

Coalition For Prisoners' Rights Newsletter

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May 2014

Our Thanks to *Hurricane*: Prisons Are All The Same Rubin Hurricane Carter: May 6, 1937 -- April 20, 2014

"There are prisons, and there are prisons. They may look different, but they're all the same. They're all confining. They all limit your freedom. They all lock you away, grind you down and take a terrible toll on your self-esteem. There are prisons made of brick, steel and mortar. And then there are prisons without visible walls, prisons of poverty, illiteracy and racism. All too often, the people condemned to these metaphorical prisons--poverty, racism

and illiteracy--end up doing double time. That is, they wind up in the physical prisons, as well. Our task, as reasonable, healthy, intelligent human beings, is to recognize the interconnectedness and the sameness of all these prisons, and then do something about them."

--Rubin Hurricane Carter 1994. He was incarcerated for 19 years before being exonerated. He wrote *Eye of the Hurricane*, published in 2011, with a Forward by Nelson Mandela.

INEQUALITY GETTING WORSE

From the end of 2008 to the middle of 2013, total U.S. wealth increased from \$47 trillion to \$72 trillion. The richest 1% made over \$5 million for each of their 1.2 million households.

The next richest 4% gained about \$5.1 trillion. That's over a million dollars for each of their 4.8 million households. The least wealthy 90% in our country own only 11% of all stocks excluding pensions.

From 2009 to 2011, the average net worth of households in the upper 7% rose by an estimated 28%, while the average net worth of households in the lower 93% dropped by 4%. From 2011 to 2013, the stock market grew by almost 50%. The great majority of that gain went to the richest 5%. Of all countries with at least a quarter of a million adults, the U.S. is 4th in wealth inequality, led only by Russia, Ukraine and Lebanon.

WHAT DOES CCA STAND FOR?

This for-profit prison corporation, officially the Corrections Corporation of America, is currently under investigation by the FBI for fraud. The feds are looking into allegations that the CCA falsified employment records to hide that the Idaho Corrections Center was so badly understaffed that it became known as a "Gladiator School" due to the violence there.

And it isn't only in Idaho that CCA has had problems. In Ohio, compliance auditors

Seeking Testimony

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) is seeking testimony from women, men and children in U.S. prisons. Both the U.N. Periodic Review of the U.S. and the Shadow Report for the U.N. Convention Against Torture are due within the next few months. Both need input from you on "no touch" (solitary), physical and chemical torture, rape, racism, brutality, sexual and other violence, lack of medical care and other aspects of prisoner treatment that violate human rights.

We will be accepting testimonies until August 22, 2014. You will receive confirmation of receipt of testimony. Statements should be no more than two pages describing what you have experienced or seen. Send to: Bonnie Kerness, AFSC, 89 Market St, 6th floor, Newark NJ 07102. We appreciate your courage in sharing your voice. Thank you.

found a CCA operated prison with no running water for the waste system. Also, immigration detention facilities under CCA management have had many suicides.

CCA's 2,300 capacity facility at California City has been a California DCR overflow site for much of this year. Many people on meds for chronic conditions have been shipped there only to be shipped back to their original prison within two weeks, when it became obvious that their medication needs could not be met there.

CRIME OF THE MONTH

Remember when we used to have to pretend that "innocent until proven guilty" was the basis for our so-called legal system? Thankfully, the Senate's recent confirmation of David Barron as a judge in the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals has relieved us of the burden of such hypocrisy. Now we can finally admit that guilt or innocence has nothing to do with "justice."

Barron is the fine upstanding lawyer at the Department of Justice who wrote a legal memo in 2010 assuring us that the U.S. government can arbitrarily decide people are guilty, then assassinate them without wasting time and resources on the inconvenience of a trial. We can kill anybody we "suspect" of being an "imminent threat," anywhere in the world. How cool is that!

Of course, Barron's historic memo is still a "secret." No one outside of the government has actually had a chance to read it yet. But that's okay. We've been assured that soon an edited version will be released so that we little people can at least sort of see why we no longer need to be troubled by the myth of "the rule of law" in our society.

Let's hope that more honest people like Barron will be rewarded with judgeships so we can get on with the real business of our legal system, the glorification of might makes right. Our Crime of the Month is the absurd machinations of our government which allow the power elite to literally get away with murder.

To receive the Newsletter by postal mail each month, send us self-addressed, stamped envelopes (with the CPR return address)--up to 12 at one time.

Please continue to send us address changes and renewal requests, in order to be sent the yearly holiday card/ new calendar each January.

Also, please note that the *only* address to use to be sure to reach us continues to be: PO Box 1911, Santa Fe NM 87504. There are resource listings which, unfortunately, use an incorrect address. Remember: NONE OF US ARE LAWYERS OR LEGAL WORKERS. Please do not mark any envelopes sent to us as "legal mail."

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

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

COMITE INTERNACIONAL POR LA LIBERTAD DE LOS 5 CUBANOS

Un intercambio de presos para pacificar las relaciones entre Cuba y los Estados Unidos. [el 12 de mayo 2014]

Alan Gross, agente estadounidense, cumple una pena de prisión de 15 años en Cuba desde 2009. Por otro lado, tres agentes cubanos están encarcelados en los Estados Unidos desde 1998. Existe la posibilidad de un intercambio de presos y el caso de Gerardo Hernández, uno de los tres cubanos, condenado a dos cadenas perpetuas, se prestaría particularmente a un acuerdo humanitario.

VOICES FROM INSIDE

Shirley MA March-April-May 2014

What we have begun here in MA is to form advocacy groups which present the real voice of the prisoner, of the oppressed. We have found loyal advocates who have formed what we see as formidable advocacy groups that will represent what the prisoners see as our needs. They are:

CURE-ARM, Inc. BREAD & WATER
Donna Barnoski PRISONERS, Inc.
PO Box 396 Karen L. Schulman
Billerica MA 01821 PO Box 84
tmuise63@gmail.com Hopedale MA 01747
KLSchulman@verizon.net

Also: Timothy J. Muise, W66927, MCI
Shirley, PO Box 1218, Shirley MA 01464.

This Change Is Only Cosmetic

The clemency proposed by the White House changes no laws or institutions or police, prosecutorial or prison practices.

Presidential clemency can only be applied to federal prisoners, who are 11% of the 1.7 currently imprisoned. There are more former prisoners than current ones, and they continue to face a lifetime of vicious discrimination. The feds will not even be screening all federal drug prisoners--the majority, those who don't have vigilant private attorneys and advocacy organizations, will remain unjustly imprisoned.

This Change Goes Backwards

As of May 1, the New Mexico Department of Corrections is dumping its modest, almost 30 year old conjugal visit program which serves 150 out of 7,000 prisoners a year.

Fortunately, NY, CA, WA and CT still offer them. The NM Sec. of Corrections did comment that many inmates weren't happy to lose their conjugal visits....