

All told, Alabama is making anywhere from 2 to 3 billion dollars each year from our labor, fines, fees, canteen, phone calls, etc. while over \$500,000,000,000 dollars is made nationwide off of prison slave labor.

If we are to end Mass Incarceration and Prison Slavery, which only those caught up in the slave system can do, then we must Unify nationwide from inside of these prisons and we must stop our labor and LET THE CROPS ROT IN THE FIELD.

Notes

1. See online at: <http://truthcdm.com/corporations-involved-in-profiting-off-prison-labour-prison-for-profit-dirty-secrets/>
2. Idem: <http://truthcdm.com/corporations-involved-in-profiting-off-prison-labour-prison-for-profit-dirty-secrets/>
3. See: truth-out.org/news/item/27125-smoke-and-mirrors-inside-the-new-bipartisan-prison-reform-agenda
4. See: Atlanta Black Star, Oct. 10th, 2014: 12 Mainstream Corporations Benefiting from the Prison Industrial Complex <http://atlantablackstar.com/2014/10/10/12-mainstream-corporations-benefiting-from-the-prison-industrial-complex/>
5. See: Buzzfeed News: The Prisoners Fighting California's Wildfires, Oct 31st, 2014 <http://www.buzzfeed.com/amandachicagolewis/the-prisoners-fighting-californias-wildfires#.ajPXZzq8xr>
6. See: LA Times, Nov. 14, 2014 <http://www.latimes.com/local/political/la-me-ff-federal-judges-order-state-to-release-more-prisoners-20141114-story.html>
7. See: Buzzfeed News: The Prisoners Fighting California's Wildfires, Oct 31st, 2014 <http://www.buzzfeed.com/amandachicagolewis/the-prisoners-fighting-californias-wildfires#.ajPXZzq8xr>

FREE ALABAMA MOVEMENT & FREE MISSISSIPPI MOVEMENT

Committed to Non-Violent and Peaceful Protests for Civil and Human Rights for the Men and Women Incarcerated in Alabama & Mississippi prisons, and any other prison where the People desire to be FREE.

FREE ALABAMA MOVEMENT

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LET THE CROPS ROT IN THE FIELDS:

A Call For New Strategy in The National Movement Against Mass Incarceration and Prison Slavery – Short Version

By FREE ALABAMA MOVEMENT

After a period of over 40 years of an accelerated rate of incarceration, the issue of Mass Incarceration and Prison Slavery have now reached its crescendo.

Spurred on by factors that included racism, capitalism, free labor, and a politically motivated desire to provide jobs to a valued voting block of rural, conservative white citizens by building prisons in rural and agricultural areas that had been decimated by the Industrial Revolution and the outsourcing of jobs to China, India, Indonesia, etc.

Then, once the prisons were built, the government manufactured a “war on drugs” designed to fill those newly built prisons with black, brown and poor whites who had been rendered unemployable by corporate downsizing and outsourcing in the early 70’s, and who were considered a strain on social programs, unwanted competitors for limited jobs, and ideal candidates for corporations that needed a large labor pool for forced slave labor.

Mass incarceration has now culminated in a for-profit Prison Industrialized Complex that now holds over 2.5 million men, women and children hostage for the sole and exclusive purpose of exploitation and free labor.

Today, January 2015, the people in America’s prisons, mostly black, brown (and white), and all poor, now make up a free (or penny wages) labor force for a 500 billion dollar per-year industry that is producing a range of products and providing services so broad and extensive that it touches every area of the U.S. economy.

Virtually EVERY person in prison, our families, friends and supporters, and even every organization that states that they are against mass incarceration prison slavery, are all contributing financially to the very companies that are exploiting the people through mass incarceration and prison slavery.

Have you ate at McDonald’s or Wendy’s lately? Shopped at WalMart or Victoria’s Secret? How about that Dell computer? Have you used a customer service center? Where do you bank at, Wells Fargo? Are you in the military? Have you seen a soldier in that finely stitched uniform with night vision goggles? Do you work for a State University or agency that gets its furniture repaired somewhere?? Or that purchases large amounts of cleaning supplies, or hand-made brooms, mops, etc.? How many of these companies do you do business with?

Well, if you get up out of the bed and do anything more than breathe, chances are you contribute to the bottom line of a company that is engaged in warehousing millions of people for exploitation through mass incarceration and prison slavery.

Just to get a general idea of how pervasive this modern-day forced labor, i.e. slave system is, check out this article titled: Corporations Involved in Profiting off Prison Labour. Prison for Profit Dirty Secrets1 :

“Prison labor— with no union protection, overtime pay, vacation days, pensions, benefits, health and safety protection, or Social Security withholding — also makes

complex components for McDonnell Douglas/Boeing's F-15 fighter aircraft, the General Dynamics/Lockheed Martin F-16, and Bell/Textron's Cobra helicopter. Prison labor produces night-vision goggles, body armor, camouflage uniforms, radio and communication devices, and lighting systems and components for 30-mm to 300-mm battleship anti-aircraft guns, along with land mine sweepers and electro-optical equipment for the BAE Systems Bradley Fighting Vehicle's laser rangefinder. Prisoners recycle toxic electronic equipment and overhaul military vehicles."

For a listing of the many other companies, products and services, read the article: Corporations Involved in Profiting off Prison Labour. Prison for Profit Dirty Secrets2:

Don't Trust the Mainstream Media

All across America, one can't turn on the news, read a newspaper, or follow social media without seeing that mass incarceration and prison slavery ('corrections' or 'prisons' in mainstream terms) have become a national problem. The 'problem' though, as being reported in the mainstream media (msm), is not about the human devastation that mass incarceration has wrought, but about the costs associated with maintaining budgets to keep so many people in prison.

The mainstream media, which is controlled by the business elite no less than our current politicians, are reporting on this 'problem,' but with no real solutions being offered.

CAUTION: I must add that the reason the msm is reporting on this issue is because the prison profiteers are promoting a 'reform' plan to the public that in reality is a new scheme that has been thoroughly exposed by N. Heitzeg and K. Whitlock in their Smoke and Mirrors series,³ to expand the privatized prison industry directly into the communities with community corrections, privatized parole/probation, drug rehabilitation centers, traffic court, and more, with the sole purpose of releasing low level offenders, who will then be required to pay a ransom to enjoy a semblance of freedom.

Simply stated, every facet of the criminal justice enterprise will be contracted out to private for-profit businesses, and the human traffickers who own these businesses will become the new slave masters. The businessmen and women will make their campaign contributions, the politicians will ensure that the laws are in place, the police will make the arrest, the prosecutors and judges will guarantee the convictions, and the prisoner will be a slave.

The New Strategy: Using Direct Economic Action to Affect Change

When determining the best strategy to challenge Mass Incarceration and Prison Slavery, it is essential that we step back and take a look at the entire system. We must identify the fundamentals of what makes this system work and why this system exists. Once we thoroughly understand the underpinnings of the system of Mass Incarceration we can begin to see why the old strategies and tactics have not and will not bring about any meaningful change. Then we can begin developing a New Strategy that attacks Mass Incarceration at its core.

Just like the Institution of Chattel Slavery, Mass Incarceration is in essence an Economic System which uses human beings as its nuts and bolts. Therefore, our new approach must be Economically based, and must be focused on the factors of production- the people being forced into this slave labor.

MOVEMENT, is the key to bringing the system of mass incarceration and prison slavery to its death: If we are held solely for our labor and exploitation even after educating and rehabilitating ourselves, then why should we continue to work? If the firefighters in California can't be freed because they save the State a billion dollars that they don't otherwise have, then why don't the firefighters go on a workstrike? The fires will continue to burn until they either come up with 1 billion dollars to train other firefighters, or they can release them and then hire them to do the job that at prevailing wages.

Also please note that the State is saving one billion dollars just on the firefighters alone. How much more pressure would a work strike/shutdown put on the CDCR or any other prison system, when all the kitchen workers go on strike? All the maintenance and electrical workers? All the garbage workers? The yard crew? Gym and library workers? And then the BIG whammy, when ALL of the factory and farm workers in prisons go on strike at one time, and this strike is spread regionally and nationally?

The financial numbers and fallout from such a strike will be felt from Wall Street to Main Street, and every street in between. This is the power of economics at play, and this strategy is the only strategy that will stop mass incarceration in its tracks.

WE MUST LET THE CROPS ROT IN THE FIELD IF WE AREN'T RECEIVING BENEFIT OF THE HARVEST

LET THE CROPS ROT IN THE FIELD is a proven strategy that was passed down to us from our Ancestors from the slave plantations that was used to disrupt the economics of the field. The harvest of the planter season was reaped when the crops were picked from the field and sold on the open market. When the slave master had invested all that he owned into his next crop (prison factories), the slaves would wait until just before the harvest and rebel against the slave system by 'going on strike' and causing the crops to rot in the field. This tactic would completely ruin the slave master's investment.

While these crops were rotting in the field, the slave master would come down from the big house, make nice and beg the slaves to go back to work

But when that didn't work, the slave master, just like the modern prison commissioners and wardens, would then result to threats and violence. But those determined for their freedom would resist and fight to the end.

In the end, when the crops were left to rot in the field, the slave master would sometimes lose his plantation if he had used it as collateral to secure a loan from the bank to plant. This is what happens to a prison system that is built upon the exploitation and free labor of the people incarcerated: when the laborers stop working, the free labor prison system collapses because there isn't any revenue coming in to finance the system of 30,000 people in Alabama, 23,000 in Mississippi, 160,000 in California, or 2.5 million nationwide, who still must be fed, still must be provided medical care, still must have lights, water and basic hygiene.

These obligations and costs don't stop, but the means to pay for them — the revenue that is produced by our labor — stops when we stop.

In 2014, Alabama has a 400 million dollar budget to run its prisons, which is paid by the sale of the products and services that are manufactured by the slave labor from the people incarcerated.

In F.A.M. we strategize around bringing all of the forces and resources together from each individual state into one collective whole. Groups that are fighting against the death penalty, solitary confinement, children in prison, voting rights, mentally ill people in prison, free labor, disenfranchisement, parole reform, and a few other issues. We will address all of these issues in our “FREEDOM BILL”, so everyone and every organization that is fighting against these issues should all be fighting together.

Note: Each State should draft their own FREEDOM BILL

The best way that we see to do this in Alabama is to identify the most economically important prison(s) in Alabama, and start organizing shutdowns until all of the strategically important prisons are shut down. One main prison will serve as the “headquarters” for our families, organizers and supporters, etc. At that point, the negotiations begin as to how to tear down the system of exploitation and create a new system based on the structure as outlined in the FREEDOM BILL, which promotes Education, Rehabilitation and Re-Entry Preparedness.

Take for example the situation that just occurred in California with the various lawsuits that the State fought for over 20 years (See the Plata decision by the U.S. Supreme Court) and passage of the Prop 47 law that went into effect. Despite the fact of California’s prison system being overcrowded with a 160% occupancy rate, the State’s prison officials and Attorney General’s office still refused to budge on releasing people who were eligible.

“Most of those prisoners now work as groundskeepers, janitors and in prison kitchens, with wages that range from 8 cents to 37 cents per hour. Lawyers for Attorney General Kamala Harris had argued in court that if forced to release these inmates early, prisons would lose an important labor pool.

Prisoners’ lawyers countered that the corrections department could hire public employees to do the work.” (LA Times, 11/14/2014 Federal judges order California to expand prison releases6)

As for the Firefighters, the Attorney General’s Office concluded that these men who risked their lives for the State, who saved the State over \$1,000,000,000 billion dollars annually, were simply too valuable a commodity to release, even though these men worked outside of prison every day and were clearly not a threat to society anymore:

“About half of the people fighting wildland fires on the ground for the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) are incarcerated: over 4,400 prisoners, housed at 42 inmate fire camps, including three for women.

Together, says Capt. Jorge Santana, the California Department of Corrections & Rehabilitation (CDCR) liaison who supervises the camps, they save the state over \$1 billion a year.”7

While it is extremely rare to receive these type of admissions from the State, what we witnessed in the California litigation is the reality of modern slavery: Yes, the people have an education and are already working in society, but, NO!!!, they can’t be release because it would cost too much to replace their free or penny labor!!

This episode highlights why the strategy of work strikes/shutdowns being promoted by FREE ALABAMA MOVEMENT, and now joined by FREE MISSISSIPPI

Our Three-Part Strategy

- 1) Organize prison shutdowns at prisons with major economic industries (tag plants, fleet services, food distribution centers, agriculture, etc.)
- 2) Call for a nationwide leaflet campaign, protests, and boycotts of McDonald’s restaurants, which is one of the major corporation that has a national presence and that benefits from prison slavery, in addition to others like WalMart, Victoria Secret, AT&T, Wells Fargo Banks, Wendy’s, GEO/CCA private prison companies that are listed on the NYSE, and more.
- 3) Having our families, friends, supporters, activists, and others holding protests at the prisons where the people are mass incarcerated and oppressed.

PART 1 : “SHUTDOWNS/WORK STRIKES”

- 1) Organize prison shutdowns at prisons with major economic industries (tag plants, fleet services, food distribution centers, agriculture, etc.)

Remember, we are working against a half trillion dollar system that is controlled by businessmen and women who are the modern-day slave profiteers. And just like any business, their focus is on the bottom line. From this viewpoint, we must organize work stoppages at prisons with economic industries that are operated by slave labor. The impact of a work stoppage is immediate and significant, as production is shutdown and profit margins plummet around the country.

Believe me, if you want to have commissioners, politicians and the like hunting you down, organize a strike. You won’t have to call them, because they will call you. Prison industry is more than just license plates. Now it includes military, food, clothes, mining, recycling, call centers, car parts, cleaning supplies, printing, and so much more.

And when we organize, we have to demand that real “reforms” take place that will afford everyone an opportunity to earn our freedom, NOT JUST EARN A CHECK FOR OUR LABOR, and that fundamental changes be made throughout the system.

Experience has shown us at FREE ALABAMA MOVEMENT that this approach is more effective than hunger strikes, marching and writing letters combined, as those strategies will only bring publicity, lip service and some changes, while work stoppages shut down the entire economic system and gets directly into their pockets, which brings the movers and shakers to the prison for negotiations.

PART 2: McDonald’s

Ronald McDonald: A Slavery Master in Clown’s Clothing !!!!

When deciding on which company to protest we have to devise a strategy that we can use nationwide: We can’t boycott all companies because there are simply too many corporations involved. What we have to do is focus on just one of them at a time that uses prison slave labor and that is large enough and visible enough to bring a true awareness about prison slavery, and target that one.

Starting off we have identified McDonald’s as a company that presents itself as family-oriented, but which uses prison slavery to produce a number of goods:

“McDonald’s uses inmates to produce frozen foods. Inmates process beef for patties. 3

They may also process bread, milk and chicken products.”⁴

We will start off our McDonald’s protest by locating and reaching out to the people in the prisons where McDonald’s products are produced. At the same time, we will begin letter-writing campaigns to their investors and shareholders, while also leaving leaflets/pamphlets on the cars of their customers at McDonald’s restaurants nationwide, and organize protests at their storefronts, in a mall or headquarters, or wherever we can, and call for boycotts of their stores to force them to stop using products that are manufactured by forced prison slave labor.

But we focus all of our attention on one corporation at a time, instead of using a scattered approach of multiple orgs spread out thinly over several corporate fronts.

When one falls, we move on to the next prison profiteer, which can be Victoria’s Secret, Wal Mart, GEO, CCA, JPay, Keefe, or something.

Part 3: Consolidating our Resources

HAVING OUR FAMILIES, FRIENDS, ACTIVISTS, AND SUPPORTERS ALL GALVANIZED AT A SELECT PRISON TO ENGAGE IN PROTESTS AND TO SHOW SUPPORT FOR THE PEOPLE ON THE INSIDE WHO ARE BEING OPPRESSED.

This strategic move is just as important as the strikes, because it brings all of the people together who oppose mass incarceration and prison slavery. We can’t have a unified Movement Against Mass Incarceration and Prison Slavery if we are in a long-distance relationship with our supporters, organizers, activists and others who support our cause. We have to get everyone organized at the prisons, so that we can confront the system at the site of its oppression: the prisons.

By having our supporters in one location for each State, we maximize our resources, increase our strength in numbers, and we move with a unified front.

Very little can be done by the State at this point except to meet our demands.

The protests against police brutality are taking place at police stations. The workers at Wal Mart are protesting at WalMart. The Occupy Wall Street Movement protested on Wall Street. Therefore, the Movement and fight against mass incarceration must take place at the prisons !!!

“The Old Way”

Now, let’s take a look at the familiar strategies of Movement Against Mass Incarceration and Prison Slavery, and see why we need a change in strategy:

1) Hunger Strikes

2) Marches and Protests at State Capitols, (as opposed to demonstrations at the prisons where they should be)

3) Letter writing campaigns, petitions and phone calls, etc.

1) HUNGER STRIKES

The demonstrations put on by the Men and Women in California (and Georgia, Washington State, and Texas) showed us all that with leadership and unity, we can defeat

mass incarceration with the right strategy. But, we also learned that, while we did see progress in some areas, it has a minimal impact on the system of mass incarceration.

We have to strategize with the understanding that we are dealing with modern day slave profiteers. These businessmen will gladly let us die from starvation so long as their assembly lines keep moving.

“Leasing convicts to private businesses made a tidy fortune for both state and local governments, especially after slaves were emancipated. In 1878, 73% of Alabama’s entire state revenue came from prison labor. Reconstruction-era plantation owners, though, were hardly incentivized to care about their charges: When any of their starving workers died, they simply asked the state for new ones, at no cost to their bottom line.”⁵

The net effect on the bottom line from a hunger strike is negligible. This is not going to get the response we need, so we have to do more.

2) MARCHES

Sure, the traditional marches bring attention to issues and they bring people together, but they simply don’t bring about much results. If we must march, then let’s March at the prisons where mass incarceration and prison slavery are taking place at.

As I said above, when the people protest against police brutality in Ferguson, Memphis, and California, they are doing it at the police stations.

When “BANTHEBOAT”-activists protested in support of Palestine, they protested at ports. We have to ask ourselves: If we are protesting against mass incarceration and prison slavery, then why aren’t we doing it at the prisons where our economic strength can be felt?

Just like we saw in California with the hunger strikes, the families and supporters showed their support at the prison. The people in the prisons can see that support and receive the boost in morale that will be needed to carry this thing through. The meeting place is at the prisons!!!

3) LETTER WRITING, PETITIONS, ETC.

Letter writing campaigns and making phone calls are still effective, but we have to change who we are targeting and what we are attempting to communicate.

Letters/calls help when written to alternative media sources and other activists, organizations and supporters of our Movement, to let them know that we are striking so that we can inform other prisons in other states, so that they can join in also.

Letters/petitions also help when we target companies that are using prison made good to let them know that we will boycott them if they don’t stop, and it also helps to contact their customers and let them know that they are purchasing slave-made good. But the old habit of writing politicians and commissioners won’t work in today’s world, and just haven’t produced meaningful results.

It’s time to find a new target audience and bring attention to a new strategy and a new message!!

Is The Current Movement Against Mass Incarceration Spread Too Thin?