

Final Paper - Strategic Action Plan

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Strategic Action Worksheet

Overview:

What is the issue?

The Prison Industrial Complex (PIC) is a set of interests, like guards unions and prison companies, that are empowered by racism, capitalism, and sexism. They use tools such as policing, prisons, and criminalization as a response to poverty, homelessness, violence, addiction, etc., of which disproportionately impact the lives of people of color, immigrants, and poor people. According to the Bureau of Justice statistics, “35% of state prisoners are white while 59% are Black or Hispanic; in comparison, 62% of the overall national population is white and 30% are Black or Hispanic,” (Cao). Through these interests and tools they are able to keep alive and reinforce racist stereotypes. The Prison Industrial Complex consumes many aspects of society. To promote change or reform, we must tackle them one at a time. First, to bring to light who is benefiting from prisoners, how they are doing it, and why. Large corporations are able to use prison labor by contracts through the prisons. Prison labor camps and the convict leasing system are used to assign locations and tasks for prisoners, at little-to-no compensation. For convict leasing programs, state prison facilities receive money for lending out prisoners as hired hands (Cao). Various judges nationwide have ordered drug offenders into substance abuse rehabilitation centers that

were actually just prison labor camps for private-sector companies, such as meat processing factories that sell to big name brands. Prison labor is modern day slavery and no one talks about it. Prisoners are usually not considered “real” workers, leaving them no opportunities for minimum wage, benefits, taxes, or workers compensation. Prisoners are forced to do the dirty work while the prisons and big brands the money back ten-fold in their pocket. If we could take away the patriotic notion of, “Made in The U.S.A.,” and put the truth of its manufacturing on the products themselves, maybe people would start to question our government regulations (or lack thereof).

What specific problem will your project address?

The exploitation of prison labor to push profit to large corporations that label their products as “Made in the USA.”

What is your goal?

Decrease the revenue of large U.S. companies benefiting from prison labor (ie: Starbucks, Target, American Airlines, Nike, Microsoft, JCPenny, McDonalds, and Wendy's {Cao}) by 50% by January 2023.

Why is this a *feminist* issue?

It is a feminist issue because it is combatting the way certain minorities are targeted and exploited for capitalist gain. Many feminist efforts have positioned against capitalism as it is considered the root of patriarchy and various forms of oppression. The Prison Industrial Complex upholds patriarchy and capitalism because prisons are the invention of a single

generation to fulfill specific needs (Potopowitz). If prisons continue to be the only solution to social issues, we will continue to be trapped in inherited answers. Confinement and dependency are used as means to control and undermine the abilities and desires of inmates, providing evidence of this outdated, unjust method of punishment that only produces more fear and trauma for future generations. Studies have shown that children of inmates are five to six times more likely to follow the pattern of the incarcerated parent and are often psychologically traumatized (Potopowitz). Also, there is a disproportionately small number of women incarcerated than men, may be due to the “traditional deference of women which leads to leniency,” (McArthur). In other words, because men are considered more dangerous than women and treated as such. Regardless of sex, most men and women in prisons come from poor, less educated, powerless communities (McArthur). Social problems of these communities are grouped together as crime, leaving these individuals as targets to state violence (Davis). However, prisons do not make problems go away, they only make the people go away. Making these people disappear from poor, immigrant, and racially marginalized communities has become one of the biggest businesses in the U.S. According to Angela Davis, “The political economy of prisons relies on racialized assumptions of criminality.” The PIC is rooted in patriarchy and capitalism because official decisions tend to favor white, middle class personas. Courts historically rely on “narrow, technical grounds of state law,” especially for oppressed communities (Bingaman). Capitalism profits from prisoners because prison labor is as valuable as third-world labor, and mass incarceration uses a hidden agenda to trick people to believe its efficacy (Davis).

Spectrum of Allies:

- **Who can give us what we want?**

Large corporations that exploit prisoners for cheaper manufacturing. If we can encourage a boycott on the products made by prison laborers, large corporations will have to find new means of manufacturing. If prisoners aren't as 'valuable' for capitalist gain, the incarceration rate will hopefully decline.

- **Is there another audience who we also want to address?**

Large corporations that don't exploit prisoners can help address the issue by promoting their lack of involvement. Black Lives Matter activists and members of Critical Resistance, people against the unjust treatment of people of color and prisoners, can be a helpful audience in distributing the stickers on products.

- **Who is *most affected* by the issue?**

Prisoners. Especially Black and Hispanic communities who are targeted the most by over policing and incarceration. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, 35% of state prisoners are white while 59% are Black or Hispanic. To put this issue into perspective, 62% of the overall national population is white and only 30% are Black or Hispanic (Cao).

- **Who is against us?**

The Prison Industrial Complex and the corporations/individuals that profit from it.

- **Who might be our allies?**

Families and individuals impacted by policing and imprisonment, Black Lives Matter activists. People who also consider the prison industry as modern day slavery that can potentially be found in Facebook groups and/or Reddit pages, or traditional, regional community groups/organizations. Allies within these groups can be used to distribute the stickers in their own respective regions.

- **How do we get people to join our cause?**

Emphasize the federal government's "best kept secret in outsourcing," (Cao), so consumers know just how deeply capitalists value profit over people.

Strategy:

- **Taking all of the above into account, what is our best strategy for using our resources to achieve our goal?**

To achieve our goal, we must let consumers know directly which products are made by U.S. prisoners by labeling them with stickers* so they can hopefully avoid purchasing them.

- **Explain why you chose the strategy you did**

Awareness of the issue is not enough, so we need to make products produced solely from prison labor easily recognizable.

Tactic(s):

- **Now it is time to pick tactic(s) that work strategically towards your goal!**
 - 1) Cover “Made in the U.S.A.” labels on products sold at these businesses with “Made in U.S.A. Prisons” stickers.
 - 2) Include a QR code to a website with the details of prison labor, the PIC, and the convict leasing system.

- **Explain why you picked the tactic(s) you did**

Consumers can know exactly which products and (through the code) which businesses utilize prison labor to produce.

Messaging:

What is our message?

“Made in U.S.A. Prisons” “Made In U.S.A. Prison Labor Camps and Convict Leasing Systems”

What is the tone we want to take?

Confrontational to expose the mutual hostility between the PIC, corrupt corporations, and consumers.

Sharing the work!

What structure does your activist group use?

The structure is horizontal but applying individual talents to the decision-making process to split up work based on experiences/knowledge.

What are the roles needed to complete the project?

The roles needed to complete this project include decisions in public relations, research for every product in these businesses, design and printing the stickers.

Logistics:

- **When will the action occur?** Present - January 2023
- **Where will we take our stand?**

Activists can do the work in their own communities around the U.S.

- **How will I get the word out?**

Sharing the QR code and website, create social media pages for more awareness and engagement.

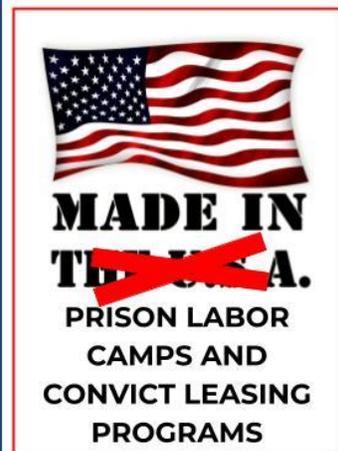
- **What is the timeline leading up to, throughout, and after the event?**

Leading: research on the products, create media involvement, and distribute the stickers accordingly. Throughout: continue distribution everytime we are at one of these stores/businesses, keep up with their revenue. After: evaluate the success and track media metrics.

Counter Plan:

Counter plans for possible reactions: If they prohibit placing stickers on products, place them around the outside of the business and in places people frequent. If they undermine our research and the scale of the situation, create a movement to formally boycott or individually protest the businesses involved.

***Sticker mock-ups:**



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