

## New “Bipartisan” Coalition for Public Safety Dupes Conservatives in Campaign to Empty the Prisons

# Marxist Van Jones Praises Koch Brothers

By Cliff Kincaid – March 30, 2015

When he left the Obama Administration in disgrace, the expectation was that “former” communist Van Jones would return to Oakland, California, and resume his duties as an anti-police street activist. Instead, Jones, a former activist with the group, Standing Together to Organize a Revolutionary Movement (STORM), was hired as a “liberal” co-host of a new version of CNN’s debate show “Crossfire.” Now, Jones has emerged as a point man for Koch Industries in a multi-million dollar campaign for “criminal justice reform.”

The spectacle of Jones appearing at a podium emblazoned with the company name “Koch Industries” became a reality last Thursday when the ACLU and the billionaire Koch brothers joined forces to sponsor an all-day [“Bipartisan Summit on Criminal Justice Reform.”](#) Jones orchestrated most of the conference, serving as a moderator and speaker.



Van Jones (left) at “criminal justice reform” summit.

While the conference included a few Republicans, there was clear evidence that the new “bipartisan” campaign is being directed from the Obama White House. Attorney General Eric Holder and senior White House officials had [met](#) with several prominent leaders of the effort on March 2.

In addition to Jones, who was forced to resign as White House “Green Jobs Czar” after his extremist background came to light, Holder was a featured speaker, [calling](#) for “a fundamental shift in our criminal justice system,” and “historic change.”

Known for his lawless actions, such as refusing to enforce federal anti-drug laws, Holder was held in contempt by Congress for withholding documents from them about Fast and Furious, the scandal involving a gun-running operation that put deadly weapons in the hands of narcotics traffickers from Mexico. He is also known for the “open borders” policy that has prevented a vigorous enforcement of immigration laws on the federal and state level.

Addressing an audience of about 500 people, Holder spoke of a “rare consensus emerging across the country,” adding, “Recently, we have seen conservative stakeholders like Koch Industries and Americans for Tax Reform join with progressive voices like the Center for American Progress to form a new coalition dedicated to this cause.”



**The “Coalition for Public Safety” meets with Holder**

The “cause,” based on what we witnessed at the all-day event, is to reduce prison populations in the name of fiscal restraint and liberal compassion.

The financial support from the Koch brothers gives this left-wing campaign a bipartisan appearance and may be intended to buy some goodwill from the “progressives” who normally target these billionaires.

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But knowing of Holder's involvement in the event and the evidence that he, in fact, helped orchestrate this conference, it was troubling to some conservative observers that members of Congress, such as Congressman Bob Goodlatte (R-VA) and Republican governors such as Nathan Deal of Georgia, participated in this event.

Holder argued that the criminal justice system was racist against minorities, while Deal said the system was too costly and that many criminals can be re-educated, rehabilitated and released.

Although Americans for Tax Reform was indeed listed as a sponsor, its head, Grover Norquist, was in the news for another reason. He is embroiled in a controversy over his alleged ties to Islamists, and gave [an interview](#) to Glenn Beck defending himself against the charges.

The Center for American Progress, another major player in the new "criminal justice reform" effort, is [funded](#) by the Open Society Foundations of billionaire hedge-fund operator George Soros.



Senator Cory Booker, Eric Holder, and Van Jones (left). Jones and Newt Gingrich (on the right)

The new group Holder spoke about is called the [Coalition for Public Safety](#), financed by \$5 million from the Koch brothers and other "core supporters," such as the liberal Ford Foundation. The group is run by Christine Leonard, a former Ted Kennedy Senate staffer once affiliated with the left-wing Vera Institute for Justice.

The Vera Institute is so extreme that its Project Concern had a National Advisory Board on Adolescent Development, Safety and Justice that included the former communist terrorist [Bernardine Dohrn](#) as an adviser from 1998 to 2003. Dohrn was accused of bombing a police station and killing a San Francisco police sergeant. However, she has never been brought to justice for her alleged role in this crime.

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Though it tilted heavily toward the left, the new coalition and the conference had a sprinkling of conservatives, most notably former Republican House Speaker Newt Gingrich. His firm, "[Gingrich Productions](#)," was an official sponsor. Gingrich apparently became a friend of Van Jones when they appeared together on CNN's "Crossfire." Other conservatives or libertarians in attendance included Matt Kibbe, President/CEO of FreedomWorks, and Tim Head, Executive Director of the Faith & Freedom Coalition.

In a joint statement, Gingrich and Jones declared, "Our over-reliance on prisons has failed America. It is past time for both political parties to come together and fix a bad system of their own making. We believe this moment offers a once-in-a-generation opportunity for reforms that will save entire communities and transform the lives of millions of Americans. We must not let it pass."

However, the well-documented book, [Why Crime Rates Fell](#), by John E. Conklin, argues persuasively that crime reduction is due in large measure to putting more criminals in prison.



On one panel at the event, John Malcolm of The Heritage Foundation disputed the liberal notion advanced by Nicole Austin-Hillery of the Brennan Center for Justice that increased incarceration had no role in the drop in crime. He noted that economist Steven Levitt has estimated that approximately 25 percent of the decline in violent crime can be attributed to increased incarceration, and that [Professor William Spelman](#) has estimated that increased incarceration may be responsible for as much as 35 percent of the reduction in violent crime.

Following Governor Nathan Deal as a speaker was [Piper Kerman](#), a convicted drug-money launderer who wrote, [Orange is the New Black: My Year in a Women's Prison](#), a book made into a television series by Netflix.

Dr. Tina Trent, an advocate for victims of crime, is watching this campaign go forward with a lot of questions and suspicion. She was [writing](#) about the campaign for “criminal justice reform” when it was primarily underwritten by Soros. She discovered that the group, Critical Resistance, a Soros-funded activist group founded by long-time communist Angela Davis, had invented the “cop-watch concept” that would be popularized by Jones in Oakland through a group called Bay Area Police Watch. Davis wrote, [Are Prisons Obsolete?](#), a book arguing that criminals are victims of capitalist society.



Trent says the campaign is well underway and aims to eliminate the death penalty, life without parole sentences, “three strikes” laws, mandatory minimum sentencing laws, and other changes that states have passed over the last 20 years to reduce violent

crime. Another goal is to expand voting rights for felons, who are expected to show their gratitude by voting Democratic.

She says the movement also aims to “ban the box”—a reference to removing the criminal record question from job applications—and legalize dangerous mind-altering drugs. In this context, the Soros-funded Drug Policy Alliance was another “partner” in the “bipartisan summit.”



Trent has also highlighted the Soros-funded effort to “radicalize” prisoners while they are incarcerated.

The campaign to target the prisons for revolutionary purposes is actually an old one. The House Internal Security Committee in 1973 published a report, “[Revolutionary Target: The American Penal System](#),” which examined how “groups committed to Marxist revolutionary theories and tactics were exploiting the popular issue of prison reform and had become a source of the unrest then afflicting many of the nation’s prisons.”

A different approach and analysis of what has to be done about the crime problem is being taken by veteran journalist Colin Flaherty, in his new book, [Don’t Make the Black Kids Angry](#). Flaherty argues that the Obama/Holder narrative of the alleged “racial victimization” of blacks by whites ignores the black-on-white violence that has become an epidemic across the country.

Rather than empty the prisons, he argues, more criminals need to be apprehended and punished.

Black crime rates are “astronomically out of proportion” to their presence in the population, he points out. But the media “ignore, condone and deny it.” Obama, he adds, is a “willing partner” in the deception.



**Holder is shown meeting with the “Coalition for Public Safety.”**

An official statement said, “The Coalition met with Attorney General Eric Holder, Acting Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates, and other senior department officials at 2:30 p.m. at the Justice Dept. The Coalition then met at the White House at 4:45 p.m. with Cecilia Munoz, Director of the Domestic Policy Council, and Roy Austin, Director of the Office of Urban Affairs, Justice, and Opportunity, as well as other senior White House officials.

Coalition Director Christine Leonard had this to say, “Today’s meetings with Attorney General Eric Holder and senior White House officials to discuss the growing, bipartisan momentum behind criminal justice reform were both informative and productive. Like the President and Attorney General Holder, we believe significant opportunity exists to achieve meaningful reforms at the federal, state and local level. We look forward to working together in collaboration with the Obama Administration, and bipartisan leaders in Congress to get the job done.”



Statement by Attorney General Holder Following Meeting with Bipartisan Coalition for Criminal Justice Reform:

“In our ongoing effort to reform our criminal justice system, the formation of a coalition this ideologically diverse represents an important milestone unto itself. Though different concerns may bring us to the table – whether it be the skyrocketing costs of incarceration, or the unfair disparities seen in our prison population – the important thing is the broad consensus in favor of action on this issue. The Justice Department has made real gains in reforming our sentencing policies and reducing the federal prison population, but more work remains to be done. Even at a time of gridlock in Washington, I am actually quite optimistic that criminal justice reform is one issue around which we can unite and make a true difference.”

<http://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/statement-attorney-general-holder-following-meeting-bipartisan-coalition-criminal-justice>