

WE NEED TO "OCCUPY" THE PRISONS
A Rallying Cry

FROM: Timothy J. Muise

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To fight for a cause larger than the selfish wants of the individual becomes a wellspring of healing through the understanding and empathy the endeavor instills. The world calls for selflessness to solve its mysteries, but the flesh desires pleasures and safety zones, rendering us deaf to the call to arms. It can be exceedingly difficult to break out of our safe habits, to break out of our personal "prisons", but we must remember that it is eminently achievable. We must look to heal ourselves by assisting to heal others.

An outsider might seem to have easier choices than the prison captive, but if we can bridge the separation created by lack of understanding and stereotypes we can bridge the divide, close the gap, and we will see that most walls are not made of steel and concrete. Our hearts and minds can become captive to our restrictions on choice or fears of the unknown, but we can choose to fight for better understanding of the social ills that stem from the abusive incarceration of human beings. This abuse erodes the social fabric in a myriad of ways.

Is it selfish for a prisoner to fight for prison reform? I must offer that it is no more selfish than a student fighting for education reform or even a cancer patient fighting for a cure. Our realisation of needs and understanding of solutions is derived from our experiences. Sometimes the experiences of others can make us aware, and that is noble and many times effective, but there is nothing more powerful than becoming aware through our own lives. To be aware is to be alive someone once said, and our life wisdom makes us only partly alive. We are not fully alive until we apply that wisdom toward improving the human condition.

The defeatist attitude and operating procedures of the department of correction can only be overcome by the unified wisdom and efforts of self-aware captives and freeworld citizens. Children kill each other in the Mattapan corridor each summer as a result of failed tough on crime policies. For the prisoner the risks can be formidable and very real if they report abuse. Those risks can be reduced and retaliation can be insulated with the dedicated support of the reform community. The only way the abuse, failure, and counter-productive system can be exposed is through the prison captive. The only way that the prison captive can do this is with the full and displayed support of the reform community, abolitionists, effected families, and other self-aware and fully alive persons.

Not all prisoners are cut out for the "front lines" work. My belief is that there are many more men and women who are in fact cut out for it, but they will have to become aware of this in their own lives. To be at the head of the spear means that you sometimes get plunged into edge dulling barriers full force. To resharpen, reload, and pick up that lance again requires fortitude, and many of us have an abundance of it, but others must be spinning the sharpening stone and bandaging the wounds. They are the support system behind the front line warrior. Those who help out with the supportive duties deserve as much credit as those with their heads squarely upon the chopping block.

Wartime leaders are rare. It is easy to make decisions, to take risks

and gambles, when the consequences are few. When the penalty for such actions can be severe, can result in beatings and dungeons, a special kind of leader is required, one who can see several steps ahead, to have clear battlefield vision. This can make or break the battle or even the war. If anyone thinks that the push for dignified prison conditions and true public safety advancements is not a war they are sadly mistaken and will be subjected to more crime, violence, and social despair in their communities. Men have died behind prison walls for the cause and our children die in the streets due to the rehabilitative void. Our enemy, the sadistic and draconian abuse of guards and administrators, have the balance of power in their hands at this time. We can change that as what our enemy does not have is the truth. Their world is that of lies and deceit in an effort toward job security and increasing the prison industrial complex. We can and will reveal the truth behind the madness and that truth is our strongest ally. The truth in the lack of accountability for the systemic failures will shine its light upon the abusive staff actions that are the naked heart of the failed system. Our sprout of hope will sprout strong through the bloodied soil of the battlefield, and will not be stomped to death by their strong resistance to humane change which bleeds from the tortured soul of the jailer. Where is this progressive battlefield? It will be at the "Occupy Prisons" event set for September of 2013. We need you to be motivated to be there at the department of correction headquarters to show that you want to strengthen society and are outraged that no effective actions are being taken to address youth violence, drug use, violent crime, and most importantly to combat the social ills which foster crime and incarceration in the first place.

To get involved in this event in a real and meaningful way please contact the following individuals;

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Enclosed you will find a copy of our proposed platform as well as other materials for your perusal. Trust and believe that we can and will change the world and save lives!

In Solidarity ,

Timothy J. Muise

"Who shall stand guard to the guards themselves?"

Chazal