

Communiqué #5 from the Revcoms

Mass Incarceration and the Coronavirus... a Death Sentence Waiting to Happen



Photo: Alabama Department of Corrections

Prisoners packed in tight at Alabama's Easterling Correctional Facility, February 25.

We could be about to witness the death penalty being given to thousands of people in America's prisons. The 2.3 million people locked down in America's prisons (about 60 percent Black or Latino) are being forced to face the deadly coronavirus without consistent access to soap and water, without masks, with no ability to do "social distancing." Many whose crimes were as petty as drug use or stealing a bicycle, and many who haven't been convicted but just can't pay bail. And all of whom are human beings now facing mass death if things continue as they are.

The authorities made a big show of releasing a few (far less than other countries), but the vast majority continue to be held. All while pig governors (yes, including Democrats in CA and NY) argue things like "prisoners have no rights to social distancing" or even worse, and the outright fascist Trump himself threatens to stop what little is being done. The way all these rulers are handling this virus in the prisons could speed up "slow genocide" of mass incarceration into a fast one!

This mass incarceration, and the whole way Black and other oppressed people are treated, didn't come out of nowhere. Bob Avakian (BA), the most important political thinker and leader in the world today, has pointed out:

In the days of slavery, and then Jim Crow segregation after the Civil War, the oppressors viciously exploited and terrorized Black people, brutally murdering those they saw as posing a threat, or "not staying in their place," but they did not kill off or incarcerate a huge part

of the Black population, because their labor was needed as a backbone and crucial source of profit for the cotton plantations and the overall economy in the South (and the country as a whole). Today, with great numbers of Black people concentrated in the inner cities, and with many factories and other capitalist enterprises having moved away from the urban cores, the police have killed thousands of Black people in the last few decades, and they play a key part in forcibly maintaining masses of Black people in a situation where, especially youth robbed of any decent future under this system, are killing each other in the thousands, and millions are either incarcerated or in some other way under the control of the so-called "justice system."

—*Why We Need An Actual Revolution and How We Can Really Make Revolution*

This must end! We need an actual **revolution** to emancipate all humanity and the Revolution Club is organizing for that. And right now **there is an urgent need to come together to figure out what we do about preventing this mass death sentence from going down.** If you care about humanity, we need to talk about how.

Connect with the Revolution Club (the RevComs), to find out how to work together toward these goals. Visit www.revcom.us and find out more about Bob Avakian and the revolution we need. Meanwhile: spread this communiqué and subscribe to the YouTube channel TheRevComs, as part of getting organized. As you do, write to us about what you are learning.

An Appeal to Those the System Has Cast Off

Here I am speaking not only to prisoners but to those whose life is lived on the desperate edge, whether or not they find some work; to those without work or even homes; to all those the system and its enforcers treat as so much human waste material.

Raise your sights above the degradation and madness, the muck and demoralization, above the individual battle to survive and to "be somebody" on the terms of the imperialists—of fouler, more monstrous criminals than mythology has ever invented or jails ever held. Become a part of the human saviors of humanity: the gravediggers of this system and the bearers of the future communist society.

This is not just talk or an attempt to make poetry here: there are great tasks to be fulfilled, great struggles to be carried out, and yes great sacrifices to be made to accomplish all this. But there is a world to save—and to win—and in that process those the system has counted as nothing can count for a great deal. They represent a great reserve force that must become an active force for the proletarian revolution.

Bob Avakian
*BA*sics 3:16

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