

A Flicker Turns Into A Flame: Alabama Prisoners Want Change



A Report From F.A.M.'s Southern Region

By Kinetik Justice Amun (g.n. Robert E. Council)

Today in America, there's the resurgence of a People's Movement sweeping across the Nation – As the flame of inhumane treatment and economical exploitation has billowed into a wildfire demanding change.

Reminiscent of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's, from California to Ohio, Texas to Florida, there is a deafening call for an end to America's systemized targeting, mass incarcerating, warehousing, then economically exploiting those considered, "LOW CLASS," i.e., New African, Hispanic and poor whites.

Suffering from gross incompetence, sub-par management of resources and the Nation's highest OVERCROWDING RATIO - 200% over its designed capacity-that flame of change touched the Alabama Prison system.

On Jan. 1st, 2014, FREE ALABAMA MOVEMENT launched a cross-racial collective action - a PEACEFUL & NON VIOLENT PROTEST for Human & Civil Rights, in the form of a work stoppage, which spread to St. Clair Correctional Facility on Jan. 3rd, 2014 and Elmore Correctional Facility on Jan. 5th, 2014.

"THE FREE ALABAMA MOVEMENT"

Free Alabama Movement is an "INSIDE-OUTSIDE" solidarity network, which has brought Alabama Prison Class and Human Rights Advocacy Groups together across Racial, Ideological and Geographic differences - thereby created a cross denominational solidarity, unlike anything ever seen in the Alabama Prison System.

Free Alabama Movement is a peaceful & nonviolent protest for the human and civil rights of over 27,000 incarcerated citizens and several more thousands of family & friends of those incarcerated citizens.



Our Message is Clear:

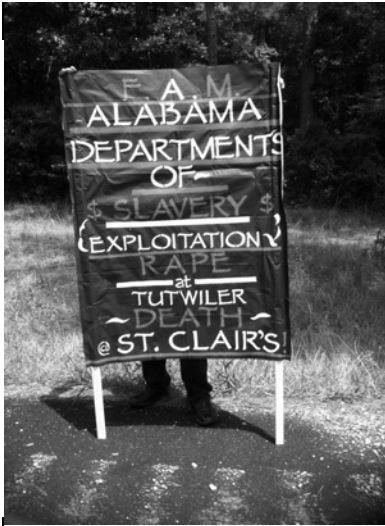
We proclaim that Alabama's practice of:

1. WAREHOUSING INMATES IN OVERCROWDED DORMITORIES....
2. PROVIDING NO EDUCATIONAL OR REHABILITATIONAL PROGRAMS....
3. PROHIBITING AN INMATE FROM BEING COMPENSATED FOR HIS LABOR, WHILE FORCING HIM TO PAY FINES AND FEES....

Is Inhuman & Exploitative in Violation of the Standards of Human Decency...

Our Goals are Defined:

- 1) OVERCROWDING MUST BE ADDRESSED; 8-10 THOUSAND PEOPLE RELEASED.
- 2) TAXATION WITHOUT COMPENSATION (FREE LABOR) ABOLISHED.
- 3) PAROLE BOARD OVERHAULED TO ESTABLISH PAROLE CRITERIOR.
- 4) ABOLISH LIFE WITHOUT PAROLE, LIFE/BARRED FROM PAROLE & THE DEATH PENALTY.
- 5) AMEND ARBITRARY & DISCRIMINATORY APPLIED LAWS, i.e. 13A-5-40 (16)(17)(18).



WHY FREE ALABAMA MOVEMENT?

In every stage of these inhumane conditions, we have petitioned the courts for redress, in the most humble method-filing lawsuit after lawsuit. Our repeated petitions have been answered with time-stalling rhetoric, as we continue to suffer from neglect while the D.O.C. daily reaps the financial benefits of our economical exploitations.

And as of June 2013, Alabama law makers established that prisoners could no longer file "class action" law suits against the D.O.C. in regards to inhumane living conditions. (SEE the AL PRISON LITIGATION REFORM ACT).

History has taught us that convincing the court to issue new rules to improve day to day life in prison and changing exploitive policies requires, not only petitions, but also the creation and maintenance of a legitimate prisoner's rights movement-both inside and outside the prison walls. Clearly stated, to make real sustaining fundamental change in the inhumane treatment and overcrowded prison conditions, we can't rely on law suits alone - they have to be connected to the larger struggle.

FREE ALABAMA MOVEMENT IS THE LARGER STRUGGLE - GET INFORMED!!

WHY A WORK STOPPAGE?

It is our understanding based on various in depth studies that *MASS INCARCERATION, UNCONSTITUTIONAL OVERCROWDED PRISONS AND THE INHUMANE TREATMENT ARE MORE ABOUT ECONOMICS THAN THE HUMANITY OF PEOPLE.

The numbers support our contention that "MONEY" is the motive and most important factor in explaining the policies and conditions within the D.O.C. Therefore, an economical response is our most effective strategy.

A PEACEFUL & NONVIOLENT ECONOMICAL RESPONSE...

Each institution is a "STATE FREE LABOR FORCE", which generates BILLIONS of dollars each year, in tax dollars, industry market, imposed fines & fees, co-payments, court costs and the millions saved by inmate "FREE LABOR."

We have researched and studied the lessons of previous prison movements throughout the country; and the evidence of the Jan. 1, 2014 - Jan. 21, 2014 work stoppage has confirmed that prisons don't function without inmate labor. And every day that the prison doesn't function the prison profit margin plummets.

Based upon these premises and understanding the motive behind Alabama's Prison Policies, Free Alabama Movement takes the position that - if we, collectively, engage in a proactive peaceful & nonviolent work stoppage, the financial burden will compel the Dept. of Corrections and the law makers of this state to be more receptive to our demands for fundamental Human Rights. This method also affords us the opportunity to show society that many of us are intelligent & rational men striving to resolve our issues with the most peaceful means possible; and to combat the misconception that we all are, irrational, violent predators lacking any morality and humanity.

All of Free Alabama Movement's action have been and will continue to be peaceful and nonviolent as we work to bring about a positive change within the Dept. of Corr. If they refuse to recognize the legitimacy of our Human and Civil Rights Struggle against the practices of the D.O.C. then it is the responsibility of the Federal Government to use their powers to stop Alabama's inhumane treatment and economical exploitations.

Maybe that's what it might take - as Alabama has a long history of having to be forced into glory, by the intervention of the Federal Government.

For those familiar with the Alabama history, let's not forget that it took the Federal intervention to abolish slavery, Federal Intervention to enforce reconstruction, Federal Intervention to outlaw convict leasing, Federal Intervention to enforce Civil Rights Laws in the 1960's and Federal Intervention in the 1970's when Alabama became the 1st prison system taken over by the Federal Courts due to inhumane treatment of its prisoners.

40 YEARS LATER, the Alabama prison system is once again on the brink of a possible federal take-over. In the 1970's, the inmates resorted to VIOLENCE in order to push change. **TODAY, THE FREE ALABAMA MOVEMENT VOWS AND IS COMMITTED TO EFFECTING CHANGE BY PEACEFUL & NONVIOLENT MEANS...**



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