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Editors' Note

Welcome to the fourth and final issue of Cygnet for 2014. Our previous issue was released in July, during the extraordinary negative backlash to Abbott's brutal and far-reaching austerity budget, one of the most audacious and ferocious exercises in class warfare we have seen for a long time. Since then, we have seen the return of the kind of terror hysteria that we saw immediately after 9/11 and the Bali Bombings, and concerted attempts by politicians to generate as much paranoid and Islamophobic sentiment as possible.

As an exercise in shifting people's focus, it is very transparent, but it is not clear that it will be successful, at least in one sense: most of the budget cuts – to education, healthcare, and welfare – remain unpopular, and are unlikely to pass the Parliament (not that this will stop the government from its never-ending attempts to smash whatever is left of our failing public health and education systems, and welfare state). Despite decades of neoliberal propaganda, on a range of social and economic issues, ordinary people remain way, way to the left of both the major political parties. Speaking of which, anyone surprised that Labor completely capitulated and allow the Coalition to pass some new, deeply disturbing “national security” laws? Labor's spinelessness is infinite.

In this issue, we have two excellent pieces on prisons, one an excerpt from a 1917 essay from Emma Goldman, which still rings true; an impressive take-down of the 'cult of non-violence'; an interview with the founder of the Australian Unemployment Union (thought: is Work For The Dole a 'busy-work' scheme for imprisoning angry young job-seekers, who with their considerable free time, could potentially organise themselves and create some serious problems for governments?...); and a statement from the Brisbane Solidarity Network on the G20 (where police got to exercise draconian new powers – give an inch, and they take a mile...).

If this is all too grim, check out the AnarchoScopes!! As a Virgo, I can attest to the fact that conversations about David Graeber do come thick and fast!!

In Solidarity,

Pas F and Olivia S

AnarchoScopes

Aries - March 21 - April 20

You will be disappointed to find your name has been misspelled in your ASIO file.

Taurus - April 21 - May 21

You will continue to post-rationalise your cheapness by stealing clothes from target.

Gemini - May 22 - June 21

You will vomit down your Propagandhi shirt after eating dumpster dived sushi.

Cancer - June 22 - July 22

You will attempt to dumpster dive weed instead of sushi but be disappointed to realise you can't dumpster dive weed.

Leo - July 23 - August 21

You will be accused of being an agent provocateur after you incorrectly spray paint an anarchy symbol on parliament house.

Virgo - August 22 - September 23

You will have 18 conversations about David Graeber in one week.

Libra - September 24 - October 23

You will cringe when your 'feminist' friend will tell you to wear less revealing clothes.

Scorpio - October 24 - November 22

You will be involved in a plot set up by mud blood, Tanya Plibersek to rally 400 anarchists against Tony Abbott.

Sagittarius - November 23 - December 22

You will be red faced when a fellow activist points out you've been mispronouncing Mikhail Bakunin's name for years.

Capricorn - December 23 - January 20

You will sigh when the Australian Federal Police raid Mad Mouse Alley for dangerous items but only find mold spores in the freezer.

Aquarius - January 21 - February 19

Your friend will wonder why your bandana smells like vinegar when they borrow it.

Pisces - February 20 - March 20

You will lose faith in a new political movement when some of the members ask you to smoke outside.

**Great
moments
in Leftism**



greatmomentsinleftism.blogspot.com.au

The Cult of 'Nonviolence'

by Shelswan

"Repression is inevitable in any struggle against authority. It is important to be able to survive this repression, but in the worst case, a struggle that is completely crushed by repression is still more effective-because it can inspire us today -than a struggle that allows itself to be recuperated for fear of repression, as happens with many nonviolent movements." - Peter Gelderloos

Proponents of 'nonviolence' rarely engage with arguments that contradict their view, rather they tend to hold onto falsified histories of struggles from times past. The most common is the cringeworthy 'Gandhi liberated India' argument, which fails to recognise that the movement he was a part of was recuperated by British Neo-Colonialism and only got as far as it did because of the militant elements (Churchill, 2007). It's ridiculous to consider a movement which involved regularly hacking cops limb from limb or blowing up police stations nonviolent. These proponents of 'nonviolence' also rely on falsified histories of the Civil Rights Movement and the Anti-Vietnam War Movement to legitimise their pseudo-arguments (Churchill, 2007).

This is unfortunate for those of us who argue for a diversity of tactics because self described 'pacifists' are also known to enforce a rigid control of movements and ostracise those who do not conform with their understandings. The problem with this is that to 'pacifists' the word 'violence' doesn't actually mean not harming sentient beings - it means looking good on TV cameras. It means presenting themselves as 'sensible' and 'realistic' so as to not alienate potential political allies. But perhaps if they weren't so critical of tactics such as property destruction 'violent' tactics would be more accepted and less threatening to potential allies.

In reality, these liberals are not actually opposed to violence as they are complicit in the violence of the state. They are the type to be apologists for the violence of the racist police force or the government's policies. At the same time they go wild with anger when a few anarchists smash some windows of corporate giants profiting from slave labour. In the most extreme cases, self described 'pacifists' have physically attacked militant activists engaging in property destruction and even ratted them out to the police (Graeber, 2009). This illustrates the ridiculous self-contradictory nature of 'non-violence' and how it usually assists the violence of the state.

In years past, intelligence agencies of the world have spent significant resources on social control theorists and role-playing experiments of various kinds to better understand how populations organise and fight against the power structures that be. Their motivation for doing this is so that they can better repress anti-government movements and uprisings by the public in either domestic or foreign contexts. An example of one of these role-playing experiments was carried out in August 1965. The experiment took place on Grindstone Island in North America (Oppenheimer, 1969, p.141). Thirty one 'non-violent' civilian defenders were instructed to deal with six weapon bearing individuals, which represented the Canadian government who controlled the majority of the country. It's not difficult to guess the conclusions of the experiment. Thirteen 'non-violent' defenders were killed and it was concluded that "the experiment had been a defeat for nonviolence" (Oppenheimer, 1969, p.142).

Another finding of the state is their theory of counterinsurgency, which hold that "conflict is the inherent condition of society under the State" (Gelderloos, 2007). In other words, the state (with surprising lucidity) recognises that, regardless of their actions, under the existing economic system with the state to maintain it there will always be social disturbances (Williams, 2004, p. 201). Therefore, the state never attempts to totally destroy movements, which could result in a popular backlash, but rather to contain them at unthreatening levels (Williams, 2004).

Building on bodies of research like this, a social control theoretician by the name of General Frank Kitson, conceptualised actions by citizens against their respective governments as being part of three distinct stages (Williams, 2004, p. 201). They are named 'preparation,' 'non-violence' and 'insurgency.' Kitson's works have been distributed to police agencies around the world and are also implemented by planners of the state. We see this in '*The US Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual*,' which states "insurgencies evolve through a series of stages" (Nagl, Amos, Sewall & Petraeus, 2008, p.2). Police forces and militaries use these understandings in their strategy so as to keep opponents of the state in the middle stage, 'nonviolence,' where the state is safe from meaningful opposition (Williams, 2004, p. 201).

Freedom fighters must realise the state is constantly manipulating us so as to keep us under control. They won't hesitate to use force when we threaten their interests. But at the same time they don't want to attempt to outright destroy us because they fear it would make the state look authoritarian and give the movement even more support. For them the very best thing we could do is peacefully march to parliament house where we stand around for an hour and then disperse. This makes us feel as if we live in a 'free democracy' where we can bring about change - but in reality we are probably doing next to nothing. They provide a manageable outlet for our frustrations of the status quo but do very little to change it. These so called 'peaceful protests' seldom scare those in power because they do little to disrupt the existing system. But we can have hope because breaking the ideology of 'pacifism' we open the door to more oppositional movements that utilise more effective tactics and are ultimately more successful.

Prisons: What Are They Good For?

by Ved R

On the 20th of October 2014 in Adelaide a conference was held by **Prison Fellowship International** (PFI), the theme of which will be: *“What does the community really require from the prison system?”*

Those speaking were MPs (including a former Premier), former police staff, and advocates of “restorative justice” - a practice which denies societal causes for antisocial behaviour and imprisonment, and instead focuses solely on the idea that those convicted have to, or even can, *“repair the harm they have done – by apologising, returning stolen money, or community service.”*

There were no representatives of rehabilitation workers or former prisoners, PFI preferring to staff the panel with people sympathetic to their agenda, one which advocates for faith-based prisons in Australia (according to their website they are already operating Christian-prisons in 16 countries).

The NSW Bureau of Crime, Statistics, and Research have argued that the main identifiable causes of antisocial behaviour are societal and economic – meaning that poorer people with fewer educational skills, employment skills, and/or purposeful aims are most likely to participate in them and become imprisoned.

The reasons given for imprisoning people are usually defined as:

- Removal from streets provides a safer community;
- To punish them for their crime by taking away their freedom;
- To deter them and other would-be offenders from similar crimes; and
- To make a public statement that society will not tolerate crime.

The last two points are fairly uncontroversial: the message being sent by sentencing someone to a prison term is two-fold: first, to those whom the message would serve as a warning, and second, to those members of the wider public who would take comfort that someone is *“doing something about it”*. Seeing as this group of people are most likely to become victims it is not unsurprising that they take this, or a similar viewpoint. I would, however, like to know whether it has ever been the case that fore-knowledge of a risk of conviction and a gaol sentence has ever reduced the amount of harmful actions taking place?

Due to the private nature of the mind and people's ability to self-deceive there is no way of gaining this information and I move that this no longer be considered a valid excuse as it cannot be tested.

The assertion that removal of antisocial people from the streets will create a safer society is made lie simply through the fact that antisocial acts still exist in similar proportions despite a concerted effort to do just this.

Australia's adult imprisonment rate was 168 per 100,000 adults at 30 June 2012, in 1984 the rate of imprisonment was approximately 86 per 100,000 – enough said.

As previously mentioned, the main causes of crime are societal and economic in nature. Those without access to support structures that are usually found in the home, schools or social groups, those without the means to enjoy life and feel connected to the wider community, and those who cannot foresee a meaningful future for themselves, are most likely to take part in antisocial behaviour that is likely to have them incarcerated.

Without proper programs designed to give people the means to enjoy life and feel they have a purposeful role to play within society, when we imprison someone we are punishing them for the abuses that led them to that position and not changing the conditions that allowed the situation to arise in the first place.

This may be fine for those who are paid to “deal” with the aftermath but it does nothing for society as a whole.

The Australian Institute of Criminology claims that:

- About 60 percent of those in custody in Australia have been imprisoned before.
- About 25 percent of prisoners will be reconvicted within three months of being released from prison.
- Between 35 percent and 41 percent of prisoners will be re-imprisoned within two years of being released and;
- That the rates of re-imprisonment (regardless of how they were measured) appear consistent over time.

This shows that denial of liberty does not assist with reducing overall levels of antisocial behaviours or to the over-all levels of reimprisonment. In fact, it appears that it may be entirely counter-productive when you consider the reductions/restrictions to liberty, caused through the societal and economic deprivations mentioned previously, they have already experienced are a major factor in causing the initial antisocial behaviours.

It is a fallacy to suggest that a further reduction in liberty and opportunity will suddenly make a model citizen and well-rounded person when nothing is done to alter or reverse the pre-conditions which made the person so desperate, reck-

less, or agitated that they act in such a manner.

It is illogical to think that to abuse someone twice will make them good – the first abuse being an unfortunate mistake, of course, but when the person acts out as a result we shall deprive them in much the same way and *that* should show them the error of their ways!

Many studies show that repeated antisocial behaviour and/or repeated incarceration is influenced by many factors including poor education and employment opportunities, mental illness, drug/alcohol abuse, and poor physical fitness. Very little is done to address these issues within our current punishment-driven system and these factors are routinely ignored in the court system.

Post-release difficulties are particularly important. These difficulties, such as living on a meagre income, being shut-off from family and wider community, and a lack of social and health services have all been identified as contributing to an increased likelihood to repeat antisocial behaviours and being imprisoned again.

The cost to imprison a person in Australia, according to The Report on Government Services 2013, the total cost per prisoner per day, comprising net operating expenditure, depreciation, debt servicing fees and user cost of capital, was \$305, equating to about \$111,325 per annum.

In South Australia, annual operating expenses for the Department of Correctional Services were \$226.5 million of which 61 percent were employee expenses. Operating expenses, \$156 million on custodial services, \$37 million on rehabilitation and repatriation and \$30 million on community based services. The average annual cost per prisoner is between \$108,999 and \$75,000.

State governments save more than \$110,000 every time an alcohol or drug-addicted Aboriginal offender is ordered into rehabilitation instead of jail, a study by Deloitte Access Economics has discovered. The reason Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons are specified is that they are over-represented in out prison populations and that the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's 2010 report on prisoner health stated that:

- 65 percent of Australia's prisoners had used illicit drugs in the 12 months prior to incarceration (compared with 15 percent of the general population using illicit drugs in the previous 12 months);
- 50 percent reported drinking alcohol at levels that put them at risk; and
- 73 percent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners reported alcohol issues.

I am sure this is an initiative that could be universally applied to **all** those who have been found to have a substance problem, regardless of culture. This would not only save money and reduce prison populations but it would also address the problem at its root cause.

If prison is designed to make society safer and fairer why does it punish those whose societal and economic situations have determined that they are most likely to partake in antisocial behaviour? Why is there nothing done to address that which generates the influencing factors, such as job-creation, smaller classrooms/more autonomy within education, and alleviating the poverty that is common among a vast majority of those who partake in antisocial behaviours?

Sending people to prison and, when they are full: opening more prisons, does not reduce the crime rate, it only further serves to marginalise and segregate already disenfranchised people from the community and create a group of people who have a shared experience of being without from society and who feel no obligation to become a member of it.

Unemployed Resist Welfare Cuts

by Pas F

Recent months have seen repeated and unprecedented attacks on the unemployed and other income support recipients, with the Federal Budget and McLure and Forrest Reviews proposing cuts to payments for job-seekers, restricting access to the Disability Support Pension, and expanding Work for the Dole, and Income Management. But there are signs of resistance. Pas F spoke to Owen Bennett, who set up the Australian Unemployment Union.

What is the Australian Unemployment Union and what are its goals?

The Australian Unemployment Union (AUU) is an organisation run by the unemployed, for the unemployed. AUU's mission is to protect the interests of the 750,000 people currently unemployed and stop the government's ongoing assault on Australia's welfare state.

While we formed recently, the idea behind the union is a product of the way Australia has been treating the unemployed for the past two decades. Successive Australian governments have been making it harder and harder for the unemployed to collect income support payments.

What are some of the major problems facing unemployed people and other income support (Centrelink) clients today?

Our major concern is the government's plan to cut all unemployed people under the age of 30 from any unemployment benefits for six months when they have already spent more than six months on benefits.

By the government's own estimates, this will plunge 110,000 people a year into extreme poverty. This policy will essentially move these people out of the dole queue and into the streets begging for assistance from charities. This attack represents the most significant assault ever on our welfare state. Even the conservative Liberal Prime Minister Robert Menzies acknowledged in 1944 that people should be able to collect unemployment and sickness benefits as "a matter of right".

It is not just the unemployed who will feel the effects, but also everyone else. If people can no longer ... afford adequate food, clothes and housing, crime will surely sky-rocket.

AUU is also strongly focussed on lifting the current low rate of Newstart, which hasn't lifted in real terms since 1994. Relative to the average wage, for the last two decades the unemployment benefit has been in free-fall. While in 1996 the unemployment benefit was 23.7% of the average male wage, recently Newstart was calculated to be only 18.5% of the average male wage.

The Melbourne Institute calculated that a single Australian with housing costs needed \$1017.04 a fortnight to live above the poverty line. Today, Newstart is \$510.50 a fortnight.

What do you think of Employment Minister Eric Abetz's proposal to expand Work for the Dole to all job seekers under 50 and double the number of jobs that job seekers must apply for to 40 a month?

The planned expansion of Work for the Dole is a major attack. When it is introduced on July 1 next year, this plan will force all unemployed people to do Work for the Dole regardless of how long they have been looking for work.

Under this plan, unemployed people under the age of 30 will be required to do Work for the Dole for 25 hours a week, unemployed people between the ages of 30 to 49 for 15 hours a week, and unemployed people between the ages of 50 to 60 will be required to do an "approved activity" for 15 hours a week.

When you consider the complete lack of jobs available in Australia, forcing hundreds of thousands of unemployed people to do Work for the Dole can be seen as nothing other than a cruel punishment.

To top it off, the government are also expecting all unemployed people to apply for 40 jobs a month, double the previous rate. This means each month there will be over 30 million applications being lodged to the 146,000 job vacancies currently available in Australia.

These attacks on the unemployed are not trying to get unemployed people into work at all. What the government really wants is to change our attitude to how Australian society should operate.

According to the government, unemployed people are not "entitled" to any government support. They have to work for it. Students are not "entitled" to an education; they have to pay for it. The sick, disabled, and elderly are not "entitled" to health care; they have to pay for it. If you want something, no matter who you are, you will have to work for it.

Why do you think unemployed people and others on income support payments are so frequently attacked by governments?

With capitalist societies like ours, you are only truly valued by the government if you are “economically productive”. Thus people who don’t fall into this category, such as the elderly, unemployed and disabled, are easy targets for those in power. As long as there is no opposition, the government has nothing to lose by attacking those who are “economically unproductive”.

How important is it to build bridges between people on income support payments and workers?

As soon as the unemployed and employed realise their common interest is in creating a humane and fair welfare state in Australia, then we will be able to create a humane welfare state.

The more people who are unemployed, the more competition there [is] for jobs. Over time, this will drive down wages and conditions. The more difficult the government makes it to be unemployed, the more desperate the unemployed will be to accept work [under] any conditions, and the more workers will be undercut. After our extensive campaign to build union links, we received official endorsements from the National Union of Workers and the Electrical Trades Union.

How important is it to counter the myths spread by governments and the media about unemployed people?

Labelling the unemployed “job-snoobs” and “dole bludgers” and blaming them for governments failures to create enough jobs serve two important functions. It allows government to avoid any blame or responsibility for its continual failure to create enough employment and instead direct all blame against the unemployed themselves. And it is a way of keeping employed and unemployed people divided — if they were united and organised it would be a potential threat to the government’s power.

How can individuals and organisations get involved?

We encourage anyone interested in helping to visit our volunteer page on our website and read our three-step plan to protect the unemployed and the welfare state.

Visit the Australian Unemployment Union can be on Facebook: [facebook.com/australianunemploymentunion](https://www.facebook.com/australianunemploymentunion) - or their website: <http://unemploymentunion.com.au>

Don't Believe the Media Hype

Brisbane Solidarity Network Statement on the G20

DON'T FEED THE JOURNALISTS OF THE GUTTER PRESS

If you've seen the front pages of the Curious Smell [Courier Mail] & other sections of the Propaganda Factory over the past few weeks you'll no doubt have seen the sensationalist doom & gloom headlines and the constant talk of Anarchists threatening to bring chaos to Brisbane for the G20. These stories (info-tainment) serve a purpose and they are serving it well; to intimidate the population and divide the organisers and movements which are attempting to coordinate a response. As the central task of the media is to deliver audiences to advertisers (\$\$), the educational value of content comes second to profits, and so we get reporting designed to catch the attention of the public rather than inform them. Front-page photos of thunderstorms and headlines about shadowy groups plotting atrocities at a protest have been all over the news despite the fact that these stories have no informative value whatsoever. How is it that we are flooded with so much information and yet so little is known in the public mind about what the G20 is and why so many different sections of society around the world are resisting it? We're dealing with a system of imposed ignorance which suits the needs of the powerful.

IF YOU STAND FOR NOTHING, YOU'LL FALL FOR ANYTHING

"...The smart way to keep people passive and obedient is to strictly limit the spectrum of acceptable opinion, but allow very lively debate within that spectrum...."

What is the G20? The short answer is that the G20 is a kind of global executive committee for capitalism which hands down recommendations for individual States to implement. The aim is the security and stability (or image of) markets across the entire globe; the rich need to have a safe environment to continue their plunder. The G20 faces a difficult dilemma: it needs to support and coordinate economic stimulation to drive growth and job creation whilst addressing the challenges posed by increasing debt. The G20 Leaders Declaration commits to the seemingly contradictory goal of both 'promoting labour market adaptability and efficiency' (ie: a casualised, submissive workforce with little security) and 'ensuring adequate labour protection'. Whilst it's correct to see the G20 as the executive committee for global capitalism it doesn't mean it has more power than the economy itself, and the G20's attempts to address economic crises over the past few years have created a lot of misery across the globe (as well as increased resistance).

The G20 commitments are about increasing corporate profits, forcing the costs of maintaining an active workforce back on the shoulders of the people. We've seen huge cuts across the entire social/services sector in the past year, massive job losses, attacks on the unemployed and an increasingly brutal border policy. The 'globalisation' that the G20 talks about means more work put on us for less; it means the globalisation of exploitation and money but an increased control of the globe's populations.

The effects of colonialism, capitalism and the extension and imposition of western rule have created economies that displace and compel people to move, yet which at the same time denies culpability and accountability for displaced migrants. The material structures which 'secure the economy' have killed, tortured, occupied, raped, incarcerated, sterilised, robbed land from, pillaged, stolen children from, introduced drugs into, sanctioned vigilante violence on, denied public services to, and facilitated the hyper exploitation of broad sections of the globe.

Under capitalism the never ending quest for profit & resources means the system and those who benefit from it commit numberless atrocities as a matter of routine daily functioning. Capitalist social relations violate humanity and dignity of people, their workplaces and communities and continue to ever increasingly threaten us with ecological destruction across the entire planet. We want to dismantle the structures of border imperialism, ecological insanity, colonialism, oppression, and the capitalist class system which shapes these.

NO JUSTICE ON STOLEN LAND

As a practice and over-arching worldview Anarchism is fundamentally about sticking up for each other – against the whims of bosses, landlords and bureaucrats, against systemic and psychological systems of social control, against racism, sexism and other forces that hold illegitimate power over our lives. At the same time anarchists look at how we can organise ourselves and our struggles in a way that reflects the kind of society we want to see, and the nuts and bolts of doing this in such a way so that our movements can't be demobilised or sold out from above, or used as trampolines for political careerists, NGO's and those who seek to rule over and above the people.

Our situation is one where strike action is basically illegal. Trade-Unions for the most part act as representative service organisations and NGO's do – with all the rotten fruits of bureaucracy, paid officials and hierarchy. Most of the workforce have never been in or participated in a fighting union culture and there are not many opportunities to learn from struggle. In terms of organising, this sounds bleak; there is so much to do.

Anarchists believe the seeds of a better world exist in the shadows of this one. Against the chaos and instability of the State & Capitalism, we see the need to push for solidarity, democracy, cooperation, mutual aid and popular control to become the basis of the way we organise society.

Communiqué from The Freedom Summit

Freedom Summit held at the Old Bungalow, Mparntwe (Alice Springs, NT) , 27 and 28 November 2014

[This declaration has been approved by elders from many nations at the summit itself, and will be taken and presented to other nations around the country to be signed before it is presented to the government and the world in Canberra on Invasion Day 2015 .]

We, the Original Sovereign Peoples and Heads of Nations being assembled at the Old Bungalow, Mparntwe (Alice Springs) declare the Independence of our Nations and Peoples. We also declare that we have and continue to be independent Sovereign Nations under the designation of the United Tribes of our Lands.

All sovereign power and authority within the Territories of the United Tribes of our Lands are hereby declared to reside entirely and exclusively in the hereditary Elders and in the Heads of the Tribes. In our collective capacities we declare that we will not permit any legislative authority separate from ourselves to exist on our Lands, nor any function of the colonial governments to be exercised within the said Territories, unless authorised by the appropriate people or persons appointed by us. Our authority originates from the ancient Law/Lore of the Land, also referred to as the continental common law of Australia.

We gathered at The Freedom Summit to respond to the extreme assaults from all levels of government hitting our communities including but not limited to:

- historic and growing rates of incarceration;
- a continuing stolen generations;
- a suicide epidemic and;
- the growing death rate from preventable diseases.

In addition, governments have shamefully announced intentions to close down communities in Western Australia and South Australia. Oombulgurri in WA has already been bulldozed – this is an act of aggression in an open genocidal process, on top of the continuing apartheid and land clearances through the Northern Territory Intervention.

Organisations across the continent are having funding slashed. Heritage laws are being attacked and our culture is being owned by white government Ministers.

A new land grab is happening through mining tenements and operations. This is a direct attack on Land Rights across this country.

There is no grass-roots representation of our people at the national level and the Indigenous Advisory Council is a hand-picked farce and must resign.

At this Freedom Summit grass-roots leaders from across the country have gathered to say enough is enough.

To our people suffering, we say - there is hope.

We have nominated a steering committee to take the struggle forward. We are planning future Freedom Summits to discuss the vision of our true national representation with bigger numbers and to strategise ways forward.

The fight for our rights will rise from the ashes.

We are planning to lead mass action on the streets to defend our rights and enforce our vision of self-determination and continuing sovereignty.

The Freedom Summit authorised delegates are:

Tauto Sansbury	Billy Risk
Rosalie Kunoth-Monks	Vanessa Culbong
John Christophersen	Richard Evans
Jenny Munro	John Singer
Les Coe	Ghillar: Michael Anderson
Paul Spearim Jnr	Lesley Tickner
Lex Wotton	Janice Harris
Christine Abdulla	Elaine Peckham
Roxley Foley	Rex Granites Japanangka
Maurie Japarta Ryan	Chris Tomlins
Helen Lee	

Prisons: a Social Crime and Failure (Excerpt)

by Emma Goldman, 1917

With all our boasted reforms, our great social changes, and our far-reaching discoveries, human beings continue to be sent to the worst of hells, wherein they are outraged, degraded, and tortured, that society may be "protected" from the phantoms of its own making.

Prison, a social protection? What monstrous mind ever conceived such an idea? Just as well say that health can be promoted by a widespread contagion.

After eighteen months of horror in an English prison, Oscar Wilde gave to the world his great masterpiece, THE BALLAD OF READING GOAL:

The vilest deeds, like poison weeds,
Bloom well in prison air;
It is only what is good in Man
That wastes and withers there.
Pale Anguish keeps the heavy gate,
And the Warder is Despair.

Society goes on perpetuating this poisonous air, not realizing that out of it can come naught but the most poisonous results.

We are spending at the present \$3,500,000 per day, \$1,000,095,000 per year, to maintain prison institutions, and that in a democratic country,—a sum almost as large as the combined output of wheat, valued at \$750,000,000, and the output of coal, valued at \$350,000,000. Professor Bushnell of Washington, D.C., estimates the cost of prisons at \$6,000,000,000 annually, and Dr. G. Frank Lydston, an eminent American writer on crime, gives \$5,000,000,000 annually as a reasonable figure. Such unheard-of expenditure for the purpose of maintaining vast armies of human beings caged up like wild beasts!

Yet crimes are on the increase. Thus we learn that in America there are four and a half times as many crimes to every million population today as there were twenty years ago.

The most horrible aspect is that our national crime is murder, not robbery, embezzlement, or rape, as in the South. London is five times as large as Chicago, yet there are one hundred and eighteen murders annually in the latter city, while only twenty in London. Nor is Chicago the leading city in crime, since it is only seventh on the list, which is headed by four Southern cities, and San Francisco and Los Angeles. In view of such a terrible condition of affairs, it seems ridiculous to prate of the protection society derives from its prisons.

The average mind is slow in grasping a truth, but when the most thoroughly organized, centralized institution, maintained at an excessive national expense, has proven a complete social failure, the dullest must begin to question its right to exist. The time is past when we can be content with our social fabric merely because it is "ordained by divine right," or by the majesty of the law.

The widespread prison investigations, agitation, and education during the last few years are conclusive proof that men are learning to dig deep into the very bottom of society, down to the causes of the terrible discrepancy between social and individual life.

Why, then, are prisons a social crime and a failure? To answer this vital question it behooves us to seek the nature and cause of crimes, the methods employed in coping with them, and the effects these methods produce in ridding society of the curse and horror of crimes.

First, as to the NATURE of crime:

Havelock Ellis divides crime into four phases, the political, the passionate, the insane, and the occasional. He says that the political criminal is the victim of an attempt of a more or less despotic government to preserve its own stability. He is not necessarily guilty of an unsocial offense; he simply tries to overturn a certain political order which may itself be anti-social. This truth is recognized all over the world, except in America where the foolish notion still prevails that in a Democracy there is no place for political criminals. Yet John Brown was a political criminal; so were the Chicago Anarchists; so is every striker. Consequently, says Havelock Ellis, the political criminal of our time or place may be the hero, martyr, saint of another age. Lombroso calls the political criminal the true precursor of the progressive movement of humanity.

"The criminal by passion is usually a man of wholesome birth and honest life, who under the stress of some great, unmerited wrong has wrought justice for himself."

Mr. Hugh C. Weir, in THE MENACE OF THE POLICE, cites the case of Jim Flaherty, a criminal by passion, who, instead

of being saved by society, is turned into a drunkard and a recidivist, with a ruined and poverty-stricken family as the result.

A more pathetic type is Archie, the victim in Brand Whitlock's novel, *THE TURN OF THE BALANCE*, the greatest American expose of crime in the making. Archie, even more than Flaherty, was driven to crime and death by the cruel inhumanity of his surroundings, and by the unscrupulous hounding of the machinery of the law. Archie and Flaherty are but the types of many thousands, demonstrating how the legal aspects of crime, and the methods of dealing with it, help to create the disease which is undermining our entire social life.

"The insane criminal really can no more be considered a criminal than a child, since he is mentally in the same condition as an infant or an animal."

The law already recognizes that, but only in rare cases of a very flagrant nature, or when the culprit's wealth permits the luxury of criminal insanity. It has become quite fashionable to be the victim of paranoia. But on the whole the "sovereignty of justice" still continues to punish criminally insane with the whole severity of its power. Thus Mr. Ellis quotes from Dr. Richter's statistics showing that in Germany, one hundred and six madmen, out of one hundred and forty-four criminal insane, were condemned to severe punishment.

The occasional criminal "represents by far the largest class of our prison population, hence is the greatest menace to social well-being." What is the cause that compels a vast army of the human family to take to crime, to prefer the hideous life within prison walls to the life outside? Certainly that cause must be an iron master, who leaves its victims no avenue of escape, for the most depraved human being loves liberty.

This terrific force is conditioned in our cruel social and economic arrangement. I do not mean to deny the biologic, physiologic, or psychologic factors in creating crime; but there is hardly an advanced criminologist who will not concede that the social and economic influences are the most relentless, the most poisonous germs of crime. Granted even that there are innate criminal tendencies, it is none the less true that these tendencies find rich nutrition in our social environment.

There is close relation, says Havelock Ellis, between crimes against the person and the price of alcohol, between crimes against property and the price of wheat. He quotes Quetelet and Lacassagne, the former looking upon society as the preparer of crime, and the criminals as instruments that execute them. The latter find that "the social environment is the cultivation medium of criminality; that the criminal is the microbe, an element which only becomes important when it finds the medium which causes it to ferment; EVERY SOCIETY HAS THE CRIMINALS IT DESERVES."

The most "prosperous" industrial period makes it impossible for the worker to earn enough to keep up health and vigour. And as prosperity is, at best, an imaginary condition, thousands of people are constantly added to the host of the unemployed. From East to West, from South to North, this vast army tramps in search of work or food, and all they find is the workhouse or the slums. Those who have a spark of self-respect left, prefer open defiance, prefer crime to the emaciated, degraded position of poverty.

Edward Carpenter estimates that five-sixths of indictable crimes consist in some violation of property rights; but that is too low a figure. A thorough investigation would prove that nine crimes out of ten could be traced, directly or indirectly, to our economic and social iniquities, to our system of remorseless exploitation and robbery. There is no criminal so stupid but recognizes this terrible fact, though he may not be able to account for it.

A collection of criminal philosophy, which Havelock Ellis, Lombroso, and other eminent men have compiled, shows that the criminal feels only too keenly that it is society that drives him to crime. A Milanese thief said to Lombroso: "I do not rob, I merely take from the rich their superfluities; besides, do not advocates and merchants rob?" A murderer wrote: "Knowing that three-fourths of the social virtues are cowardly vices, I thought an open assault on a rich man would be less ignoble than the cautious combination of fraud." Another wrote: "I am imprisoned for stealing a half dozen eggs. Ministers who rob millions are honoured. Poor Italy!" An educated convict said to Mr. Davitt: "The laws of society are framed for the purpose of securing the wealth of the world to power and calculation, thereby depriving the larger portion of mankind of its rights and chances. Why should they punish me for taking by somewhat similar means from those who have taken more than they had a right to?" The same man added: "Religion robs the soul of its independence; patriotism is the stupid worship of the world for which the well-being and the peace of the inhabitants were sacrificed by those who profit by it, while the laws of the land, in restraining natural desires, were waging war on the manifest spirit of the law of our beings. Compared with this," he concluded, "thieving is an honourable pursuit."

Verily, there is greater truth in this philosophy than in all the law-and-moral books of society.

