

Coalition For Prisoners' Rights Newsletter

Vol. 32, No. 8

PO Box 1911, Santa Fe NM 87504-1911

August 2007

"GIVE US YOUR POOR..."

"ICE (the Immigration & Customs Enforcement Agency, "La Migra") knows there are less costly and less restrictive options when it comes to dealing with immigrants who are undocumented, but what ICE does is not about justice. This is about squelching a growing movement of immigrants advocating for their human rights and full participation in a global economy. Why else would the U.S. government spend over \$1.2 billion per year on caging immigrants? Why else would politicians collude with for-profit prison companies and then place these prisons in some of our nation's poorest communities if not to pit one group of poor folks against another by calling it 'economic development'?"

These comments and questions are by Anton Flores of the Alterna community, in Georgia, in April, at a demo at a new, for-

profit private prison run by the CCA (Corrections Corporation of America), which operates 65 prisons around the country.

Nationwide, ICE now has 27,500 prison and jail beds available. About 230,000 immigrants are detained in the U.S. during the course of a year, making them the fastest growing segment of the country's prison and jail population.

The 84% of detained immigrants not represented by a lawyer are four to six times less likely to win asylum than those who do have lawyers. The average cost to taxpayers of imprisoning an immigrant is \$95 per person/per day.

Needless to say, the revenue and stock prices of these for-profit prison companies that build immigration prisons are, especially since 9/11, skyrocketing.

(continued on next page)

GIVE US YOUR POOR..., cont.

The CCA prison in Lumpkin, Georgia, one of four in that state, opened in October, 2006, and is already nearing capacity, holding men from five continents, the majority Hispanics. Shortly after the prison opened, ICE began making armed raids into workplaces across the country, rounding up workers and charging them with immigration violations. Many of these people were shipped to this rural Georgia prison.

Other CCA immigrant prisons include Florence AZ, Elizabeth NJ, and San Diego CA. New CCA prisons will be in KY, KS and FL. ICE rents beds at a total of 300 local and state jails, concentrated in the South and Southwest.

Another big for-profit prison company was originally known as Wackenhut although it has now changed its name to the GEO Group. It got a contract with ICE in 2002 for a Miami based facility. It also manages the Queens Private Correctional Facility, a CA facility, and a MS facility. In 2005 GEO merged with Correctional Services Corporation (CSC).

The average time an immigrant is detained is 42.5 days from arrest to deportation. CCA calculates it makes a contractual daily profit of \$50 per person incarcerated. In addition, prison companies profit from the Department of Homeland Security guideline that mandates that non-citizen prisoners cannot earn more than \$1 per day. So janitors, maintenance workers, cleaners, launderers, kitchen staff, sewer and grounds keepers cost them almost nothing.

The most recent figures we could find are that there are a total of 160,000 federal prisoners. Along with CA and TX, the federal prison system is now one of the three biggest in the country. Of the federal prisoners, 29% are said to be non-citizens (both documented and undocumented).

Of the over 2 million prisoners in the US, about 85,776 are non citizens. Of these non citizen prisoners, 38% are in federal prisons and 62% are in state prisons. One source said that 25% of CA prisoners are deported upon the completion of their sentences.

In mid-2005, the US Department of Justice claimed 16,613 non citizen (documented and undocumented) federal prisoners, or 10.1% of the total DOJ prisoners. The most recent figures state 6.4% of all state and federal prisoners are non citizens.

As an immigration reform activist recently said, we need to have a sense of outrage with what's happening. The for-profit prison business is salivating over its good fortune. It's about buying and selling people as commodities. Politicians are building careers by touting draconian measures that deny immigrants the most basic human rights. Our nation's soul is at stake.

Resources

"Freedomways," May/June 2007, newsletter of the Prison & Jail Project, PO Box 6749, Americus GA 31709, 229-928-2080
CorpWatch, 1611 Telegraph Ave #720, Oakland CA 94612, 510-271-8080
www.corpwatch.org

La esperanza nunca muere

La esperanza de ver a los 12 millones de indocumentados que viven en este país salir de las sombras y emprender el camino hacia la legalización se ha aplazado hasta después de las próximas elecciones. El 28 de junio 53 senadores del Congreso de los EEUU votaron en contra de la propuesta de ley para una Reforma Migratoria, aunque encuesta tras encuesta dada a conocer últimamente declaraba que un 60% a 70% de los estadounidenses apoyan una reforma que permita la legalización de los trabajadores inmigrantes.

El deseo de volver a ser elegidos, el racismo, la inseguridad económica del país y la ignorancia fueron algunos de los factores que contribuyeron a la falta de liderazgo por parte de los políticos en Washington. El sistema actual de leyes migratoria no funciona ni para los empleadores ni para los trabajadores. Miles de millones de dólares se han gastado para militarizar la frontera, el número de patrulleros fronterizos se ha triplicado y el único resultado es que la cruzada es más peligrosa y más inmigrantes mueren al atravesar el desierto durante el verano.

En nuestras comunidades las redadas conducidas por ICE (la Agencia de Inmigración y Aduana, por sus siglas en inglés) en los últimos meses han hecho que nuestros niños vivan con el miedo de no encontrar a sus padres cuando vuelven de la escuela a sus casas; que la persona que sostiene a la familia haya sido deportado/a. Cuando se corre la voz de que la Migra anda por las calles, las madres temen salir a comprar comida, a llevar a sus niños al

médico, los padres no asisten al trabajo.

Vivimos en una época muy difícil para el inmigrante pero no debemos perder de vista los logros que hemos alcanzado recientemente. Las grandes manifestaciones que organizamos el año pasado a favor de una reforma migratoria. Este año nos concentramos en el proceso legislativo. Piolín, la estrella de radio de Los Angeles, entregó a los representantes en Washington un millón de firmas apoyando una reforma migratoria justa, miles de personas llamaron o les escribieron a sus congresistas. Si seguimos trabajando juntos y con el apoyo de nuestros aliados vamos a alcanzar vamos a llegar metas.

Ya que el gobierno a nivel nacional decidió no reformar las leyes de inmigración, a corto plazo necesitamos proteger a nuestros compañeros inmigrantes haciéndoles saber sus derechos civiles, documentando abusos por parte de los agentes de policía y las Migra (ICE) y preparándonos para el siguiente round.

Lo que queremos es:

- * La legalización de todos los inmigrantes,
- * Un programa para los trabajadores futuros que proteja sus derechos laborales y que incluya una vía hacia la ciudadanía,
- * La unidad de familia
- * La protección de los derechos civiles y el proceso debido legal.

¡LOS DERECHOS DE LOS INMIGRANTES SON DERECHOS HUMANOS!

Coalition for Prisoners' Rights Newsletter



VOICES
FROM
INSIDE
since 1976

A CONTROVERSIAL NOTE

Woodville TX

April 26, 2007

We need a well-rounded look at things as they are. Sirak is in business to make money. He is providing a service that is perfectly legal. You pay him, he litigates. He doesn't have to win or get results. Sec. 1983 is the only way Sirak could get into court in Texas. Parole rules and policies are governed by state law. People must remember: Parole is not a right. [Eds.' Disclaimer: None of us are lawyers.]

ORAL ARGUMENT

Marysville OH

June 12, 2007

Not a person in Ohio has got out 'cause of Sirak.

DIET

Coalinga CA

June 3, 2007

On April 30, the federal judge in our civil rights case separated all of the 7 plaintiffs into individual actions. Our discovery proceedings have been placed on old. CDCR just can't see themselves granting Muslims a Halal diet without making a fight for it. Interested parties should write Judge Gregory G. Holos, Eastern District of California, U.S. District Court, 501 "I" St #4-200, Sacramento CA 95814, and tell him that you want to have a case number assigned to you so you too can become an individual plaintiff who wants to receive a Halal diet. Case name: L. Qiyam Pogue v. James Tilton, CIV S-05-1873 MCE GGH P L.Qiyam Pogue, E65357, PVSP, PO Box 8503, Coalinga CA 93210.

ACTIONS

Deer Lodge MT

June 15, 2007

A federal class action injunction against state prison policy on legal access and inmate assistance of others with legal matters is being filed with the US District Court in Butte. Also there is a class action suit against state prison policy on censorship of publications and content. MT inmates interested should contact (through an outside source): Ron Glick, 2100185, MSP, 700 Conley Lake Rd, Deer Lodge 59722.

INFORMATION REQUEST

Journalist seeks interviews for a feature story on the trend toward 23-hour lockdown. Have you been placed in a control unit for an extensive period of time and suffered serious psychological duress, hallucinations or other psychiatric symptoms or conditions as a result? Were you there for a non-violent or minor offense? I want to hear your story: Silja J.A. Talvi, 2424 E. Madison St #203, Seattle WA. 98112.

Mailing list additions and address changes should go into effect within two months from their postmarked date. Our goal is to answer requests for referrals and other correspondence within six weeks. Letters intended for publication must say "Do Print." If requesting responses, state if you can receive mail directly from those imprisoned. The Coalition makes information available on resources and services for prisoners. We strongly urge readers to keep copies of all papers, especially legal papers, sent to those offering assistance, and be careful about sending money. In most cases we do not have direct experience with the quality or reliability of the services provided by the groups mentioned. NONE OF US ARE LAWYERS.

ISSUES

Appleton MN

June 20, 2007

If you have an issue with Keefe Corporation, write to: Attorney General's Office, Consumer Protection Division, PO Box 899, Jefferson City MO 65102. This is what the Attorney General of Virginia, where Keefe is based, told me to do. [Eds' Disclaimer:None of us are lawyers]

ENVELOPES

Hominy OK

June 22, 2007

We won against price gouging on envelopes and aspirin just recently. ACA Standard 4-4379, entitled "non-prescription medication," is a result of our continued complaints about price gouging and lack of access to over-the-counter medications. It foiled some of the prisoncrats' plans to get rich off us and make us suffer in our cages. It takes time, stamps and effort, but eventually it works. Never give up!

PRAYERS

San Diego CA

June 2, 2007

The jury trial in the civil lawsuit *Henderson v. Ayers, et al.*, case number CV 06-4348, VBF (RC), U.S. District Court, Central District of California, concerning Muslims being denied release from work/school to attend Friday Islamic prayers, is now in the pre-trial discovery stage and may be in trial in early 2008. Muslims at Lancaster State Prison and R.J. Donovan will be affected and possibly all California state prisoners. Arthur Lee Henderson Sr, D-25201 F3-13-144U, PO Box 799003, San Diego CA 92179. Let me know if your requests for access to Friday prayers are denied. I am without funds to respond to inquiries--sorry. For those on the road to civil justice for Muslims incarcerated, read: *Mayweather v. Newland*, 136 F. Supp. 2d 1152, April 5, 2001.

PRISONERS' JUSTICE DAY

For 32 years, August 10 has been a day prisoners show solidarity in remembrance of those who have died unnecessarily. Some fast or refuse to work. It is a day of demonstrations, vigils, worship services and other events to raise public awareness of the demands made by prisoners to change the criminal injustice system, the brutal conditions that lead to so many prison deaths. It is a chance to publicly oppose prison and police violence, to talk about the disproportionate numbers of marginalized people being held in detention such as First Nations people.

[The CPR recently received the following statement] WITNESS FOR THE DEFENSE

"I was asked to testify because I am writing a study of death penalty cases since 1979 in my state. This case had all the red flags: the victims were an elderly white couple, well-liked in their community. Two men were accused of the crime, one white (actually a relative of the victims), the other Black. The white man bought his life by pleading guilty and agreeing to testify against the Black man. By the time I was asked to testify, the jury had already rejected the Black defendant's alibi evidence and found him guilty of all the crimes with which he had been charged. The jury had also decided that the state had proven an aggravating circumstance and had been informed that the defendant had already been sentenced to 120 years. The defendant was in his early forties. All that was left was for the jury to decide if he would die of natural causes in prison or of lethal injection. The substance of my testimony was simple. I would testify that, when it came to the death penalty, African-Americans were grossly under-represented as victims and over-represented as defendants. I would also testify that the particular district trying to kill this man had only sought the death penalty when the victims were white. The district's population was roughly 50% Black, but one-third of the defendants in death penalty cases were Black. As it turned out, the judge decided that the jury would not hear my testimony, although I did testify outside the presence of the jury. I think the defendant's family appreciated the fact that someone in the courtroom talked about racism, even if the jury did not get to hear it.

"This defendant was more fortunate than many. He came from a large, loving family that had turned out in force to support him through the three weeks of the trial. I met family members from my state, from a neighboring state, and from a state more than a thousand miles away. In the courtroom, they all sat behind the defendant, where I joined them. One by one they took the stand and talked about what this man was like as a son, as a brother, as an uncle, as a nephew. One of them, a preacher, spoke directly to the surviving family of the victims, telling them how very sorry he was for their loss. Another begged the jury not to sentence his relative to death, only to be told by the judge that he was not allowed to say that.

"Meanwhile, the surviving family members of the elderly couple who had been murdered, all of whom were white, sat behind the white prosecutors and law enforcement officers. They all seemed pleasant enough. What stays with me about this experience is the pain of both families. Their pain was as present in the courtroom as any witness. While the seating arrangements reminded me of a wedding, the feeling in our part of the courtroom was like the survivors at a funeral. Both sides tried to smile occasionally (humor is one way to hold back unbearable pain), but neither could completely hide their devastation. When I left the courthouse, I was thinking that these two families, so very different on the surface, had so much in common. I wondered if they would ever realize it. Two days later, the jury came back for life. And when they did, the daughter of the couple who had been killed walked up to the defendant, handed him a Bible, and told him that she forgave him. But there are no happy endings here, only survivors, variously injured."



VOICES IN SOLIDARITY

WOMEN IN PRISON SPECIAL PROJECT

"Women and Criminal Justice: Policing, Prosecution, and Incarceration" is a special issue of the *National Women's Studies Association Journal*, dedicated to exploring the global connections among the many ways in which women experience various aspects of the criminal justice system. The deadline for submissions is October 15, 2007. If you would like to contribute your scholarly or creative writing or artwork on this topic to the journal, please write to: Ashley Lucas, Center for Dramatic Art, CB#3230, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill NC 27599-3230.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL USA

We feel that one of the greatest strengths of the human rights movement is the solidarity forged among people from diverse backgrounds with different beliefs who come together with the one shared goal of ending human suffering. We know that while we might not always agree on all aspects of our respective organizational policies, that we share a long, rich history in fighting global injustice and upholding human rights. 600 Pennsylvania Avenue SE, Washington DC 20003, 202-544-0200, www.amnestyusa.org

PRIS-ART

Recently a brother of ours after 12 years went home, and in doing so is setting up a business and other programs to aid those of us inside the prisons. It is called PRIS-ART, PO Box 153, Noblesville IN 46061. It is for those in prison who have artistic talent or who purchase prison art inside the prison. The brother places the art in an on-line auction house to sell the art work and then returns most of the proceeds to the seller. For more information, write the above address. Do not send any art work until instructed to do so. The hope is to unite for good causes: employment, education, job placement training, and housing placement. The tools will be the desire to stay free, the collective effort and support and the power of a consolidated voting block.

"In the struggle of Good against Evil, it's always the people who get killed."

-- Eduardo Galeano

The Coalition for Prisoners' Rights Newsletter is published monthly by the Prison Project of Santa Fe, Inc., PO Box 1911, Santa Fe NM, 87504-1911. Subscription rates are: free to prisoners, their family members, and ex-prisoners who request it themselves; \$12/year for other individuals; \$25/year for government agencies and for-profit institutions. Please do not send names of other people; order only for yourself. We appreciate those who help us by sharing their newsletter and by sending stamps and other donations to us at the address at the top of this box.

Crime of the Month

aka Crimetoppers

Pfizer is a large U.S. drug company. In the 1990s, from the bowels of its laboratories, came a new antibiotic called Trovan. The company wanted to sell as much possible, for as much as possible. When drugs are tested in trials, the patients who participate in the trials are volunteers who have been informed of and agreed to possible risks. Since children really aren't able to understand the risks, it is unethical to do drug testing on children.

But Pfizer wanted quick and positive results for its new drug Trovan. In 1996, in Nigeria, there was an epidemic of meningitis in children, a dangerous infection of the brain. Pfizer chose to test the drug on these children without the knowledge or permission of the children's families. The families

were also not informed that effective medicines were already available for their sick children.

One hundred of the Nigerian victims of the epidemic were given Trovan. Another 100 victims were given an inadequate dose of a competitor's drug, so that the children given Trovan might appear to do better than the competition.

Eleven children died in the experiment, and other children were left blind or deaf or paralyzed. Pfizer left Nigeria and tried to hide all records of the experiment. This has now come to light, and Nigeria is trying to prosecute Pfizer for this crime.

Child abuse resulting in death is the crime this month, and Pfizer is the perpetrator.



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8/07

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