

Coalition For Prisoners' Rights Newsletter

Vol. 41-xx, No. 9

PO Box 1911, Santa Fe NM 87504

September 2016

A Long Term Strategy

Unprecedented Solidarity

It didn't come out of nowhere. In addition to the decades of unconscionable conditions and treatment, 45 years ago George Jackson had already been calling for a prisoners' union and a nationwide prison strike. On May 1, a 10 day strike began in Alabama, led by a man being held in solitary confinement. It became visible again on September 9; and, as of this writing, is continuing in a variety of forms and locations. Prisoners are participating in whatever way they can.

This challenge to mass incarceration has so far involved actions in 40 to 50 prisons around the U.S., in at least 24 states. Long-term isolation, inadequate health care, overcrowding, violent attacks and unpaid labor are all being protested. Locations of actions include Alabama, California, Florida, Indiana, Louisiana, Michigan, New York, Ohio, South Carolina, Washington, and Wisconsin--involving substantially more than 20,000 imprisoned people.

In addition, in Alabama, a small group of guards has refused to work. At Holman prison in Alabama on Saturday, September 24, there were only a commissioner, a deputy commissioner, three wardens, a sergeant, and a captain staffing the facility holding approximately 1,000 prisoners. "At 6:00 no officers came to work....Right now, the commissioner is passing out trays. A warden is pulling the cart...."

For more, and current information contact: Free Alabama Movement, PO Box 186, New Market AL 35761; 256-203-43711. Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee, PO Box 414304, Kansas City MO 64141; SupportPrisonerResistance-subscribe@lists.riseup.net; The Ordinary People Society, 403 West Powell St, Dothan AL 36303; 334-671-2882.

* * * BLACK LIVES MATTER * * *

INAUGURAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE

The conference of the Formerly Incarcerated and Convicted People and Families Movement (FICPFM) was held in Oakland CA on September 9 and attended by approximately 500 people from more than 30 states. (See our August 2014 issue for their 14 point platform.)

In addition to co-founder Dorsey Nunn of All of Us or None, participants included Sekou Odinga, a Black Panther; Susan Burton of A New Way of Life in Los Angeles, Angola 3 member Albert Woodfox and Sister Sheba/Claudia Grayson of the G.J. People's Free Health Clinic in Berkeley, Kenneth Glasgow of The Ordinary People's Movement in Alabama; Vivian Nixon of Education from the Inside Out.

A point clearly made by the activists present was that the system is not broken, but is operating exactly as designed, marginalizing poor people and people of color. This went along with the awareness that the present federal administration has not been a model for human rights.

The FICPFM's "Ban the Box" campaign, has spread across the country. At least people get out of prison nationally every year. Most employers require job-seekers to check a box on an application to indicate if they have a criminal record. Studies have shown that doing so reduced chances of a job-consideration callback by 50% and that African Americans are affected twice as much as "whites." A third of men without jobs between the ages of 25 and 54 have a criminal record. Lack of employment is one of the key reasons why over two-thirds are re-arrested, over half are re-convicted and two out of five are reincarcerated within three years of release.

For more information: Manuel LaFontaine; Program Coordinator; Legal Services for Prisoners w/ Children All of Us or None, 1540 Market St, Suite 490, San Francisco CA 94102; 415-255-7036

SOLICITING HOLIDAY/CALENDAR CARD DESIGN

Imprisoned Readers: please send us a black and white drawing for the 2017 year's New Year's card and calendar. All designs must be respectful of our diversity: We cannot use any with racist, sexist, or religious symbolism. The deadline is December 15. Submission of a drawing serves as permission for use, and will be credited Prize: If at all possible, book(s) by mail.

To receive a CPR Newsletter by postal mail monthly, send us up to 12 self-addressed, stamped envelopes (with the CPR return address).

Keep sending us address changes and renewal requests as we struggle to maintain the mailing list for the January holiday card/new calendar mailing as accurately as possible.

Also, note that the only address address to be sure to reach us is: PO Box 1911, Santa Fe NM 87504. Some resource address listings are incorrect.

NONE OF US ARE LAWYERS OR LEGAL WORKERS so, for our protection, please do not mark envelopes sent to us as "Legal Mail."

Many, many thanks to the Real Cost of Prisons Project for making our Newsletter free on-line for downloading and distribution. It is at: <http://www.realcostofprisonsproject.org/html--this is a GREAT site!>

We depend on our readers' donations & thank you for your support! Mil gracias! *****

Una huelga por las condiciones de vida

Se cumple el 45 aniversario del levantamiento de la cárcel de Attica. Al igual que los presos que tomaron las instalaciones penitenciarias tristemente célebres de Nueva York en el año 1971, hoy los presos están protestando contra el aislamiento prolongado, la atención médica inadecuada, el hacinamiento, los ataques violentos y el trabajo forzado.

Las acciones de hoy evocan protesta similares sucedidas a principios de este año. En marzo, miles de personas en las cárceles de Michigan iniciaron una huelga de hambre después de que el proveedor de comidas, Aramark Correctional Services. La misma empresa provocó protestas en Georgia cuando la falta de alimentios llevó a los prisioneros a comer pasta de dientes. En mayo, hombres en prisiones de Alabama iniciaron otra huelga.

Resource for the next column: *The Economic Burden of Incarceration in the U.S.*, Working Paper #C1072016, Concordance Institute for Advancing Social Justice, Campus Box 1196, 1 Brookings Dr, St Louis MO 63130.

COST OF INCARCERATION: \$1 TRILLION

This is not the same as the "cost of crime," often estimated to be \$80 billion annually. The social costs omitted form a more accurate picture of the cost of incarceration and include costs to incarcerated people themselves, families, children, and communities. Monetary values were assigned to 22 different costs. The total approaches 6% of the gross domestic product.

For every dollar in "corrections" costs, incarceration generates an additional ten dollars in social costs. More than half of the costs are borne by families, children, and community members who have not been convicted of any crime. Excluding the costs of jail, the aggregate burden of incarceration would still exceed \$500 million annually. These numbers are from a study conducted by a team from Washington University in St. Louis and were released in July of 2016.

Each cost estimated represents either the opportunity cost of resources deployed or people's willingness-to-pay to avoid an undesirable outcome. Opportunity costs refers to the fact that the money spent on incarceration cannot be spent elsewhere. So the \$1 trillion dollar amount identifies the lifetime cost associated with all incidences of incarceration occurring within a single year.

Costs broken down, all in BILLIONS: are prison systems-\$91.1, lost wages while incarcerated-\$70.5, reduced lifetime earnings of formerly incarcerated-\$230.0, nonfatal injuries while incarcerated-\$28.0, fatal injuries while incarcerated-\$1.7, higher mortality rates of formerly incarcerated-\$62.6, visitors' costs-\$0.8, moving costs-\$0.5, eviction costs-\$0.2, interest on "criminal justice" debt-\$5.0, adverse health effects-\$10.2, infant mortality-\$1.2, children's reduced education level and adult wages-\$30.0, children of incarcerated people's increased involvement the with court and penal system-\$130.6, child welfare-\$5.3, children's homeless because of parents' incarceration-\$0.9, homelessness of formerly incarcerated-\$2.2, reentry programs-\$2.9, decreased property values-\$11.0, "crime producing" behavior reinforced by imprisonment-\$285.8, divorce-\$17.7, reduced marriage-\$9.0.

New Prison Book Project

Books available by request. Tell us the types of books you want and restrictions where you are. Include ID# in return address. We send to MA, CT, ME, NH, VT, and RI. Write: Great Falls Books Through Bars, PO Box 391 Greenfield MA 01301.