**Jan 9th Make Up**

**Put a heading in your CPAR Reading section with the title: *Vision, Problem, Purpose***

* **Read “Bill Ayers, Demand the Impossible! (Excerpt #8).” Answer the questions in sentences.**
* **Copy and finish this sentence: *Ayers wrote this piece because…***
* **This piece is a vision. A vision is a concrete goal or set of goals to achieve. It is how we imagine the world as it could be. Why do researchers need a vision?**
* **What problem does Ayers address in this vision?**
* **How does Bill Ayers create his vision? In other words, what moves does he make as a writer to communicate his vision?**
* **What is his purpose for writing this piece: inform, persuade, entertain, argue, etc?**
* Get an index card. Create a vision for McKinley as it could be. Use words, images, or any combination ofthese.

**Bill Ayers, Demand the Impossible! (excerpt # 8)**

* I often provoke my students at the University of Illinois at Chicago by saying, “Do you know that one mile from our campus there are 15,000 Irishmen [or Jewish women, or Greeks] living in cages?” “Come on! No way!” There was always a general sense of disbelief, and a notion that maybe I was joking. “You’re kidding, right?”
* Well, yes and no: I wasn’t being fully honest, so let me change it a bit—“Do you know that one mile from our campus there are 15,000 young Black and Latino men living in cages?” “No, I didn’t know that, but I’m not completely surprised either; what crimes did they commit?” The fact of Black men being imprisoned is part of the known world, Black “criminality” the common sense of known things, normalized to the point of invisibility—you didn’t know that; indeed, you didn’t even *notice* that. So in another sense, you *did* know that. …
* Angela Davis talked about the abolitionist and humane values of liberation, community restoration, and shared fate as opposed to the hardening practices of cruelty and punishment, revenge and retribution. She reminded us of the ten glorious words uttered by Justice Harry Blackmun in 1994 when he announced publicly that he had become a death penalty abolitionist: “I no longer shall tinker with the machinery of death.” He wasn’t searching for ways to make state-sanctioned murder more efficient or more palatable—he wanted to get out of the death business altogether. Let’s get out of the caging business, she said. Let’s not tinker with the machinery of mass incarceration. …
* This led to a discussion I’ve now had countless times with students and others, and it begins with an exercise in the form of a question: Can we—right now—generate a thousand alternatives to caging people? It turns out we can, and so let’s.
* A Thousand Steps toward De-carceration and a Range of Alternatives to Caging Human Beings (a start):
* 1. Decriminalize illegal drugs and expand drug treatment centers to meet the real needs of people caught in the grip of addiction.
* 2. Use a public health frame to rethink issues of violence.
* 3. Get guns off the streets.
* 4. Generously create and support community mental  
  health programs.
* 5. Build “Community Restorative Justice” projects—spaces where perpetrators and victims can meet with peers and neighbors, community organizers and social workers, to discuss how to repair the harm inflicted by misbehavior.
* 6. Redirect all misdemeanor offenses away from criminal court with its attendant culture of cruelty, humiliation, and punishment toward counseling, rehab, or anger management for some, and technological support (a simple breathalyzer device, for example, attached to a vehicle before it can be driven) for others.
* 7. Outlaw all profiteering from prison: ban private prisons, cash bail and bail bond businesses, paid alternatives to jail, telephone company gouging, and the privatizing and outsourcing of prison services like clothing and meals.
* 8. Do away with mandatory minimum sentencing, “three strikes you’re out,” sentence enhancements, and other punitive measures that serve to swell the prison population.
* 9. Restore or create opportunities to reduce time inside with policies like day-for-day good time practices.
* 10. Create massive public works programs.
* 11. Offer homes to the homeless.
* 12. Increase the minimum wage to $25 an hour.
* 13. Grant income supports to the unemployed.
* 14. Bring the endowments of all private schools, colleges,  
  and universities under public and democratic control, and organize the redistribution of those resources toward a system of free quality education for all.
* 15. Provide a living-wage stipend, free housing, and good child care to anyone living at or below the poverty line and attending high school or community college.
* 16. Create a system of free universal health care.
* 17. Immediately release all prisoners over, say, age fifty for  
  starters.
* 18. Develop a prisoner’s cooperative to operate the institutions, making decisions collectively about all matters concerning food, health care, education, and social services, the organization of work and leisure, and relations with outside institutions including religious, educational, and business organizations.
* Whew!
* Well, it’s a running start. We only have 982 to go! And, yes, none of this is possible in the absence of collective action and a social movement for radical transformation. But we need to work collectively on a vision as part of the fight for abolition. And, yes, some of it may sound a bit like fiddling with the machinery of caging, but let’s not be dogmatic hard-liners when actual people could breathe more freely with just a bit of tinkering.