

# THE PRISON CITY



**Our experience of the city is limited and subjective. Each day we cover the same paths, heads down, almost without seeing a thing. Somewhere in the back of our minds we carry a vague image of where we are in space and time: massive anonymous buildings, cultural containers, churches, palaces, shopping centres. Linked by reassuring tube maps, symbolized in picture postcards, they combine in creating - with courts, prisons, cop stations, army barracks lurking in the background - a sense of stability and permanence.**

**Over time we can even feel attached to this - imaginary - place because it is here that we have passed years of our existence, almost without noticing, illuding ourselves that we are alive and happy or at least convincing others through our public face. Just as the prisoner can muster a few fond memories of his time behind bars - because it was years of his life, the only one he has - we can end up loving and needing our incessant processing through the ruthless metropolitan meat grinder. Everybody, even the homeless staking out a few inches for a night in the doorway of one of the temples of consumerism - forbidden territory in hours of daylight - has a role to play.**

**But the London of our illusions, be they dreams or nightmares, does not exist. What we see and experience is only an infinitesimal part of what is really a militarised territory within which masses of people remain corralled inside their designated places. With all its specificities this territory is no different to any other square inch of the planet, ruled by a system based on domination and exploitation that leaves not a single blade of grass uncontaminated and free.**

**The forms that this domination takes are constantly adapting, developing and inventing new ways to better exploit the earth and control its inhabitants for goals of profit and power. While terror and despotism are**



still the norm in many parts of the world, advanced democracies such as Britain prefer to rule using the soft weapon of consensus. This involves the eager collaboration of their subjects under the banner of free speech and participation.

Indispensable to this project are the media in all their forms: newspapers, television, 'social' media, etc. Through these, the structures and values that we are expected to adhere and contribute to (and kill and die for when ordered) are reinforced. These include patriotism, monarchy, democracy, progress, work (not just to survive but as a value in itself), belief in and obedience to the law, belief in and obedience to supernatural beings. And fear. Fear of the 'terrorist'. Fear of the stranger. Fear of the young. Fear of retribution. Fear of those who say No!

So seemingly contradictory, all of the above have one thing in common - **THEY ALL CONTINUE TO EXIST BECAUSE WE BELIEVE IN THEM**, because we do not question them in our minds or in the way we act...

The prison city of London is not a theatre of open war waged by riot cops, armoured vehicles and commandos flaunting automatic rifles (always at the ready in the wings). It is an ordered territory that works to perfection, all of us going through the green lights, stopping at the red. It is a mediaeval castle in cybernetic form, whose self-controlled inhabitants move around their designated routes. As long as they adopt one of the identities available in the supermarket of alienation. As long as they are adequately supplied with the passe-partout - cash or credit - that opens all doors. As long as they carry the key to their cell in their pocket, apprehensively turning it each night before putting their head on the pillow and falling asleep. Leaving the rich to slumber in peace. Leaving the gold to remain in the vaults. Leaving the prisoners to suffer in their cages.

Unless.... Unless....

It's time to wake up! It's time to act!

It's time for our dreams to become their nightmares!

**random anarchists**

