Illustrating Intersections: Gender and the Prison-Industrial Complex
Agenda for workshop conducted with the Beehive Collective, 3/27/2011

Needs:
- CD player and music for icebreaker
- Markers and butcher paper
- CR definition of PIC written up on big paper
- 6 images for discussion
- Two-sided resource hand-out

Notes from facilitators on this workshop:
This workshop was planned by Billy Dee, Carrie Kaufman and Lewis Wallace. We only conducted it once, with an open group of about 20 people at the Chicago Freedom School. The central activity using images to spark conversation about intersections of gender and the PIC worked very well, and opened the space up for participants to teach one another about their knowledge. The most significant feedback we received was that people wanted to spend more time in this workshop talking to each other about their work and personal connections to the PIC. We encourage you to utilize the images and idea for this activity, and take it in directions that are useful to you—but please always credit the artists and/or organizations. Thanks so much. –Chicago PIC Teaching Collective

1. Icebreaker: 3 questions activity (10min) [see PIC 101 appendix for icebreakers]

2. Introductions (10min)
   - Who the PIC Teaching Collective is, who the Beehive Collective is
   - Name, pronoun, favorite creative outlet
   - Intersections and art: explain that we are experimenting through learning with imagery, not covering everything or giving an overview of all issues related to gender and the PIC

3. Definitions (20min)
   - Mind map of PIC [see PIC 101 for full explanation of this activity]
   - Point out that white supremacy and racism are driving forces behind this system—class, race, and the criminalization of poverty are key to the extreme expansion of the PIC over the last 30 years. Prison populations have grown times five since the 1970s, and people of color are disproportionately targeted at all levels from policing to sentencing. The number of people under state supervision today exceeds 7 million—almost twice as much as the population of Chicago.
   - Gender and the PIC: Say: When we say “gender”, we mean a wide variety of intersections: although the vast majority of people caught up in the system are men, women are effected by the PIC in specific ways that include the risk of sexual violence, pregnancy while in prison, separation from children (as women are more often the primary caretakers, though not always), and other things we will discuss. In addition, we will be discussing issues for transgender and gender-non-conforming people including people who cross-dress, people who do not “pass” because they don’t conform to gender norms, people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or queer, and people who are transsexual (meaning that they identify as a different gender or sex than their assigned gender or sex, and may take hormones or require special medical attention). All of these groups, which we will generally refer to as “gender-non-conforming”, can
be the recipients of violence and discrimination both outside of and inside of the prison system, from police, lawyers, foster care systems, judges and juries, prison guards, probation officers, and other incarcerated people.

- This doesn’t mean that non-transgender men do not also have a “gendered” experience of the PIC. Men are in gender-segregated facilities at all times, which in itself can reinforce dangerous ideas about masculinity. Men are also at risk of many forms of violence we will discuss today—we are just scratching the surface here.
- Ask: Does anyone have any questions about what we have talked about so far before we move on?

4. Picture activity (15 min)
- Split into 6 groups, each with around 4-5 people (count off)
- Explain that each group is going to get an image or a poster to look at. The images are really different from each other; some are photographs without a lot of context, some are pieces of art, some are political posters. You will have a few minutes (less than 10) to talk about what you see: what does the image mean? What does it remind you of or make you think about? What sort of point might the image be trying to make? Afterwards, each group will report back. This is quite open-ended and it’s not a test.
- Split up into the groups and hand out the images, supporting groups by suggesting questions or ideas.

5. Facts behind the pictures (25min)
- Have each group talk for a couple of minutes about what they saw in the image. Then, supplement with our own analysis for each image [See below for text; images are in a PDF]
- Leave some time for discussion if possible.

   - Women are the fastest-growing group in U.S. prisons: the number of women in prison is the highest in history, at a 400 percent increase since the introduction of mandatory minimum drug laws in the mid-1980s
   - Women, and especially women of color, have borne a disproportionate burden of the war on drugs, resulting in a monumental increase of women who are facing incarceration for the first time, overwhelmingly for non-violent offenses.
   - Black women represent 30% of prison populations as opposed to 13% of general pop; they are nearly 3x as likely as white women to be incarcerated
   - One in 50 black women in the U.S. cannot vote
   - Incarcerated women are also usually disproportionately affected by poverty, joblessness, and sexual and emotional abuse. Even conservative data would suggest that incarcerated women have a rate of violence against women three times higher than the national average. Some studies suggest that 60% of the women in jails or prisons in this country have experienced physical violence at the
hands of an intimate partner; many women convicted of crimes involving violence are actually fighting back

2. **Targeting of gender non-conforming people and cycles of incarceration: Poster by Tyrone Boucher: “Stonewall Was a Police Riot”**
   
   i. State legislation requiring sex specific clothing
   
   ii. Stonewall Inn in New York City, poor people, trans people, queer people, people of color patrons.
   
   iii. Private establishment. Police raided because of “liquor laws.” Patrons resisted, fought back, crowd was attracted, turned into a riot. Protests continued throughout the week.

3. **Pregnant women and shackling, mothers’ issues: “Birth In Chains” by Jane Atwood**
   
   • 2/3 of incarcerated women have at least one minor child
   
   • Shackling pregnant women is legal in more than 40 states
   
   • Separation from children can be traumatizing; programs that allow parents to spend significant time with children are shown to reduce recidivism. When a mother goes to prison, the child stays with the father only about 25% of the time, so it is a harshly gendered issue.
   
   • Still, a 2010 report found that 43 states do not require medical examinations for pregnant women; 48 did not require HIV exams
   
   • In October 2009, the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled six to five in Nelson v. Norris that it is a constitutional violation to shackle a pregnant inmate’s legs to her hospital bed during labor; Shawanna Nelson sued in Arkansas after having her legs shackled to the bed in a hospital (states that recently enacted laws include California, Colorado, Illinois, New Mexico, New York, Pennsylvania, Texas, Vermont, Washington and West Virginia)
   
   • Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 eliminates parental rights to a child who has been in foster care for 15 out of the previous 22 months. The vast majority of incarcerated women will therefore lose their children if they have to put them in foster care (10-15% of children end up in foster care)

4. **Abuse and sexual assault behind bars: Image of girl with guard by Billy Dee from “The Pic Is...” ‘zine**
   
   • The issue of sexual assault by prison guards or other inmates is vast, and largely ignored; the power imbalances inherent to incarceration put all incarcerated people at risk for sexual abuse, but especially women, gender-non-conforming people, and youth. This is inhumane and deeply traumatic, and it is ingrained in the system.
   
   • In 2008 the Bureau of Justice estimated there were actually 216,000 cases of sexual abuse in prison or jail, almost 600 people per day; 17,000 of these were in juvenile detention; that’s one in 20 people, and 1 in 8 youth. Only 7,444 allegations were reported and less than 1000 were “substantiated” by anyone.
   
   • Rather than a working grievance procedure or holding perpetrators responsible in any way, prisons and jails use (often non-consexual) “segregation” (aka solitary confinement) as so-called protection, esp. for trans and queer people (a practice that is active in Cook County jail right now)
• Even taking into account under-reporting, a recent article called these numbers “epidemic”
• Bureau of Justice stats in 2008 noted the of the 931 cases that were “substantiated,” guards rarely got prosecuted, and in 15 percent of these shockingly under-reported cases, they still kept their jobs
• Public comment is now open on the Justice Department’s national minimum standards, developed as a response to passage of the Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003.
• The department’s standards still won’t apply to parole and probation officers
• Alexis Giraldo case; turned down in 2007 but reinstated in 2010 on question of whether guards are responsible for protecting incarcerated people

5. Discrimination and violence against queer and gender non-conforming people behind bars: Photo of four women targeted by segregation of gender-variant people in Virginia prisons “VaPrisoners5”
Discuss Virginia example (stress that prison is dangerous and dehumanizing for all people, but sometimes even in efforts to change this, LGBTQ-specific targeting gets sidelined). Female-assigned people who may identify as men are placed in women’s facilities; male-assigned people who may identify as or even pass as women are placed in men’s facilities.

6. Effects of the lack of medical care, mental health support, legal services and outside support: Art by Kory Huntziger purchased from Black and Pink, “Kory.Image”
This is a particularly difficult problem for gender-non-conforming people (again, a problem for all incarcerated people but can effect gender-non-conforming people in specific ways). For example, medical care in prisons is lousy in general: most people who take hormones are denied access completely.

6. Conclusion (10min)
• Say: We know this is a lot to take in at once and we have only skimmed the surface of prison issues in general, and gendered intersections in particular. We welcome your feedback about how to use these images more effectively to talk about the PIC (will hand out a form at the end of the workshop).
• Say: Our hope in talking about this is to promote action. On that note, we are including information about organizations you can contact to find out more and take action...our priority is fighting for a system that does not depend on incarceration to solve problems or create jobs or profits, which means shifting the conversation in a direction where prisons are seen as a social evil that effects all of us!
• We are going to take a break and spend the rest of the time with the Beehive Collective, learning about Plan Colombia and the drug war, which has all kinds of interesting links to the PIC as it stands today.

BREAK (10min)