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[www.afgazad.com](http://www.afgazad.com)

[afgazad@gmail.com](mailto:afgazad@gmail.com)

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## *The party of the corrupt*

Last February, Donald Trump granted presidential pardon to eleven people imprisoned for crimes of corruption, fraud and extortion, which has led to widespread rejection of American public opinion, except in the most fanatical sector of the president's supporters that includes , of course, to the anti-Cuban right of Miami.

Among the journalists who condemned with greater clarity and firmness the forgiveness granted to this group of criminals, the young candidate for Congress Yadira Escobar stands out, who also showed a video where a lady appears, sentenced to 35 years in prison for a millionaire scam the medical insurance MEDICARE and MEDICAIDE, Cuban-American belonging to the group released by Trump, displaying a cap in Hialeah with the president's slogan: "Make this country great." I do not see how this country can be made large by forgiving corrupt white-collar, especially those who, as in this case, steal resources for the sick and the poor. Obviously, exhibiting with Trump's electoral propaganda is a way of paying the immense favor received.

The video presented by Yadira in his "Modern" program made me see the need to point out some important aspects in the context of presidential forgiveness. I will begin by turning to the anti-Cuban right of Miami to remind you that one of yours, Eduardo Arocena, has been in prison for 36 years and, year after year, he is denied presidential pardon. I advocated, from Radio Miami, not for his release, which he does not deserve for the abominable crimes he committed, but for his transfer, for humanitarian reasons, to a prison in Miami so that his family, who is guilty of nothing and has suffered Too much, I could visit it, considering especially that he is already old and sick. But Trump forgave his

corrupt friends, or the corrupt friends of his friends, and ignoring you, your outdated followers in Miami, forgot about Arocena. "Take note" of this before applauding presidential pardons.

But what, in this context, is of greater importance and priority, if we really want to make this country great, is the existence of 2.7 million American children whose fathers or mothers are locked in the prison network that covers the entire national territory and that, in a large part of the cases, they are imprisoned due to an unfair, ruthless and discriminatory penitentiary system. This means hundreds of thousands of fractured, destroyed families. More than one million of these children have had to live with someone with drug addiction problems, and about 700,000 with someone suffering from psychiatric disorders. (one)

From 1980 to date, the number of people imprisoned in prisons in the United States has quadrupled to the current figure of 2.3 million, the largest criminal population in the world. Another 5 million are on probation, probation or some other type of restricted freedom. The greatest weight of this unusual growth falls on the poor and minorities, especially on the black population. African Americans are imprisoned at a rate six times higher than that of whites. Nearly 1.5 million poor African Americans are locked in US prisons, more than 60,000 in the maddening solitary confinement. An additional cruelty is to keep prisoners in prison facilities located hundreds or thousands of miles from the places where their families reside, which makes visits difficult or impossible. With mass incarceration, attempts have been made to control the problems that arise from marginalization by repressing, criminalizing and imprisoning the marginalized. Its main pretext is the war on drugs, which has already accumulated more than four decades of failures.

The mass incarceration began with President Nixon, reached its greatest intensity with the Reagan administration and after several decades of continuous growth it stabilized first and began to descend later during the presidency of Barack Obama, resuming its growth with the administration of Donald Trump.

Massive incarceration, racist and classist, is exacerbated by the increasing privatization of prison institutions. The "Prison Industrial Complex" is a multi-million dollar business. Mass incarceration has led millions of people to poverty. Children with incarcerated parents frequently drop out of school, adopt antisocial attitudes and end up in jail. Much has been spoken and written on this subject but little has been resolved. The magnitude of the problem was recognized by President Barack Obama in his words to

members of Congress in 2015: "Mass incarceration destroys families, depletes neighborhoods, perpetuates poverty."

The worst is that, since the late 1980s, an exponential increase in the female prison population began, with devastating and irreparable impact on the training of children. Women became the fastest growing segment of the prison population. Of 13,400 women prisoners in 1980, the figure rose to 84,400 in 1990 and continued to rise rapidly. In mid-2006 the total amounted to 200,745, a creepy increase of about 1500% in just 25 years. In 2018, it had risen to 219,000 and, in 2019, to 231,000, with more than one million women in probation or parole; and we would have to add still the women prisoners by immigration (with the new modality of enclosing the children in cages and separating them from their mothers) and the minors in juvenile centers. About 67% of these women are black or Hispanic; If we add other minorities, the proportion of non-white women is close to 70%. 33% of all women incarcerated in the world are locked in prisons and prisons in the United States, while this country accounts for only 4% of the female population of the planet. (two)

To appreciate this tragedy in its real dimension, it must be taken into account that 80% of women incarcerated are mothers and, consequently, with the increase in women incarcerated, the number of children raised in the streets, without parents and homeless, also increases. , poorly nourished and expanding the vicious circle of crime and crime. For tens of thousands of these children the school and the teacher arrive too late, because it is already known for sure that malnutrition and chronic malnutrition cause neurophysiological sequelae in the early childhood that are not apparent until the damage is irreparable .

The rate of imprisonment of women has been twice that of men in recent decades. One of the main causes is the fact that women generally receive lower wages than men or do not receive salaries and, consequently, have less money to pay bail, the services of a competent lawyer, and expenses ("fees") when they are on probation.

Another cause, which also applies to men, is the draconian laws that changed the system of indeterminate sentences to that of mandatory minimums, thus eliminating extenuating circumstances and, therefore, depriving judges of any flexibility in imposing sentences. Others put the emphasis on the change that occurred from the philosophy of rehabilitation to the philosophy of punishment. Finally, and I think it is not the least important cause, we have the fact that prisons have become highly lucrative businesses,

both for private entrepreneurs and for local political wasps, and empty prisons do not produce profits.

I note that I have shown only a small fragment of the devastating picture of mass incarceration and, especially, of female incarceration, a system that victimizes not only women but also children and, therefore, the whole society. The corrupt are partying because the president (not society) forgave them, perhaps for winning the vote of the haters in South Florida. But instead of the hypocrisy and demagoguery of a misused presidential pardon, what is needed to comply with the slogan of “making this country great” is a profound reform of the judicial and prison system that mixes compassion with justice and allows that children, all children, grow with the love and protection of their parents.

#### NOTES

(1) Gabriela Bulisova: "Innocence". Smithsonian, Jan.-Febr. 2017, pp. 98-109.

(2) Data about female mass incarceration were taken from the annual reports of the Prison Policy Initiative, Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie. ”