

Coalition For Prisoners' Rights Newsletter

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WE MUST JOIN IN THE TURN FORWARD

As we know, the police, the courts, the prison system and executions all demonstrate the racism and classism which govern our lives. Every part of this punishment system falls most heavily on the poor and people of color. Every control unit, supermax prison, and special housing unit has the same purpose: the breaking of mind and spirit. The use of isolation is designed to restrict communication with the prisoners' families, the media and the outside world. And people in prison have warned the rest of us again and again that what happens inside prisons finds its way out.

How US prisons function violates the United Nations Convention Against Torture, and a host of other international treaties. Prison practices also fit the UN definition of genocide. In fact, poverty as well as prisons are a form of state-manifested violence. We must stop the spread of the culture of retribution, dehumanization and sadism.

One-third of African American males born in 2001 will spend time in a state or federal prison. Black men are seven times likelier than white men to be in prison. In general, African Americans are much more likely than whites to be stopped by the police, arrested, prosecuted, convicted, and imprisoned. Street drug and street crime control policies and practices consistently, disproportionately affect Black people.

"Law and order" appeals are commonly used to gain support from white voters. As Michael Tonry observes, white people in the US have a remarkable capacity to endure the suffering of disadvantaged Black, and, increasingly, Hispanic men.

Mass incarceration which has been created in the US over the last thirty years is, in fact, a devastating system of racial control. African American men have been systematically targeted and communities of color have been decimated. There is now generalized criminalization of the communities most

affected by poverty and racial discrimination

First the incarceration for 16 years and then the conditions of release for the Scott sisters provide an accurate example of the above assertions. The sentencing, in 1994, for involvement in a robbery that netted \$11, to double life sentences boggles the mind. Yet their release includes a lifetime on parole and the requirement of one sister donating a kidney to the other. "Grossly disproportionate" is at best an understatement--more likely "overwhelmingly insulting." Or, sheer racial and class bias resulting in flimsily based convictions and extreme disparities in sentencing.

As Derrick Johnson, state president of the Mississippi NAACP says: "One of the lessons of this case is that when local community folks advocate over a problem and are given options over how to address it, that's when change happens." The work for a full pardon for the Scott sisters, including a public rally in April, continues.

Resources

Prison Watch Project, AFSC, 89 Market St
Newark NJ 07102

Punishing Race A Continuing American Dilemma, Michael Tonry

The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness, M. Alexander

WE STAND IN SOLIDARITY WITH ALL THOSE CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY

"The ultimate measure of a person is not where s/he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where s/he stands at times of challenge and controversy." Dr. M.L. King, Jr.

CRIME OF THE MONTH

Revolution is in the air. Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Bahrain, Morocco: nonviolent resistance (on the part of the protesters, anyway) is flooding the streets. Meanwhile in Palestine, civil society has used nonviolence as a form of resistance to brutal Zionist colonization for decades. But no thanks are due on any of these fronts to our own government. These despotic regimes being challenged are U.S. protectorates, encouraged and funded as part of the U.S. global corporate empire. It remains to be seen what the end result will be of this wave of collective consciousness, but the will of the people, once roused, is a powerful force. We may even see an awakening in this country.

No doubt the U.S.'s CIA and Israel's Mosad are working overtime behind the scenes to derail any move toward autonomy on the part of Arab peoples. There is no greater threat to the oppressive policies of these two governments than the blossoming of social justice and human rights. The U.S. government talks about freedom and self-determination from one side of its mouth, while enforcing corrupt subversive agendas from the other.

Our Crime of the Month is the machinations of the U.S. and Israel governments during this time of heroic actions by so many of the people of the world, making their voices heard over the obstructive racket of the power elite.

This Newsletter will be included in all correspondence we send out. To regularly receive four monthly issues, send us a self addressed, stamped envelope (with the CPR return address), up to 12 at a time.

Please continue to send us address changes and renewal requests in order to receive the year-end holiday card/new calendar. This is especially important for those in California and Texas.

Also please note: the ONLY address to use to be sure to reach us continues to be: PO Box 1911, Santa Fe NM 87504.

Many, many thanks to the Real Cost of Prisons Project for making our newsletter available on-line for free downloading and distribution at: <http://www.realcostofprisons.org/coalition.html>. This is a superlative website!

We regret that: None of us at the CPR are lawyers or legal workers.

"La ultima medida de personas no es las creencias de ellos en tiempos de bien, pero es lo que ellos estan y hacen en tiempos malos y de angostia y controversia." --por Dr. M.L. King Jr.

Tratamiento malo

Como muchos ya sabemos, la policia, las cortes, el sistema de prisiones y ejecuciones todas demuestran racismo y clasismo en que arreglar nuestras vidas. Cada parte de este sistema siempre cai mas duro sobre la gente de color y que son pobres. Cada prison de alta seguridad y habitación de acojamiento todas tienen un solo proposito. Tiene el proposito de romper los espíritus y la mente del prisioneros. El uso de este tipo de aislamiento es diseñado para restringir la comunicación y el mundo afuera. Sin embargo, la gente dentro las prisiones nos siguen demostrando lo que pasa a dentro de las prisiones sale a la luz del dia.

Las prisiones de Los EE.UU. como funcionan viola los tratados de las Naciones Unidas contra la tortura en las prisiones. Las practicas de las prisiones tambien caben sobre la definición de genocidio.

Una tercera parte de la poblacion de los Afro-Americanos varones que nacieron en el 2001 van a estar en al carcel federal o en otro tipo de prisiòn. Un Afro-Americano es mas probablemente que sea parado por un policia, o ser arrestado, ser proseguido y enprisionado.

La ley y el orden es enfocada en la poblacion de los blancos para tener los envolver en tiempos de elecciones.

Michael Tonry observa que los de piel blanca en los EE.UU. tienen la capacidad de soportar la angustia y desventaja que tienen los Afro-Americanos y la poblacion de los Hispanos/Latinos que esta subiendo rapidamente.

El aumento de presos sobre el periodo de treinta años aumentado demasiado. Especialmente en los Afro-Americanos y las comunidades de color. Muchos han sido las victimas de discriminación y racismo.

Voices from Inside

Bellefonte PA

November 2010

Certain state inmates have decided to file a class action lawsuit concerning the issues of state inmates being sent to county jails to serve their sentences, where they are severely deprived of all rights and privileges afforded all other state inmates similarly situated in D.O.C. prisons. We are seeking assistance. Please help up help ourselves. Contact: Feldon Bush Sr, Centre County Prison, 700 Rishel Hill Road, Bellefonte PA 16823.

"Either capitalism dies or the planet dies." --por Evo Morales, President of Bolivia, December 2010.