

Revolution by Action

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Khalfani Malik Khaldun is a New Afrikan political prisoner who is incarcerated at the Westville Detention Center in Illinois. He is one of the leading voices from inside the prison walls against the abuses of the U.S. criminal justice system. We call on our readers to support his struggle for exoneration.

Advocating Oppositional/Consciousness Inside an Indiana Control Unit “....a highly restrictive, high-custody housing within a secured facility, or an entire secure facility, that isolates inmates from the general population and from each other due to the grievous opposition, to violation against their humanity....”

Politics of Imprisonment

The U.S. is currently experiencing a recession that's being felt by almost all of its citizenry, from local small business to prisons. From the year 1931 until the beginning of economic recovery and the decline of relief programs in 1940, the relationship between economic relief expenditure and incarceration was apparent. This special relationship, like the one between unemployment and incarceration, underscores the economic basis for the Prison Problem in the United States.

The maximum use of the U.S. Prison System as a weapon of Class Warfare was part of the neo-conservative agenda initiated during the Reagan Administration. Rudy Giuliani, then Assistant U.S. Attorney General in 1981, articulated the new policy in classical terms. “In the beginning,” he said, “man formed government to protect against the dangers of invaders from without as well as predators from within. National defense and domestic defense are, therefore the two primal functions of any government. Our criminal justice system is charged with one of these two primal tasks.” No subsequent administration, including that of past Democratic President Bill Clinton, has deviated from the prison policies established during the early 1980's.

The prison population, as high as it is, is only the “Tip of the Iceberg.” There are millions more who are under “correctional control”; the total adult population now under correctional control exceeds 6.6 million. There has been a corresponding upward trend in

the cost of operating the Criminal Justice System in the United States between 1982 and 1997, expenditures on corrections increased to 381%. Total direct spending on the Criminal Justice System in the United States for the period rose by 262%. The layout for Criminal Justice in the United States approached \$130 billion in 1997.

Five million jobs have been lost in the U.S. since last year. In Great Britain, over two Million people are out of work, and millions more lost jobs in Germany, France, Canada, Australia, and elsewhere. But these losses pale in comparison to the 20 million jobs that China has lost since the start of the downturn. And the “Great Recession” is only the beginning.

Unexpected Changes inside Indiana Prison Policies

There is an over-crowding Prison Problem inside the State of Indiana. In a recent article describing this, information was released of correctional facility construction underway to accommodate the expected additional bodies.

One hundred and sixteen laws were enacted by the Legislature since 1989 that created new crimes or enhanced existing penalties; 269.4 number of prison years were added by the enactment of those Indiana “Sentencing Laws.” 7,365 was the number of inmates in maximum-security in Indiana DOC custody in 2008; 6,186 is the number of beds in maximum security now that are available.

Highlighting a recent escape, IDOC Commissioner Edwin Buss stated that this is why there was a need to build additional maximum-security cellblocks at two of the prisons here. A debate ensued in the political community over the State’s Correctional System priorities. Indiana State Senator (R)-Noblesville, Luke Kensley, Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman, stated: “We clearly have a tendency to want to show that we’re strong on law enforcement by passing more crime laws and elevating things to felonies. That’s somewhat of a contagious disease around here.”

Bill Crawford, Indiana House Ways & Means Committee Chairman, stated: “It would be difficult to justify an expansion of prison beds at a time when Governor Mitchell Daniel’s proposal to sort of ‘flat line’ education: it emphasizes incarceration over education.” That’s not rehabilitation at all. And, Indiana Senate Minority Leader Senator Vi Simpson, (D)-Euettville, said she’d rather see those prison dollars going to education, including Indiana University at Bloomington, which is in her district.

So, it seems that Rehabilitation Programs and opportunities to obtain higher education are being shoved to the back burner to facilitate prison expansion. Dr. Terry L. Baumer,

Associate Professor of Public and Environmental Affairs, and Director of Criminal Justice Programs, at the School of Public and Environmental Affairs (SPEA), Purdue University at Indianapolis, blames the “War on Drugs” for filling up prison space that should be used by more violent offenses. He noted that the crime rate is going down, from a high of 525.1 violent crimes per 100,000 in 1994, to 333.6 in 2007, according to the Bureau of Justice statistics.

Larry Landis, Executive Director of the Indiana Public Defender Council, said that at a cost of \$54.28 per day, or more than \$19,000 annually to house and feed one prisoner, Indiana needs to find better alternative measures than just mindless prison construction. They’re building more prisons to keep space, more space and bodies equal more money period.

Revolutionary Oppositional Consciousness

Indiana’s Prison System is home to all sorts of men/women who all share a commonality with one another. They’re all similarly situated inside a prison. Prison, as many of you know or may not know, are institutions maintained through the enforcement of policies, rules, procedures, and Executive Directives. These guidelines for maintaining a prison are enforced by correctional officers, some of which display real professionalism, while some others see it as an opportunity to carry out repression, disguised as correctional work.

By nature, certain groups of prisoners who are strong-minded, and strong-willed, will oppose any guidelines that dehumanize them in some way. These types of prisoners are health-conscious, motivated to educate themselves and demand respect from their fellow prisoners and staff. They oppose any system of thought that goes against what they hold dear to their hearts. So, they are constantly engaged in internal/external wars, not to be defeated by the deteriorating environmental conditions of prison. Whether in general population or solitary confinement, or isolated on a control unit, these wars are for survival, mental stability, staying connected to the streets by the building or re-building of greater relationships with family; there are some procedures that only serve a purpose of breaking people down by discouraging supporters from remaining connected.

Prisoners who stand tall and never surrender their will to be free in any way, to me, share with me an *Oppositional Consciousness*. They share knowledge, wisdom, and guidance for the younger element of prisoner, to help straighten out their path; these prisoners men or women are revolutionary by action. The State Prison System, the Indiana Department of Corrections, as early as February 9, 2009, and February 11, 2009, surprisingly changed some of their procedures it would appear on the face of it, by bringing some solutions to

the by then, out-of-control disciplinary problem. We have fought long and hard by submitting proposals requesting modifications in the way Disciplinary Hearing Boards were excessively handing out sanctions to prisoners for placement into Disciplinary Segregation or demotions resulting in more prison time for prisoners.

Executive Directive #09-07 states:

“...it is the intent of the Department that the facilities will reduce the amount of Disciplinary Segregation time that offenders are given for most offenses...However, for those offenders who commit the most serious (egregious) offenses, such as Batteries (A-102), Escape (A-108), Rioting (A-103), etc. The Disciplinary Segregation guidelines for (2004) shall remain in effect. Accordingly, most serious offenses an offender may receive up to one (1) year in Disciplinary Segregation...”

Under this new progressive Directive, time-deprived due to prison infractions are now given back 90 days earlier, ultimately resulting in some cases where prisoners are being released much earlier than expected; 90 % are now being restored which is good.

Exposing Overzealous Prisoncrats' Aspirations for Power

In my 22 years of incarceration, sadly enough, I have had to witness, with my own eyes, to Indiana Prisoncrats creating situation after situation inside this prison environment, just so they can come in to resolve it, and somehow gain the “Brownie Points” for being a problem-solver. Many of these Prisoncrats have been promoted in rank, status, and position, having used real-life incidents inside these prisons, “pre-conditioned” as they may be, and have advanced their individual careers. The exaggerated gang problem inside these prisons across the U.S. is one example of “creating a situation.” The mere mention of a gang problem opens the floodgates for funding to organize for safer security measures.

Prisoncrats will go to great lengths and at the expense of one prisoner, or as many of them as it takes, to accomplish their premeditated agendas that ultimately would end up benefiting the Prisoncrats. The use of Administrative Segregation Units is where most prisoners have been or are warehoused because of their presence as a potential threat to a prison administration in some way. But in some cases, a manufactured and unjustifiable claim can be made by Prisoncrats that would permanently keep certain prisoners warehoused who “do not” cooperate with their manipulation of a situation.

Prisoncrats will severely punish the uncooperative prisoner, but reward other prison elements that opportunistically allow themselves to be participants in the games

Prisoncrats play. Prisoners have had their names and reputations destroyed simply by engaging in “good-intentioned measures” that were made to look like bad or unprincipled prison politics.

Placing prisoners into new and ambiguous situations, for which the standards are kept deliberately vague and unclear, and then pressuring them to conform to what is desired in order to win favor and a reprieve from pressure. Speaking however for prisoners who by choice have worked hard and long to not be victimized by the actions of over-zealous Prisoncrats, these are the true “Revolutionaries” by their own actions of displaying an *Oppositional Consciousness*; and refusing all forms of dehumanization, these men are standing up.

—**All power to the people**

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In Solidarity,

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