

" One of the greatest obstacles to the achievement of liberation is that oppressive reality absorbs those within it and thereby acts to submerge human beings consciousness, functionally oppression is domesticating."

Pedagogy of the Oppressed: Paulo Freire

When I think of the real cost of Prison I can't help but to reflect on the words above and then look at myself and all my incarcerated brothers and sisters and realize that most of us have certainly been domesticated.

How so? by the prison courts placing rules and regulations that make claim and certainly makes the statement they are needed to govern us.

But to be honest, these rules and regulation are in place to manifest our enslavement. As Anthony Robinson Jr states in his article "We must leave the crops in the field" "As a prisoner class, it is our labor that carries out the cause and effect of not only the inordinate sentencing we are given in the kangaroo courts of America, but the perpetration of laws and policies that keep us in prison and bargins on our return to prison via high recidivism rates."

This is the real cost of Prison, As it rips at the fabric of communities, families and

relationships.

So when I write about this topic I want the reader to really understand there is a vested interest in the criminalization of our youth.

This assures a perpetual population that will continue to create billions for the various business. The social engineers have been at work and this happens without your knowing it. You're witness the events on the news, hear the gun-shots and see these news clips daily all over America, but unaware that all of it is part of a tactic.

A ground plan designed even before many of those who will be incarcerated are born. Its purpose, to create a commodity for the purpose of exploitation in every facet of that young juvenile's life and this is done through the conduct of music, television and film. The chances of influencing the behavior of a people are greater when encouraged and influenced.

Thus the new media creates a certain image through its daily output to a larger society and our youth through TV, music and film. These behaviors created through manipulation of common thoughts, ideas, norms and values, using the above medium can create and control a whole culture and lead them to any direction you

please.

"Power is the ability to define a phenomenon and make it act in a desired manner." - Huey P. Newton

So we have become active participants in our own self-destruction. Despite many already knowing this is by design and the ability to solve this was in their hands, no one did. The plantation became the prison, the slave the convict.

Example: Alabama in the 1870's received around 70% of its state budget from convict slave labor. Most state governments still balance their budgets with labor decisions, fines and legal exploitation through phone contracts, commissary, incentives, even charging a medical co-payment like here in Illinois that has went from \$2.00 to 5.00 within the last three years for all twenty plus prisons.

But keep in mind that all these costs are borne by people working for free. This is how slavery has always worked, when we look at the real cost of prison, from the prisons for profit to state institutions, billions are generated.

Contrary to popular stereotypes, most prisoners are not "hardened killers." Most prisoners are people of color, poor people, and non-violent offenders.

- Although people of color make up about one-quarter of the total US population, 65% of the prison population are people of color. 44% of prisoners in the US are Black. Meanwhile, a majority of prison staff (65% in federal prison) are white.
- Because they cannot afford good lawyers, poor people have a much higher chance of being convicted.
- 80% of people who go to prison could not afford a lawyer and were using a public defender at the time of their trial.
- 64% of jail inmates in 1996 had a monthly income of under \$1,000 in the month before their arrest, and 36% were unemployed, and these figures have certainly become less in 2017.
- 70% of those sentenced to state prisons in 1998 were convicted of

nonviolent offenses. In some states the majority of prisoners are there for parole violations, very few prisoners are "Murderers and Rapist." Many prisoners who are convicted of violent offenses are Mentally ill people who did not have access to treatment.

- In Federal prisons, more people are locked up for immigration violations than any other offense.
- Most prisoners are men, but the fastest growing prisoner population are women of color
- 80% of women in prison are Mothers.

There is without doubt a racial discrepancy in who gets locked up. Black inmates have a 32% chance of being imprisoned in their lifetime, Latino males have 17% chance; and white males have only 6% chance of being locked up in their lifetime.

Though their total population is small Native Americans have the highest rate of incarceration per capita of any group.

These are simply the facts as researched;  
World Behind Bars: The expansion of the American  
Prison Sell. Prison Nation. Ed by Paul Wright and  
Tara Herivel and Prisonsucks.com

Prisoners like myself live in a sterile  
cruel and degrading environment, where the  
authorities try to institutionalize you or program  
you into unquestioning obedience. Prison authori-  
ties prefer prisoners who act like numbers, or  
like paper work, and they go out of their way  
to harass or even brutalize those who resist.

Meanwhile prisoners do not have access  
to education or mental stimulation, they are  
separated from their families and love ones and  
in a dehumanizing environment. They do not receive  
emotional support. Prisoners are bombarded with  
the message that they are criminals and bad  
people, but they do not receive the resources in  
prison to rehabilitate themselves. People in prison  
who do experience personal growth while locked  
up do it despite prison, not because of it and that  
is the real cost of prison from my view point of 35  
years of incarceration.

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