Holding Law Enforcement Accountable: One Protest at a Time

Special Report by Asar Rasta

It is What It is, and has always been in America-

The recent (and not so recent) murders of young African-Americans (particularly males) by law enforcement personnel and wanna-be law enforcement agents (such as Zimmerman) along with the lack of retribution for the families of the deceased in courts of law only shows and proves one thing: Michelle Alexander's counsel in her 2010 book The New Jim Crow was correct; American citizens need mass mobilizations (protests of all forms) because piecemeal policy reforms will never result in accountability of law enforcement agents, and their masters (legislators-seen and unseen, and state judiciaries) when they themselves are caught committing crimes such as murder.

This report will attempt to do several things for the reader: (1) increase awareness of several traditional institutionalized racist customs that still impact the judicial/criminal justice system in the State of Michigan, (2) to present information (books, websites, etc.) that allow the reader to research how racism and classism are like two fingers on the same hand sliding in and out of a pussified "post-racial American" still scared to address, much less reverse, the damage that racism and classism perpetuate in states like Michigan, and worldwide wherever lighter skinned people are viewed as less dangerous, more special, more human, and more valuable than their darker siblings, and (3) how education can heal the wounds that racism and classism have caused.

Institutionalized Racism in the Criminal Justice System in Michigan-

As a novice legal researcher I acknowledge that I don't have decades of legal experience. I do not claim to be a legal authority. However, the little information that I have been able to absorb informs me that Michigan's legislative, judicial, and executive branches have effectively operated together to perpetuate discrimination against the chattel class (otherwise known as probationers, parolees, and prisoners), while at the same time pretending to follow the Constitutional provisions prohibiting such discrimination.

In other words, the same racism at work during Lincoln's time, through the Reconstruction era after he was killed, all through the Civil Rights era of the 1950s through the 1970s, to the legalization of racism and classism in the 1980s and 1990s with the extreme criminalization of narcotics coupled with the corporatization of America's economic structure, is responsible for the fact that so few law enforcement who have killed young unarmed African- Americans have been convicted in court for what they did.

I will present several examples of how the legislative, executive, and judicial branches in Michigan have all worked together to change the rules and statutes to keep a growing number of convicted offenders trapped in a money-sucking judicial machine based on discrimination that is supposed to be unconstitutional and illegal.

Aint' No Rules-

The irony is that nonwhite American citizens are considered in courts of law to be members of a "protected class" because of proven historical discrimination. This means that, under the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment of the United States Constitution, nonwhites with complaints about racism have a legal argument to base their claims in court. However, once the same court system convicts that minority of an offense, then their Constitutional protection becomes compromised.

In Michigan, various departments operate with taxpayer funds to perform certain functions. For example, the staff of the Dept. of Education is supposed to oversee all issues regarding how Michigan soil is used to produce food. The duties of these departments, also known as agencies of the state, are supposed to be based on legislators' efforts to preserve the agencies' responsibilities to the State's citizens in what are called statutes.

AGRICULTURE

Every department/agency has its own regulations and rules that must be followed in order to be considered legal. For example, the Dept. of Health has regulations for all its staff that go into hospitals and inspect the facility to ensure the hospital staff, the grounds, are all operating according to basic health standards.

The rules that each agency are supposed to abide by are made, or promulgated, according to guidelines set forth in Michigan's Administrative Procedures Act ("APA") Haran C. Rushes's article in the November 2006 Michigan Bar Journal tells the reader that entire sections of regulations and statutes are brought together in what is known as the Michigan Administrative Code. Remember, each rule of all agencies/departments must be made to agree with statutes, which are made statutes by Michigan legislators on behalf of the people of the State.

Public hearings (google Open Meetings Act) are held where the average person can go (and participate if they choose) and observe how the Department or agency will try to get a rule made, changed (amended0, or removed. But before that, the State Office of Administrative Hearings and Rules ("SOAHR") and the Legislative Service Bureau ("LSB") must review the rule to see if it follows the statute that the rule is based upon. If it was up to certain legislators with hidden agendas, these meetings would be off limits to the public; however, many people have went to court to get these hearings available to the public. However, for the Michigan Department of Corrections ("MDOC"), aint' no rules.

"An administrative agency has no inherent powers;
any authority it has comes from the legislature."
Kassab v. Acho, 150 Mich. App. 104,

"A governmental agency may not violate rules and
regulations it has issued to govern its activity."
Micu v. Warren, 147 Mich. App. 573

"There is a three part test to determine the validity of an agency's rules. The rules must be within the matter covered by the enabling statute, must comply with the underlying legislative intent, and must not be arbitrary and capricious."
Luttrell v. DoC, 421 Mich. 93, 100; 365 NW2d 74 (1984)

MCL 24.207(k) "||Unless another statute requires a rule to be promulgated under this act, a rule or policy that only concerns the inmates of a state correctional facility, and does not directly effect other ||members of the public, except that a rule that only concerns inmates which was promulgated before December 4, 1986, is a rule and remains in effect until rescinded but shall not be amended.||

The above statutes and caselaw are what Michigan courts of law are supposed to base their court decisions concerning rules upon. During the 1980s and 1990s, there were several important legal controversies in Michigan courts concerning rules of Michigan departments and agencies had, including the MDOC. Once it was brought to the Courts' attention that MDOC was punishing prisoners for not following rules that were not properly promulgated, the MDOC lawyers tried to say that prisoners did have to follow rules not properly promulgated, because prisoners were not considered to be members of the public.

Once Michigan courts had to admit that prisoners were members of the public, the legislators and law enforcement, in order to keep as much power as they could in the hands of the plantation overseers, that is, the prison administrators, they got together and changed the statute you just read above (MCL 24.207(k), to formally distinguish prisoners from non-prisoners. By doing this, they made it so that MDOC can make rules that do not get public meeting scrutiny or review.

Prisoners' actions are controlled by what are known as Policy Directives and Operating Procedures, which are both under what are called Administrative Rules. Admin. Rules are supposed to be under the MAC and APA. And they were until some prisoners took MDOC to court for not following the rules it was supposed to follow, and worse, forcing the prisoners themselves to follow rules not properly made in the open meetings where the public would be allowed to examine the rules (remember the Open Meetings Act).

Prisoners are ||members of the public.
Martin v. D.o.C., 424 Mich. 553, 560

When the Courts began allowing these rules to stand even though they were not properly promulgated, several Michigan judges did stand up, and go on record to express their dissent in Opinions. Check out the following:

In Clonitara, Inc. v. St. Board of Education, 442 Mich. 230 (1991) is brilliant, stating that rules not governed under APA promulgation requirements should not be binding, the judge's dissenting opinion was righteous.

Judge Shepard's dissent in Pyke v. Dept. of Soc. Svs., 182 Mich. App. 619; 453 NW2d 274 (1990), "||this policy deprives not only this petitioner, but an entire class of people benefits to which they would otherwise be eligible on the basis of an internal policy of the agency without benefit of the protection afforded by the rule-making requirements.||

Again, the irony of all this legal mumbo-jumbo is that the law tells you one thing in one law, and something else in another part of the law.

MCL 24.232(2) "[A] rule or exception to a rule shall not discriminate in favor of or against any person, and a person affected by a rule is entitled to the same benefits as any other person under the same or similar circumstances."

One way that the discrimination between whites and nonwhites as prisoners is shown by the way the Admin. Rules are applied when it comes time for parole consideration. For example, R 791.7715(5)(a)(b) and (c) are all factors considered when the Michigan Parole Board ("PB") requires a psychological evaluation is done before they decide to grant a parole. (a) deals with if a prisoner has been hospitalized for mental illness within the past 2 years, (b) ispredatory or assaultive sexual offenses, and (c) is serious or persistent assaultiveness within the institution.

What happens is that a prisoner is interviewed by the PB, and at the end of the interview, the prisoner is not given a decision, s/he is told that the decision will be deferred until a psychological evaluation is done based on (a)-(c) above.

R 791.7716, Parole guidelines, sect. (g)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv) relate to guidelines used by the PB when they decide whether the prisoner is low, average, or high probability or getting a parole. The parole guidelines were drafted at about the same time the sentencing guidelines were drafted, around 1984. If a prisoner gets a high probability of parole, then the PB must have "substantial and compelling reasons" for not granting parole.

However, both 791.7715 and 7716 are used against nonwhite prisoners, because the PB uses information in nonwhites' files to deny them paroles. If a prisoner is found to meet criteria for sect. (g)(i)-(iv), then this prisoner is docked five points under the Mental Health subsection. Nonwhite prisoners are often docked five points for any incident that the PB feels fits the criteria for (g)(i)-(iv) such as:(i) psychiatric hospitalization as a result of criminal activity in prisoner's background, (ii) Physical of sexual assault related to a compulsive, deviant, or psychotic mental state, (iii) a serious psychotic mental state that developed after incarceration, and (iv) if the prisoner goestthrough therapy and gets a good report.

All of the above concerns prisoners being picked for certain MDOC therapy programs if they have serious assaultive convictions or sex offenses. Nonwhite prisoners are often made to take these therapy groups even if they don't have a sex offense or assaultive conviction. MDOC and the PB use any fight, misconduct guilty finding, or a psychological evaluation done by a racist, or subjectively biased mental health staff. A bad report can cause a nonwhite prisoner to be kept in prison without parole for much longer than a white prisoner with the same, or even worse, information inttheir file.

Almost as an inside joke, MDOC put in R 791.7716 (6), "The parole board shall not use a prisoner's gender, race, ethnicity, alienage, national origin, or religion as a reason to depart from a parole guideline."

The reality is, MDOC uses all of these variables in their determination as to who gets appointed parole and who doesn't. And worse than that, unless the public gets involved to force public the opportunity to study the rules MDOC will use in their decision-making. Even though on paper, MDOC tells the public that they do not discriminate against nonwhites in favor of whites, the reality is that almost every rule, procedure, policy, program, and regulation has been used against nonwhite prisoners.

WHEN THERE'S A WILL, THERE'S A WAY

This section will show and prove how racist legislators, policymakers, prison officials, judges, and prosecutors (also known as stakeholders) have all used their positions to circumvent Michigan statutes that were intended to reduce the sentencing disparities between nonwhites and whites sentenced to different sentences for the same or similar offenses.

Information in this section comes from several sources, in particular, the following reports and articles I suggest the reader examine themselves:

a) Michigan Bar Journal, Feb. 1998 article, "Prison Disciplinary Hearings: Enforcing the Rules Behind Bars by Marjorie Van Ochten

b) House Legislative Analysis Section, (1991) Sentencing, Parole Guidelines concerning House Bill 4127 and 4130

c) Council of State Governments' Justice Center: Applying a Justice Reinvestment Approach to Improve Michigan's Sentencing System (Summary Report of Analyses and Policy Options) http://csgjusticecenter.org - 2014 report

d) Citizens Alliance on Prisons and Public Spending (CAPPS) report: Corrections spending proposals reflect major policy choices: Examining the consequences - 2014 report

After reading this, you'll agree with both Michelle Alexander's and mine opinion that piecemeal policy paper changes will not work with these so-called public servants. Widespread mobilizations around the country are needed to force these people to do what they are required to do by their own laws. But first, let's clarify and define some important terms used in this section: From Webster's Collegiate Dictionary,11th Edition

i) circumvent- to check or defeat, esp. by strategem
ii) disparity (disparate)- distinct in quality or character
iii) indeterminate- vague, also, not known in advance; not leading to a definite end or result
iv) piecemeal- one piece at a time; GRADUALLY

Okay, most states have already gotten rid of indeterminate sentencing. According to CSG's Summary Report, Michigan is the only state that kept a PB that can keep a person in prison until their maximum date, even when their guideline range at sentencing has been served by the prisoner.

EXAMPLE: Lawrence Lunchmeat was told at his sentencing date in court

that the guidelines for Breaking and Entering ("B&E") were 3 to 8 years. The statutory minimum for B&E may be only 2 years and the maximum term may be 15 years, this depends on Larry's PRV scores (Prior Record Variables) and his OVs score (Offense Variables) which take into account his past criminal history and factors such as the number of victims, etc. Remember, this is called indeterminate sentencing because the judge can sentence him to a variety of different sentence lengths as long as they are within 3 to 8 years. However, this sentence by the judge is useless, because the PB can keep Larry in prison not just until the 8 years of his guidelines, but also up to the statutory maximum term of 15 years. Once Larry reaches his minimum term (whatever the judge set at sentencing), Mr. Lunchmeat is no longer under the jurisdiction of the sentencing court; his sentence belongs to the PB.

Michigan legislators in 1903, allowed this State's Constitution to sentence a person to an unknown prison term because they looked at people who were convicted of crimes as abnormal, amoral, antisocial, and/or subhuman. Parole was, and still is (according to the law), an "act of grace by the State." This means that somehow a prisoner has to "earn his/her parole". Looking back on history, one can see that racism and classism have much to do with why those people looked at crime that way. In those days, the automobile industry was just beginning to develop, and with it, a large number of immigrants and African-Americans would come here to compete for those jobs.

Along with all of the other industries that Michigan offered such as furniture, mining, cereal, fruit/vegetable production, and machinery/manufacturing, those in power had to let everybody know that Michigan was a safe state for families and that the law was tough on crime. The attitudes of the conservative, religious, and what is now known as "right-wing" legislators was purposely put into State of Michigan policies; not only with "corrections", but also into all State agencies that served the populace (remember how the State did Malcolm X's family? his family was not the exception) on behalf of Michigan. What developed over the years was the gradual division of treatment of white and nonwhite prisoners, from sentencing to programming to paroles. In the past, and maybe even now, Michigan parole board members have been known to accept bribes and gifts in exchange for grants of parole.

This racism by the Michigan judiciary was so bad that by 1979, a report of the Michigan Felony Sentencing Project, "Sentencing in Michigan," confirmed significant inconsistencies in Michigan sentences; data revealed that disparities in sentences were due to race of the offender. At the same time, Michigan changed its requirements for the qualifications of Hearing Officers ("HOs"). From that point on, all HOs would be licensed attorneys employed under the State Office of Administrative Hearings and Rules ("SOAHR"). Up until then, any ranking shift command could conduct a hearing for MDOC rule violations. Along with this change, they made it so these HOs would have absolute immunity, like judges, lawmakers, and prosecutors, preventing them from getting sued in court, and giving them the power to do almost any

thing without fear of ever being held accountable for their actions. The thing is, when they did that, they didn't allow prisoners accused of crimes and violating rules the option of an attorney at these hearings; even though the HOs would have "quasi-judicial functions", meaning they would behave like judges (basically meaning they were given power to resentence a prisoner through the misconduct hearing process).

The disciplinary hearings process was always used to control prisoner behavior, and in some cases before 1979 to deny parole; but the new changes made the business of charging prisoners with crimes/rules violations a serious matter. Keep in mind that between 1970 and 1979, the prisoner population varied from 10,000 to 14,508. From 1979 to 1984, when the first changes to the sentencing guidelines were being formed (due to that 1979 report), the prison population was stable, right near 15,000 for five years. However, after the Michigan Supreme Court ("MSC") required all judges to use the new sentencing guidelines in 1984, the prison population skyrocketed every year up until 2006, when it peaked at 51,515. From 1984 to 1994, population increased from 14,508 to almost 40,000, from 1994 to 2004, to almost 48,000.

What was happening behind the scenes was that the "stakeholders", you know, the cops, judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, legislators, and do not forget the contractors who built the new prisoners to house all these new prisoners, along with all the food processors who fed them, and the Wall Street interests who corporatized the entire scheme (almost all of them white males) worked together to circumvent the very same guidelines that the MSC had to come up with by any means.

Bear in mind, the same racists in the courtroom that were exposed in that 1979 report, along with the same racists arresting those brought into the courtrooms did not all die and/or become extinct; no, all they did was adapt and morph into a group of racists operating under the illusion that their jobs were done for "public safety."

They agreed to make the sentencing guidelines, yet at the same time, arrange it so that the "bad guys" got the most time that they felt the offender deserved. Even if Larry's guidelines at sentencing was only for 3 to 8 years, it wouldn't matter, because they put policy and legislative mechanisms in place that could keep Mr. Lunchmeat in MDOC clutches for the maximum term of the "statutory offense" of B&E. The hearings were one way to do it.

MDOC hires attorneys to conduct hearings when a prisoner is charged with a major rule violation, which was at times past anything from a simple word that meant insubordination, not having ID on one's person, all the way to a stabbing. The prisoner is supposed to have basic rights called "due process", such as asking questions of the accuser(s), presenting witnesses, evidence, etc.. But, remember that the prisoner is not allowed to have an attorney acting on his/her behalf. This is dangerous because the standard of proof that MDOC needs to find the prisoner guilty is the lowest type, that is, preponderance of the evidence ("POTE"), which is lower than the "clear and convicing evidence" ("CACE") standard, and much less than the beyond a reasonable doubt ("BARD") standard of proof used in courts.

This means that all an officer has to do is lie and say that a prisoner resisted being handcuffed, and this means a major rule violation of assault on staff. Depending on who the prisoner is, his race, his past, his status and his sentence, the prisoner will be found guilty of this misconduct; and when he is found guilty, the PB can extend his prison term for 12, 18, or 24 months until his maximum term based off of that misconduct guilty finding.

Remember those due process rights mentioned earlier? Well, they mean nothing if the HOs don't have to follow them and are permitted to do so because they have immunity when they violate a prisoner's Constitutional rights. Here's an example of how HOs circumvent the laws regarding due process and the right to equal protection under the laws guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

A Black man, Everett C. Perry, was an attorney (very rare in MDOC) hired to be a HO for MDOC. He was harassed for many weeks because his rate of finding prisoners guilty of misconducts was less than 90%. Eventually, Perry was fired. Perry filed a lawsuit in Federal Court, Perry v. McGinnis, 209 F.3d 597 (2000), and he flatly proves how MDOC in numerous ways discriminated against him because he did not follow an unofficial, unspoken rule to maintain a quota of at least 90% of guilty findings.

Here's another illustration of how this has worked to keep the MDOC population high. In 1995 and 1996 alone, over 80,000 major misconduct hearings were held each year. This means that on average, every single prisoner had gotten charged with a major rule violation. Of course we know that not every prisoner got charged with these misconduct charges, certain persons were. All of us know that the majority of those charged were nonwhite prisoners, particularly males. Even though the PB can deny parole for any reason, a guilty finding for almost any major misconduct is a sure way to get denied a parole.

The Council of State Governments ("CSG") Summary Report of 2014 revealed several important findings that prove that the sentencing guidelines/ changes of 1984 and later years mean nothing because judges across Michigan are still sentencing people of different counties and races to different sentences for the same statutory offenses. Since everything is digital, and computerized now, the numbers are clearer than ever. This means widespread, tolerated legal discrimination is occurring. Amont the CSG's study, these are the findings that stand out:

1) People with similar criminal histories who are convicted of similar crimes receive significantly different sentences.
2) After a person is sentenced, it remains unclear how much time he or she will actually serve.
4) High rates of recidivism generate unnecessary costs.
5) Funds to reduce recidivism are not targeted to maximize the effectiveness of programs and services, and
6) Policymakers and practicioners do not have an effective mechanism to track sentencing and corrections outcomes.

They said it, not me; that's their own report. But what they aren't saying is the numbers, the actual breakdowns in terms of race and gender that the facts don't come right out and say. The reason why they don't say it is because they don't want to upset the racist and money forces behind the scenes who allow this unconstitutional discrimination that is based on racism and classism to continue.

The REASONS why we're here-

The reason, in short, is racism, even classism. MDOC employs approx. 25% of all State employees, and at one point, MDOC employed 33% of all State employees. The drop was due to buyouts, retirements, and many former MDOC employees transferred to other State agencies. This is what is known as the "prison industrial complex", or nearly perfected "modern day slavery". With a certain prison population, say 40,000, this means that a certain number of State employees that are required now to manage this number of prisoners, and this means an almost guaranteed tax revenue income stream. This prison population also means unions, union dues, union political pressure, pension fund investments making their way to Wall Street to generate even more money. We won't even talk about the municipal bonds involved and the sheer political power of the "stakeholders" mentioned earlier. It's serious business.

The thing is, is that the growing population of nonwhites and whites who no longer fit the traditional good white person stereotype (you know, the red-blooded, red meat eating, red,white,and blue loving, conservative, law-abiding Christian slave consumer) is increasing within the criminal justice system, especially with all the new probationers, who will, statistically speaking, become prisoners in a matter of years if they're not careful.

The cost of this MDOC system to taxpayers is over 2 billion dollars a year, and it would cost the taxpayers more if MDOC and the PB didn't force prisoners to do the labor, maintenance, food prep, and even counseling to keep the costs near 2billion each year.

The CAPPS study, the current bills circulating through Lansing's legislative buildings (Michigan's state capital), and even the CSG report all fail to address the real problems that keep MDOC prison population hovering near 45,000 and its budget over 2 billion a year. Racism and otherwise discriminatory law enforcement has forced Michigan to drastically restructure the so-called criminal justice system.

Racism must be acknowledged as a motivation of law enforcement personnel actions that injure nonwhites. If there was a trend in America involving Black officers killing young white males that were unarmed, the FBI and CIA would no doubt investigate the Black officers' backgrounds to see if any distant relatives were members of any radical anti-capitalist, socialist, civil rights groups, or if any of their family members protested during the Civil Rights era, or for any indication these officers were

part of a clandestine group targeting white males for murder. I am not sure if the CIA or the FBI is looking at the killings of young African-Americans in this way, but if these agencies aren't, then this only shows and proves that the problem of institutionalized racism is deep.

While reading over the notes from The New Jim Crow, I came across notes from Cora Daniels' 2007 book, Ghetto Nation. Of relevance to this report is the May 1, 2005, Detroit News article on page 1A that was based on an EPIC MRA survey: "Michigan Parents-Culture of Education and Your Child" by Francis X. Donnelly and Marisa Schultz, "Parents Fail to Push for Education; Poll Shows Hurdles for State's Effort to Shift Economy's Focus from Brawn to Brains," in which the following information was revealed. Approximately one half of parents surveyed said that they didn't mind if their kids did not go to college. Michigan's college graduation rate lowest in the nation, one of the highest jobless rates. "Newspaper editorials started calling Michigan...the new Mississippi."

This correlates with the data contained in amicus briefs in the Supreme Court cases involving the controversy of affirmative action and the University of Michigan in which many organizations participated (by sending amicus briefs to support affirmative action programs there) in an effort to show the Supreme Court how racist attitudes are still very much alive in Michigan and how educational inequalities can be remedied by keeping affirmative action programs in place to promote more diversity in schools.

Education, the Future, Michigan, America, and You-

I encourage each person to take education seriously while making it as fun as possible. This means that I acknowledge and advocate the power of knowledge of Self. Knowledge of you as an individual, a human entity in this ecosystem called Earth, in this galaxy, in this Universe.

If one learns enough about herself as a person, this person will most likely respect herself more and this should increase the likelihood of this person respecting others she encounters on her Life Path even more, and respect the Life Process/Cycle as a whole.

Self knowledge depends on context. If we were to open the dictionary again, we'd see the definition reads as follows, the circumstances surrounding an act or event. If a person looks at his birth as an actual event, the person can begin to create a context from which he can function. Context, along with self-knowledge will also cause a person to create her own definition of herself. From there, the person can remain as defined at that moment, or change her definition as needed.

For example, a person that considers himself to be a white person, bases that definition not only for his skin color, but also by the context of what it means to be a white male where he lives. In America, this means the privilege to only be required to learn only one language to survive, to overeat and overconsume as desired, the privilege not to get treated as a nonwhite, along with other rights unknown to me as I am not a white male in America.

However, a male who would be considered a white male in America, who was raised in Finland, may not define himself as a white man per se, but rather a Finnish person, with all of the aspects of being Finnish incorporated into his actions.

Whatever one defines himself to be, certain aspects of Life are universal to all. All have potential, physical and mental, that may not be unlimited, but is more vast than we give ourselves credit for. All share a limited area with limited resources for limited amount of time. Not much else can be universally agreed upon, yet these simple facts should guide all human behavior.

If there ever was a trait that could be embedded, grafted, or bred into the human species at, or before birth, it should be an inner belief that all of Life should be cherished. This is a big IF, but worldwide education brings us closer to that ideal than the current educational systems do now. The current way many children are taught only prepares the student for a narrow range of functions dictated by the student's place/date of birth, the parent's educational level, the child's social/economic status, and the other limitations of the parents.

In the year of 2015 and beyond, I encourage all those who want to break the chains of mental slavery to not only define who you are, but to learn more things about Life that allow you to adjust your definition of yourself. Stated another way, if you are an American male with red hair and freckles, who finds your bloodline goes through northern Norway, it is good to identify with your Asatru, Northern European heritage; however, if the Asatru philosophy (or those proclaiming to be practicioners of it) frowns upon you for learning about Tibetan Buddhism, then most likely either the philosophy or those interpreting that philosophy for you are trying to limit your outlook on life to a social and/or political agenda that does not accept or appreciate the similarities and differences between cultures.

In addition, if you are a dark brown male in America who is unsure of your bloodline, but who feels a strong connection to the African continent and its people, by all means identify yourself as a child of Africa. However, do not limit your view of Self, because you are a Child of the Planet Earth. If the philosophy, religion, or belief you find yourself in does not encourage you to explore and embrace other cultures such as Hinduism or the indigenous Native American cultures, then you are being confined to a narrow worldview that is not strong enough to accept today's reality that the challenges across the globe demand solutions based on awareness that actions in one part of the planet do impact people living elsewhere on the planet Earth.

Conclusion-

To conclude, I return to the shared conclusions of myself, Michelle Alexander, and others, and that is, that nothing less than mass mobilizations will force the minority who are making decisions that affect the majority of

of people to change the way it goes about the business of making and enforcing laws. For example, with computers as inexpensive as ever, why aren't there rooms inside of county, state, and federal buildings dedicated to studying that areas' laws, regulations, and policies? Why are only a small number of attorneys and lawmakers aware of what the Code for Federal Regulations (CFRs) are? Why don't ordinary citizens have computer access that allows them to file, pay for, amend, and check the status of, civil complaints online 24 hours a day? Why are the same number of court staff employed to deal with growing populations' legal issues all over America?

Could the answers to these questions involve racism and classism? By now, you know the answer is yes, and if you are unsure of how to fix these problems, or if these problems need fixing, at least ask yourself and others around you if there are any changes that could be made that could lower your burden as a taxpayer.

For those of you only interested in your family, or you as an individual, it is still imperative for you to study the information available to make the best choices for yourself and/or your family.

For those interested in networking and mobilization, remember what Michelle Alexander addresses in The New Jim Crow regarding the observations and research of two sociologists, Michael Omi and Howard Winant (in their book called Racial Formation in the United States), which warns that patterns of racism evolve, much like patterns of resistance. First those in power acknowledge the power and problems of the mass demonstrations, then they provide some form of temporary reform, then a shift right back to the same racism within a number of years. Note how the powers that be acknowledge the impact and potential destructiveness of the movements, while choosing to ignore the horrible conditions that sent the people to the streets and government buildings to protest in the first place.

Remember Michigan, in 1979, the report exposing racism in the criminal justice system, within five years they came up with a "solution", five years after that, in 1989, the prison population doubled, five years later, by 1994, 30,000 became 40,000. This is the reason why large numbers of people have to get involved and stay involved.

The numbers are available now as never before, and the numbers aren't lying unless those reporting the numbers are lying. The sad thing is, those who are reporting the numbers to the public cannot change the way their friends run the criminal justice system. They are on the inside trying not to throw the stones in their glass house hard enough to shatter the system while they're inside it. They need us, they need you, to get involved, to force freedom and change.

For those who are unsure who to get involved for, do it for those such as Trayvon, Michael, and those other unarmed youngsters killed by law enforcement, on-camera. Get involved for those murdered by law enforcement that never made it to the attention of the media.