

***A meeting and a debate on the social function of incarceration
in San Vittore prison, Milan,
with Luis Sepúlveda, Don Luigi Ciotti and Gianni Minà***

COLORS BEHIND BARS

**For the publication of issue number 50
dedicated to the world's prisons**

Milan, 27th May 2002. Does prison work? Can the rehabilitation of an individual be guaranteed by excluding that person from society? In an attempt to answer this and other questions on the social function of incarceration, Colors, the Benetton magazine that has been talking about the rest of the world for ten years, is organising a meeting/debate in Milan's San Vittore prison, to be held on Monday 27th May.

Starting from issue number 50 of Colors, dedicated to *Prisons*, the Chilean writer Luis Sepúlveda, Don Luigi Ciotti from the Gruppo Abele and the magazine's editorial staff will be confronting, coordinated by journalist Gianni Minà, the governor of San Vittore prison, Luigi Pagano, and a committee of detainees at the Milan prison.

Colors 50 visited fourteen prisons in fourteen different countries to explore every dimension of incarceration. The world's total prison population, which counts more than eight million individuals, represents one of the fastest-growing communities on earth. Colors staff spoke to people both in and out of prison in the United States, which with only five per cent of the world's population accounts for twenty five per cent of world detainees, in South Africa, in second place in terms of prison population, in Mexico, in Colombia and in ten other countries. The answers our reporters obtained confirmed one irrefutable fact: in its present form, prison doesn't work. This is why Colors has decided to take the opportunity offered by the feature to open a wider-ranging debate on prisons and prisoners.

Today, Colors is published in five bilingual editions with 500,000 copies distributed in sixty countries. For ten years, Colors has been talking about the rest of the world, on the premise that differences are positive and that all cultures have equal value. After having tackled major themes like war, AIDS and environment, and after having used a fast, incisive and visual style that is nowadays more appropriate to television or internet, Colors has opted over the past year for an analysis and a "compassionate" view (in the literal sense of "feeling together") onto different communities. Some extremely significant numbers of the magazine have emerged, like the one on *Refugees* in a camp in Tanzania or the one on *Madness*, to which the new graphic design has added dignity and rigour. Nor should we forget the ironic, entertaining issues on *Leisure World* and *Tours*.