

AMC2012

Eradicating Mass Incarceration:
Commentary from The Inside. (Continued)^[1]
By: Mustafa-el K. A. Ajwa

II. Most Pressing Issues (Continued)

8.2. Racial and Religious Discrimination in Prison

In Wisconsin, which we believe is typical of most states, by sheer number the majority of arrests for crimes are Caucasian-Americans (roughly 76% in WI.), not African-Americans (roughly 22% in WI.). However, the majority who receive and are serving prison sentences for those same crimes is quite different: 45% African-American, 43% Caucasian.

Once in prison, there are prisons within prison — i.e., the hole, the box, solitary confinement, the most draconian and notorious of which are "supermaxes", such as the one the writer is confined in and has served over 10 years in, for his beliefs (Islam, Pan-African, Anti-Racist state repression) and non-violent activism (litigation for self and others, and writings such as these). The black code and Jim Crow rules of choice in this setting are 20C 303.20 (gang rules/group resistance and "disturbances") and 308 (Administrative Confinement ("A.C.") for alleged threats

^[1] The first two pages of this commentary have already been posted. To review those & get a complete reading please refer to that 6-26-12 post.

to security). Under these rules, roughly 72% of Escobedo Supermax (WSP) placement is of Alkebulis, 14% Caucasian and 14% Latino (although they comprise only 8% of the prison population). In other words these rules are being used as Black Codes/gm crow laws to target Alkebulis and for religious discrimination because most of these Alkebulis have Islam as their religion. This discrimination results in Alkebulis serving longer prison sentences (due to parole denial) and having higher risks of recidivism (denial of programs in solitary confinement, i.e., those necessary for release).

II. INCREASING EFFECTIVENESS.

How can organizations working to end mass incarceration do better? We applaud and salute all you are doing. To build on that here's what needs to be done:

(1) Connect with and facilitate the ideas and work of the avant-garde inside, which calls for a more direct and personal approach than the general efforts for the masses. There are untapped human resources inside and they receive the worst repression by the state. There are also those so arrested in their conscious and political development that they will pass on the hands that help them, which can destroy some of our best support — generalized help is all they can be entrusted with. These things and those ones it takes those inside to know.

(2) Is a bridge for us in here to be involved in the community (esp. those who come from) out there. Follow "In The Trenches" (my blog) and you'll see that we do have ideas in regards to development that ARE BENEFICIAL to the community, but they ARE dormant in here — usually because (personal experience) those who would be the BENEFICIARIES ARE so oppressed and repressed, stuck in survival mode, they are unprepared to take the initiative under our advisement alone. Those that would, we are simply not connected with — some were seen in the media but have NO ACCESS to.

III. The Type of Support Needed

The human resources I bring to the table ARE my legal aid and writing skills and mentoring (and being honored as one) to those coming inside and unconscious, and this is the case with most of the avant-garde I know. I've taught guys how, one recently got their paralegal diploma at MATC (milwaukee), won lawsuits for some, taught basic business (have a certificate for that), etc. However, my technical resources (scanty at best) are depleted, which diminishes each effort. What I need, and other serious workers I know, is access to copying, printing, and information (e.g., certain legal material — law reviews, briefs, etc. inaccessible here; cultural material on-line research/google; statistics, investigations info./reports, etc.). With this

Kind of assistance I can develop and disseminate a basic legal curriculum, cultural studies lessons, keep the [redacted] "movement-letter" (as opposed to mass newsletter) I edit relevant and actually moving something, and connect with activist outfits and inside (in other states) and network in a way yet to be seen (but easily and realistically envisioned).

Lastly, my attorney or paralegal out there, see Santiago V. Miles, 774 2 sup 775 (W.D. N.Y. 1994) (class action injunction won against racial discrimination in prison far less egregious than here).

It's about to file ours, the 2nd class action against this place, won the 1st, see Jones et al v. Berg, 164 2 sup 2d 1076 (W.D. Wis. 2001) (Supermax conditions unconstitutional, injunction granted). Need support on the new one (same claim as Santiago).

IV. Advocating Changes To Law

Changes that need to be advocated for are: (1) A 2 yr. cap on administrative confinement when there's been no incidents of threatening behavior within that time; (2) mandatory access to programs the court or DOC has required us to take to be released; (3) law banning mentally ill persons placement in supermaxes and punitive solitary confinement; (4) a freeze on child-support pay requirement for those imprisoned and not working minimum wage (usually not allowed to until at minimum security prison); and (5) A law proscribing correctional officers unions from influencing sentencing and prison release laws, which are in conflict (i.e., their job security and benefit objectives) with the states penal interests (which includes

rehabilitation and reducing the prison industry/population); and (6) NEW RELEASE LAWS/INCREASES FOR THOSE WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR RELEASE (AS I'VE BEEN SINCE 2008) AND SERVED OVER A DECADES IN PRISON (I'VE SERVED NEARLY 2, i.e., 19 years). THE PRISONERS, USUALLY OVER 30 YEARS OLD, ARE NOT THE LOST TEENS OR YOUTHFUL ADULTS THEY WERE 10 AND 20 YEARS AGO, AS AREN'T MANY OF YOU. SOME ARE NOW GRANDPARENTS. THEIR CONTINUED INCARCERATION IS EXCESSIVE.

Thank you for your attention to this commentary.

Amim!

Mustafa-el-Mu-el

(Mustafa-el-Mu-el)