

Conscious Prisoner ~ The Evolution of Uhuru

Deja vu: Total Lockdown #2

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POSTED BY BOBDYLAN14 IN WRITINGS FROM UHURU

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Deja vu: Total Lockdown #2
By Uhuru B. Rowe
August 25, 2016

A little over a month has elapsed between the July 18th lockdown and the lockdown that was initiated this morning. The July 18th lockdown lasted for approx ten days after a physical altercation between two groups of prisoners from rival organizations. Such is the cause of this current lockdown.

On the night of August 24th and the morning of August 25th, two separate group fights occurred. The group fight on the 25th happened around 7:30am as we were sitting in the day-room enjoying time out of our cells. Guards rushed into the pod screaming and yelling for the group of prisoners to disperse and for everyone to return to our cells. One officer began recklessly and indiscriminately spraying pepper spray. Everyone in the pod and in the cells began to cough and gag violently. My eyes began to water. My skin began to burn as if it was on fire and I started to sweat profusely. We all were ushered back into our cells. No medical attention was offered or given to those of us suffering from the side effects of the pepper spray.

Once again, the entire prison was placed on lockdown, except for those prisoner workers who were allowed to work their assigned jobs. No prison can adequately function without these prisoner workers, most of whom earn between .27 to .35 cents per hour. If guards and non-security staffers had to perform the same jobs as prisoners at their current wage, most would quit within a matter of days.

Like the last lockdown, this cell is still hot and humid, the food is still served semi-cold, and no cleaning supplies are issued so we can properly clean and sanitize our living quarters.

Most of the prisoners involved in the group fight were taken to the restricted housing unit (RHU), a.k.a. solitary confinement, and transferred shortly thereafter. On their way to the RHU, escorted by two officers, with their hands cuffed behind their backs, they smile and holler at their homies in the cells as they pass by. They take pride in the fact that they have just engaged in prisoner-on-prisoner and Black-on-Black violence. They think this is the kind of behavior that makes them men; what earns them respect and prestige. They only see fellow prisoners, Black prisoners in particular, as their immediate adversaries, and not the guards escorting them to the RHU.

Guards enjoy a strict code of unity among themselves. During the last lockdown, I witnessed staffers wearing a blue T-shirt with the image of a pair of handcuffs with the word "united" underneath. I suspect this means "corrections united" or "law enforcement united." If prisoners were to create and wear a T-shirt with the slogan "prisoners united," we would be thrown into solitary for "participating in a group demonstration." This is because unity among prisoners is aggressively discouraged. We are prohibited from collectively challenging prison conditions. When filing complaints and grievances, we are disallowed from using words like "us", "we", and "our" when complaining about the effects of inhuman prison conditions on the larger prison population. When there is a large gathering of prisoners in a meeting, a guard or an informant is usually dispatched to ascertain the nature of the meeting. Most prisoner workers are housed in units separate from the rest of the prison population. The cafeteria is also divided with Blacks, whites and Latinos all seated in their respective areas during feeding. This is voluntary but encouraged. Rival gang members are sometimes assigned to the same cell and pod to further divide and inflame hostilities. There are also divisions along the lines of religion, age, and sexuality. There is virtually zero solidarity among prisoners.

At approx 4:30pm, two prison investigators (a white male and Black Woman) descends upon my cell. My cellmate is forced to leave the cell. The investigators enter my cell with a folder. The white investigator begins aggressively interrogating me concerning my alleged involvement in spearheading a planned strike in September and my alleged ties to the Black Panthers. He stated that numerous prisoners have pointed me out as the leader of the strike and that I am recruiting others to be Panthers. He then accuses me of being a member of a gang. When I deny every one of these allegations, he grows visibly upset and angry. In a last ditch effort to assassinate my character, he calls me a racist. This is a classic case of the pot calling the kettle black. Though he claims to know all about me, my contacts, the contents of my incoming and outgoing mail, he has conveniently overlooked the fact that I have consistently espoused anti-racist, anti-sexist, and anti-homophobic/anti-transphobic views. He ends his interrogation with a veiled threat to transfer me to a higher security prison. The Black investigator was at all times polite and maintained her silence except for the few times she was prompted to say something by the white investigator. After the two exit my cell I am left feeling like public enemy #1.

The top brass responsible for my constant scrutiny and harassment fail to realize that it is the physical presence of conscious, revolutionary brothers like myself that has kept Black-on-Black prisoner violence to a minimum. They don't know about the numerous stabbings and fights we've prevented by being in the right place and speaking the right words at the right time. They don't know about the lives we've changed by sharing our wisdom and testimony with the young, wayward prisoners on the verge of returning to their communities.

But these are the positive things my keepers refuse to acknowledge (not that I want their acknowledgment) because these things actually runs counter to the goals of the prison industrial slave complex which is to perpetuate Black criminality and recidivism, and to socially control poor people and people of color while profiting off of our misery and suffering.

ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE!