

**OPEN LETTER TO FELLOW
INCARCERATED PERSONS**

FROM HARLEQUIN

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Hello, I'm Harlequin, a person who's been incarcerated inside the gulags of Pennsylvania Department of Corruptions more or less since 2009. I've seen and have experienced atrocity and oppression on a daily basis. It's expected to experience oppression and abuse by prison officials, as that's what they are paid to do. What really bothers me though is the oppression and abuse so prevalent between fellow prisoners.

As I write from the hole (RHU) on a petty, largely exaggerated charge, I am experiencing indirect oppression at the hands of my neighbor next door to me. He is at war with a handicapped prisoner directly underneath him for no reason other than the handicapped prisoner's here on a rape conviction. My next door neighbor bangs on his stainless steel sink loudly throughout the day and night to induce sleep deprivation in the man downstairs. It doesn't matter to my next door neighbor that his senseless actions are effecting others, and oppressing everyone on the unit.

If a C.O. Or other staff members would do that, banging on each door to wake us all up day and night, we would be raising hell. But we take it in stride when another prisoner oppresses each other, and think it to be normal. Brothers and sisters, this is far from normal! When we oppress each other, prison staff meet their objectives.

The prison industrial complex is designed to keep us at each others throats, so to speak, to divide and conquer so as to squelch any form of unity. The P.I.C. Encourages divisions and animosity between these divisions and fuels the divisions, so as to prevent collective unity among prisoners. We forget the fact that at the end of the day, we are ALL human beings, capable of contributing to the good and betterment of our society. We are all worthy of dignity and respect, regardless of convicted crimes, lifestyle, religion, gender identity, sexual preference, race, creed, etc. Is the person convicted of murder better than the person convicted of rape or another sex

crime? Not at all. Are the LGBTQ prisoners less of persons than hetero and cisgender prisoners? No! Why you ask? Because we are all human beings.

I hear the cries of those around me throughout my sentence, against the oppression and injustice we all feel on a daily and continual basis. Complaints are made all the time and people moan about nothing being done. The reason for this is a total lack of unity. Too many are focused on the choices of everyone else. The divisions created keep us from achieving the unity necessary to take a stand against oppression we all face. We often wonder why things occur and why no one stand up about it. It's going to take more than a few people to unite and make a significant impact. It's going to take us all as a whole to make it happen! No more every-man-for-himself mentality. We need to adopt the attitude that when one is down and out, all are down and out. We must do this collectively. And no, this is not going to happen overnight, but small steps can be taken. Reaching out to someone who has nothing, helping them with their needs, getting to know someone you wouldn't ordinarily speak to – small steps! Will this be difficult? Hell yes! Can it be done? I believe it can abundantly as a collective effort.

So, I resound the call – Prisoners and oppressed of the nation – UNITE! Rise up against oppression!

In Solidarity and In Struggle,

Comrade Harlequin

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