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**Reproductive Justice and the Prison-Industrial Complex:
A Mini Zine**

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**IS THERE A CONNECTION
BETWEEN REPRODUCTIVE
JUSTICE AND THE ABOLITION
OF THE PRISON INDUSTRIAL
COMPLEX?**



yes!

what is the Prison Industrial Complex

multibillion dollar industry that promotes exponential expansion of prisons, jails, immigrant detention centers, juvenile detention centers, and surveillance programs as the solution to social, economic, and political problems



what is PIC abolition

elimination of policing, incarceration, and surveillance and establishment of alternative models of safety and accountability

PIC abolition is rooted in notion that "crimes" should not be seen as individual moral failing but as a result of larger systems.

What is Reproductive Justice?

a movement created and led by indigenous women and women of color that encompasses the right to have or not have children and raise children in safety



The term was coined in 1994 at a conference on health of women of color when a group of black women gathered to discuss the ways in which mainstream women's rights movements ignored the realities of black women.

Reproductive Justice rejects an "individual choice" paradigm and recognizes that our choices are always already socially constructed.

How do Prison Abolition and Reproductive Justice intersect?

The Prison Industrial Complex limits access to reproductive services while criminalizing marginalized groups for their reproductive decisions.

These “decisions” are often made as a result of lack of access to a full range of choice due to systems of oppression.

The heightened surveillance of poor and POC communities as well as racist myths that drug use makes a person unfit to parent are used to justify prosecution.

The Pro-Life framework supports criminalization of individuals who abort fetuses, funneling money into prisons and taking away money from possible reproductive services in marginalized communities.

Incarcerated people are shackled while giving birth.



Examples of the criminalization of reproduction



Purvi Patel of Indiana self-induced an abortion and disposed of the fetus, arrived at the hospital bleeding, and was subsequently charged with feticide and neglect of a dependent for failing to seek medical help for the fetus. Patel was initially convicted to a twenty-year prison sentence in 2015.

Anna Yocca was charged with aggravated assault, an attempt to procure a miscarriage, and an attempted criminal abortion for self-inducing a fetus of 24 weeks. Convicted in 2015, Yocca is still awaiting trial and is being held in Rutherford County jail in Tennessee.



Cordelia Whitner, a poor black woman from South Carolina, was arrested in 1992 after the birth of a healthy baby due to allegations that she endangered the child by smoking crack cocaine during pregnancy. Whitner was sentenced to eight years in prison. Studies have suggested that fetuses exposed to crack cocaine may not have any related health problems, yet Law Enforcement and medical discourse have focused on research that suggests crack is harmful to the fetus.

**A Feminist
Politic of
Reproduction**
must be rooted in
**abolishing
the Prison
Industrial
Complex**



Abolition vs. Reform

Prison abolition is concerned with ending prisons and incarceration.

Prison Reform is concerned with improving conditions of incarceration.

Both are necessary.

Reformist reforms work within the prison industrial complex, thus strengthening and further legitimizing it.

ex) surveillance measures such as ankle monitoring that are still prisons without bars



Abolitionist reforms are rooted in and working towards dismantling the prison industrial complex.



Abolitionist Reforms

**SOLITARY
CONFINEMENT IS
TORTURE**

Stop the Shipment of Prisoners across state lines



Decriminalize drug use

Stop building new prisons

End Solitary Confinement



**NO MORE
SHACKLES**

End mandatory minimum sentencing

Stop shackling incarcerated people while they give birth



Sources

- page 2: Andrea Smith, Critical Resistance
- page 3: Dorothy Roberts, SisterSong
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- page 5: Dorothy Roberts
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