

# Open Research Group

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## NOTES

May 2<sup>nd</sup> 2018

**Report of meeting** held at School of Economic Science, 11 Mandeville Place, London W1U 3AJ  
See: Notes of Open Research Group meeting on 25th April 2018: [OpenResearchGroup-180425](https://www.themap.org.uk/research/2018/04/25th-april-2018/)

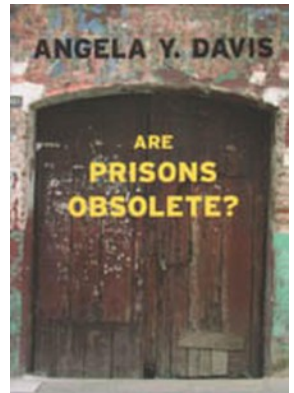
**Present:** Janos, Mary, Ashburn, Paul, Apologies: Dagem, Ahmet, Bob, Henry, Ellena (medical appt), John Mc, Kyle, Liliias, Liz, Maya, Philip, Robin, Sandra, Steve, Trevor.

**Janos** suggested we focus on developing TheMap: <http://www.themap.org.uk> – so look at this next time.  
**Ashburn's** group is called ICI – Islands Caribbean Institute, Redbridge, and he also discusses these issues there. For next week he offered a presentation on Food Speculation. Today he showed us a video from RT:

**RENEGADE INC: Monday 30th April 2018: Our prisons' dilemma:** As reoffending rates are so incredibly high in the UK, there is surely something terribly wrong with prison rehabilitation. Without proper rehabilitation, this vicious cycle – that we all pay for – continues. This poses a fundamental question about how we, as a society, view the role of prisons and the people who run them. On this show, we ask if the profit motive combined with using prison as a deterrent skews rehabilitation. Ross Ashcroft is joined by former prison monitor and criminologist Faith Spear and Dr. David Scott, senior lecturer in criminology at the Open University: <https://www.rt.com/shows/reneegade-inc/425506-uk-prisons-rehabilitation-problem/>

**Faith** described the poor state of the prisons. She questioned why she was sometimes denied entrance at night, when things were not looking good, sometimes with one person supervising a whole wing. **David** said prisons were never about rehabilitation, they were set up as places causing suffering and pain. The norm is that people are traumatized and damaged by the experience: prisons are zones of abandonment, where we put unwanted people. **Faith** added that they might be in a cell for 23 hours, and if they didn't have a mental health problem before, they will be after. Carl Cattermole, interviewed, talked about the mental deterioration that occurs in prison, what a shock it is coming out, even after a year, let alone ten years. Faith says it's going to escalate mental health issues, look at the statistics on self-harm. David says there is no measure of deterrence, it assumes that people are rational and have nothing to lose, which is not the case with offenders. In fact prison is a "university of crime". Inflicting harm upon them is not a way to deter them from future crime, in fact they tend to make up for lost time once they are out by doing even more crime. Drugs are an attempt to anesthetize themselves against the pain. Apart from a few pockets of excellence, there is not much going on in prisons that would stimulate people. David says we should look at the Portuguese model.

**Book of the week: "Are Prisons Obsolete" by Angela R Davis** – challenges the entire basis of the prison's industrial complex, a short, accessible and important read: <https://www.akpress.org/areprisonsobsolete.html>  
• <https://www.feministes-radicales.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/Angela-Davis-Are-Prisons-Obsolete.pdf>

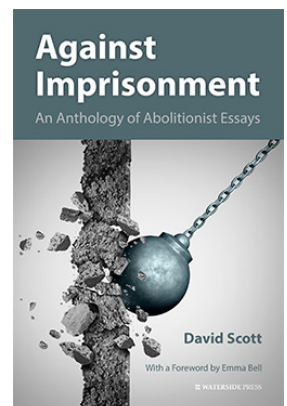


**Dr David Scott's new book "Against Imprisonment" -**

<https://www.watersidepress.co.uk/acatalog/Against-Imprisonment-9781909976542.html>

Interviewee Carl Cattermole talks about poor literacy, lack of support, and the trauma he suffered. The inmates were not criminals, they were mostly hapless individuals, the triple insult of the system.

David added that prisons are run for profit, Faith talked about mind-numbing work. The contradiction is on the one hand idleness and waste of their lives, but giving them work gets us into the trap of slave labour. Since 1992, the prison population has doubled. The context of growing inequality, neoliberalism "Blair's "tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime" - the causes of crime are social issues, the 1990s Labour Party increased the use of prison sentences, it's a political choice. The last radical reduction was 1910, the ruling elite realised they were harmful institutions, because



the more we ratchet up punishment the more we damage society. Ross says now we are also up against the profit motive. David says we need to find alternatives that do work. Faith says we don't have alternatives. What if we take it to the private providers. She attended the G4S AGM where shareholders were kettled into one area, they were dragging people across her lap (it seems they treat their shareholders the same as they treat inmates). When she tried to ask a question about self-harm, she could not get an answer. David said we must find alternatives. Prison is the enemy of the people, not the protector. Ross says it's a design problem, lacking in imagination. Even in Open Prisons they are not using the space, which could be used to grow food, they are locked into contracts with frozen food providers. David said we cannot design it out, it's a place of estrangement. He says it's the person defending the prison to prove its case, what is their evidence - the first obligation is to prove that prison works. *Will add more detail if I manage to listen to the programme again – MF.*

In discussion of the programme, **Paul** mentioned Irish Law, based on the restoration of right relationship, rather than punishment, so the wrong should be corrected. If it can't be given back, as in taking away someone's good name, then we have the concept of the "honour price", which depends on their status in society, similar to our idea of damages for libel. The Dalaigh is the person whom the damaged person takes their grievance to. The Chief Brehon is the most senior lawyer. All this was erased by the British invasion, and replaced by Norman Law, which made the vast majority of people legally slaves. So if we kill someone we have damaged state property. In 1922 there was a groundswell of desire to restore Brehon Law, but there was a war between two factions, one side was English mentality, and they were the ones that won the civil war.

One of the main causes of crime on the street is to raise money for drugs, it's been removed out of society. If money were spent on medically dealing with those who are addicted, it would take the profit out of supply. A significant proportion of the people in prison are there due to the drug problems. Cannabis can heal cancer and a Canadian comedian found out how to make cannabidiol, which is medically active. After he created the cannabis oil, he had a pindrop once per day, and he felt his whole body changing, he reduced the painkillers, and after a month he was back to normal – will make a copy of that video for a future meeting.

<https://www.webmd.com/vitamins/ai/ingredientmono-1439/cannabidiol> • <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cannabidiol>

The government does not want such cures because the corporations are farming us a slave animals for their own profit. Dealing with the epidemic of emotional trauma, would reduce the need for drug intake. Paul says raw vegan fermented foods can also be used to treat some forms of cancer. Sauerkraut is useful for all cancers, and there are specific ones for particular cancers. Paul talks about a remedy that a pedlar had in the south of England, he wanted to tell the doctors but was imprisoned and took it to the grave. Rene Kess, brewed Essiac as a cure, but fake cures are out there offering expensive fake cures. Cases of pancreatic cancer, has a low survival rate, took the "real" cures, someone else talked to him about nutrition, he went into remission and his cancer disappeared, then began to target medical emergencies as a result of the western medicine cancer cure. The Green Party in New Zealand has tabled a paper to legalize such substances, Green Party is in coalition with Labour in government, so something may come of this.

MF/mf/180502 – see other information and **REPORTS** on: <http://globaltable.org.uk/wp/archives/7377>