## Framing

**Volition, or the structure of the will, is a pre-condition for ethics and has intrinsic value – A) Proceduralism – the will is the mechanism by which every agent engages in any activity, which means regardless of the content of any ethical theory, the ability to will that theory is an intrinsic good B) Foundations – the will is the basis for what constitutes an ethical subject which means its relation to the world is the primary ethical consideration C) Motivation – the structure of the will is the primary source of all our desires, reasons, and beliefs since it generates what counts as motivational to the subject**

**However, ethical theories to evaluate the will face a dilemma – they are either paternally objectivist to the extent they restrict the will, or they are weakened by subjectivism to the extent that it’s impossible to make true moral claims. The only solution is a concept of alienation that understands the will in a functional capacity to relate to itself and the world – a criterion that is concerned with how one wills, rather than what one wills. Understanding the functionality of the will is impossible in a vacuum. This culminates in the act of appropriation – the ability to view yourself as a practical agent capable of taking up a project that actively changes your own subject and the role itself.**

**Thus, the standard is consistency with non-alienated relations. Only this coheres the nature of who you are and prevents psychological violence.**

**There are four types of alienating relations: A) Objectification – treating an agent with normative potential as a passive object B) Standardization – Enforcing one particular way to engage in a role such that the subject has no interpretive leeway C) Fixation – preventing the acquisition of new experiences within a particular role rather than fostering the development of an agent and D) Over-identification – allowing the portrayal of a particular role to over-identify you as merely that**

**Prefer additionally –**

**[1] Action theory – only viewing an agent as an active body capable of generating intentions can hold agents culpable and decipher the difference between actions and wishes.**

**[2] Performativity – Every exercise you engage in is an instance of using your volition to establish some relation to the world and only non-alienation can establish that relationship as normatively legitimate.**

**[3] Solves oppression – A) Universality – The structure of the will is a basis for justifying why all agents are normatively equivalent which undermines the ideology underlying all forms of violence B) Empowerment – it ensures agents view themselves as active which motivates agents to combat systems of oppression rather than viewing themselves as passive objects C) Explanatory power –oppression operates through the alienation of oneself from the world through various categories of relations**

## Solvency

#### The Plan: A Just United States ought to recognize that prison workers in the US have the unconditional right to strike. The criminal justice system is inherently marginalizing

Loubriel 16 - Jennifer Loubriel, Everyday Feminism, May 17, 2016 “Why Our Punitive Justice System Doesn’t Work – And 3 Alternatives to Prisons” [https://everydayfeminism.com/2016/05/punitive-justice-alternatives/] Accessed 2/11/18 SAO

Like most people, I grew up believing that prisons equaled safety. According to the majority of cop shows all over television when I was a kid, only “bad guys” went to prison. The good detectives always put away the violent criminals. Sometimes it was for a few years, and sometimes it was for a lifetime. The message was always clear: criminals did this to themselves. They deserved to be locked up. Prison walls protected the rest of us – the good, the upstanding, the lawful – from them. But as I got older, I realized how wrong these shows were. Because everything that I was witnessing in my neighborhood, everything I was hearing from loved ones, and everything I read from activists just didn’t match up to what I had always been taught about punitive justice. Instead of the simple narrative of good cop vs. really bad, violent criminal, the story got way more complicated. What Is Punitive Justice And Why Is It Oppressive? Prisons are part of a larger system called punitive (or retributive) justice. Under this system, if someone breaks the law, they’re punished for that wrongdoing. The punishment is supposed to be proportionate to the crime and should accomplish two things: rehabilitate the original law-breaker and stop others from committing the same crime. On paper, that looks pretty simple, and it looks fair. In reality though, punitive justice in the United States is far from being simple or being fair. Our punitive justice system is inherently antiblack, racist, and classist. Historically, the prison system and the police force in the United States were both used as tools of white supremacy. Michelle Alexander’s The New Jim Crow is one of many resources that go into details about how our so-called justice system disproportionately attacks Black people. Nothing much has changed since these things were created. Today, the justice system relies heavily on prejudices we’ve been socialized to see as truths for generations. These prejudices, when internalized, are called “implicit biases.” Implicit biases work against marginalized folks because we are seen as inherently dangerous — whether or not we have committed a crime, we are assumed to be guilty simply by existing. This means that Black, Native, Latinx, LGBTQIA+, and low-income people – many of whom have more than one of these identities – are all overrepresented in the punitive justice system. Because we’re automatically seen as criminal, law enforcement can basically do anything to us without consequence. This is why rates of police brutality, rape, and abuse are extremely high against People of Color. This is especially true for folks who are further marginalized in our communities. For example, 58% of fatal police shootings involve a person with a mental illness. This means that the death of Tanisha Anderson – a Black woman with schizophrenia who was murdered by police – is not an isolated event. Unfortunately, it’s all too common. But more than that, when a crime has been committed, the punishments we receive are disproportionately harsh, particularly for non-violent crimes like drug related offenses. Wealthy white people, however, are often protected or get lesser sentencing for crimes they commit. For example, both Jaime Arellano and Ethan Couch were Texas teenagers who killed people while driving drunk. They were charged with the same crimes. Yet while Jamie Arellano was charged as an adult and spent 20 years in prison, Ethan Couch stayed in the juvenile justice system and was only sentenced to 10 years probation and 2 years of jail time. The punitive justice system definitely doesn’t treat everyone equitably. And a lot of times this happens because the punitive justice system just seeks to punish someone for breaking a law, rather than looking at the reason why it was done. This kind of system doesn’t look at how oppression and systemic violence can cause someone to break the law — nor does it look at how some laws were created to target certain people. Many women – especially queer and trans Black women – are punished simply for protecting themselves. Often, these are women who are protecting themselves from abusive partners. In New York’s prison system alone, 67% of women incarcerated for killing a significant other had been abused by that person. It’s not only that our punitive justice system is racist, classist, and homophobic. It’s that this system doesn’t even do what folks claim it’s supposed to do. Going to jail just doesn’t rehabilitate people. There’s no proof that incarceration prevents crime. And once they go to jail, so many marginalized folks continue to experience trauma. The American Civil Liberties Union has many pages explaining how the prison system often violates human rights. Abuses such as lack of medical resources, solitary confinement, debriefing policies, and rape happen too often within the system. The Attica Prison Revolt of 1971 is one of the most famous examples of incarcerated folks protesting these abuses. In short: the United States punitive criminal justice system is inherently violent and it just doesn’t work. INCITE!’s Critical Resistance Statement speaks to all of this.

#### Prison strikes align prisoners with radical Black movements to test revolutionary political strategies against the state’s necropolitics.

Fox ‘20 [Taylor Fox; a fourth-year in the College studying Political Science and Human Rights; 05-01-2020; “Freedom, Caged: A Foucauldian Inquiry into the National Prison Strike”; Bachelor’s Thesis, University of Chicago; Advisor: Professor Reuben Miller; Preceptor: Alex Haskins; http://pozen.s3.amazonaws.com/system/ckeditor/attachments/435/Fox\_\_Taylor\_BA\_Thesis\_copy.pdf; Accessed 10-09-2021] AK Recut SAO

The National Prison Strike follows a long tradition of prison strikes in the U.S., beginning with insurrections in late 18th-century prisons. Incarceration was a popular form of criminal punishment, compared to the death penalty in England and elsewhere, and often required hard labor. In Philadelphia’s Walnut Prison, America’s first prison, incarcerated people regularly mounted work stoppages to protest brutal labor conditions. In turn, common features of today’s prison struggles can be traced to the founding of the U.S. prison system itself.67 Following the Civil War, Black convict laborers struggled in response to brutal labor practices demanded by the growing Southern plantation economy. In order to enforce social control over recently freed Black men and disincentivize poor whites from unionizing, these punitive labor regimes escalated in cruelty and violence.68 As this problem of incarceration grew in size and brutality, prisoners responded with over a dozen major riots and strikes between 1879 and 1892.69 Though quickly suppressed, these **strikes “symbolically empowered inmates**, who could no longer be considered ‘powerless, broken men who could do nothing but toil obediently for their masters.’”70 This “symbolic” register re-emerges throughout prison strike history, apparent in uprisings that failed to secure material gains but garnered significant outside attention. Yet scholars also consider the public outrage and media attention that ensued from these late-19th century strikes to be significant in their own right, contributing to the demise of contract prison labor and chain gangs.71 Moving to the 20th century, the period between 1968 and 1972 saw a significant uptick in **prison struggles, providing a testing ground for political** questions of unionism and revolutionary action that continue to beset prison strikes today. During this era, a broad coalition of prisoners’ rights groups, academics, lawyers, journalists, and incarcerated activists emerged in support of the growing prison movement. In particular, the 1970 Folsom Prison Strike was a major inflection point for the U.S. prison movement.72 While no demands were met, prisoners claimed the right to unionize for the first time in U.S. history, along with economic, labor, and general human rights. The early 70s saw other major prison uprisings, with San Quentin and Attica among the most notorious. Folsom was made possible by the rise of Black Power and its ideological import on political prisoners across the U.S. and beyond. Black Power organizers positioned themselves as a revolutionary alternative to NAACP-style legal change and proffered a distinct form of Black political consciousness that was embraced by prison radicals. Incarcerated Black Power organizers saw their task as a revolutionary challenge against the state and its necropolitics, which incarceration embodied. They claimed that white racism necessarily relied on Black captivity, which manifested in the prison being used “as,” and not “for,” punishment.73 For Black Power revolutionaries, criminalization was a racialized project designed to punish Blackness itself. In turn, Black prisoners were de facto political prisoners. Black Power’s redefinition of crime as something beyond moral failure – as a political act, and as a form of survival – exposed the indefensible logics of incarceration to a new generation of prison radicals.74 Beyond appealing to Black prisoners, Black radicalism attracted whites through its message that all incarcerated people belonged to a distinctly exploited underclass.75 The possibilities for **multiracial solidarity** presented by Black radicals **threatened the prison’s hegemony** over the socio- political order. During prison uprisings in Walla Walla and Walpole, for instance, Black Power organizers and prisoner unions fought and temporarily won self-governance.76 Though this demand for self-governance is largely absent from today’s prison struggles, the instinct toward self- determination remains visible in hunger strike campaigns that assert prisoners’ subjectivity.

## Contention

**US carceral practices fuel global capitalism. Methodological pluralism is key to combat it.**

**Sudbury 4 - Julia Sudbury, Canada Research Council Chair in Social Justice, Equity and Diversity in social work at the University of Toronto, in the Journal Social Justice, 2004** “A World Without Prisons: Resisting Militarism, Globalized Punishment, and Empire” [http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/29768237.pdf] Accessed 1/10/18 SAO

In addition, global capitalism is deeply implicated in U.S. and allied military interventions worldwide, which frequently target strategic economic interests and natural resources. These interventions are not limited to wars using U.S. troops. From Israel to Bolivia, U.S. funds are used to pay for military equipment, training, and troops. Women are particularly at risk in the environment of violence and displacement caused when regimes with poor human rights records deploy armed forces against civilian or insurgent populations. One outcome of this vulnerability is the displacement of poor women from traditional forms of survival and their subsequent engagement in the illicit economies of sex work or the drug trade. Women in militarized situations are also at risk of criminalization and incarceration when they take up insurgent positions against repressive regimes. Militarism and globalization thus generate a web of criminalization that in turn fuels the prison building boom and generates profits for the economic interests served by the transnational prison-industrial complex. **Penal warehouses** for people of African descent, immigrants, indigenous people, and the global poor, as I have outlined, **are central to the new world order**. For that reason, even as "small government" is promoted as a prerequisite for competitiveness in the global market, "corrections" budgets continue to skyrocket. That is also why **prison abolition remains of vital importance in this time of endless war**. What does this mean for our research and praxis as scholars and activists? First, much more work needs to be done to unravel the complex interconnections between mass incarceration, militarism, and the global economy. **As activists in the heart of empire, our priority should be to make connections** between radical social movements. **Bridge-building between the anti-globalization, antiwar, and prison abolitionist movements provides critical opportunities for sharing strategies**. For example, global anti-sweatshop activism against Wal-Mart and Nike can serve as a model of cross-border activism that could be deployed to challenge private prison corporations such as Wackenhutand Sodexho. Such transnational activism might successfully prevent the spread of U.S.-style private superjails from South Africa through the rest of the continent and from Mexico and Chile throughout the rest of Latin America. In addition, cross-fertilization between movements will encourage activists to address wider issues that are not always made visible in issue-based campaigns. For example, intensified analysis of globalization might encourage prison abolitionists to consider the need for anti-capitalist economic models as a prerequisite for a world without prisons. Similarly, an engagement between antiwar activists and analyses of mass incarceration would generate a deeper understanding of the need to simultaneously challenge militarism abroad and racialized surveillance and punishment at home. An effective challenge to the interlocking systems of militarism, incarceration, and globalization demands the establishment of broad-based, cross-movement coalitions, in the U.S. and internationally. The World Social Forum (WSF) is an important venue where critiques of, and alternatives to, free trade, imperialism, and neoliberalism are developed. Prison abolitionists need to infuse the politics of the WSF with an analysis of the role of the prison-industrial complex in bolstering global capitalism. At the same time, the movement to abolish prisons can learn from the successes of popular movements in the global South such as the Movimento Sim Terra in Brazil and the Ruta Pacifica in Colombia. These broad based movements involve organized labor, women, the homeless, the unemployed, students, rural campesinos, and indigenous communities. They have developed a sophisticated intersectional analysis of globalization, imperialism, and militarism, as well as race, gender, class, and nation. Most important, they have been successful in generating mass mobilizations by developing a viable alternative to the Washington Consensus model, prioritizing people and the environment over corporations and profits. These broad-based popular movements pay attention to issues of identity while maintaining a radical analysis of, and opposition to, global capitalism. Activists in the global North have the advantage of witness? ing firsthand the emergence of the transnational prison-industrial complex as important weapon in the armory of global corporate and political elites. Radical prison abolitionists, especially grass-roots activists of color, have a great deal to add to the global movement against imperialism and neoliberal capitalism. Our combined analyses demonstrate that to build un outro mundo (a different world), we must first envision a world without prisons.

**Prison Workers specifically subsidize weapon production**

Noah **Shachtman**, March 8th **2021**, “Prisoners Help Build Patriot Missiles, [https://www.wired.com/2011/03/prisoners-help-build-patriot-missiles/] // swickle

This spring, the United Arab Emirates is expected to close a deal for $7 billion dollars' worth of American arms. Nearly half of the cash will be spent on Patriot missiles, which cost as much as $5.9 million apiece. But what makes those eye-popping sums even more shocking is that some of the workers manufacturing parts for those Patriot missiles are prisoners, earning as little as 23 cents an hour. (Credit Justin Rohrlich with the catch.) The work is done by Unicor, previously known as Federal Prison Industries. It's a government-owned corporation, established during the Depression, that employs about 20,000 inmates in 70 prisons to make everything from clothing to office furniture to solar panels to military electronics. One of the company's high-tech specialties: Patriot missile parts. "UNICOR/FPI supplies numerous electronic components and services for guided missiles, including the Patriot Advanced Capability (PAC-3) missile," Unicor's website explains. "We assemble and distribute the Intermediate Frequency Processor (IFP) for the PAC-3s seeker. The IFP receives and filters radio-frequency signals that guide the missile toward its target." The missiles are then marketed worldwide -- sometimes by Washington's top officials. Last year, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates pitched the Patriots to the Turkish government last year, a diplomatic cable released by WikiLeaks reveals: "SecDef stressed that 'nothing can compete with the PAC-3 when it comes to capabilities.'" Patriot assemblers Raytheon and Lockheed Martin aren't the only defense contractors relying on prison help. As Rohrlich notes, Unicor "inmates also make cable assemblies for the McDonnell Douglas/Boeing F-15, the General Dynamics/Lockheed Martin F-16, Bell/Textron’s Cobra helicopter, as well as electro-optical equipment for the BAE Systems Bradley Fighting Vehicle’s laser rangefinder." Unicor used to make helmets for the military, as well. But that work was suspended when 44,000 helmets were recalled for shoddy quality. Government agencies -- with the exception of the Defense Department and the CIA -- are required to buy goods from Unicor, according to a Congressional Research Service report (.pdf). And no wonder: the labor costs are bordering on zero. "Inmates earn from $0.23 per hour up to a maximum of $1.15 per hour, depending on their proficiency and educational level, among other things," the report notes. Last year, Unicor grossed $772 million, according to its most recent financial report (.pdf). Traditionally, inmate salaries make up about five percent of that total. Unicor insists that the deal is a good one for inmates -- and for the government. The manufacturing work offers a chance for job training, which "improves the likelihood that inmates will remain crime-free upon their release," the company says in its report. (Some reports suggest that Unicor prisoners are as much as 24% less likely to return to crime.) The work also keeps the inmates in check, Unicor insists. "In the face of an escalating inmate population and an increasing percentage of inmates with histories of violence, FPI’s programs have helped ease tension and avert volatile situations, thereby protecting lives and federal property," the company says. "Prisons without meaningful activities for inmates are dangerous prisons, and dangerous prisons are expensive prisons."

**Prison labor strike action unsettles the carceral state spilling up to larger movements and demystifying the prison.**

**Fox ‘20** [Taylor Fox; a fourth-year in the College studying Political Science and Human Rights; 05-01-2020; “Freedom, Caged: A Foucauldian Inquiry into the National Prison Strike”; Bachelor’s Thesis, University of Chicago; Advisor: Professor Reuben Miller; Preceptor: Alex Haskins; http://pozen.s3.amazonaws.com/system/ckeditor/attachments/435/Fox\_\_Taylor\_BA\_Thesis\_copy.pdf; Accessed 10-09-2021] AK – Recut SAO

By shutting down activity and rejecting the material rhythms of prison life, **strikes unsettle the reproduction of the prison apparatus**. According to Michigan Abolition and Prisoner Solidarity organizer Alejo Stark, these disruptions “intensify the state’s inability to continue to hold prisoners captive,” helping to dismantle the carceral state piece-by-piece.117 One example of disruption can be found in the Crossroads prison uprising, which resulted in the closure of the prison itself through stripping its financial resources. Stark provides another instance of disruption in Michigan’s Kinross prison during the 2016 Strike, during which an uprising forced the state to spend exorbitant financial resources to keep the prison up and running. Because incarcerated kitchen workers were on strike, no one was left to staff the kitchen and “the warden was spotted making peanut butter and jelly sandwiches [for prisoners] with his staff.”118 The point is not that these disruptions will necessarily force the state’s hand in conceding to strikers’ demands, like higher wages, but that the state must devote extra resources to keep prisons alive.119 **A longstanding prison strike tactic, disruption is central to the abolitionist project today**. Like abolition, disruption is processual. In an interview with Shadowproof, a JLS member incarcerated in South Carolina remarked that he thinks about prison organizing as a “a dismantling process. And that gives the opportunity for other people to get in with their reform ideas.”120 Disruption involves mobilizing collective power to chip away at the carceral state, through actions big and small.121 Experiences of freedom emerge through participation in disruption, as protestors refuse to accept the carceral present as a blueprint for the future. Building on the lessons of the 2016 National Prison Strike, 2018 organizers broadened their internal tactics and forms of participation to include sit-ins and commissary boycotts while also re- introducing hunger strikes.122 While work strikes were a central feature of the 2016 Strike, most prisoners don’t actually work, limiting their tactical value. Importantly, disruption does not need to rely on withholding physical labor in order to be successful; work strikes are only one form of doing so. Strikers were influenced by “Redistribute the Pain,” a set of essays by Bennu Hannibal Ra-Sun of the Free Alabama Movement, who called on his fellow prisoners to mobilize their economic power to “boycott, defund, and bankrupt.”123 Ra-Sun urged a commitment to “defund[ing] prison operations budgets” by eliminating spending on commissary, collect phone calls, and incentive packages would shrink a prison’s finances.124 Accordingly, Strike organizers employed a multiplicity of tactics tailored to participants’ levels of access in the prison. For instance, while people on lockdown couldn’t participate in a work stoppage, they could join a boycott or hunger strike. In the year leading up to the Strike, sit-ins notably resurged in popularity across the prison movement. During a sit-in, participants refuse to return to their cells when corrections officers tell them to line up at lunch or yard. Collectively refusing to comply stops the motion of the prison, halting thedailybusinessofcorrectionalstaff.125 Like a boycott, which strips the prison of important financial reserves, sit-ins disrupt the labor power used to fuel the prison’s operations. Florida offers an instructive example of how coordinated tactics on the inside and outside speak to the intersubjective character of freedom, which is constantly in-the-making through struggle. According to the Miami New-Times, work strikes have ballooned over the last few years in response to increasingly poor conditions in Florida’s prisons, such as when prisoners were forced to work for free in clean-up crews after Hurricane Irma in 100-plus-degree conditions.126 Throughout the Strike, hundreds of prisoners in at least five facilities organized work strikes and commissary boycotts.127 Internal participation during these uprisings showed how collective struggles can provide glimpses into alternative ways of organizing power. Returning to Oksala’s reinterpretation of Foucault, these struggles visibilize the “indeterminacy of the present” in their refusal to accept its suffocating terms. Following the prison movement’s long tradition of inside-outside organizing, Strike disruptors understood what happened on the outside to shape the conditions of possibility on the inside.128 For instance, Gainesville’s IWOC chapter coordinated a string of solidarity actions, including an eight-day encampment outside a work release camp.129 In response to a call to escalate strike solidarity over Labor Day weekend, Gainesville IWOC, Fight Toxic Prisons, and Occupy ICE Tampa organized a 24/7 occupation across from the Florida Department of Corrections’ Gainesville Prison Work Camp. The protestors called for an end to “slave labor contractors” between FDOC, the City, County, and University of Florida, in addition to the Strike’s demands.130 Over a hundred people participated in the demonstrations, which included blocking and delaying City vehicles from leaving for work assignments and staging protests at work sites. In an interview with Shadowproof, a JLS prison organizer remarked that “the more people that tend to stand up, demonstrate from the outside, particularly demo[nstration]s at the prisons, what it does is it incites. It incites inside and this is why prisons have a problem against it.”131 In response to the protestors, FDOC officials would frequently usher work crews back into their vans and leave the site in order to eliminate contact with the protestors. On day four, protestors reported that police and prison officials threatened to use prisoner labor to shut down the encampment. In the absence of direct testimony from incarcerated organizers, we can heed Foucault’s dictum of analyzing power (and, by proxy, freedom) through the strategies of its antagonists.132 Returning to FAM’s “Let the Crops Rot in the Fields,” Gainesville protestors collectively “confronted the system at the site of its oppression: the prisons,” centralizing resources and forcing the state’s response.133 By forcefully demanding sets of political alternatives, incarcerated strikers and comrades offered glimpse into what life beyond carcerality could look like. IWOC organizer Nick conceded that “withholding labor” for extended periods of time “as a way of crippling the system is a way’s off,” but also that cases like Gainesville set the pace for larger-scale protests in the future. Gainesville illustrates how the walls of the prison are more porous than any Department of Corrections would have us believe. In other words, the joint protest helped demystify an image of the prison as a self-contained institution impenetrable to outside influence. Most visibly, we can see this through how the occupation disrupted daily life in the work camp, forcing FDOC to rearrange and even suspend production. By refusing to leave for nearly a week, the protestors offered an alternative imaginary of what the work camp could be: a space for music, art, free movement, and collective struggle. But we can also find literal glimpses in reports that, though inside-outside communication was heavily restricted, incarcerated people were seen giving affirmative “nods, smiles and throwing up power fists, even in the face of overseers and guards” to outside protestors.”134 These brief moments gesture toward the kinds of intersubjectivities that uniquely emerge through struggle.

**Eliminating the prison industrial complex is critical to challenging global predatory capitalism**

**Martinot 15 - Steve Martinot, Journal of the Research Group on Socialism and Democracy, November 14th 2015** “Toward the Abolition of the Prison System” [http://sdonline.org/66/toward-the-abolition-of-the-prison-system/] Accessed 1/10/18 SAO

The existentiality of prisons involves not only what prison does directly, but how it affects the society that accepts it as normal, and that can have what prisons do as a purpose. This existential aspect is applicable to all societies that use imprisonment as a way of implementing political decisions. It reflects the understanding that crime itself is politically defined. **Imprisonment as punishment of crime exists only within a matrix of political uses (such as class control**, racialization, social militarization, etc.).1 I will deal with the prison system in the US as the world’s extreme case, that for which all other prison systems are lesser forms. And I will argue that in order to get beyond capitalism, the social/cultural framework that sees prisons as normal will have to be transformed. Every society has its own traditions with respect to imprisonment, but the existentiality of prison will have to be addressed in general. Prison is used to punish. Punishment is used to establish the cultural norms of a society. And law is thus deployed for the creation of cultural norms.2 We can see this not only in US history, but also in the history of the birth of capitalism in Europe. As Silvia Federici has shown, a culture that could accept capitalism arose through the criminalization of women, and through the colonial imposition – via the church – of certain laws, in particular, pertaining to witchcraft.3 In England, the previous norms of cooperative production were squelched and replaced through the state’s systematic torture and murder of anyone who took goods without paying for them. The colonialist context for this discussion is threefold, understanding colonialism as the arrival or invasion of an alien power that dominates for its own benefit an indigenous people, which it then reduces to subhuman status by force and through destruction of the indigenous culture. The US dominates most areas of the world financially or militarily. There is also an internal colonialism in the US governed by the corporate structure, white supremacy, and the structures of racialization; the institution of prisons sits at the core of this. And finally, there is the domination of humans globally by the corporate structure, which colonizes by its indifference to human concerns.4 Here I will focus on the second of these three forms of colonialism. The existential dimension of prisons in general An existential examination of prison is necessary in order to go beneath the political rhetoric by which it legitimizes itself, to its underlying structure. Prison is a form of violence. It has the same structure as a number of different criminal acts. A person is forcibly removed from social space and social relationships, immobilized spatially, and made to suffer thereby. The removal from social space is an act of violence; the immobilization is an act of control over a person’s consciousness through control of the body; and the resultant suffering serves an intended ideological or political or psychological purpose. That is the basic structure of imprisonment.5 The crime most similar or isomorphic to this is kidnapping. Its purpose is personal gain of some kind for the kidnapper, and its major instrument is spatial constraint. When a man sequesters his wife as a form of patriarchal control, keeping her locked in the house, it amounts to the same thing. Imprisonment also resembles torture. The precondition for physical torture is immobilization, but its major element is inducing suffering, so as to control consciousness, i.e., force the subject to behave in accordance with the torturer’s wishes. The most prevalent form of torture in civil society is rape. A person, most often a woman, is immobilized for the purpose of using her body for some form of personal gratification. In the sense that no ransom is demanded, incarceration is most isomorphic to rape, as it supposedly gives the entirety of society some form of satisfaction. All of these crimes are acts of extreme violence. Prison, despite its acceptability, fits this category. It serves as a role model for all these other acts. In this sense, the violent act of imprisonment does more than punish violation of the law; it situates prison at the source of social violence. Judicial process claims to punish criminals as a means of making them “pay” for what they have done. That is, they pay for their transgression by undergoing a transgression against themselves. The act of punishment is indistinguishable from revenge. The core of incarceration is a revenge ethic. That revenge ethic is the essence of any and all judicial process that pursues imprisonment. But a revenge ethic cannot be used to respond to or diminish the violence in a society because it is itself an act of violence. It thus doubles the violence of society, and doubles its criminality. Insofar as any concept of justice is motivated by a desire to diminish social violence, to heal the wounds to community caused by violence, the revenge ethic accomplishes the opposite. For a society that operates on the basis of a revenge ethic, justice is impossible. And the possibility of equality between persons is canceled by the existence of institutions that can impose this revenge. Therefore, democracy, which depends on justice as well as equality, becomes impossible in such a society. In the US, this existential absence manifests itself as the ease with which political voice and political participation are reduced to merely a periodic vote (with growing deployment of police repression, which we shall examine shortly). Rather than a “justice system,” a society that operates on a revenge ethic can at most have a “judicial machine.” Role models are ethical as well as structural. When the state executes a convicted person, it is saying that murder is not impermissible. When it imprisons a person, it is saying that kidnapping and torture are not impermissible. It signifies that violence itself may be illegal, but is not impermissible. War is a role model, not in the sense of exemplifying courage, but rather in making it acceptable to use hyper-technological means of killing others who are defined as a threat. Thus, when a cop kills an unarmed man, and says he felt threatened, he is claiming a war situation between himself and his victim, and using his socially given technology to carry it out. When Reagan sent 14 fighter-bombers over Libya to try to assassinate Qaddafi, he was ordering a drive-by shooting (and killed 100 people in the process). Someone who does a drive-by shooting in LA is simply trying to keep up with the president. Gun control will not put a dent in the effects of social role models. When parents punish their child by locking him in a closet, they are acting in keeping with the political structure. Imprisonment, however, is considered paying a “debt” to society. The form in which this debt is paid is control over the convicted person’s body, followed – upon release – by social ostracism, aggravated impoverishment, and harassment, signifying that the debt never gets paid.6 But to whom is the debt to be paid in the first place? Not the person wronged, and not society. It is paid to the judicial machine. The judicial machine collects the debt in the name of the victim. This makes the victim an accessory to the criminal violence committed against the convicted person. Thus, the victim becomes complicit in the crime of imprisonment, while the convicted person is commodified by becoming a form of payment. This commodification of persons is performed for its own sake, with no socially redeeming value. It only expresses the political character of criminalization. Though the state performs acts of violence against people, it defines its own violence as something else (“justice”). In the same way that the state has the power to politically redefine what it itself does, those acts it considers criminal become so as well only through political definition. We see this when definitions of criminal acts are modified. Marital rape, for instance, used to be non-criminal. It has been redefined. Marijuana use is currently in the process of being redefined as non-criminal. Thus, a crime exists as such only because an act has been politically defined as a crime, and not otherwise. Debt servitude, sweatshop labor conditions, racial segregation, and rent gouging all make people suffer, and do so by trapping them in social situations from which extrication most often requires an act of violence, for which the perpetrator will be punished. But those conditions that make people suffer are not defined as criminal. In short, there is nothing that distinguishes the existentiality of imprisonment from the fundamental aspects of capitalist society – the violence against persons, the social immobilization of persons, their commodification, the reduction of certain persons to lesser human status for the benefit or satisfaction of those in certain positions of power, as well as finally the revenge imposed on those who have slighted the self-proclaimed virtue of a self-decriminalizing judicial machine. The essence of prison is the validation of political power, and the bestowal of sanctity on private property.7 It is impossible to get beyond capitalism as long as society insists on the most fundamental form of commodification, the commodification of human beings. **We will not have gone beyond capitalism until we have eliminated the ethos of imprisonment from society.** We have to understand that, because imprisonment is an act of violence and violation, and because the prison – whatever its social framework (traditional or revolutionary) – is thus a criminal institution, those who gravitate toward the carceral system for employment do so existentially in order to be able to commit acts of violence against others.

**Capitalism is the root of all impacts. It’s try or die to avoid global extinction**

**Foster 19 - John Bellamy Foster, Monthly Review, February 1st, 2019** “Capitalism Has Failed—What Next?” [https://monthlyreview.org/2019/02/01/capitalism-has-failed-what-next/] Accessed 11/19/19 SAO

Less than two decades into the twenty-first century, it is evident that capitalism has failed as a social system. The world is mired in economic stagnation, financialization, and the **most extreme inequality in human history**, accompanied by mass unemployment and underemployment, precariousness, poverty, hunger, wasted output and lives, and what at this point can only be called a **planetary ecological “death spiral**.”1 The digital revolution, the greatest technological advance of our time, has rapidly mutated from a promise of free communication and liberated production into new means of surveillance, control, and displacement of the working population. The institutions of liberal democracy are at the point of collapse, while fascism, the rear guard of the capitalist system, is again on the march, along with **patriarchy, racism, imperialism, and war**. To say that capitalism is a failed system is not, of course, to suggest that its breakdown and disintegration is imminent.2 It does, however, mean that it has passed from being a historically necessary and creative system at its inception to being a historically unnecessary and destructive one in the present century. Today, more than ever, the world is faced with the epochal choice between “the revolutionary reconstitution of society at large and the common ruin of the contending classes.”3 Indications of this failure of capitalism are everywhere. Stagnation of investment punctuated by bubbles of financial expansion, which then inevitably burst, now characterizes the so-called free market.4 Soaring inequality in income and wealth has its counterpart in the declining material circumstances of a majority of the population. Real wages for most workers in the United States have barely budged in forty years despite steadily rising productivity.5 Work intensity has increased, while work and safety protections on the job have been systematically jettisoned. Unemployment data has become more and more meaningless due to a new institutionalized underemployment in the form of contract labor in the gig economy.6 Unions have been reduced to mere shadows of their former glory as capitalism has asserted totalitarian control over workplaces. With the demise of Soviet-type societies, social democracy in Europe has perished in the new atmosphere of “liberated capitalism.”7 The capture of the surplus value produced by overexploited populations in the poorest regions of the world, via the global labor arbitrage instituted by multinational corporations, is leading to an unprecedented amassing of financial wealth at the center of the world economy and relative poverty in the periphery.8 Around $21 trillion of offshore funds are currently lodged in tax havens on islands mostly in the Caribbean, constituting “the fortified refuge of Big Finance.”9 Technologically driven monopolies resulting from the global-communications revolution, together with the rise to dominance of Wall Street-based financial capital geared to speculative asset creation, have further contributed to the riches of today’s “1 percent.” Forty-two billionaires now enjoy as much wealth as half the world’s population, while the three richest men in the United States—Jeff Bezos, Bill Gates, and Warren Buffett—have more wealth than half the U.S. population.10 In every region of the world, inequality has increased sharply in recent decades.11 The gap in per capita income and wealth between the richest and poorest nations, which has been the dominant trend for centuries, is rapidly widening once again.12 More than 60 percent of the world’s employed population, some two billion people, now work in the impoverished informal sector, forming a massive global proletariat. The global reserve army of labor is some 70 percent larger than the active labor army of formally employed workers.13 Adequate health care, housing, education, and clean water and air are increasingly out of reach for large sections of the population, even in wealthy countries in North America and Europe, while transportation is becoming more difficult in the United States and many other countries due to irrationally high levels of dependency on the automobile and disinvestment in public transportation. Urban structures are more and more characterized by gentrification and segregation, with cities becoming the playthings of the well-to-do while marginalized populations are shunted aside. About half a million people, most of them children, are homeless on any given night in the United States.14 New York City is experiencing a major rat infestation, attributed to warming temperatures, mirroring trends around the world.15 In the United States and other high-income countries, life expectancy is in decline, with a remarkable resurgence of Victorian illnesses related to poverty and exploitation. In Britain, gout, scarlet fever, whooping cough, and even scurvy are now resurgent, along with tuberculosis. With inadequate enforcement of work health and safety regulations, black lung disease has returned with a vengeance in U.S. coal country.16 Overuse of antibiotics, particularly by capitalist agribusiness, is leading to an antibiotic-resistance crisis, with the dangerous growth of superbugs generating increasing numbers of deaths, which by mid–century could surpass annual cancer deaths, prompting the World Health Organization to declare a “global health emergency.”17 These dire conditions, arising from the workings of the system, are consistent with what Frederick Engels, in the Condition of the Working Class in England, called “social murder.”18 At the instigation of giant corporations, philanthrocapitalist foundations, and neoliberal governments, public education has been restructured around corporate-designed testing based on the implementation of robotic common-core standards. This is generating massive databases on the student population, much of which are now being surreptitiously marketed and sold.19 The corporatization and privatization of education is feeding the progressive subordination of children’s needs to the cash nexus of the commodity market. We are thus seeing a dramatic return of Thomas Gradgrind’s and Mr. M’Choakumchild’s crass utilitarian philosophy dramatized in Charles Dickens’s Hard Times: “Facts are alone wanted in life” and “You are never to fancy.”20 Having been reduced to intellectual dungeons, many of the poorest, most racially segregated schools in the United States are mere pipelines for prisons or the military.21 More than two million people in the United States are behind bars, a higher rate of incarceration than any other country in the world, constituting a new Jim Crow. The total population in prison is nearly equal to the number of people in Houston, Texas, the fourth largest U.S. city. African Americans and Latinos make up 56 percent of those incarcerated, while constituting only about 32 percent of the U.S. population. Nearly 50 percent of American adults, and a much higher percentage among African Americans and Native Americans, have an immediate family member who has spent or is currently spending time behind bars. Both black men and Native American men in the United States are nearly three times, Hispanic men nearly two times, more likely to die of police shootings than white men.22 **Racial divides are now widening across the entire planet**. Violence against women and the expropriation of their unpaid labor, as well as the higher level of exploitation of their paid labor, are integral to the way in which power is organized in capitalist society—and how it seeks to divide rather than unify the population. More than a third of women worldwide have experienced physical/sexual violence. Women’s bodies, in particular, are objectified, reified, and commodified as part of the normal workings of monopoly-capitalist marketing.23 The mass media-propaganda system, part of the larger corporate matrix, is now merging into a social media-based propaganda system that is more porous and seemingly anarchic, but more universal and more than ever favoring money and power. Utilizing modern marketing and surveillance techniques, which now dominate all digital interactions, vested interests are able to tailor their messages, largely unchecked, to individuals and their social networks, creating concerns about “fake news” on all sides.24 Numerous business entities promising technological manipulation of voters in countries across the world have now surfaced, auctioning off their services to the highest bidders.25 The elimination of net neutrality in the United States means further concentration, centralization, and control over the entire Internet by monopolistic service providers. Elections are increasingly prey to unregulated “dark money” emanating from the coffers of corporations and the billionaire class. Although presenting itself as the world’s leading democracy, the United States, as Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy stated in Monopoly Capital in 1966, “is democratic in form and plutocratic in content.”26 In the Trump administration, following a long-established tradition, 72 percent of those appointed to the cabinet have come from the higher corporate echelons, while others have been drawn from the military.27 War, engineered by the United States and other major powers at the apex of the system, has become perpetual in strategic oil regions such as the Middle East, and threatens to escalate into a global thermonuclear exchange. During the Obama administration, the United States was engaged in wars/bombings in seven different countries—Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Yemen, Somalia, and Pakistan.28 Torture and assassinations have been reinstituted by Washington as acceptable instruments of war against those now innumerable individuals, group networks, and whole societies that are branded as terrorist. A new Cold War and nuclear arms race is in the making between the United States and Russia, while Washington is seeking to place road blocks to the continued rise of China. The Trump administration has created a new space force as a separate branch of the military in an attempt to ensure U.S. dominance in the militarization of space. Sounding the alarm on the increasing dangers of a nuclear war and of climate destabilization, the distinguished Bulletin of Atomic Scientists moved its doomsday clock in 2018 to two minutes to midnight, the closest since 1953, when it marked the advent of thermonuclear weapons.29 Increasingly severe economic sanctions are being imposed by the United States on countries like Venezuela and Nicaragua, despite their democratic elections—or because of them. Trade and currency wars are being actively promoted by core states, while racist barriers against immigration continue to be erected in Europe and the United States as some 60 million refugees and internally displaced peoples flee devastated environments. Migrant populations worldwide have risen to 250 million, with those residing in high-income countries constituting more than 14 percent of the populations of those countries, up from less than 10 percent in 2000. Meanwhile, ruling circles and wealthy countries seek to wall off islands of power and privilege from the mass of humanity, who are to be left to their fate.30 More than three-quarters of a billion people, over 10 percent of the world population, are chronically malnourished.31 Food stress in the United States keeps climbing, leading to the rapid growth of cheap dollar stores selling poor quality and toxic food. Around forty million Americans, representing one out of eight households, including nearly thirteen million children, are food insecure.32 Subsistence farmers are being pushed off their lands by agribusiness, private capital, and sovereign wealth funds in a global depeasantization process that constitutes the greatest movement of people in history.33 Urban overcrowding and poverty across much of the globe is so severe that one can now reasonably refer to a “planet of slums.”34 Meanwhile, the world housing market is estimated to be worth up to $163 trillion (as compared to the value of gold mined over all recorded history, estimated at $7.5 trillion).35 The Anthropocene epoch, first ushered in by the Great Acceleration of the world economy immediately after the Second World War, has generated enormous rifts in planetary boundaries, extending from climate change to ocean acidification, to the sixth extinction, to disruption of the global nitrogen and phosphorus cycles, to the loss of freshwater, to the disappearance of forests, to widespread toxic-chemical and radioactive pollution.36 It is now estimated that **60 percent of the world’s wildlife** vertebrate population (including mammals, reptiles, amphibians, birds, and fish) have been wiped out