



Against Equality: Prisons Will Not Protect You

Ryan Conrad (Editor), Dean Spade (Introduction), Liliana Segura (Contributor)

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In the third and final installation of its trilogy, Against Equality once again demonstrates that another queer and radical world is possible. The essays in this volume take a critical stance against the prison industrial complex and the system of inequality and violence perpetuated by hate crimes legislation, formally passed in the United States in 2009 as the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act.

Prisons Will Not Protect You, a compilation of archived work, is located at the difficult and traumatic point where the violence of the state against queer and LGBT people colludes with the violence we are always trying to escape. The pieces here question the gay community's fealty to the prison industrial complex, arguing that hate crimes legislation, which enhances penalties and can even be used to bring in the death penalty, only serves to funnel massive numbers of people into prisons with increasing lengths of time served and the use of tortuous methods like solitary confinement. This has significant racial and economic implications in a country that houses five percent of the world's population but nearly a quarter of the world's prisoners and where prisons have become, for many impoverished area and people, the only source of livelihood.

With an introduction by Dean Spade and work by contributors Liliana Segura, the Sylvia Rivera Law Project, Jason Lydon, Jack Aponte, Sébastien Barraud, Imani Keith Henry, James D'Entremont, Yasmin Nair, Erica Meiners, Liam Michaud, Josh Pavan, Bridget Simpson, Prisons Will Not Protect You introduces the history of hate crimes legislation and its part in the expansion of the prison industrial complex. It also examines specific cases, like that of the New Jersey Four and Texas Four, demonstrating the vulnerability of raced and gendered bodies within the labyrinthine and mundane realities of the law. Prisons Will Not Protect You exposes the deadly links between state-sponsored violence, homophobia, and the criminal punishment system.

Against Equality: Prisons Will Not Protect You Details

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From Reader Review Against Equality: Prisons Will Not Protect You for online ebook

Stephanie Schroeder says

This book provides a cohesive, enlightening (and enlightened) perspective on hate crimes legislation and prosecution that is unpopular everywhere, but in and among especially Gay Inc. Thank goodness for the Against Equality collective and its trilogy of important books and archives. I'd give this final book in the series 4 or 5 stars except for the unwise inclusion of a badly written essay by John D'Entremont that, while decrying the homosexual panic that fueled child sexual abuse allegations and convictions referred to one accuser as "a schizophrenic" and in another instance referred to another accuser a "steroid addict." I found it very offensive that in an essay ostensibly deconstructing multiple levels of violence against queers, poor people and people and communities of color, the author chose to label and "accuse" folks in other communities and with other perceived disabilities and identities of not being credible based on unfounded grounds.

Kathleen O'Neal says

This third volume of the Against Equality trio critiques the mainstream LGBT community's focus on hate crime legislation, arguing that it does not solve the problems of violence and oppression facing LGBTQ people and in fact feeds the prison-industrial complex. While I found the arguments in this volume less compelling than those in the other two books in the series (which is odd enough because I actually oppose hate crimes legislation and do not oppose same-sex marriage or the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell which were the topics of the other two volumes in the series) I still enjoyed reading this book.

Sarah says

A great introduction to why many queer activists aren't in support of hate crimes legislation. This book is a small collection of brief essays on the same topic, so it can get repetitive, but I think it's a good introduction if these ideas are newer to you and, for all of us, it's a great chance to survey some of the positions that various organizations and activists have taken in the last decade or so re: hate crimes legislation and the role of mainstream gay rights organizations in perpetuating the prison-industrial complex.

(Dean Spade's excellent and accessible intro is online and I would highly recommend it to anyone interested in LGBTQ rights, hate crimes legislation, the criminal justice system, and prison/incarceration.)

Audrey says

This is a really quick read, since it's a series of essays (mostly blog posts). I would have preferred more analysis, but this is a great introduction to prison abolition through a queer lens -- specifically critiquing

prison expansion and hate-crime legislation.

Planning to read *Captive Genders* soon; flipped through it briefly and there's much more analysis and examples of ways to implement abolition.

Emma says

Again, so great. And yet again, Yasmin Nair nails it, adding nuance and intrigue.

Possum Paderau says

This review is a WIP. I have a lot of thoughts about this book that I'm going to work on organizing whenever possible.

I was very torn on what rating to give this book and how I should review it. On the one hand, the book offered a lot of insights that I had never previously considered and also gave me a lot of empirical data to digest. This book definitely convinced me that prisons aren't an effective means of managing conflict or reconciling harm committed against people. Furthermore, the most vulnerable and marginalized people in our society also tend to be those most deeply affected by prisons.

With that in mind, I had several issues with the book. The first two are trifles compared to the others.

1. Many of these essays did not name their sources. Without knowing what sources were used, I cannot verify the veracity of the claims that were made, and I cannot make a decision whether or not to trust those claims based on the credibility (not credentials, necessarily) of the source of these claims.
2. This book is poorly edited. There were multiple grammatical and spelling errors.
3. I'm not sure why the article titled "The Devil in Gay Inc.: How the Gay Establishment Ignored a Sex Panic Fueled by Homophobia" was included. The premise of the article was nearly identical to the one that followed, except this one contained explicit descriptions of the accusations without warning readers. The author clearly doesn't care how actual victims of pedophilia, like myself, might respond to graphic descriptions {TW: pedophilia, sexual assault}
*****of a woman forcing a child to lick peanut butter off of her cervix.*****

It's very clear that the author included these descriptions to shock and horrify his readers, as if we're all as sheltered and wealthy as he is and need to be "woken up" to these realities. I sat in a court and described in graphic detail how I was raped. I do NOT need to be "woken up." I'm already awake. I've lived this, and I don't need a bougie white man telling me how it is. My suffering is not a rhetorical device.

Lee says

A terrific queering of the prison abolition movement. A must read for anyone doing work around race, class, sexual orientation, gender identity or ability.

Dee says

Vital critiques of the prison industrial complex and hate crime laws written by fierce people.

Krystal Marlein says

This was a very interesting and educational book to read. Every essay is different. It makes you think and opens the readers eyes to the hate and discrimination that goes on in our world.

I won this book as a good reads first reads winner.
