

!ROCK!

★ Working to Extend Democracy to All ★

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FIVE CORE AND 40 SUPPLEMENTAL DEMANDS, AND CDCR'S STG-SDP

By Todd Ashker

This memorandum is directed to the above CDCR Administrators for the express purpose of respectfully reminding you about unresolved, and/or continued problematic, issues relevant to our 2011-2014 Five Core and 40 Supplemental demands... and CDCR's Security Threat Group-Step Down Program [STG-SDP]...

I am requesting your attention and responsive dialogue-addressing these issues during the meeting with our outside mediation team- and with Arturo Castellanos, George Franco, James Williamson, and myself in the near future... The following is from me.

We are presently at the one year point-post "suspension," of our third peaceful protest hunger strike action against long-term-indefinite-solitary confinement [i.e. SHU/Ad-Seg confinement]... and related

conditions therein and damage therefrom- to prisoners, our outside loved ones, and society in general, as supported by the public record from the legislative Joint Public Safety Committee hearings held in Oct. 2013/Feb. 2014...

I believe we have demonstrated our commitment to seeing the reforms sought in our demands implemented in principle and spirit, via our peaceful collective actions and I am reminding you of some relevant facts...

A) In 2011, CDCR Undersecretary Kernan, and others, admitted that our five core demands were reasonable-and, many should have been implemented/provided [20] years ago-Three years later, many remain unresolved -

B) It was our (2) peaceful hunger strike actions-involving thousands of prisoners statewide, and related international/national public exposure and condemnation of our decades of subjection to a form of coercive, state sanctioned torture... that brought out Undersecretary Kernan, and others', public admission that CDCR had been over using the validation process', and was going to revise such policies... responsive to our demands -

C) Our Primary Goal has always been, and remains, ... Ending Long-term Indefinite- SHU/Ad-Seg confinement!

Contrary to CDCR Secretary Beard, et al claims, the STG-SDP is not responsive to our Primary Demand because it continues a policy of indefinite SHU placement and retention. (And it's structured in vague over reaching terms that will ultimately result in many more prisoners being subject to indefinite SHU-in large part due to minor in-

fractions- already being born out by fact of, more prisoners are in SHU-Ad-Seg today- than there were prior to start of STG-SDP pilot program Oct. 2012!)

D) With our primary goal in mind -"Ending Indefinite SHU" policy- any policy/practice that enables such to continue is not acceptable, thus, while CDCR has been somewhat responsive to some of our demands re: SHU/Ad-Seg program/privilege issues- most of us in SHU for decades already,... remain here indefinitely! The point is, no matter how you dress it up- spending 24/7 in a small cell for months, years, decades- without normal human contact- especially, the contact of physically touching one's outside loved ones... equals a form of torturous social extermination period!!

E) A major aspect of our collective movement to meaningfully reform this prison system in ways beneficial to prisoners, staff, outside loved ones, and society in general, is related to the system's rank and file treating prisoners and our outside loved ones humanely- as fellow human beings, with dignity and respect.

I'm not sure how many of you current administrators were in the loop during our discussions about

SHU policy change(s) in 2011-2012, ... but we pointed out that "CDCR leadership knows how to create a reform policy- intended to be successful or, - one intended to fail." ...As summarized below, the current structure and implementation of the STG-SDP appears to be intended to fail- this will not bode well for CDCR!

Remember this, our 2013 peaceful pro-

Ashker Memo Continued on page 8

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EDITORIAL 3-10

Dear Reader, It's in the area of international news that I've failed you most. I have access to the Internet and other news sources that you as a prisoner do not. One of the things *Rock* could have been (if it possessed more people and money) was a digest of news from around the world—not news written from just the viewpoint of the U.S. ruling class. This would have given you both sides of the story. Yet Mark and I don't have the money for a larger issue of this newsletter, nor the volunteers needed to do the work of making this thing fly each month. For now you'll just have to settle for the following mish-mash of news, politics, and commentary.

We'll start our political odyssey with Robert McNamara, the former Defense Secretary during the Vietnam War. He wrote a book in which he stated that the United States had killed 3.2 million Vietnamese people during that conflict (the Vietnamese government puts the number of its citizens killed by the U.S. at a much higher figure). Why did those millions die in Vietnam? Let me explain, just briefly.

French imperialism controlled Vietnam until the outbreak of World War II, when the wannabe Japanese imperialist then took it away from them. But the people of Vietnam wanted the country for themselves; not for Japanese, French, or even American imperialism. So they fought back; they fought for self-determination. The Vietnamese people battled the Japanese and drove them out, then fought the French to a standstill and defeated them. Then in came the Americans.

Back in the mid-1950s representatives of President Eisenhower and the Vietnamese government (led by Ho Chi Min) met in Geneva. The outcome of that meeting was to order elections be held to decide the political fate of Vietnam's future. In preparation for the elections the U.S. conducted a poll of the Vietnamese population. Surprisingly, the polls demonstrated that Ho Chi Min would win by a whopping 80 percent of the votes.

The U.S., those great lovers of democracy, immediately chopped Vietnam in half, setup a puppet government in the south, and first with advisers sent in by Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy, initiated a ground war in Vietnam—a war *against* democracy.

Later came the phony “Gulf of Tonkin” incident, which stampeded the U.S. con-

gress into passing a resolution authorizing a substantial escalation of the Vietnam War. As the Pentagon Papers later proved the lie behind the Vietnam War, so too did subsequent disclosures prove that the Gulf of Tonkin incident was fabricated by the U.S.

The American people were also told that if Vietnam fell, then all of Southeast Asia would tumble into the hands of communists, like so many “dominos falling” over. Well, we lost that war and guess what? No dominos fell. Like the Iraq war, the Vietnam War (the Vietnamese call it the American War) was totally based on lies, naked aggression, and imperialist greed.

Another bump in the global death rate was the 1.7 million Iraqis deaths that came “as a direct result” of the genocidal sanctions imposed on that nation by both the Bush and Clinton administrations (750,000 children perished because of those sanctions). Then there was the slaughter of 200,000 Iraqis by President Bush in his 1991 Gulf War I. Following that came the deaths of 1.4 million Iraqis as a result of the illegal 2003 war of aggression ordered by then President Bush Jr. It looks to be that about 3.1 million Iraqis were murdered by the U.S. (we won't bother to count the millions of more wounded or displaced by the other wars the U.S. is waging today).¹

Two wars of aggression, both rooted in lies and deception, costing the combined lives of some 6.3 million Vietnamese and Iraqi peoples, and now we are told to prepare for yet a new war? This one against ISIS (ISIL or Islamic State) exists because we invaded Iraq and installed a Shiite government that hated Sunnis. It's called by any number of names—blowback, the law of unintended consequences, etc. In the remote event the U.S. is successful in defeating ISIS², will there be an even worse threat created by our doing so? Where will it all end?

The U.S. has now bombed Syria. Days before the missiles flew Syria's Deputy

1. Interestingly enough, I can find the number of occupation troops killed and the cost of the war in Iraq, yet I can't find figures on the number of Afghans who have so far been killed or wounded during that ongoing war. Or, for that matter, the number of people killed by the U.S. in places like Pakistan and Yemen, Somalia, and a number of nations in Western and Northern Africa.

2. People in Syria and Iraq living under ISIS control say they are tired of war, they want peace. Most of these people tend to see the areas governed by ISIS as stable. Many do not like ISIS, but they hate and fear the U.S. even more. Yes, we're well into our third decade of indiscriminately bombing the people of Iraq. Want to see what kind of a mess the U.S. and its military flunkies leave in their wake? Just take a quick glance at Libya today.

Foreign Minister, Faisal Mekdad, affirmed that “any attack against the Syrian territory with the pretext of fighting terrorism ... will be considered an aggression.” Russian foreign ministry spokesman, Alexander Lukashevich, also before the attacks, said “This step, in the absence of a UN Security Council decision, would be an act of aggression, a gross violation of international law.” While there are bombs and missiles exploding over Syria as I write this, at this point both Britain and Germany and said they will not be bombing Syria.

Welcome to yet another exciting war in the Middle East, we can call this one Iraq War 3.0 (three point zero).

Many years ago, in the editorial page of some past issue of *Prison Focus*, I quoted Osama Bin Laden on the subject of what it would take to bring peace to the Middle East. He said they want two things; first, remove your military bases from our lands, and, secondly, stop killing us. Would it not have been so much easier and cheaper to end it right then and there?

The terrorists got the Twin Towers in New York and we got Afghanistan. Even-steven, right? Nope. We have to win! A new war, even as our military is already fighting on four fronts—a new war that crosses Syria's boundaries as if they didn't exist. How many more millions will have to die before America's leaders come to understand that the U.S. cannot win in a struggle against a genuine peoples' war³?

The down side here is that it is too late to cut and run; lest we look like a nation of cowards. So off we go, skipping merrily down the yellow brick road, just us and our trusty dogs of war.

The borders of what is called modern day Iraq were created by the British after World War One, without any regard for such things as tribal differences or the ethnic backgrounds of the peoples who lived there. Fast forward to modern days, when along comes the all-powerful United States who destroys Iraq, twice. We bombed them into the Stone Age and then went in with our troops. When it was all done we'd killed over a million Iraqis and sent millions more fleeing for safety into neighboring regions.

Remember, Iraq had done nothing to the U.S. to provoke these wars—they had not harmed a single American. While that

3. I am not in any way suggesting that ISIS struggle amounts to a people's war, although it may be a national liberation struggle led by religious reactionaries who are homophobic, anti-communist, and against women.

infamous war crime is now behind us; the once proud nation of Iraq has been brutally violated (raped) by the United States, multiple times. Now Obama has already told us what's next: It's going to be even more war—as he's just demonstrate with his against Syria.⁴

How about this? We let Iraq slip back into the three states it was before all of the meddling by the various imperialist powers—a Kurdish region, a Shiite area, and a Sunni section. Just walk away! Yes, it will be messy. But not as messy as if we had stayed for yet more years of seemingly unending wars. Fact is, if the U.S. wants to do more than merely attack the symptoms it needs to address the disease of Middle East violence. And to do that you must first address Israel's oppression of the Palestinian people; the removal our military bases from Arab lands; quit stealing their resources (oil); and, yes, stop killing them.

Our founding fathers were opposed to our even having a standing army, saying it would lead to.... Well, the mess we have today. They felt, if need be, an armed and informed populace would defend the nation from any foreign invaders. The extent to which we as a nation have strayed from those early teaching is a measure of how far America has drifted from her roots.

And let's not forget how bad those roots were: You could not vote unless you were a white land owner (women could not vote at all), and Blacks were held in conditions of slavery—the U.S. Constitution did not even recognized Blacks as full human beings. This was a nation founded by the rich, for the rich, and it has steadily gone downhill ever since. Today it is the global murderer of millions, while stealing the food from the mouths of starving children (oil and other natural resources needed for their development) in places like Africa, South America, and Asia. As Dr. Martin Luther King correctly noted, the United States is “the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today.”

It's way past time to move beyond the narrow self-interest and selfishness of capitalist modes of thought and being. “War”, it has been said, “is when the government tells you who the bad guy is. Revolution is when you decide that for yourself.” What

4. A former counterterrorism specialist and military intelligence officer of the CIA, Philip Giraldi, says: “The United States is not at war with Syria [and] to attack Syrian territory as they're planning on doing is an act of war and in fact to do it in this fashion is a war crime....” <http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2014/09/13/378611/us-plan-to-attack-syria-is-war-crime/>

side are you on? The side of slavery, exploitation, oppression, and war? Or are you on the side of peace, freedom, justice and equality for all? It is not the voice in your head that is going to answer those questions for you, but rather it will be the concrete steps you take to bring about a better world. It's not what you say; it's what you do that counts. You vote with your feet.

You also vote with your pocketbook. I am sending this newsletter off to the printer today, October 1st. So far I've received one \$15 check for a subscription and 17 stamps. What this means is that I will be paying nearly \$500 to put this issue of the newsletter into your hands. Others will have volunteered their time to fold, seal, stamp, and label each of the over 600 copies we send out each month. We will not be able to afford continuing to do that for very much longer.

Lastly, for those who argue that submitting to the state's behavior modifications programs is “an individual decision or solution.” Please consider the possibility that there are no individual solutions, only collective ones. We are one! PC, queers, rats, SNY, and every prisoner who as a set of tits to swing or a pair of balls to hang. We all know the source of the problem, and it ain't other prisoners. ●

Ed Mead

THEY REALLY HATE US?

Most American citizens believe that no matter what the United States does abroad, no matter how bad it may look, no matter what horror may result, the government of the United States means well. American leaders may make mistakes, they may blunder, they may lie, they may even on the odd occasion cause more harm than good, but they do mean well. Their intentions are always honorable, even noble. Of that the great majority of Americans are certain.

Frances Fitzgerald, in her famous study of American school textbooks, summarized the message of these books: “The United States has been a kind of Salvation Army to the rest of the world: throughout history it had done little but dispense benefits to poor, ignorant, and diseased countries. The U.S. always acted in a disinterested fashion, always from the highest of motives; it gave, never took.”

And Americans genuinely wonder why

the rest of the world can't see how benevolent and self-sacrificing America has been. Even many people who take part in the anti-war movement have a hard time shaking off some of this mindset; they march to spur America – the America they love and worship and trust – they march to spur this noble U.S. back onto its path of goodness.

Many of the citizens fall for US government propaganda justifying its military actions as often and as naively as Charlie Brown falling for Lucy's football.

The American people are very much like the children of a Mafia boss who do not know what their father does for a living, and don't want to know, but then wonder why someone just threw a firebomb through the living room window.

This basic belief in America's good intentions is often linked to “American exceptionalism.” Let's look at how exceptional US foreign policy has been. Since the end of World War 2, the United States has:

- Attempted to overthrow more than 50 foreign governments, most of which were democratically-elected.
- Dropped bombs on the people of more than 30 countries.
- Attempted to assassinate more than 50 foreign leaders.
- Attempted to suppress a populist or nationalist movement in 20 countries.
- Grossly interfered in democratic elections in at least 30 countries.
- Led the world in torture; not only the torture performed directly by Americans upon foreigners, but providing torture equipment, torture manuals, lists of people to be tortured, and in-person guidance by American teachers, especially in Latin America.

This is indeed exceptional. No other country in all of history comes anywhere close to such a record. ●

By William Blum

U.S. National Debt Surges \$1 Trillion In Just 12 Months:

The U.S. financial position continues to deteriorate badly in the last 12 months has increased by over \$1 trillion dollars.

<http://tinyurl.com/lkuqpam>

Number of billionaires hits record

A new survey shows that 155 new billionaires were minted this year, pushing the total population to a record 2,325 - a 7 percent increase from 2013. <http://www.cnbc.com/id/102007270>

DANIEL MCGOWAN, JAILED FOR HUFFPOST BLOG, FILES LAWSUIT AGAINST BUREAU OF PRISONS

Daniel McGowan may have been the first person thrown in solitary confinement for writing a HuffPost blog. Now he'll be the first person to sue the Bureau of Prisons over it.

The environmental activist and former prisoner filed a lawsuit on Wednesday against the prison system over an April 2013 incident in which U.S. Marshals threw him in a Brooklyn federal jail -- ironically, for criticizing earlier violations of his free speech.

"The Bureau of Prisons does not like criticism and their reaction was unsurprisingly to try and crush someone who stepped out of line," McGowan told HuffPost Tuesday in an email.

After a federal judge labeled him a terrorist in 2007 for arson committed with the Earth Liberation Front, McGowan spent years in some of the federal prison system's most restrictive prisons, the communication management units (CMUs). The Bureau of Prisons denies it, but internal prison files strongly suggest McGowan was placed there because of his continued outspoken association with the environmental movement.

Serving the final months of his sentence in a Brooklyn halfway house in 2013, McGowan continued to speak out. He detailed how he was placed in the isolated special prisons in a HuffPost blog entry.

Three days after writing that post, the marshals threw him in the Brooklyn Metropolitan Detention Center. He was placed in solitary and told that he would be soon taken back to one of the CMUs. Inmates call them "Little Guantanamo."

"I had just served over five years in prison and was acclimating to life on the outside only to be yanked back to prison," McGowan said. "It was terrifying."

After his lawyers interceded, McGowan was released the next day back to the halfway house. But in a separate, multi-plaintiff lawsuit against the Bureau of Prisons for how it creates and runs CMUs, Mc-

Gowan's lawyers argued that the entire incident was a startling example of their larger claim that the special units are used to punish political speech. Even the federal government later admitted in that case that McGowan was jailed contrary to the established law that inmates may write articles under their own bylines.

Although a judge dismissed McGowan's claims in the lawsuit against the CMUs in July 2013, he is now forging on against the Bureau of Prisons for what he says was a case of unconstitutional retaliation.

"McGowan was arrested for his criticism of the government, plain and simple," his lawyer David Rankin told HuffPost in an email. "Communication management units are wrong now, they were wrong then, and trying to tell that to the world should not get you thrown back in prison." •

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/08/20/daniel-mcgowan-jailed-for_n_5694877.html?1408553679

ANGOLA THREE INMATE IN LONGEST SOLITARY CONFINEMENT SEEKING DAMAGES IN COURT

Ed Pilkington

Albert Woodfox, on lockdown in a small cell for 40 years, now seeking legal permission to sue the Louisiana prison service

America's longest-serving solitary confinement prisoner, who has been on lockdown in an isolated cell almost without break for the past 40 years, will go before a federal appeals court on Thursday seeking legal permission to sue the Louisiana prison service for damages.

Albert Woodfox, 67, has been in solitary, known in the jargon as "closed cell restriction", since 18 April 1972 following a prison riot that resulted in the death of a guard. Apart from a three-year period in which he was kept among the general population of a parish jail, he has spent every day since then entirely alone in a 6ft by 8ft cell with views through metal bars only of the concrete corridor.

He is held in the cell for 23 hours a day. In the final hour he is allowed to shower and walk up and down the corridor or, weather permitting, to have an isolated walk in the exercise yard.

Woodfox, one of three Black Panther prisoners known as the "Angola Three" who faced prolonged solitary confinement, will argue in front of judges of the US fifth circuit appeals court in New Orleans that he should be allowed to sue prison officials from the two main penitentiaries for damages. Under the eighth amendment of the US constitution, state authorities are banned from subjecting prisoners to cruel and unusual punishment by depriving them of their "basic human needs".

"There is no other American prisoner who has been as long in solitary," Woodfox's lawyer, George Kendall of the New York-based law firm Squire Sanders, said. "If you ask other prisoners who have spent time in solitary, they will tell you that it is the worst thing that can happen to you in prison -- it's as lonely and painful as it gets."

If the appeals court upholds an early ruling from a lower court and allows Woodfox's lawsuit to go to trial next year, the Louisiana authorities face potentially massive financial penalties. Were he to win at trial, not only would the prison service face up to \$1m in legal costs but it could also be saddled with seven-figure damages.

The prison service will on Thursday seek to swat away Woodfox's lawsuit by claiming that all the prison officials being sued are immune from legal challenge because they have protection known as "qualified immunity". The state emphasises that in 2010 Woodfox was transferred from



the notorious Angola prison in Louisiana where he was held in closed cell restriction since 1972 to the David Wade correctional center.

As a result, Louisiana officials argue, the clock restarted, meaning that he has only been in solitary confinement for the past four years rather than 40. In court documents, state officials argue that it is only from the time of the transfer four years ago “that the objective reasonableness” of the correction department’s “conduct must be measured”.

Woodfox’s lawyers will tell the appeals court that such an argument makes a mockery of his experience over four decades in solitary confinement irrespective of the prisons in which he has been detained.

Woodfox’s extraordinary history of extended lockdown began when he was convicted along with a fellow Black Panther member, Herman Wallace, of murdering Angola prison guard Brent Miller during the 1972 riot. Both men protested their innocence, but were kept in isolation almost solidly since the date of their conviction.

Wallace was ordered released from Angola on 1 October 2013 after he was diagnosed as suffering from terminal liver cancer. He died a free man three days later.

The third member of the Angola Three, another Black Panther member named Robert Wilkerson, was put into solitary in 1972 for a separate incident in which he was accused of killing a prison inmate. He was cleared of that crime in 2001 and released from custody and since then has lived in the community without further incident.

Woodfox’s lawyers contest that the harsh treatment meted out to the Angola Three has been a form of political punishment for their membership of the radical socialist Black Panther party. In all his years in solitary, he has only once been charged with a single act of violence dating back to 1985.

Every 90 days he is given an official review of the conditions of his detention. But his co-counsel Carine Williams says the reviews are “very perfunctory. He walks in, they tell him they are not going to release him from lockdown at this point – from our perspective it is a sham proceeding.”

The prisoner is suffering from several medical ailments including hypertension, heart disease and kidney disease. Psychologically, his lawyers say, Woodfox is remarkably stoic and uncomplaining, but Kendall said there had been a “horrible toll” from prolonged isolation.

In a legal declaration made in 2008, Woodfox described the bouts of claustrophobia he suffers frequently in his cell. “When I have an attack I feel like I am being smothered, it is very difficult to breathe, and I sweat profusely,” he said. “It seems like the cell walls close in and are just inches from my face. I try to cope by pacing, or by closing my eyes and rocking myself.” •

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/04/angola-three/>

WE CAN STOP THE BEATINGS OF TEXAS PRISONERS — TOGETHER!

By Keith ‘Comrade Malik’ Washington
Captain of Information, New Afrikan
Black Panther Party (Prison Chapter)

Comrades; approximately 2-1/2 weeks ago, here on the Wynne Unit, located in Huntsville, Texas, a white male TDCJ Correctional Officer, who holds the rank of Captain, beat a black male prisoner unmercifully with his fists in the hallway. The prisoner was swatting flies away from his face as he stood in the oppressive heat waiting on his medication. Captain Daigle, a known racist, took this action as a sign of aggression. No meaningful investigation was done. No witness statements were passed out. Another cover-up of prisoner abuse which has become “business as usual” on the “Friendly” Wynne Unit.

On August 10, 2014, at approximately 1:35 pm Correctional Officer I-Dakota Davidson, a white male, attacked prisoner Michael Dunn (a white prisoner). C.O. Davidson beat Michael Dunn nearly unconscious! No investigation; No witness statements. And, Dunn was thrown in lock-up, hidden from the outside world.

I was able to mobilize some white male prisoners and show them how to have their families file a “Free World” Ombudsman Complaint in order to shed light on the beatings, but concerned mothers of prisoners were afraid that their sons would become the targets of retaliation by rogue officers on the “Friendly” Wynne Unit.

Comrades; the beating of prisoners on the Wynne Unit has crossed the color, or racial, barrier. We, the White, Black and

Brown prisoners housed on Wynne, see clearly that there is a class war going on. Texas actually has laws on the books which protect prisoners from assaults by sadistic rogue correctional officers, but the ranking administrators on this unit are not reporting these incidents to the Department of Public Safety, and the Office of the Inspector General seems to be a willing partner in covering up the abuse of human beings housed in the TDCJ facilities.

Please help us expose these unethical and immoral oppressors. Let’s take a look at Texas Law and a quote from Huey P. Newton.

Texas Government Code SEC 501.002: “If an employee of the department commits an assault on an inmate housed in a facility operated by, or under contract with, the department, the executive director shall file a complaint with the proper official of the county in which the offense occurred. If an employee is charged with an assault described by this section, an inmate or person who was an inmate at the time of the alleged offense may testify in a prosecution of the offense.”

But you see Comrades; the law means nothing if TDCJ prison employees conspire together to cover up heinous acts of violence!

Lastly I leave you with some food for thought from Comrade Huey P. Newton: “One of the evils the guards were guilty of was promoting racial animosity in prison, using it to divide us. Many white prisoners are not outright or overtly racist when they get to prison, but the staff soon turns them in that direction. While the guards do not want racial animosity to erupt into violence between inmates they do want hostility kept high enough to prevent any unity.” Huey P. Newton, *Revolutionary Suicide*. . . Dare to Struggle! Dare to Win! All Power to the People! •

Did Ju Hear That....

A recent article titled "The Lure of War", by Mumia Abu-Jamal in Muia says "The latest is Obama's war against a relatively small organization 'ISIS'. ISIS is a close descendant of a group founded and formed by American, British, and Pakistani intelligence: al-Qaeda." He goes on to point out that war technology, especially drone tech, has made war almost easy. Thus, U.S. drones have bombed in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Yemen and Pakistan. According to an article on alnetnet.org, the U.S has launched some 94,000 drone air-strikes in the noted areas. 94,000!*

[*Source: Davies, N., "Since 9-11 Americas insane Foreign Policy -continued under Obama- has killed a million and created ISIS." Sept. 10, 2014.]

LETTERS

[In this issue we have more letters than we can print. We have a long one from William "Billy" Martinez on the subject of strategy that will be in the next issue.]

Am I Missing Something??

I read article after article praising the accomplishments of our hunger strikes. Yet the only thing CDC has done is restructure the gang policies and validation so they can slam more people in the SHU for less years than before.

People that believe the step down program is "cool" are clumsy and want to conform in the belief that it is an individual option to participate or not. To that, I say it's every person's choice to do what they want at anything in life but be wary of the consequences of the faulty program and failure that you are setting yourself up for! 30,000 in the state stood up for this cause because they see the bull-shit they're doing to us. All these inmates on the yard stood because they want to put an end to it and believe in the five core demands. But they're getting repaid with us in the SHU complying with the state in the SDP, or even worse, what about the people that will now be automatically profiled at the gate and slammed in the SHU as soon as they sneeze the wrong way because everything is considered "Gang Activity" once you are labeled? If they don't wish to comply with this chicken shit SDP program, - then what, is it the SHU for life? At least before they weren't slamming and labeling everyone for anything! So what do the good men who stood with us in this struggle on the main-line get other than validated and in our SHU's? We got a few cosmetic items to pacify us and make life in the SHU a little more comfortable on and bull-shit politicians filling us with lies and broken promises. I understand some people want to side with the lawyers and let the legal system play out but isn't it de' ja' vu all over again!? How are we going to have faith in our courts when they have let us down during the *Castillo* case and others of that era? Besides, when has the courts ever backed convicts, they're the system that convicted us and the reason why CDC gets away with isolating us for decades! Do you think this is the first time isolation in California has been challenged in our courts!? We got to stand strong in this struggle as convicts and

link arms not let people conform for more failure in the SDP, more validation and false hopes through the court or crooked politicians who change their mind like they change their underwear. By conforming to this SDP and playing their game has turned off major support for our struggle reaching the five core demands. It is very likely there will be a lot less than the support we got from the main-line in our last step on the simple fact that their support is getting the short end of the stick with 115's retaliation validation, etc. and they are only receiving negative results as things are worse than before.

Absolutely, we should never have glanced an eye at their program and immediately repelled it so it would've never even been considered to take effect in our rules! Now it is what it is and we're sitting here worse off with this false delusion that somehow we're better because we got into the courts corrupt system and a few people got out to the mainline. Another delusion is that over 800 people have been reviewed and 550 released into the general population from the SHU. I wrote Assemblyman Ammiano myself personally because he was being told bogus propaganda from CDC about this leading them and the public (and us) to believe it but the truth is the mass majority of those reviews and releases were from Ad-Seg's from up and down this state! These are hundreds of inmates waiting to go to the SHU on validation but were never actually in the SHU a single day. Also, CDC told him they planned on being done with these "case-by-case" reviews in two years and that was two years ago this month but they tell us they've been reviewing inmates from being in the SHU in 1985 for the past year! Surely not for them to take a year to do! One can only imagine how many years it's going to take this two man team to review everyone in the SHU. It's a bunch of fluff so CDC can say to the courts they're letting everyone out of the SHU's and everyone is complying to their program - SDP- so throw out the cases or not just the courts but so the people can see they've made successful change. It's a good try but we can't let them do it!

The SDP is a failure and that is clear, we don't need to try it to know it's a failure because it's right in front of our eyes for all to see in black and white. Critical thinking in our position is crucial to achieve our goal. So, I just ask men that are true supporters of this cause to look at it for the long run. I

understand having a shot at getting to the yard after all these years to hug your loved ones is important but don't set yourself up for another life time in the SHU. Let's keep this struggle strong and united and we will prevail but that won't happen by conforming and complying with "Stepping Down" or false hopes within the corrupt court system. It is us that will make change, yeah we had major outside support but it was us that moved the system not the courts and we need to keep moving, keep momentum and stop stepping backwards for chicken bones and politicians lying or the court system that is slowing our progress while rules and regulations are changing.

Lastly, I would like to add about the SDP. "Step Down" from what? Is this a similar distinguishing tactic by CDC like SNY and PC? They say SNY (Sensitive Needs) is different than PC (Protective Custody) but they're the same. Maybe people don't see it that way but the name itself implies you're associated with something as you're stepping down from it and even though people say they don't ask incriminating questions in those journals, the questions "imply" that you are what they say you are.

w/r don't call us—we'll call you.

Name withheld

The Lucifer Effect

In the solidarity of all the oppressed people lies the strength to win the revolution.

The more than 2.3 million individuals incarcerated across the U.S. has become a log in the eye of a nation that is always eager to point out and complain about the speck in the eye of its neighbors! Never before in the history of civilization has a country condemn so many of its own people to imprisonment. Has society become so violent and incorrigible and eroded that locking people away is the key? Is incarceration the only available tool that can ensure public safety? If that is the case, how is the safety of the public protected by warehousing people, punishing them by locking them in an eight by ten foot bathroom box for 22&1/2 hours a day left to languish for decades before returning them to society worse off then they were upon entering the system?

Isn't obvious that the tactical use of incarceration has never been about public safety? It was never intended to be a tool

that would help to curb crime. It has never been intended to be utilized as a corrective of rehabilitative measure to aid prisoners. The prison industrial complex is exactly what its title is; Industry. An industry that has been tweaked and fine tuned over the span of 150 years in order to sustain the 1% control over 99%. In 1863, the Emancipation Proclamation went into effect freeing slaves in those territories still rebelling against the Union. This created a void in the workforce for plantation owners. Though slaves were free, this was only an illusion crafted by the masterful slight of hand of a government not yet ready to lose such cheap labor.

In 1865, the 13th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution was passed and the government magicians crafted a caveat into the amendment which reads; “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as punishment for crime . . . shall exist within the United States.” The key words “except as a punishment for a crime . . .” created an exception to the rule. In essence giving birth to what would become a fundamentally flawed system that would be free to exploit its fellow human beings by forcing them to provide cheap and hard labor for violating the “law”.

Laws such as “vagrancy” and “loitering” would be enforced around harvest time to ensure crops were picked and other work around plantations would be done. Industrial developers took notice of this transaction between law enforcement and land owners and bought in obtaining just what they needed to maintain high yielding profits on the backs of these workers. The foundation was laid for what the system is today. The political forces support this industry by passing laws that enhance criminal penalties, increasing penal incarceration and restricting parole. With this type of support prisons have swelled beyond capacity along with the wallets of its financial bankers and law makers (including law enforcement agencies, prison guards, judges, etc.).

Given this reality, the struggle to abolish prisons in the U.S. and to change the way crime and punishment are dealt with will require being able to reconstruct the DNA of U.S. society. But how do you remove the financial incentive - the profitability of the prison/slave system? In order to do these things would require the U.S. to develop new ways in addressing the growing issues of poverty, ethnic inequality, and the misappropriation of tax dollars. This would

also require the U.S. to remove the lipstick from the pig that is the prison system; in acknowledgement that it has never been a department of corrections and rehabilitation. Instead, it is a system utilized to dehumanize the social structure and denigrate its moral social values though the fact remains that even as the sun sets, a pig with lipstick is still a pig.

There has been a recent shift in the consciousness of society. Citizens in the U.S. and across the world have grown sick and tired of the abuse of power exhibited by governments which have given rise to the blooming of protest and unrest across the nation and world over. Things have to change!

For a year or two, I have had the pleasure of corresponding with a friend who runs Truththat.org, Maya Shenwar. In a letter a few months back she shared an intriguing morsel of monologue with me that was trimmed from a conversation between her and an activist who is working toward making the idea of restorative justice a national reality. Restorative justice happens to be an alternative to prison. Which would involve the offender, victim, families and community members meeting together to figure out a solution to the situation in place of incarceration. “The activist,” Maya wrote, “talked about how the definition of “crime” is based mostly on things that poor people do --- selling drugs, theft, gang related crime, etc. Other types of harmful activities (such as rich bankers cheating people or politicians taking funding away from certain neighborhoods) or just someone spreading a horrible rumor about someone else) are not “crimes.”

My mind was blown after reading these truths and having someone I’ve never met echo my thoughts, not because I believe my thoughts on the matter are unique (after all beautiful minds think alike) but because what she said was absolutely right. Why isn’t the latter group of “harmful activities” crimes? Why aren’t the people involved in the harmful activities prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law?

Thanks to the power that be, there exists a double standard which stands in the midst of society separating the 1% from the 99% like the Mexican-American border separates the Sonoran desert. Therefore, in order to begin implementing restorative justice into the DNA of U.S. society, everyone must be equally accountable for breaking the law and made to act here to the same standards of it. If the 1% can get away

with their law infractions by going to rehab or doing community service, why can’t the rest of the 99%? There are an endless supply of examples of people with money getting away with criminal activities, such as drug possession, soliciting prostitution, carrying illegal weapons, etc. , while those who are in poverty who are charged with identical crimes are shipped off to prisons across the U.S. for decades at a time.

With restorative justice as a beginning, society can help to build a sense of community again by helping the development of people and not prisons. People are more than just a crime. Why not treat them as such? Treat them with the same compassion and humanity that is afforded to all human beings. Crimes are committed by good people who have made bad decisions in life.

A lot of crime has to do with circumstances such as; low income, little to no job opportunities, poor schools . . . With restorative justice there can be job training, technological schools, the chance to attend college or join the military. . . The possibilities can be endless. It’s not a refined idea, though it is an idea to contemplate in place of prisons – which don’t seem to be working.

Mark San Juan

A Nice Letter

[I wrote to the author of the below letter: “Your article on the ‘An A-B-C Approach to Organizing the Prison Movement’ will be published in the September issue of the Rock newsletter. That piece took third place. Well done. You can thank Mark Cook. I thought you were pushing your own trip at the expense of prisoners in general, but Mark overruled me.”]

In brief, this is just to acknowledge receipt of the \$50 dollar donation that you sent. Thank you. We will definitely put it to use—for our much needed basic essentials.

And be sure to send a clenched fist salute to Mark Cook for being on the job, by recognizing the materialism in the article submission.

In truth, we wouldn’t know what to do with you if it were not for the resolve and ability of Comrade Mark to keep you in balance. In fact, give Mark a great big bear hug for me [bear hug was given], along with my revolutionary love—because you were way out there, in thinking that I was taking a shot at other prisoners. Comrade, you’re something else. Haha Take care.

Kijana

Ashker Memo Continued from page 1

test action was “suspended” and many prisoners are not happy with much of the STG-SDP policy!! They aren’t being treated humanely-with dignity, or respect, under the present structure and implementation of said policy...

Like it or not, you need prisoners cooperation, support, and participation with any policy affecting thousands, or your policy fails!

For example, if all prisoners refused to participate in you SDP, while you go by the STG provisions your policy fails you because you end up having tens-of-thousands on Step 1, indefinite SHU status...

Add peaceful actions, resulting in additional peaceful protesting prisoners’ deaths, and costs, etc... should you have to force feed a hundred to two hundred etc. prisoners- and related global attention... At some point, jobs would be lost and changes made- ending the failed policy!! Will it come down to this?? The bottom line is, long-term-indefinite-SHU is not effective and harms all concerned. It’s ending nationwide and this will be the case in Calif. too- better to be sooner than later...

With the above in mind, the following are points supporting the referenced facts and unresolved issues you have the power to meaningfully resolve:

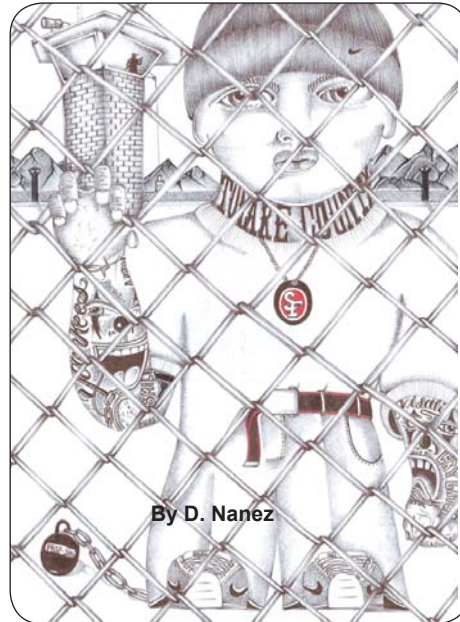
1) Our alternative proposal to the STG-SDP has been on the table since Sept. 2012.... It’s based on principle points of (a) SHU placement being reserved for those guilty of felonious type violations assessed determinate SHU terms, and (b) A modified type of general population transition program between SHU and G.P.- Our mediation team has details about this proposal, which have been provided to you as well. The SDP-Steps 3 and 4, aren’t even close to this (e.g. zero contact visits)

2) In addition to provisions enabling continued indefinite SHU placement and retention, the following examples support the position that the STG-SDP as structured and implemented is designed to fail...

(a) The issue(s) re: legitimate- meaningful- incentives for each step have not been satisfactorily resolved (e.g. allowing more-

phone calls, photographs, packages/special purchases, contact visits, etc.)

(b) Steps 3 and 4 at CCI-Tehachapi, are seen as a bad-step down re: conditions, programming and privileges- to the extent that many prisoners see no point in participating!



Examples are: visits are limited to (1) hour, on either Sat. or Sun.; cells are dirty and cleaning materials are not being provided; nor is laundry, clothing, linen, etc, being provided/exchanged; the T.V. and radio stations are very limited and out of signal all the time; the food is bad; shower program is poorly run- as is yard program; property is processed very slowly, and typewriters are not being allowed, etc.,etc.,etc; Staff attitudes are poor!!

Plus, many prisoners held in PBSP-SHU for decades have loved ones who reside in the Del Norte Co. area- with jobs, etc., and a transfer to CCI is a hardship to their loved ones...

You have ability to remedy the above, via use of former PSU [at PBSP] cell block(s) for Steps 3 & 4... These steps should also allow contact visits!! A Step 3 and 4 at PBSP should be an option for those with local family ties, etc!!

There’s no legitimate penological basis to deny these prisoners human physical contact with loved ones and friends... Up until mid-1986, all SHU prisoners were allowed contact visits- thus, it’s a reasonable, meaningful incentive for those prisoners participation in Steps 3 and 4...

(c) The journals remain a problem for many (e.g. Corcoran) and I will point out that George Guirbino, et al, admitted at one of our meetings last year, that the journals

were ‘lacking re: substantive rehab, value’ -qualifying this with- “but that’s all that’s available.” Look, we all know the journals have zero relevance to rehabilitation of prisoners transitioning between SHU and G.P. (demonstrated by the fact that prisoners placed on Step 5 by DRB’s case-by-case reviews of long-term SHU prisoners don’t have to do a single journal!!) You should make the journals a voluntary self-help program available to all CDCR prisoners... The way you’re using them as required part of SDP- Steps1-4, makes you all look bad- for many reasons!!

(d) The case by case reviews at PBSP are too slow—100’s still wait on theirs.

Miscellaneous Issues Remaining To Be Resolved Include But Are Not Limited To:

1. Mattresses (As you know, PIA mattresses are a big problem!??)

2. Restriction on privileges should only be based on being guilty of abusing the specific privilege

(eg., photographs, art materials)

3. Allowable art materials expanded, per, principle of individual accountability (eg, woodless colored pencils, and all type of art paper)

4. Photograph program for SHU/Ad-Seg visiting- as done in Vacaville in the 80’s (visitor and prisoner in photo, taken on visitor’s side of glass)

Your attention and anticipated positive responsive resolution(s) to the above subjects is appreciated.

Todd Ashker, C58191/PBSP-D4-121

WHAT IS REVOLUTIONARY INTER-COMMUNALISM?

By Tom “Big Warrior” Watts

Revolutionary-Intercommunalism is the theoretical understanding that the world we live in today, has become globalized and the principle contradiction in the world is now between the need of the capitalist-imperialist ruling class to consolidate their global hegemony and the anarchy and chaos they are unleashing by attempting to do so, including the threat of a new world war. Revolutionary-Intercommunalism recognizes that because of this globalization, independent nation states can no longer exist as such, and cannot exist except as temporarily “liberated

The Prison Art Website is Gone

Due to medical problems I will not be able to continue the Prison Art website. I have been running the website since 1999 as a service to prisoners, and I do feel bad about closing it. If you want to sell the art of a loved one inside you should do a Google search for “prison art” so you can find other sites that sell this art.

Ed Mead

territory” besieged and undermined by the forces and agents of capitalist-imperialism.

Revolutionary-Intercommunalism is illuminated by Marxism-Leninism-Maoism (MLM) and the theory and practice of the original Black Panther Party (BPP) and allied formations in the revolutionary upsurge of the late 1960’s and early ‘70’s; and in particular the theoretical contributions of the BPP’s Minister of Defense, Huey P. Newton. Comrade Huey summed up that because of automation, the capitalist-imperialists would increasingly be unable to profitably exploit a growing percentage of the proletariat as wage workers, and this growing mass of “unemployables” would eventually become the majority of the population. He further theorized that the lumpen (broken) proletariat would provide the basis for a new revolutionary vanguard that would act as a catalyst upon the whole proletariat and masses of people to inspire them to rise up against and overturn the capitalist-imperialist system.

When we apply this analysis on a world scale, we see that large-scale capitalist agriculture has rendered the small-scale production of the peasant class obsolete, and that it is pushing the peasantry off the land and into the proletariat, as they have nothing left but to sell their labor power to survive, while at the same time the employed section of the proletariat is shrinking. Thus, throughout the “Third World” there is a growing mass of “unemployable” and marginalized poor concentrated in and around the urban centers living under dire conditions, or being compelled to emigrate to the “First World” imperialist countries in search of employment, even as industrial jobs are being outsourced to the “Third World” to take advantage of the cheap labor available there. Thus we have a situation of rapidly changing demographics in the “First World” countries.

In this declining phase of capitalist-imperialism, where nations are submerged into Empire, the “mother countries” of imperialism are being transformed into “Third World” countries while capitalist-imperialism is “ghettoizing” the dependant countries of the actual “Third World.” In the four decades since Huey Newton announced his Theory of Revolutionary-Intercommunalism in 1970, we have seen all his predictions come to pass, as well as an eightfold increase in the imprisoned population of the U.S., and the rise of the “New Slavery” of the prison-industrial complex. Moreover, wages have remained at or be-

low what they were in 1970 (when adjusted for inflation), though corporate profits have soared to record highs, and the “Safety Net” of social welfare programs has been dramatically cut back and is in danger of being all together eliminated.

In effect, there is a “War on the Poor,” within the U.S. and internationally, while the ruling class grabs up the lion’s share of the wealth and power for itself and is driven to monopolize control over fuel, food and water globally and to subordinate every country to their economic and political domination. The concentration of wealth and power into ever fewer hands, and the systematic generalization of poverty, (driving masses below the level of bare subsistence), can only be ended and resolved by World Proletarian Socialist Revolution.

The absence of a “Socialist Bloc,” as existed previously under the leadership of the Soviet Union, and later People’s China, emboldens U.S.-led imperialism to bully the world and demand complete subordination to it global hegemony. NATO has been aggressively expanded, and of the 190 some countries in the world, more than 150 now have U.S. military bases and installations and in many cases integrated military commands. Even though Russia and China are now capitalistic and integrated into the world capitalist system, they are viewed as potential rivals by U.S. imperialism, which demands their complete subordination. Instead of a “Socialist Bloc,” we have a formerly-socialist camp of semi-independent national bourgeois dictatorships clinging to the forlorn hope of achieving their own imperial hegemony in a bi-polar world.

The proletarians of today truly have no country. In every country, we are the oppressed and exploited – or the “broken,” - who have little connection to the global economy except as poor consumers. What we have is a world to win!

Our world is made up of communities in which we live, under the oppression of a growing police state. It is a world where day to day, week to week, and month to month survival is a constant struggle. Even those lucky enough to have jobs live paycheck to paycheck, with bills to pay every month and less to pay them with. We can communicate instantly around the world, (though “Big

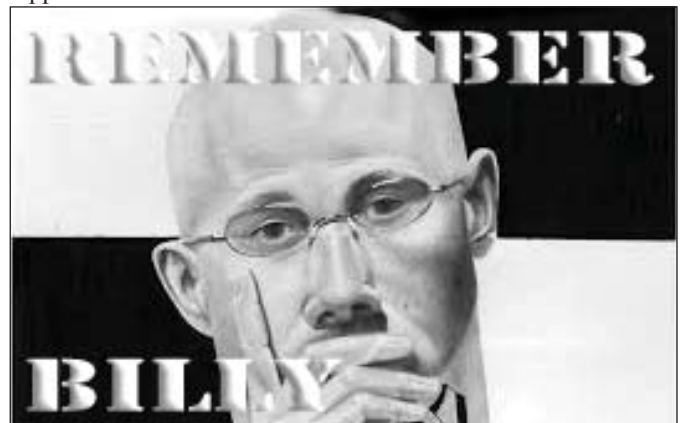
Brother” is listening), but everywhere we have no voice on the matters that determine our very existence. We share a common culture and economic life, we wear the same clothes and shop for the same things; we can get on a jet plane and fly anywhere in the world in a few hours, but everywhere we are under the same exploitative capitalist empire.

Culture and location define our communities. Neighborhoods, regions and countries define one type of community, and ethnicity, religion and life style define another. There is the gay community, the Black community, the biker community, the hip hop community and so forth. We all live in communities!

Revolutionary-Intercommunalism promotes solidarity between communities, and a culture of resistance to all oppression. In opposition to the “War on the Poor,” it promotes strategies for survival and mutual assistance. In the broadest sense, it promotes a worldwide people’s war against the capitalist empire and the creation of “liberated zones” and “dual power.” In particular, it promotes the transformation of urban oppressed communities into base areas of cultural, social and political revolution, and the creation of “People’s Power” at the grassroots level. In the prisons and other “Slave Pens of Oppression,” it promotes their transformation into “Schools of Liberation,” as well as a united campaign to defeat the imperialists’ strategy of criminalization and mass incarceration of the poor.

The goal of revolutionary-intercommunalism is to overthrow capitalist-imperialism and create a worldwide “Dictatorship of the Proletariat” as a preparatory step towards “World Communism,” classless, stateless, egalitarian society, a world without poverty and war, where everyone has an equal right to access the fruits of our common labor. ●

ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE!



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On Jailhouse Lawyers

"...jailhouse lawyers often unwittingly serve the interests of the state by propagating the illusion of 'justice' and 'equity' in a system devoted to neither." They create "illusions of legal options as pathways to both individual and collective liberation."

*Mumia Abu-Jamal,
JAILHOUSE LAWYERS: Prisoners
Defending Prisoners v. The U.S.A.*

Important Notice

Articles and letters sent to the *Rock* newsletter for publication are currently being delivered and received in a timely manner. Please do not send such materials to third parties to be forwarded to *Rock* as it only delays receiving them and adds to the workload of those asked to do the forwarding.

Letters sent to *Rock* (located in Seattle) in care of *Prison Focus* (located in Oakland) can take over a month to reach us. Send *Rock* mail to this newsletter's return address.

SHOUT OUT BOX

**A hearty shout out to
Gabriel A. Huerta for his donation of \$50, which equaled
just under 100 forever stamps.**

Rock on!

**(Those stamps were used for
the last issue. We need more.)**

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