas Corpus.
- 2 End the "Quorum of One" practice for the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals.
- 3 Meaningful Good Time/Work Time and Presumptive Parole – When Good Time, Work Time and Flat Time equal 100% of their sentence, a Texas prisoner should be presumed to automatically make parole or discharge!
- 4 Payment/Compensation for Forced Labor: "No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms" – Article 4, Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- 5 End the \$100 Medical Co-Pay
- 6 TDCJ Oversight Committee – This is a bill that has been up for a vote in the past two Texas legislative sessions. It will require all grievances to be processed and investigated by an independent outside organization. Prisoners in Texas are dying and being murdered and abused by staff at an alarming rate and we need

independent oversight of this corrupt agency right now!

Comrades, I was just studying the Yule-Winter 2017-2018 edition of Earth First! The Journal of Ecological Resistance. I came across an article by Al Williams entitled "What We Learnt by Coordinating a Month of Rolling Resistance Against Cuadrilla at Preston New Road." I came away with some excellent tactics and strategies which we can adopt for our abolition movement.

- Direct action is for everyone! Work strikes, hunger strikes, tear these slave kamps down!
- Engaging other activist collectives helps form an inclusive, diverse alliance.
- Diversity of tactics is key when deploying multiple direct actions against police forces (or prisoncrats) who know we are coming! (Juneteenth, y'all!)
- Alternative media is an important lever when the national news in the UK or US isn't shining a light on prison slavery or abuse of prisoners.
- Corruption, collusion and violence are now endemic throughout the world!

Comrades, I wrote this essay with the intent of promoting international solidarity as we approach Juneteenth. Let's plan to do something big.

Dare to struggle, dare to win. All power to the people.

Your Brother and Comrade, Malik

*Keith "Malik" Washington is a co-founder and chief spokesperson for the End Prison Slavery in Texas Movement, a proud member of the Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee and Deputy Chairman of the New Afrikan Black Panther Party Prison Chapter. Malik has been instrumental in calling for the abolition of legalized slavery in Amerika and is very active in the Fight Toxic Prisons campaign. You can view his work at comrademalik.com or you can write him directly at Keith "Comrade Malik" Washington, 1487958, Eastham Unit, 2665 Prison Rd. 1, Lovelady, Texas 75851.*

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10 See <http://smashipp.noflag.org.uk/>

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12 San Francisco Bay View, September 2017, "We must affect the bottom line" by Bennu Hannibal Ra-Sun

13 The WL Nolen Mentorship Program (WLNMP): A Proposal for Developing a Community Release Board by Fati Yero Kambon

14 Demands for Battleground 2018/19 by IWOC members

15 Earth First! Journal, Yule 2017/2018, "What We Learnt by Coordinating a Month of Rolling Resistance Against Cuadrilla at Preston New Road" by Al Williams

# A CORRUPT BRITISH LEGAL SYSTEM

## - *TERENCE WILLIAM ALLEN, ENGLAND*

My nightmare began 33 years ago 24/7/1985 to be exact. My friend was raped and murdered in her flat on the 17/7/85.

On the 25/7/85 I was charged with her murder (no rape). The samples taken from me by the police were never tested against the samples taken from Anita Kirkwood's body because I am a natural non-secretor to Anita, AB-/A-

1. Reference Angela Gallop's undisclosed forensic reports, dated 26/7/1985, also on that same day Angela Gallop reported to DC Hensley "you have the wrong man Terry is a non-secretor".

The fluid removed from Anita's body produced a blood result of 13 with minute traces of A: No AB blood group (+ or-) would produce any blood antibodies to attack Anita's A-. Therefore her rapist must be blood group B.

2. The police faked bite mark evidence against me by taking a mold of my teeth, filing the cast down until they could take a perfect bite mark on Anita's breast – you can even see pieces of the plastic square my teeth marks were on before being transferred to a photo of Anita's breast – my front teeth were broken by the Royal Berkshire Hospital the day after Anita had been murdered. And yet the bite mark evidence used in court clearly shows my broken front teeth.

3. The police killed off Anita in less than 15 minutes, my own defence QC Mr Convi destroyed my alibi for those 15 minutes Anita was actually heard to be screaming for some 40 minutes. All this evidence was in the NON committed statements.

4. It took me 30 years to get DNA testing done. Two reasons for doing it, the first obviously to clear myself, the second, I was hoping for a different result, but I will admit the chances of me being wrong were 200-1 and I only put them odds out because I was hoping with all my heart that I was wrong – that my suspicion was false, but the DNA proved positive not a perfect match for me but so damn close the forensic people named me as their owner – my brother Stephen is blood group B. He was also a prosecution witness against me in court?

5. I had identified one of Anita's killers 6 months before my fake trial, I told the police and my own defence his name and the evidence to look at to catch him – None of this was reported to the court. Since then I've caught a further 3 killers all by using statements and forensics collected by the Reading Police but ignored.

The CCRC say I have no grounds for an appeal – so fuck you all I'm now sorting out a brave soul to put the entire case online to name and shame our "GREAT?" British legal system. 16 coppers, 2 forensic scientists and 2 circuit judges, all guilty of falsifying forensics/statements/conspiracy to pervert the course of justice.

Plus of course the name of Anita's killers, with evidence to match: I had no-one defending me, my own defence QC helped the CPS QC/police to convict me. The scum bags. Angela Gallop top forensic scientist – how many innocent victims has she helped put into prison. Print this if you dare.

# WHEN ABOLITION IS NOT ENOUGH

- ASBO, ENGLAND

It is easy to criticise reformist organisations and the demands they make on the state. However, it is just as important to maintain a critical approach to the concept of prison abolition. The prison industrial complex (PIC) is not going to disappear quietly!

*"Prison abolition is not a call to suddenly fling open the prison doors without enacting alternatives. Nor is it an appeal to a utopian ideal. Abolition is a broad based, practical vision for building models today that practice how we want to live in the future."*

- Sarah Lambale

Many abolitionist texts, such as the example below from Critical Resistance, emphasise the need for positive alternatives to the prison system, and community resources:

*"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 organizing tool and a long-term goal."*

It is important to emphasise however that even if none of the examples of alternatives to prison work, that does not legitimise its existence now. Restorative and transformative justice will not bring an end to the prison society without aggressive solidarity and sustained attack.

*"There are two types of solidarity. A passive one that all too often serves only to wash away conscience for someone's own inactivity and that does not bridge the gaps between words and deeds. And then the active, concrete, real solidarity that some call revolutionary, created in silence and anonymity, where only destructive actions speak even through the words that follow. Needless to say which one I prefer." - Cospito*

A broader interrogation of the prison system must include a rejection of the organisations that support it. James Kilgore argued that "a key social change underlying the advance of mass incarceration has been an increasing respect for the absolute authority of the law and those involved in law enforcement."<sup>26</sup> This is a critical feature of the prison society. Prisons are the end of the road for many people in a journey which is instigated and enforced by those in authority. An attack on the prison regime must therefore incorporate an attack against the

police. It is not enough to resist the physical manifestations of the PIC, constant vigilance and awareness is required in order to remember how systemic and far reaching it is. For continuous resistance to “the absolute authority of the law and those involved in law enforcement!”

*“Sometimes I think this whole world  
Is one big prison yard.  
Some of us are prisoners  
The rest of us are guards.”*  
- Bob Dylan

## **Punishment**

Joe Black and Bra Bros outlined the triple function of prisons: deterrence (fear of incarceration), incapacitation (containment of individuals) and rehabilitation (of “offending behaviour”). They also discussed criminological theory, the increased use of thought crime within the judicial system and prison estate, and the inconsistencies upon which the system is dependent.

*“The law does not pretend to punish everything that is dishonest. That would seriously interfere with business.”* Clarence S. Darrow

Many politicians have sought to cut their teeth on the prison system in the UK, using the language of rehabilitation to create a benevolent façade whilst promising to create tougher conditions inside. During his time as Secretary of State for Justice, Michael Gove was outspoken in his contempt for prisoners, before then promising the world in various initiatives that never materialised:

*“Abolishing the death penalty has led to a corruption of our criminal justice system, the erosion of all our freedoms and has made the punishment of the innocent more likely. Hanging may seem barbarous but the greater barbarity lies in the slow abandonment of our common law traditions.”* - Michael Gove

In the ‘Prison Safety and Reform White Paper’, Justice Secretary, Liz Truss, published plans for increased disciplinary powers for screws and prison staff including: body cameras for prison staff, greater governor autonomy, extended tests for drugs use and no-fly zones (to stop drone drop offs). She also plans to build five new ‘community houses’ for women.

The prison system controls its populations using the concept of divide and rule. Issues surrounding class, race, gender and sexuality are just some of the ways in which prisons — and prison staff— play their captives off against each other and seek to perpetuate a culture of alienation.

*Excerpt from Bang Up & Smash: Women’s Prisons, Bail Hostels and Probation*

# STUCK IN HELL

- *KELLEY SMITH, ENGLAND*

Welcome to my life stuck in hell (prison) for a crime I didn't do or foresee what would happen. Why because the courts don't care. Under there clothes the judges wear red and shine there horns. What a nightmare this is, a mother's fight for justice. To be home with her kids. Where she should be. Instead of being kidnapped to the system away from our babies. Going to sleep every night to nightmares waking up in a nightmare watching time go by.

STOP THIS LAZY LAW AND HELP and shout with our family and JENGBAs fight for Justice. NOT guilty.

JENGBA

I Kelley Smith have sent you a picture and little story for your event. Thank you for being able to do some art work. Me and my sister are serving life sentences for a crime we did not do or was present when it happened because of foresight. We will fight for the truth to come out but the appeal courts are not righting their wrongs trying to make our fight harder, we're innocent mothers with kids and no matter what happens we will always fight for justice and go home and be mums again, thanks to my family and JENGBA helping us. We would be lost by now, mother walking on the edge. All the help we need til the courts take note we won't go away. I am a mum not a murder, not guilty by association.

From,

A broken hearted mother fighting to go home with my babies.

# MISS-EDUCATION OF THE GHETTO CHILD

- *CHRISTIAN BARABUTU, ENGLAND*

"The choices you make will shape your life forever" – A Bronx tale

A lot of kids are growing up in social and economically deprived backgrounds and communities. They are surrounded by a high crime rate and broken dreams, fuelled by a lack of positive male role models in their communities. This usually leads them to emulating local criminals. No one is born evil, but we're all shaped by our experiences and what we see around us. Everything from TV, music parenting or lack of parenting and most definitely the characters they encounter on the outside world plays a part. A lot of these kids who fall victim of a broken society usually start with the desire to go against the grain in an environment that prizes a man by his toughness. Without a male positive role model, most of these young males turn to the people outside the home as an example of manhood and what it means to be man. In a broken society, this is usually the local gangster or drug dealer that they see every time they leave their homes.

Parents can't protect their kids and wrap them up in cotton wool forever but they can help by guiding in order to minimise the risk of kids ending up a statistic. There's also the issue of absent fathers or the lack of one. A woman can't teach a boy to be man. A lot of men are quick to have kids but refuse to deal with the responsibility of leading their families and educating their children. How do you expect a child to be a positive member of society when his environment teaches him differently? A lot of those kids don't know the importance of education or see it beneficial. Their environment teaches them that crime pays and are blind to the consequence of bad actions. They see the benefits of leading a criminal lifestyle: money, power, respect and fail to see the downside to the madness.

People may question why someone would like to live a life where death and jail hang over your head 24/7? The answer is what do you do if you don't know better? These kids are a product of their environment just like you're a product of your environment and upbringing. The government's always thinking they can solve these issues by increasing sentences and punishment so they look like they're taking a tough approach on crime to win elections. Everyone breaks the law in one way or another, even the people who make the law and try to impose it. Society's quick to judge. Malcolm X said once "once a man has been to prison, he never looks at himself or other people the same again. The squares out here

who boat has been in smooth waters all the time turn up their noses at an ex-con. But an ex-con can keep his head up when the squares sink".

Ask yourself this, what's the different between someone that goes off to war for his country and kills their so call enemies over a dispute between 2 countries, and a so called gangster that shoots and kills a rival over a dispute between two gangs? Or a drug dealer selling drugs and a government selling tobacco in order to make money from tax? Is one less evil than the other because the law permits him to carry out such acts? The truth is all these actions whether legal or not are all wrong deeds in life, it's in our nature. That's why we have things like law and order and religion to deter such things, because truth is these are factors that give us a sense of morality. We fear the consequences imposed on us by the law and religion.

The point being made is in a broken part of society, young men growing up to lead a life of crime lack the fear of the law and they have grown up to disregard it. Being tougher on crime doesn't change anything, it just makes them more determined to get away. When they are out and about doing what they do, the last thing on their mind is consequence. That usually comes into play when they're sitting in a cell somewhere. A lot of these kids might be in too deep and probably a lost cause, but the majority of them can be saved. The only way to make a difference is by addressing the social and economic issues faced by kids from deprived background, by breaking down the barriers stopping them from changing and leading a more positive life. A lot of money gets spent to look after someone in jail, but why not spend that money on prevent those problems in the first place?

England's a small country, yet a lot of these kids grow up only knowing their negative boroughs and all the rubbish in it. We can start by removing some of the young ones out of their comfort zones and introducing them to new things and different options in life. Talking doesn't do much, actions speak louder and different experiences are the key. We can't fully stop crime but we can stop a lot other kids chasing a broken dream. By speaking to some of these kids on a one to one basis and breaking down their shell you'll find that a lot of them have potential but hide behind a mask because in their environment, they're expected to behave a certain way.

# CHANGE THE PEOPLE AT THE TOP OF THE FOOD CHAIN

- *DANNY DIXON, ENGLAND*

I would like to share my views and experiences of the justice system with you, which I can comfortably say is not a good one.

I try to imagine what a world, or should I say, this country would be like without police or prisons. Unfortunately I can't say it will be a better place. Without police or prisons it would be absolute chaos because some people need to be separated from society, that's just the realism of things. As long as we have free will, men and women will choose to do wrong. I know we can manage things a lot better though.

The main problem is the "POWER" that the police and prisons have, especially the police, their ability to do whatever, whenever they want.

It is now fully accepted from legal professionals, mainly defence barristers and solicitors (also some prosecution barristers if they will admit it), that police will on a regular occasion withhold evidence from defence and prosecution that undermines their case. (I will give the prosecution the benefit of the doubt in this situation). This is where the problem lies, if the police are constantly getting away with it, never being challenged, or punished, what can we normal people do about it. The police have far too much influence on our courts considering they are almost openly corrupt. People in the legal profession need to speak up for us and make their voices heard. There is no point moaning behind the scenes, being afraid to make waves, speaking up is the only way, or it will constantly happen and there will be no change.

Imagine "HONESTLY" sitting in prison for something you didn't do or an event been accused of doing JOINT ENTERPRISE. Try to imagine the pain and anguish you will be going through everyday and every night. You wonder how your children, partner, mother, father, brothers, sisters and all your nearest and dearest would be feeling and you realise they will feel like they have suffered a loss as well. When you are in prison truly "INNOCENT" and they want you to participate in course and to show EMPATHY for a victim and their family, as bad as it sounds, it is hard because realistically you have no victim, so you can only dwell on your own unfortunate circumstances. From you are convicted in a court of law then prison offers OMU, don't really hear what you are saying to them, their only job is

to try and rehabilitate you and get you to do what they will rehabilitate you. They will still try to force you to do courses when you are maintaining your innocence when you are not technically an appellant, even if you are wholeheartedly maintaining your innocence. You will get punished if you refused to participate in offending behaviour programmes. The reason they can do that is because they have too much "POWER".

My experience of the justice system is not good either, convicted of murder (WITH NO EVIDENCE I KID YOU NOT) with 4 other co-defendants for JOINT ENTERPRISE. The prosecution accept I was not at the murder scene, was not the person who set everything in motion (organiser), had no motive to be involved and had no link to the alleged shooter and bike rider in the case. The prosecution reasoning for me being involved, as they say is, because a good friend of mine had a grievance with the victim so, (1) I must of known he was going to be shot dead and (2) I must be involved because any grievance of his is a grievance of mine, YES REALLY.

That is my recent experience with the justice system in this country, in a very simple format. If you friend is doing something and you are with him you must know plain and simple.

However I don't know if we should take the current system apart, overhaul it yes, change the people at the top of the food chain yes. How can you possibly expect people to change when they don't think they are in the wrong. In February 2016, the Supreme Court ruled that the British Courts have been applying the law JOINT ENTERPRISE, wrongly for 32 years. So, it stand to reason, without a question of a doubt, that there is hundreds, if not thousands of innocent people in prison convicted of JOINT ENTERPRISE, (not only murder). So far only 1 case has ben overturned – is that all they have got wrong in that time?

Until the people at the top admit and try to rectify the problems in the system, there will always be flaws, mistakes and miscarriages of justice, resulting in innocent people having their lives destroyed.

I wish I had some good ideas as to what we could build in its place but unfortunately I don't. What I can tell you is if a man spends 10 years in prisons and doesn't change it is highly unlikely he every will.

Thanks everybody in JENGBA and associated with JENGBA for supporting us unlawfully locked up innocent people and not forgetting us. Without you people, where would we be at with JOINT ENTERPRISE.

How many more innocent people will be locked up for something they didn't do.

# PRISON SLAVERY

*- JOHN BOWDEN, ENGLAND*

The growth of what some have described as the 'prison industrial complex' and the unleashing of economic free market forces upon the prison system by a government ideologically-driven to sell off or 'out-source' virtually every state function has created the spectre of a prison population utilised as, essentially, a source of cheap, forced labour for an increasingly avaricious neo-liberal capitalism. There is no starker example of organised modern slavery.

In the U.S, the epicentre of the prison industrial complex, the exploitation of cheap convict labour takes place on an industrial scale and in poor urban areas, especially districts with a majority poor Afro-American population, prisons are increasingly replacing factories as places where the criminalised poor are confined and exploited by multi-national security corporations.

In Britain, whose criminal justice system is becoming almost a mirror-image of its American counterpart, the exploitation of cheap convict labour by private companies is increasing, as is the ownership of entire chunks of the prison system. More and more prisoners are dealt with and treated, not as offenders to be rehabilitated, but as a source of considerable profit for economic elite not hamstrung by wishy-washy concepts such as public service or moral conscience in the treatment of prisoners.

Paradoxically, however, the creation and exploitation of a working class behind bars might also create the potential for the collective organisation and self-empowerment of prisoners as a group and a movement capable of radically reforming the prison system itself. A possible example exists in Tegel prison in Berlin, where prisoners have formed the first union for prisoners that is campaigning for the introduction of a minimum wage and pension scheme for prisoners. Prisoners at Tegel jail work regular shifts in workshops, which their union says makes them 'de facto employees, just like their colleagues outside the prison gates'. Oliver Rast, a spokesman for the union, said 'Prisoners have never had a lobby working for them. With the prisoners' union we've decided to create one ourselves'.

In Germany, as in Britain, prisoners are excluded from the national minimum wage and national pension schemes. Prisoners at Tegel jail earn between €9 and €15 per day; in Britain prisoners are paid considerably less than that. The Tegel prisoners union is registered as an association without legal status but claims to have the mass support of prisoners within the jail who signed a petition in support of the union.

There have been attempts in the past to organise union-like structures amongst prisoners, but they were usually short-lived and ceased to exist once 'ringleaders' were segregated or transferred to other prisons. In Britain in the early 1970s an organisation called Preservation Of The Rights Of Prisoners (PROP) was created by a group of ex-prisoners and radical criminologists who coordinated with prisoners inside long-term jails a series of protests and days of action that established PROP as an authentic voice for prisoners. The response of the prison authorities was predictable and took the usual form of straightforward repression – the 'ghosting', or transfer, of 'ringleaders' to other jails or their long-term segregation in punishment units 'in the interests of good order and discipline'. Unfortunately the repression succeeded and PROP faded away. Still a very young organisation, PROP's presence in prisons was confined to a relatively small group of individual activists; once they were removed from the mainstream population PROP's presence was also removed.

The administration at Tegel prison in Berlin have adopted a similar punitive approach towards the prisoners' union and Oliver Rast, who was sentenced to prison in 2009 for his involvement in the revolutionary organisation Militante Gruppe, has been targeted as a 'ringleader' and his cell repeatedly searched and documents relating to the union confiscated. Sven Lindemann, a lawyer representing the prisoners' union, described the searches of Rast's cell as attempts to intimidate his client.

It is, of course, the fear of self-organisation and collective empowerment amongst prisoners that motivates the response of management and staff at Tegel prison towards the prisoners' union, and it is a fear shared by prison systems the world over. Jailors do not distinguish between the activities of a prisoners' union committed to seeing prisoner workers afforded the same rights as workers often employed by the same companies outside, and what are considered more gratuitous acts of protest by prisoners; it is the spectre of prisoner collective empowerment that unnerves those operating an institution and system intrinsically designed to completely disempower prisoners.

In fact, the struggle of prisoners at Tegel prison to form a prisoners' union transcends the prison walls and finds common cause with an increasing number of people now struggling to exist in a society increasingly polarised between the obscenely rich and the desperately poor, and where security of employment and a living wage are myths of the past.

The trade union movement, or what remains of it, should recognise that prisoners have a legitimate right to form unions and stop their exploitation as a source of cheap, forced labour; indeed the trade union movement should recognise a strong, mutual interest with prisoners' unions in stopping the use of convict labour as an alternative to providing secure and reasonably paid employment.

Whilst the formation of the prisoners' union in Tegel prison is perceived by the prison's management as a potential threat to 'good order and discipline', the positive empowerment it has created in the lives of the prisoners involved will, more than anything, eradicate the sense of alienation and social exclusion that originally drove their 'offending behaviour' and replace it with a strong feeling of solidarity with the lives and struggles of ordinary working-class people everywhere.

Articulated in the language of the liberal middle-class, Frances Crook, Chief Executive of the UK's Howard League for Penal Reform praised the Berlin initiative: 'We want prisoners to develop civic responsibilities, learning that work pays is a key stepping stone towards that goal. Why shouldn't they form a union to help them on that path?'

What is truly inspiring about the creation of the prisoners' union at Tegel prison is that in an institution and place that so symbolises the complete exclusion of the 'other' or that portion of the population so existentially removed from ordinary society, a movement exists that seeks common cause with the struggle of ordinary people as well as a common humanity.

# TOMORROW NEVER COMES UNLESS THERE'S JUSTICE TODAY!

- *JOSIAH FAURÉ, ENGLAND*

Now Im locked in the brick house  
Caged windows and steel doors concrete floors  
Down the corridors tears pour  
I hear the crying  
From a con who cant take it no more  
Hes got his note wrote, and saying prayers  
With the back of his hand  
He wipes his tears  
Now he covers the pipies with soap  
From his cup of water took a final gulp  
Screamed tell my mum I love her  
And it wasnt her fault  
After that...  
No more words he spoke  
I saw the Priest with the guard  
Through the crack in the door  
I know hes dead for sure  
Another victim pof the system  
But the system wont listen  
So many innocent men  
Left to die in prison  
Joint Enterprise Not Guilty by Association

Tomorrow never comes in this hood of mine  
2 many innocent people dying  
I said tomorrow never comes in this hod of mine  
Thats why my mums at home crying

# SEGREGATION AND SOLITARY CONFINEMENT

*- KEVAN THAKRAR, ENGLAND*

Before entering the notorious Close Supervision Centre (CSC) system back in 2010 I had very little knowledge of either segregation or solitary confinement. Having just turned 23 years of age and having spent as little as two and a half of those years in prison, my mind had never had been focused on or even interested in this topic. Now, midway through my seventh year of isolation things have changed; the horrors I have witnessed over this period have left me with little option but to become fully aware of the devastation even short periods in these conditions can have.

For those who have not experienced solitary confinement, there are no words or description which could allow you to fully comprehend what it means. I should probably start by explaining that in official terminology 'solitary confinement' equates to at least 22 hours a day locked away, with every hour of the day spent in isolation from other prisoners; whereas, 'segregation' is the removal from normal location without specified conditions. Generally speaking, both amount to the same thing, due to the harshness of segregation units within this country. The CSC is commonly described as a prison within a prison; it allows for indefinite isolation of prisoners under the most oppressive conditions. Effectively, permanent segregation, almost always meets the definition of solitary confinement and it is from here that I bring you my voice.

The Prison Reform Trust (PRT) did some good work with their February 2016 report, entitled Deep Custody, although, they could never truly reflect the dire reality of life in this appalling environment without living it themselves. The common belief is that prisons in England are holiday camps where human rights have led to things being too easy for prisoners, but this propaganda in no way relates to the facts, as most clearly demonstrated by the deplorable way prisoners in segregation are treated. Routinely abused by prison officers appointed to look after their care needs, starved, assaulted and made to live in filthy cells, made of nothing more than an empty concrete box, wearing the same clothes day in and day out; a holiday camp offering this would not sell many tickets.

One day, less than six months after first being placed in the CSC, another prisoner who had been unfortunate enough to be located in HMP Woodhill CSC unit along

with the rest of us (never totalling more than ten) had been struggling to cope since his arrival a few weeks earlier. He complained of the difficulties he was having and was directed toward the psychiatrist, who duly prescribed medicine to help him survive the CSC. As the effects wore off he continually required higher dosages. Eventually, the drugs were not enough; he began to hear voices and took action to put a stop to them. Using a prison issue razor he sliced off one of his ears out of pure desperation. Even this did not resolve his problem. Pumped full of anti-psychotics and anti-depressants, anti-anxiety drugs and sleeping pills the CSC did not go away for him. About six weeks later he removed his other ear.

This man had been totally fine in the beginning; he simply crumbled beneath the weight of pressure being in solitary confinement puts on a person. The official objective of the CSC is to reduce the alleged risk factors of the prisoners detained within it and then return them to mainstream prison population. However, the statistics show a darker picture. More than half of all prisoners who enter the CSC are driven insane before being removed to a psychiatric hospital. Fewer than 10% actually ever return to normal conditions. The question therefore is not what alternatives are there but why is this being allowed?

Self-mutilation is one symptom but, dealing with extreme environmental stress manifests itself in many ways, most of which are unhealthy. You would think that the few prisoners lumped together in these places would form some kind of solidarity to overcome their shared ordeal but, instead, an irrational hatred for everything forms, or they attempt to appease their guards by joining in with the victimisation of a particular individual.

Racism is more prevalent in the CSC among those who have suffered there the longest. It is an outlet to focus their rage when the faceless bureaucrats responsible for inflicting the harm upon them are out of reach. It is encouraged by prison officers. I am also certain that discriminatory views are developed fastest and held most strongly by those who spend their meagre allowance purchasing tabloid newspapers; this says something about the weakness of mind of the prisoners held in these conditions, leaving them open to manipulation.

The dangers of containment in such units, have, however, always been known of, which is why prisoners of war have deliberately been subject to such treatment. Amnesty International has previously condemned Britain's use of special units in its report, United Kingdom Special Security Units: cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment? And, this was in relation to a previous variation which operated a less oppressive regime than currently exists.

Desperation consumes so many prisoners held in solitary confinement, leading to desperate acts. In 2015 at Woodhill CSC one man even began the transition to become female, purely to escape the dreadful environment. He then committed suicide before achieving his goal, as he was no longer able to tolerate the

constant harm.

This is not humane, yet steps are being taken to expand the use of segregation through the creation of what are being called Separation Centres (SCs), aimed specifically at the minority group of Muslim prisoners.\*

The first instalment of the SC system has opened on E wing at HMP Frankland in Durham. The wing, which was formerly used to house elderly prisoners, is now an SC for those deemed to present a threat - either in person or by influencing others - which cannot be managed within mainstream population. The elderly prisoners have been left to fend for themselves on a normal wing. E wing contains 16 cells. It is not yet clear if all of them will be utilised. The wing has been refurbished, to include hidden microphones for covert surveillance and the transformation of one of the segregation exercise yards - which will now be used only by those on the SC - by adding barriers to isolate it further.

A gym is located on the wing since the prisoners will not be allowed to access normal facilities. However, it seems that only basic cardiovascular equipment like a running machine and rowing machine are available. Prison Service Instruction 05/2017, which governs the SC system, claims that 'The Supervision Centre Regime is as broadly comparable to the mainstream population as is possible, with individual risk assessment informing activity and management of the prisoner'; however, this is exactly the same basis on which the CSC regime, which can best be described as indefinite solitary confinement, operates.

The SC system is blatantly an unofficial CSC system designed to specifically discriminate against Muslim prisoners who are disliked but have not actually done anything to justify a CSC placement. Since the ruling in the Supreme Court case of *Bourgass*, concerning holding Muslim prisoners arbitrarily in isolation in segregation units, prison management has been planning a way round it - hence the SC system.

From at least as far back as the mid-1990s, and probably before, the Prison Service has been fully aware that holding prisoners in these conditions is detrimental to their physical and mental health. In 1996 Chief Medical Officer Sir Donald Acheson completed a report on the effectiveness of the SSUs which contained the then hated and demonised Irish prisoners of war. The creation of the SC system can therefore be seen as a direct attack and deliberate act of harm by those legally bound to maintain a duty of care against those who today oppose their political views.

The financial cost of inflicting this harm upon each SC or other control unit prisoner is more than four times the cost per prisoner held on normal location. At a time when the prison system is in crisis through underfunding and is struggling to cope with excessive numbers of prisoners, for exorbitant amounts to be found solely for these invidious purposes, makes clear how little the welfare of prisoners really matters to those operating and managing prisons. The sooner an

end to this massive waste of public money occurs, the better.

The total abolition of the CSC solitary confinement and segregation units is the only way to end this insidious destruction of human minds and lives.

By Kevan Thakrar (prison number A4907AE)

*This article was first published on the website of the Revolutionary Communist Group  
www.revolutionarycommunist.org in August 2017.*

To find Kevan's current prison address visit: <http://justiceforkevan.org>

# NO JUSTICE, NO PEACE

*- STEPHEN KIDD, ENGLAND*

Hello, my name, is Stephen Kidd Ag166AZ  
I'm a prisoner in Wales called HMP Berwyn  
For a change you have read  
Its called Joint Enterprise and wrecks lives,  
Over a thousand of us given life.  
Im not guilty and wasn't involved,  
I've battled it with all my might  
Ten years of my life have been taken,  
A stroke has left me in a wheelchair  
I've lost my family and friends along the way,  
Because our Government(s) just don't care.  
This 'charge' was invented simply for gangs,  
Though many of us were never part.  
And now we are here middle-aged,  
But they won't break our spirit or heart.  
So think of us a Thousand and more,  
Go to website JENGBA add my name  
Raise your voices please raise them high  
Our lives and freedom are not a game.



