

Lock Up, U.S.A.

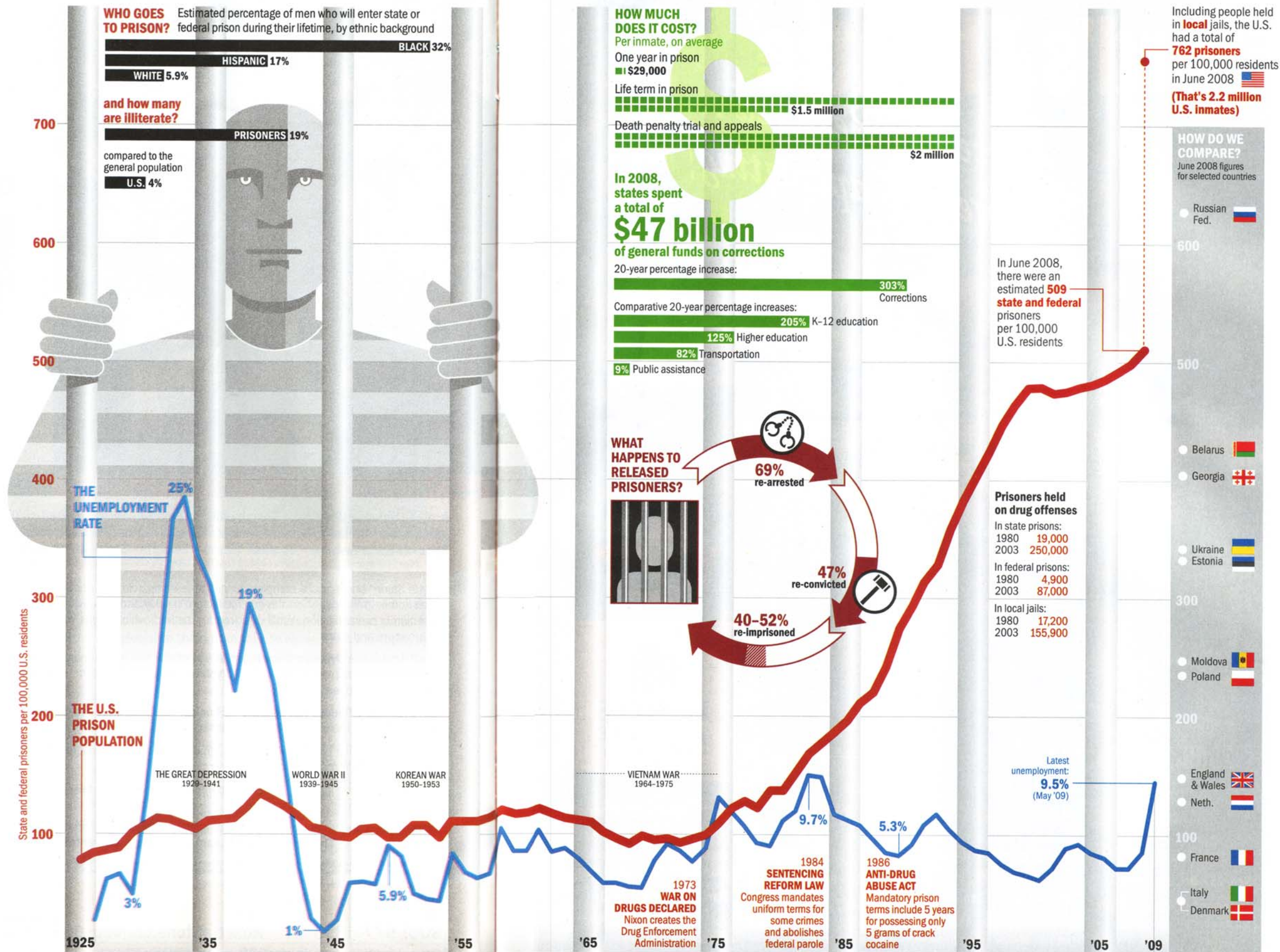
America may be the land of freedom, but we also lock up more of our citizens than any other nation. That was not always the case. During the Great Depression and the four decades that followed, the incarceration rate hovered around 100 prisoners per 100,000 U.S. residents, dipping a bit during wars, when young men were drafted. Since 1985, however, the incarceration rate has risen five-fold, and the number of inmates has tripled. The increase is due primarily to tougher mandatory sentencing laws at both the federal and state levels and a quantum leap in the number of jailed drug offenders, who now account for one-quarter of the total prison population. Between 1974 and 2000, the number of state prisons rose from 592 to 1,023.

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ONE QUARTER OF THE WORLD'S PRISON POPULATION IS IN THE U.S.



1 in every 100 adults in the U.S. is locked up



Sources: Bureau of Justice Statistics; National Association of State Budget Officers, "State Expenditure Report"; One in 100: Behind Bars in America 2008 by the Pew Center on the States; Peter Wagner, The Prison Policy Initiative; Urban Institute; International comparisons: World Population List (8th edition) by Roy Walmsley, published 2009 by the International Center for Prison Studies, King's College, London