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## “Editor’s Introduction”

- Howard Davidson

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The most serious forms of oppression may not be those which we are quick to name but those which are buried just beneath the surface of our most commonplace assumptions, our day-to-day beliefs about how the world operates and how it ought to operate. When these beliefs are seriously challenged, one can feel quite literally the resistance to accept what is being said. This is the feeling I experienced when I first read through the articles collected here, especially the essays by Danny Homer, Little Rock Reed, and Arthur Solomon. By now I have read them over many times and I still react to their iconoclastic force.

This issue was not planned as a special issue on Native people and the prison; nor was it decided beforehand to print along side these articles the letters on political prisoners by C.J. Hinke and Susan Rosenberg. Homer's article arrived first and preparation for its publication was well underway when Solomon's article/poem appeared. My first reaction to the latter was "We don't publish poetry" and I prepared to return it with a note to this effect. Obviously, I did not, and instead, sent it on for review. Neither Dragan Milovanovic, who has prepared the response to this issue, nor any of its reviewers have had much to say about its statements. For the most part we speak of its form and style. Why is that?

I cannot speak for the others, and I invite them to reply, but for myself it is related to Homer's observations that that which white people do not know - and that which they cannot control - they fear, desecrate, and repress. And as Little Rock Reed notes in his analysis of the insidious imposition of Judeo-Christian culture through Anglo treatment programs, this behaviour emanates from white culture's most deeply seated assumptions about how the world works and how it should work, rather than any purposive intention to impose our will and interests.

It does not escape me either that these articles are disquieting because they are not about 'them': guards, the ruling class, whomever, but about us *white people*. However, not one of these papers neglects to make it clear that white people are *not* inherently unjust. Not one would disagree with these words by Max Weber:

Where the market is allowed to follow its own tendencies, its participants do not look towards the person of each other but only towards the commodity; there are no obligations of brotherliness (sic.) or reverence, and none of the spontaneous human relations that are sustained by personal union (Weber in Rubenstein, 1983: 7).