

DECARCERATE LOUISIANA



SLAVERY THEN, SLAVERY NOW!

With the number of enslaved persons steady growing in the Old South slave states along with an increase in white fears, unhappiness in slaves, slave revolts, and abolitionist sentiment throughout the world, a civil war was destined to happen. To better control the slaves, slave rebellion, and abolitionist clamor, enslavers were compelled in war to release its prisoners and consider a new system. Soon, the idea and plan would be to enact legislation, scrap the old system of slavery and recreate it for persons convicted of crimes. To make it more easier to manage the plantation system and keep things quiet, and appease white fears of being surrounded by large numbers of angry slaves, and white

fears of foreign criticism of the land of the free, the newly enslaved African Americans and poor folk would be stereotyped as criminals and then spread out on prison farms across the country in all 50 states. And their enslavement would be guaranteed by creating a system that would hold millions of its citizens in poverty and passage of new laws that criminalized and penalized its subjects for certain types of behavior.

What is clear is that slavery has evolved to a modern practice of politics, criminal law and procedure. Today, enslavers have multiplied to become a complex system of representatives, senators, mayors, governors, sheriffs, political action committees, the police, surveillance state, prosecutors, judges, wardens, and a billion dollar prison enterprise.

“NEITHER SLAVERY NOR INVOLUNTARY SERVITUDE, EXCEPT AS PUNISHMENT FOR A CRIME WHEREOF THE PARTY SHALL HAVE BEEN DULLY CONVICTED, SHALL EXIST WITHIN THE STATES, UNITED STATES, OR ANY PLACE SUBJECT TO THEIR JURISDICTION.”

-13TH AMENDMENT

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In pre-Civil War days, slave traders would march a gang of slaves past the US Capitol just as a group of congressmen took a cigar break on the front steps. One of the captive men might raise his shackles and mockingly sing "Hail Columbia," a popular patriotic song. Northern Federalist newspapers complained that this put the most unpleasant parts of slavery right in their faces. Others resented the embarrassment the traders could inflict. Could this explain why prison farms and the ongoing slavery of African Americans and poor folk have been hidden today in rural areas in the country far away from public discussion, debate, and scrutiny?

"ALREADY, WHITES REALIZED THAT THE COMBINATION OF TRUMPED-UP LEGAL CHARGES AND FORCED LABOR AS PUNISHMENT CREATED BOTH A DESIRABLE BUSINESS PROPOSITION AND AN INCREDIBLY EFFECTIVE TOOL FOR INTIMIDATING RANK-AND-FILE EMANCIPATED AFRICAN AMERICANS AND DOING AWAY WITH THEIR MOST EFFECTIVE LEADERS."

-DOUGLAS BLACKMON

Then, we were three-fifths of human beings. Now, we are branded as criminals. Then, we were called slaves. Now, we are called convicts. Then, slaves were the property of private owners. Now, convicts are the property of the state. Then, if slaves were disobedient, they were subject to corporeal punishment or lynched. Now, if convicts misbehave, they are punished with loss of yard, loss of phone, loss of canteen, food loaf, isolation, sensory deprivation, retaliation, or even murdered by prison guards.

Then, it was abolitionists versus enslavers. Now, it is still enslavers versus abolitionists. We, the People, must decide now whether to support slavery and human degradation, or stand in solidarity with the freedom march for human rights and human dignity!