

Ending The Obscenity of Prisons

The brutality of a country that has more people locked in prison than any other in the world is a crime of untold proportions. Prisons are deeply enmeshed in American culture and it's historic fabric. Even the most casual student of history is familiar with the tragic world-altering brutalities of the past in which subsequent generations asked, with justifiable outrage, why is the general public silent and uninterested with slowing and in time stopping the out of control juggernaut of mass incarceration, building more prisons, the misery and destruction wrought by unprecedented concentration of wealth and power, corrupt electoral politics, the ever growing rates of poverty and many other pressing social problems.

Whether by design or happenstance, this disengagement has been a tremendous boom to Wall Street bankers, corrupt politicians, money-grubbing contractors who build more prisons and The Prison Industrial Complex, (PIC). The vast majority of Americans are consigned to observer status. A broad insidious apathy has taken hold of American citizenry. Mass consumerism and unchecked capitalism continues to run rampant in America.

Our challenges can sometimes seem overwhelming. To exercise power we must create and put forth ingeniously highly proficient strategies that have been meticulously tested and proved to be workable and will generate a wave of strong support that launch us on the road to success. We must induce a seismic shift in our thinking and planning. Our narrative must give a sense of unity, purpose and optimism. Let us build relationships based on trust, mutual respect and solidarity that help create needed disciplinary policies, with an emphasis on problem solving. I often ask myself, does our narrative resonate to a large section of the public? Have we lost our grip on the essential virtues embodied by a narrator? I believe that we must put forth a strong unified version of our mission and actions that not just awakens public sympathies but enlighten and enlarge imagination and inspire people to join us. Changes will be made only

in response to changed people. I strongly believe in the power of tides and of the way a thing that is moving one way can yet, in time, with courage and determination of the majority of people, bring about powerful positive change.

Corrupt political campaigns that focus on undermining democracy to make sure that uninformed voters make irrational choices, continues. Many politicians upon being elected to office create policies that interpret their elections as a writ to do whatever they want and begin behaving in imperious or corrupt ways. Too few politicians are not leveling with the public regarding the many social and economical problems in America. Mass incarceration and building more prisons creates huge economic and social cost including the break up of families and the increased risk that children of those families will become criminals a generation later. Locking up vast numbers of non-violent offenders is also a huge waste of money and other resources. When almost one percent of Americans are imprisoned, the criminal justice system becomes a cause of family breakdown and contributes to the delinquency of a generation of children.

Mass incarceration interacts with other government policies, such as the way the so-called drug war is implemented to have a disproportionate effect on Black, Hispanic young men. Criminal justice reform advocates have been unsuccessful bringing about these much needed changes. They have not adequately addressed many of these entrenched problems. They remain stubbornly behind the curve, and the Federal government is cutting education spending, yet continues to spend billions of dollars building and funding prisons and the Prison Industrial Complex. Is this a prime case of justice served or justice run amok?

In a country that is supposed to be post-racial but still seems hell-bent on the epidemic destruction of young Black and Hispanic men is a crime against humanity. We must shatter the public's moral complacency. We must provoke a powerful streak of lightning through the brain when the people's mind is pierced by an understanding and

realization that was previously inaccessible. Americans must give up the myth that they can incarcerate the way to a safe society. We must send an ever louder decibels call for ending the obscenity of prisons.

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