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In Her Majestys Prisons, Long-Term Isolation Is RareBut Still Harsh for the Few Who Endure It

by Aviva Stahl | October 21, 2015

What is a prison system to do with what are sometimes called the worst of the worst among its charges? How can prisons handle individuals who have been so violent that they cannot be housed in the general population? For decades, in the United States, the answer has been to place them, along with tens of thousands of lesser offenders, in long-term solitary confinement.

Over the past year, calls for the reform of solitary have emerged from across the political spectrum and from the highest echelons of power. All seem committed to reducing the number of people held in isolation. Yet many of these reformers have said that are some people who simply belong in solitary.

Even among advocates committed to ending prolonged solitary for everyone, questions remain about how to identify which individuals cannot be safely held in general population, and how to manage these individuals in a way that is humane.

Our closest ally, the United Kingdom, holds a far smaller proportion of people in supermax conditions of long-term isolation. Her Majestys Prison Service, which covers England and Wales, incarcerates about 85,000 people. About sixty of the most significantly disruptive, challenging, and dangerous prisoners are held in small, highly supervised units called Close Supervision Centres (CSCs).

The CSC system is supposed to enable the successful identification of those who cannot be safely held in general population without condemning those individuals to a lifetime of solitary confinement. Could it be a model for Americas prisons?

In both the US and the UK, the 1980s brought to the fore the difficult question of how prisons should manage whom they deemed the so-called worst of the worst. In the United States, the growth of the supermax option can be traced to 1983, when two guards were killed in the control unit at Marion federal prison in Illinois.

As the overall prison population continued to increase, states across the country built new facilities, or remodeled existing ones, in order to accommodate those prisoners perceived to be high-risk. The notorious Pelican Bay State Prison, in California, opened in 1989 to house inmates presenting serious management concerns. ADX Florence, which the Bureau of Prisons opened in 1994, was purpose-built for the long-term isolation of the people determined to be highest-risk in the federal prison system.

By the early 2000s there were more than 25,000 supermax beds in 44 states, and tens of thousands more in the Special Housing Units (SHUs) of conventional prisons. And once these facilities were built, they were fillednot only with truly dangerous individuals, but also with nonviolent rule-breakers and anyone deemed a threat to prison order.

Across the Atlantic, the English prison system was also struggling with how to effectively gain control over the most difficult prisoners. Instead of building supermax facilities, HM Prison Service established small, separate units within high-security mens prisons. In 1998, after a number of the most highly classified prisoners escaped from Whitemoor prison, the Labour government proposed the creation the Closed Supervision Centres (CSCs). The CSCs would be overseen and coordinated as a national system, and designed to be progressive, so that even the most highly disruptive prisoners could eventually be placed back into general population.

Today, the CSC system has five units scattered across Englands High Security Estate. Most people in the CSCs have been convicted of serious crimes and are alleged to have committed violent acts on the inside, like attacking a prison officer or holding other prisoners hostage. While short-term solitary confinement lasting days or weeks is not uncommon in the British prison system, long-term solitary is rare outside of the CSCs.

Her Majestys Inspectorate of Prisons, an independent government organization, publishes reports on the treatment of individuals held inside the UKs prisons and immigration detention centers. In August 2015, after doing site visits of all the units, and surveying CSC prisoners and staff, the Inspectorate released a report on the Close Supervision Centers.

Although the report commends CSC staff for managing such a challenging population and introducing rehabilitative programs into some units, the report also outlines out some serious shortcomings, including inconsistent program delivery across the CSC system and a lack of robust, independent scrutiny in the selection and deselection of prisoners.

One of the most controversial aspects of the use of solitary confinement in Americas prisons is how people end up there. Selection processes vary widely by prison, as well as the kind of solitary for example, disciplinary segregation for punishment, or administrative segregation for institutional safety or security. But in many facilities across the country, the power to put someone in solitary rests in the hands of a single guard or a handful of administrators, and people can end up in the box for months or years for committing nonviolent disciplinary infractions, or simply having alleged political or social affiliations.

Prior to a recent settlement, for example, at Pelican Bay prison people could be placed in indefinite solitary confinement after being gang validated, sometimes simply for possessing a particular piece of artwork or waving to an already gang validated individual. And decisions about how someone got placed in the box at Pelican Bay often came down to just one man: the gang investigator. In 2009, less than 1 percent of validations were rejected meaning that if the prison staff wanted someone in the box, they went.

In the United States, people are also placed in solitary simply as a result of their crime or their sentence. For example, in nearly every state, people on death row are automatically placed in solitary confinement, without any individual evaluation of the risk they might pose in general population.

Not so in Britain. There is a detailed processat least on paperfor placing an individual on a CSC and re-evaluating his placement on the units. The CSC Management Committee (CSCMC) reviews referrals with input from a range of actors involved in the prisoners daily life, including guards and mental health/psychiatric staff (the forms that referring staff must fill out are available in the CSC referral handbook). Candidates for the CSC then undergo an assessment and testing period of up to four months. They have the right to make legal representations to the CSCMC, and to receive copies of all the reports utilized for their eventual assessment.

Importantly, not everyone who is referred to the CSC is accepted into the units. According toHMPrison Service, between September 2011 and February 2012 there were 11 referrals to the CSCs, and just over half were even selected for assessment to the unit.

Once someone is selected into the CSC, a Care and Management Plan is devised, according to the CSC Manual. The plan is supposed to simply and specifically outline targets for the prisoner that would enable him to leave the CSC. It is meant to address issues such as triggers and protective factors, and self-harm or suicide risk. Plans are scheduled to be reviewed quarterly, and theoretically at least, these meetings can be attended by a range of staff, a legal representative, the prisoner, and even his family.

The result is system that is far more procedurally robust than in any long-term solitary confinement units in the United States, according to Andrew Coyle, who spent 24 years as a warden in the British prison system. Last year, Coyle submitted expert evidence in *Ashker v. Brown*, the federal lawsuit brought by the Center for Constitutional Rights on behalf of prisoners incarcerated in Pelican Bays Secure Housing Unit.

There should be a clear, well-defined system for identifying which prisoners require to be held in high security conditions, he notes in the submission, something the Pelican Bay SHU lacks. The degree of risk which they pose should be assessed individually on a continuing and regular basis.

Still, the process of selecting individuals into the CSCs, and re-evaluating their placement, is far from perfect. According to the Inspectorate report, while the assessment, selection and review processes were detailed, no external independent organisation was involved in or challenged these key decisions in a meaningful way to ensure fairness and proportionality.

Progress reviews took place regularly but the requirement to continue to hold a prisoner within the system was not formally reviewed on an annual basis, the report adds. There was no process within the system to allow prisoners to appeal formally their allocation or their continued detention in the system.

One CSC prisoner contacted by Solitary Watch said that the allocation processes to the CSC is entirely arbitrary. He said that suitability for the CSC should be initially identified by the prisoners trial judge, after a CSC assessment an impartial tribunal should evaluate the need to place the individual in the CSC.

With changes to British legal aid in 2012, people in prison no longer have the right to free legal counsel to challenge their selection or continued placement in the CSCs, which presumably leaves many individuals unable to fully press for their release from isolation.

As with U.S. solitary confinement, selection processes for the CSCs also appear to have a discriminatory impact upon racial and religious minorities. According to the Inspectorate report, almost half the prisoners incarcerated in the CSC are Muslim despite the fact that Muslims comprise just 13 percent of the English population and 19 percent of the high security prison population. Black and minority ethnic men also made up a disproportionate percentage of those held in the CSCs.

Much as in supermax prisons in the United States, the CSC regime has come under criticism for holding a high number of people with severe mental illness, and sometimes failing to provide them with appropriate treatment. In 2011, one CSC prisoner sliced off his remaining ear, months after he had cut of his other ear with a razor blade

The conditions inside American supermax prisons are stark and extreme: people spending months, years or even decades in small, cramped cells, with little or no opportunities to interact with others or access to fresh air or sunlight. For a proportion of prisoners on the CSCs, perhaps a significant minority, conditions on the CSCs appear similar to those inside Americas harshest prisons.

Daniel Sonnex, who is serving forty years to life for a 2008 double murder, has been in the CSC system for about three and a half years. He is currently incarcerated at the Exceptional Risk Unit at Wakefield prison, near Leeds, which places the greatest restrictions on CSC prisoners.

Lisa Sonnex, Daniels cousin, described conditions of almost absolute isolation. Dano has literally no normal human contact in [the] CSC, just prison officers dressed in riot gear at least six at a time who unlock him and pass food, etc she told Solitary Watch via email. [O]nly on visits does he have some form of contact with family. Dano is locked up23 hours a day but mostly 24 hours a day as he is regularly denied his exercise and showers.

Prisoners at Wakefield spend only two or three hours out of their cell each day, according to the Inspectorate report, and some were prohibited from spending time with other people on the unit.

The physical CSC units also contribute to the isolating and repressive nature of the regime, according to the Inspectorate report. The CSC units varied greatly: some were claustrophobic and oppressive and all of them obstructed prisoners view of the outside, which could only be seen through bars, caged exercise yards and razor wire. Exercise yards are generally consisted of dehumanising austere cages.

Kevan Thackrar, who has been in the CSC system for about five and a half years and is also currently incarcerated at Wakefield, described a dark, windowless cell with no bed and a hatch on the door to handcuff individuals for transport. He told Solitary Watch, that exercise takes place in a concrete yard topped by tarpaulin so prisoners have no direct access to sunlight.

Thackrars description of the effects of the CSC echo those of people held in solitary confinement in U.S. prisons. Being in the CSC causes everyone to deteriorate significantly, some quicker than others, he said in a letter. Some guys become insane in days, others last years, but without a doubt everyone is damaged by the experience.

As they do in American supermax prisons, prisoners in CSCs find it particularly difficult to stay in touch with friends and family on the outside. According to a survey conducted by the Inspectorate, 70 percent of men in the CSC have had trouble sending and receiving mail, and 40 percent said it was very difficult for friends and family to come visit.

Conditions at Wakefield CSC appear be particularly harsh. According to the data collected by the Inspectorate, overall the CSC units offer more opportunities for human contact than American supermax prisons. For example, according to the Inspectorate report, a little less than 60 percent of CSC prisoners have opportunities to spend time with others on the unit. Just under 50 percent of those surveyed had spent part of the previous day in the open airsomething which prisoners in a number of U.S. prisons may not experience for decades. And only 14 percent of CSC prisoners always had non-contact visits with family and friends.

Furthermore, most of the men held in the CSCs seemed to have some positive and trusting relationships with guards. When asked, 69 percent said the staff treated them with respect, and 72 percent said there was a member of staff they could turn to for help if they had a problem.

The aspect of the CSC system that may make it most distinct from American supermax facilities, is its stated commitment to progression and reintegration. The men held there are supposed to benefit from a purpose regime which supports efforts to address problematic behavior, and clearly focuses on progression and reintegration.

According to the Inspectorate report, most prisoners on the CSCs had access to one-to-one psychology support at least once a week, a reality that would be unthinkable in most supermax facilities in the United States. The CSC unit at Whitemoor prison offers a violence reduction program, which is designed to enable the men to develop and practice strategies for managing their problematic behavior. Since 2012, two men have successfully graduated from the program and moved out of the CSC system.This week, HMPS announced they were introducing one-on-one mindfulness and meditation training to prisoners inside the CSC in an effort to address mental health and emotional regulation issues amongst the population.

However, some prisoners, including Kevan Thackrar, have been frequently placed in designated cells, which are located within the prisons segregation unit and hold CSC prisoners allegedly engaging in unmanageable behavior. In an interview with Solitary Watch, Inspectorate staff noted that CSC prisoners were sometimes placed in designated cells for months or years, during which time they could not access the specialist support available on the CSCs, or access to programming, showers, or phone calls.

When surveyed, the majority CSC prisoners reported that they did not have enough to do either inside or outside of their cells, and the Inspectorate report notes that opportunities for education are extremely limited. Although the CSC system is supposed to be managed nationally, the staffing for the units is determined locally, so the quality and availability of programming also varies significantly between prisons.

In practice, it seems, people incarcerated in the CSCs do not feel that the regime is designed to support their rehabilitation and well-being. About half of the prisoners polled in the Inspectorate survey were unaware of what targets had been outlined in their Care and Management Plan, which is supposed to guide their progressive steps to reintegration in the general population. More than half (53 percent) told the Inspectorate they did not know what they had to do in order to return to mainstream conditions. Less a third of prisoners polled (31 percent) felt that someone was helping them to complete their targets so they could progress out of the CSC.

One prisoner wrote on his survey, I havent been in the CSC even a year yet so I havent got much to say about the system other than since 1998 only five people have been deselected after selection into [this] CSC. When faced with these statistics Im left with little hope. That sentiment was echoed by lawyers, prisoners, and family members interviewed by *Solitary Watch*: that the CSC system was most often a one-way street, in which those who were selected into the regime would struggle for years to get out.

In an interview with Solitary Watch, Inspectorate staff member Sean Sullivan noted that although 10 people have progressed out of the CSC system since 2008, many have simply been moved into psychiatric units, and they have sometimes subsequently returned to the CSCs. This revolving door between the CSCs and forensic psych units was also noted by prisoners families, who lamented how difficult it is to be mainstreamed into general population after being placed within the CSC system.

In his book *Understanding Prisons*, Andrew Coyle writes of the need to maintain a balance between managing minimizing the risks to safety posed by prisoners who are determined to be violent and destructive, and ensuring that these individuals are treated decently and humanely.

It is by no means clear that the [British] prison service always gets this balance right, Coyle concludes. What it has managed to do is to keep the numbers of prisoners who fall into this category to a minimum and to acknowledge that its management of them needs to be open to scrutiny.

With its stated commitment to reintegration of CSC prisoners and minimizing the harmful psychological effects of solitary confinement, the English system prison at least pays lip service to treating even so-called worst of the worst as human. Furthermore, there are stringent processes for selection into the CSCs, and institutions in placelike the Inspectoratecharged with evaluating the success or failure of the CSCs and designating areas in need of improvement.

The English prison system is illuminating for any American who doubts our ability to vastly diminish the number of people held in long-term or indefinite solitary confinement. Yet despite their small size and supposed safeguards, the CSCs often come dangerously close to becoming little more than warehouses for a class of prisoners deemed incorrigible.

According to Hamish Arnott and Simon Creighton, solicitors at Bhatt Murphy who have worked on CSCs for years, the creation of CSCs was a movement away from anything therapeutic. CSC prisoners were seen as a problem to be controlled, they said in an interview, rather than people with problems needing to be treated.

Ultimately, the CSC system raises important questions about what it means to create a category of people deemed the worst of the worst, and whether it is possible to create an institutional culture and implement a prison regime that affirms the possibility of everyones rehabilitation.

The question is in large part philosophical, but has pragmatic implications. Can we willingly condemn people to the torture of long-term isolation, whether in the CSCs or the SHUs, without reducing them in our eyes, without rubber-stamping the idea that they are beyond saving?

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by Juan Moreno Haines

October 25, 2022

by Solitary Watch Guest Author

October 13, 2022

by Vaidya Gullapalli

September 29, 2022

The worst of the worst enunciate not me but you. A holier-than-thou attitude is a feeling of smug moral superiority. In World Leading Jailer Land this seems to be a basic attitude. Underlined by foreign policy as well! We, the good ole people bring to you not only our well established democracy (by war) but also prison culture, Abu Ghraib for example with torture and prisoner abuse. The linkage between religiosity and national pride (Samuel P. Huntington in WHO ARE WE, NY 2004) show high ranking to Importance of God in life. You dare questioning justice execution? Congratulation!

The legal history which has resulted in todays Mass Incarceration crisis:

In 1970 the Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act set the legal foundation for the governments War on Drugs, first declared by President Richard Nixon, but which had actually begun under President LBJ with the passing of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Street Act of 1968.

The Edward Byrne memorial Justice Assistant Grant program which grew out of the Omnibus Act has since become the cornerstone of a massive federal assistance program to wage this war. The resulting flood of cash from these grants has inadvertently created huge incentives for those receiving the funds to increase arrests, prosecutions, and incarceration.

Politicians were eager to build their tough on crime image and the media sought higher ratings as they both focused their attention on inner city crime where an abundance of crimes of opportunity were highly visible. The result was greater resources were allocated to fight inner city crime in the form of policemen, squad cars, communication equipment, and crime labs than rural areas. These resources resulted is a greater number of arrests and convictions of minorities.

Once arrested efforts were made to hold onto suspects. So in 1984 Congress replaced the Bail Reform Act of 1966, which had based release on bail solely upon the risk of flight, with new bail law which allowed for pre-trial detention of individuals based upon their danger to the community; persons charged with a crime of violence, an offense for which the maximum sentence is life imprisonment or death, certain drug offenses for which the maximum offense is greater than 10 years, repeat felony offenders, or those suspected of witness tampering could be held without bail after a special hearing to determine if the defendant fell into one or more of these categories. Those that did were at an obvious disadvantage in mounting an affective defense.

That same year congress passed The Sentencing Reform Act, which under President Reagan established the United States Sentencing Commission which in turn established guidelines enacted in 1987 to alleviate sentencing disparities. These guidelines provided for determinate sentencing at the time that the sentence was imposed, as opposed to indeterminate sentencing, which would later be determined by a parole commission after the prisoner had already started serving his or her sentence. As part of the guidelines, Federal parole was abolished.

The Sentencing Reform Act was followed by the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986, which set mandatory minimum sentences for drugs, including marijuana. Under this act the same mandated minimum sentence of 5 years without parole was established for the possession of 5 grams of crack cocaine as for 500 grams of powder cocaine. Crack cocaine was primarily consumed by Blacks and powder cocaine by Whites.

(This 100:1 disparity was later reduced to 18:1 by the Fair Sentencing Act of 2010.)

The first President George Bush maintained President Reagans hard line, when he created the First National Drug Control Strategy to establish policies, priorities, and objectives to eradicate illicit drugs issued by the Office of National Drug Control in 1989.

With a National War on Drugs Strategy firmly in place an evolution of changes resulted in weakening the prisoners chance of mounting an affective defense.

An inadequate defense leaves a defendant at the mercy of what the U.S. Supreme Court has called the machinery of law enforcement. In acknowledgment of this vulnerability the 1963 Supreme Courts ruling on Gideon v. Wainwright established the constitutional right of criminal defendants to an attorney, even if they had no money to pay for one. When Gideon v. Wainwright was decided, fewer than half of all defendants were poor currently over 80 percent are. In the 1969, there were less than 200,000 people in prisons. http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/sfp2585.pdf

Today, we have 2.3 million people in jails and prisons so our need for lawyers is much greater. But this increased need is not being met so we find that over 90% of all cases in this country are being resolved by a plea deal.

Twenty years after Gideon, Strickland v. Washington created minimal standards for a lawyers conduct; weve discovered over time that they had been set too low. Even the U.S. Department of Justice has found that the right-to-counsel services in America exist in a state of crisis and are unworthy of a legal system that stands as an example to the world.

We all know the result; the gates of the abyss opened wider and the prison population grew ever faster with many suffering the duel consequences of longer sentencing and harsher prison conditions.

Unable to pay for proper legal representation the jail house lawyers were their only hope of salvation. Appeals written by such inmates increased along with the incarcerated population with many an inmate filing frivolous shot in the dark appeals.

So in 1996 the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act was passed. This act required that prisoners who wish to appeal their convictions under state courts must petition the federal courts within one year. In addition, inmates must make all their claims for relief at one time. Impoverished, and under-educated, rank-and-file prisoners operating from behind bars, were henceforth required to file their appeals quickly and correctly.

All of these conditions have deepened the distrust of the American justice system, and this attitude is made worst by the racial imbalance in prisons and with each humiliation and abuse that prisoners endure.

Rage against the system that had begun during the 1960s, was by 1970 frequently leading to confrontations with the men running these prisons. With so many losing hope of ever reentering civil society, the number of violent incidents increased dramatically in the 1970s, with much of this violence fueled by Marxist revolutionary rhetoric and a virulent, unadulterated racial hatred leading to ever more draconian measures being deployed against inmates.

In response to this rise of institutional violence, the Control Unit was created at the United States Penitentiary in Marion, Illinois in 1973. Marion was designed as the place where prisons across the nation could send their most radicalized inmates and violent gang members. As Marions Control Unit received more and more, of the worst of the worst, Marions security deteriorated to the point where violence became the new norm. Marions warden may have indeed been seeking an excuse to lock down the whole population at the institution when in October 1983 Thomas Edward Silverstein and Clayton Fountain supplied him with a politically correct excuse to do so. The Supermax Prison model was thus born.

Silverstein was taken to USP Atlanta where he describes in his declaration as having been terrified as he witnessed the construction of new walls and bars around him. In this declaration Silverstein describes being forced to cover himself with bedding to hide from the flying sparks as workers added more iron bars to his tomb located in USP Atlantas underground basement. After a riot took place there in 1987 in which Silverstein was briefly set free he was moved to the basement of USP Leavenworth in December 1987, and then around eighteen months later to the specially built Silverstein Suite, described as an isolated cell adjoining Leavenworths SHU. Finally on July 15, 2005 Silverstein was moved to Range 13, the most restrictive isolation section at the United States Penitentiary Administrative Maximum Facility (ADX) in Florence, Colorado, a purpose-built super-maximum security facility.

Fountain was taken to an underground, steel, and concrete containment cell constructed especially for him, next to the criminally insane

wing of the Federal Medical Center in Springfield, Missouri where he remained until his death in July of 2004 from a heart attack.

And today if such prisoners wish to challenge these harsh measures, another law waits to thwart all their efforts:

The Prison Litigation Reform Act (PLRA) was also passed in 1996. The PLRA imposes strict filing procedures which require hard-to-come-by documentation, combined with inflexible time restraintsall of which are technically incomprehensible to almost all inmates. The result is even constitutionally meritorious cases are often thrown out of court.

All of this is exponentially more difficult for juveniles in adult prisons to manage. But sadly they, too, must navigate this maze of bureaucratic red tape, even as they struggle just to survive another day in prison. Governor Hugh Carey of New York was the first to lobby his states legislature to pass the states Juvenile Offender Act of 1978, which allowed juveniles to be charged and punished as adults. The law is now known as the Willie Bosket law. After its passage a few other states quickly followed suit but by the end of the 1990s, the rest of the 50 states, having been encouraged by financial incentives in President Clintons Juvenile Crime Control Act, had all passed their own laws allowing or requiring select juveniles between the ages of 10 and 17 to be charged and punished as adults. An estimated 250,000 youth are now tried, sentenced, or incarcerated as adults every year across the United States most for non-violent offenses.

Is it right that persons who have legitimate claims should be denied legal recourse because others have filed frivolous cases? When they choose to seek justice, should they have to navigate a system obviously geared to make it next to impossible to have their grievance heard? A bedrock principle of international human rights law is the equality of all persons before the law. But in reviewing this act, Human Rights Watch has said that it is not aware of any other country in which national legislation singles out prisoners for a unique set of barriers to vindicating their legal rights in court. This is all the more alarming because the monitoring of conditions in prisons, jails, and juvenile facilities, in the U.S. is primarily left up to the federal courts.

The result of the PLRA is that fewer law suits have been filed by prisoners, and of those filed, fewer are being won. Many acts that would be treated as serious crimes if perpetrated upon those of us in the free world can legally be perpetrated upon prisoners under the tenets of this act. This includes any act that is deemed to produce only mental or emotional injury. Thus, the internationally recognized harm that is done to inmates in SOLITARY CONFINEMENT is sanctioned and ignored, as is the emotional distress caused by the rape of inmates, whether by other prisoners or by guards.

Excerpts from a Rolling Stone article:

On the morning of October 1st Democratic and Republican senators gathered for a news conference to announce new legislation titled The Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act of 2015.

The bill requires that juveniles sentenced as adults be eligible for parole.

It allows terminally ill and elderly inmates with no violent record to be released from prison.

It mandates the Bureau of Prisons to provide inmates with programming shown to reduce recidivism.

It reduces the three strikes penalty that saddled three-time drug convicts with life sentences.

The bill also makes retroactive the reductions contained in the Fair Sentencing Act of 2010, which lowered the discrepancy between crack and powder-cocaine sentences.

However it does nothing to eliminate the institution of mandatory-minimum sentences, and in fact creates new mandatory-minimum requirements for domestic violence and arms trafficking.

But the Senate is the easy part. Its in the U.S. House, the seething, clotted epicenter of government dysfunction, that sentencing reform will face its real test.

Read more: http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/why-cant-we-end-mass-incarceration-20151026#ixzz3pn1hOyQZ

With states like California second guessing the causes of an uptick in crime following the release of prisoners there one has to believe passage of The Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act of 2015. is not assured.

First Id like to complement you and Jean on this new series. Well done. I like your use of the history and Jeans recognition of what makes our system stand apart from the likes of Norways. Indeed history plays an important role in todays prison conditions.

For example the most infamous phrase in Alabamas former governor George Wallaces Inaugural Address on January 14, 1963 is segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever. Wallace wasnt referring to, Administration Segregation but he might as well have been, because the atmosphere in which Wallace and others like him fostered is indirectly responsible for the formation of race based prison gangs whose members now fill these units.

The decade of the 1960s had begun with the domestic terror of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) on the far right and ended with the bombings of the Weather Underground Organization (WUO) on the far left. The watershed moment of this maelstrom occurred on November 22, 1963 when President Kennedy was assassinated. Indeed the 1960s was one of the most tumultuous decades in our nations history and nowhere was it more turbulent than in Californias Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (C.D.C.R.). In fact, by the mid-1960s Californias San Quentin Prison, located on San Francisco Bay, had become the epicenter of a prison race war for the control of its prison yard. And by the time the Summer of Love arrived in 1967 every peaceful-flower-child that arrived there had a cross to bear. As he walked, bound in his chains, through the cruel gauntlet that is San Quentin Prison, sadistic guards on one side and leering sexual predators on the other, he may have paused with a tear in his eye to look beyond the ominous watchtowers towards the sky to ask, Why has thou forsaken me? While just outside its walls the New Left had established what has since become known as Californias Radical

Prison Movement in support of the civil rights of prisoners.

Even as the casualty count, of inmate on inmate violence increased as the decade ended, it had been almost twenty years since a guard had been killed in a California prison, but that would also change by January 1970. What took place in the C.D.C.R. over this period of time is still reverberating throughout the whole U.S. prison system.

Everyone that has entered the U.S. prison system since has been thrust into this ongoing conflict and forced to adjust to it. The history of our prison system is unique in this regard. The solution to solitary will thus have to address this sad history.

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