

Building the Caring Community

For prison abolition to become a reality, alternatives must exist. Prisoners, victims and others must be empowered to take responsibility for their own lives. Prisoners need support and allies. Above all they need services in their communities — health, educational, vocational, residential, counseling and legal services, jobs — which should be available not only for prisoners but for all people. Some ways to build the caring community include:

- developing a network of community support services
- support ex-prisoner and peer-assistant groups and centres
- develop victim-assistance, restitution and compensation programs
- develop community mediation centres
- develop community empowerment programs

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Dismantling the System

“The first step would be to release to the community the approximately eighty per cent of the 26,000 incarcerated in Canada on any given day who were not convicted for violent crime and are not considered dangerous, so that they can work and make restitution to their victims and support themselves and their families. Following that, the next fifteen per cent who are not quite ready to return to work should be provided with the appropriate medical, economic, and social care required to raise them to the level of the first category. For the remaining five per cent who may have been judged to require further detention, only one prison would be needed, with a humane and creative environment which would remove the degrading effects on both the keeper and the kept.”

Claire Culhane 'Still Barred from Prison'

Prisoners' Justice Day Committee
P.O. Box 78005, 1755 E. Broadway
Vancouver, BC V5N 5W1
Phone: (604) 682-3269 ext 3019
Fax: (604) 872-0509
Email: pjd@prisonjustice.ca
Website: www.prisonjustice.ca



A Model for Prison Abolition

Building a Caring Community

A Moratorium on Prisons

Decarceration

Uncarceration

Dismantling the System

Moratorium



NO MORE PRISONS!

The present move of the Canadian government appears to be to build more but smaller prisons. Past experience in Canada and other places is that when this happens both the old and the new prisons are needed to cage the increased number of prisoners that seem to be found every time a new prison opens. A moratorium would move to abolish the building of any new prisons. One tactic of the moratorium is to attempt to cut off funding for the design and building of such places.

Restraint of the Few

There are a very small percentage of law-breakers who need to be limited in movement for periods of time in their lives, a monitoring and review procedure should be established with the goal of working out the best and least restrictive, most humane option for these people so they may be restricted for the shortest period of time.

Uncarcerate

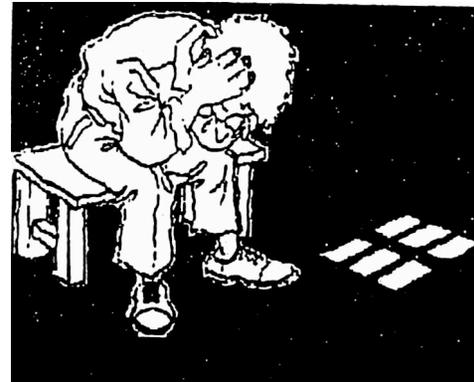
STOP PUTTING PEOPLE IN JAIL NOW!

This can be done in various ways including:

- decriminalize various crimes now cluttering the courts and prisons — possession of drugs, prostitution, etc.
- abolish pre-trial detention and bail
- make greater use of conditional and absolute discharges, fines, restitution, community service orders
- greatly develop community parole with decreased work loads for parole officers who should be helpers, not police.
- develop community alternatives to sentencing now used
- establish legal precedents for such sentencing



Decarcerate



EMPTY THE PRISONS OF THOSE NOW THERE!

There are several ways this may be moved on. These include:

- abolishing parole and go to short set times for offences
- create sentence review boards with the aim of releasing most of the inmates into the community
- provide options for those now in prison to make restitution in lieu of finishing sentence
- use parole contracts for negotiating terms of release
- educate prisoners and lawyers to use any legal petitions available and put pressure on the government on issues like amnesty, pardons, etc.
- make decriminalization of offences (possession of drugs, etc.) retroactive