Welcome to 4strugglemag

You have just come upon a dynamic and unique publication, where Truth (real and raw) speaks to power. This magazine focuses on the insights and experiences of North American political prisoners on major issues of the day. While a lot of the writing is by political prisoners, other activists, allies, revolutionaries and insightful outsider voices are included. We publish three issues a year and all back issues remain posted on the website (4strugglemag.org).

4strugglemag is an independent non-sectarian revolutionary voice. We are unapologetically anti-imperialist and solidly in support of progressive national liberation, especially the struggles of New African/Black, Mexicano/Chicano, Puerto Rican and Native American Nations presently controlled by U.S. imperialism. Reflecting on the work and principles of political prisoners held by the United States, 4strugglemag advocates for justice, equality, freedom, socialism, protection of our Earth, human rights and peace.

www.4strugglemag.org is primarily an e-magazine, but hard copies are available (see sidebar for subscription details). We encourage readers to respond, critique and carry on discussions in the magazine. We value and encourage feedback and discussion. The address of each political prisoner is posted with his/her article so people can directly communicate with them (few political prisoners have internet access: 4strugglemag.org).

We like dialogue, but we are not going to print racist or pro-imperialist messages, so you government agents and klansmen don’t bother wasting your time.

Each issue of 4strugglemag focuses on at least 3 main topics. Additional poems, graphics, essays, announcements and more are included. Unsolicited writings and graphics are accepted and welcomed. We won’t guarantee printing, but we’d like to see your work. This and other correspondence should be sent via regular mail to the following address (remember it costs 75 cents to send a letter to Canada or via email to: jaanlaaman@gmail.com)

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Jaan Laaman, editor
anti-imperialist political prisoner

Call for contributors

4strugglemag is looking for quality writing that contributes to critical, revolutionary thought and reflection. In particular, we are interested in the following:

Feature articles: In-depth, analytical articles that critically examine a particular issue, historical occurrence, political idea, or current event.

Book reviews: Is there a book you’d like to review for 4strugglemag? Let us know.

Letters: We love to hear from you. Please let us know if we have permission to print your letter.

Moving? Don’t forget to send us your new address!

Subscriptions

Support 4strugglemag’s commitment to providing free prisoner subscriptions by subscribing or donating. We publish 3 issues a year.

Prisoner subscriptions: free
1 year standard subscription: $15
1 year solidarity subscription: $30
(Solidarity subscription covers 1 year for yourself and subsidizes a free prisoner subscription).

To subscribe by credit card or paypal, check out our website: www.4strugglemag.org

If you wish to pay by cheque or money order, please get in touch first. We cannot cash cheques made out to 4strugglemag.

If you are one of our 500+ subscribers with a free prisoner subscription, one way to contribute is to send us stamps, which help offset our huge mailing costs.

Back issues

Unfortunately, we lack the funds and resources to send back issues. You can print articles from our website, or have a friend do so, if you don’t have internet access: 4strugglemag.org

To the Man-Child, Tall, evil, graceful, bright-eyed, black man-child ~ Jonathan Peter Jackson ~ who died on August 7, 1970, courage in one hand, assault rifle in the other; my brother, comrade, friend ~ the true revolutionary, the black communist guerrilla in the highest state of development, he died on the trigger, scourge of the unrighteous, soldier of the people; to this terrible man-child and his wonderful mother Georgia Bea, to Angela Y. Davis, my tender experience, I dedicate this collection of letters; to the destruction of their enemies I dedicate my life.

George L. Jackson

August 7, 1970, just a few days after George Jackson was transferred to San Quentin, the case was catapulted to the forefront of national news when his brother, Jonathan, a seventeen-year-old high school student in Pasadena, staged a raid on the Marin County courthouse with a satchelful of handguns, an assault rifle, and a shotgun hidden under his coat. Educated into a political revolutionary by George, Jonathan invaded the court during a hearing for three black San Quentin inmates, not including his brother, and handed them weapons. As he left with the inmates and five hostages, including the judge, Jonathan demanded that the Soledad Brothers be released within thirty minutes. In the shootout that ensued, Jonathan was gunned down. Of Jonathan, George wrote, “He was free for a while. I guess that’s more than most of us can expect.”
United Struggle Project

Giving a voice to displaced people globally through music. United Struggle Project produces CDs/DVDs of songs, music videos, and documentaries recorded in remote communities—slums refugee camps, and prisons in Africa, Palestine, Afghanistan, Cambodia and Australia. Help us bring these voices to the world.

I want to produce 1000 audio CDs and DVDs containing the best musical and video elements of my project United Struggle. It will consist of songs, music videos and mini documentaries that I have recorded and filmed over the past 2 years of United Struggle tours in slums, refugee camps, war zones and prisons in Africa, Palestine, Afghanistan, Cambodia and remote aboriginal communities in Australia. I am currently trying to source funding to produce these DVDs and CDs and send them to the artists involved as well as use it to build the United Struggle

During the post election violence.

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My name is Isabella Brown, founder of the no profit collective – United Struggle Project, rapper in Melbourne hip-hop band Fighting to make life better for our communities. Help us bring these voices to the world...

Donate a Beat

Producers from around the world delved deep into their hard drives to donate beats to host unheard voices of displaced people. I then took the donated beats to those artists in places with limited access to beat making technology to collaborate on.

Objectives:

1. Record music and make music video clips addressing issues faced by displaced people in affected areas, displaced by war, colonisation, development, poverty and environmental issues.

2. Create collaborative songs with representative artists from each place.

3. Create a forum for displaced people to express their stories through music and video documentary making.

4. Create networks to unite struggles and create links amongst artists globally.

5. To target racism in the broader international community with music.

Background and Inspirations

I was first inspired to do this project whilst I was in Kenya 2007 filming the documentary Ghetto Moto (fire) about the journey of a hip-hop spoken word poet after the post election violence. During the filming I was approached daily by artists from the slums in Nairobi to produce music videos of their songs. I noticed the huge demand and lack of accessible equipment and skills in video production for people in these poverty stricken areas. I also noticed a wealth of talent and wisdom.

I met a Rwandan refugee in Nairobi who got me to film a music video for his song One Nation Africa. He told me of many other artists like himself but who were still trapped in refugee camps. After the success and popularity of the music videos in the slums I thought why not try and reach artists in these camps and give them the opportunity to record music and communicate their issues through video. I had a very strong feeling that there was something incredible and insight hidden in these isolated places of limbo.

An example of uniting artists and struggles is the song ‘Bow Down No Way,’ a collaborative track between Shoeshine Boy from Mukarru slum and Adel from Star Studios in Nairobi with Monkeyfarm (Combat Wombat) and myself. The video clip was shot in Nairobi, Melbourne and Alice Springs. It has had a good response and draws parallels between the poverty of indigenous people in Australia and Africa and unites their struggles.

Palm Island was a prison island made up of 65 different tribes displaced from their traditional lands. The people from Palm Island are dealing with similar social issues as the displaced people in the camps in Africa, Palestine and Cambodia, including overcrowding, poor health and tribal tensions. Today they are still suffering the effects of colonisation.

“I feel like a refugee in my own country,” Uncle Chappy, Aboriginal Tent Embassy. I have been working in remote Aboriginal communities all over Australia since 2000. I have seen a very positive response from the kids and the community to the music and video workshops. They have proven to be a fantastic way for youth to voice their issues. Even though Australia is a very multicultural society, there is a definite underlying racism that needs to be addressed in the cases of refugees and indigenous people. Music, being a universal language, can be a very effective way to address the issues of racism in society.

Another element of the project is the ‘Donate a Beat’ web site. This gives producers from anywhere in the world opportunities to donate beats to the project via the Internet, thus creating links with producers and artists globally.

My main motivation is my love for music and belief in social and environmental justice. Music can be used as a tool for change and education to break down walls, create common ground and unite common struggles.

With a suitcase sized recording studio in hand, my 7 year old son Bassi Brown and I will set out on a 2 year tour to record and collaborate on trax and make music videos in the far corners of the planet in refugee camps slums and prisons and remote communities. Help us bring these voices to the world...enjoy the journey.

unitedstruggleproject.org
Welcome to 4sm, issue 21. We are very glad to finally get this issue out, in Fall 2012. I know a lot of readers, friends and activists have been wondering what happened to the strugglemag? This is the first issue we are putting out in 2012. It is a combined Summer and Fall issue. Normally 4sm comes out three times a year (March, July/August, November). This is the first time we have had to combine two issues into one.

Some people may have been wondering about my ability to continue working on 4sm, after the death of my son last October. I am sure that any doubt, the death of Rick was and continues to be the hardest reality in my life. This was not the reason for the delay in issue 21. We have had medical and personal problems with key outside people. A valued precious sister (Sara), who does so much to make 4sm a reality, seriously broke her arm in a bicycle accident earlier this year.

Some material in this issue covers events from earlier in the year, but all of it remains important and pertinent. Regular readers know that 4sm always runs a section on Black August in our summer issue. Because 21 is coming out so late this summer, there is no usual Black August section. We are running some significant insight and analysis, by Mumia Abu Jamal, George Jackson and his nephew Jonathan Jackson Jr., about the events of August 7, 1970 (the Marin Courthouse Raid and the deaths of Jonathan Jackson and others on that day). Also, because of the late arrival of this issue, we are not helping to announce and organize this year’s Running Down the Walls, which takes place on September 2. We do want people who participated in RDTW, both inside prison and out in cities across the country, to send us words and photos of your run. We will use some of this material in the next issue.

There are many other important and informative articles in this issue. Definitely check out the reports on Occupy. Also check out the lengthy section on prisons. Finally take time to read David Gilbert’s letter, calling for discussion and action around the issue of sexist and male chauvinism on all levels – more unity and more direct action and participation of the people. Some time tested slogans seem appropriate and called for now:

Black and white, unite and fight...Less talk, more action...All Power to the People!

On that thought, we’ll see you in issue 22.

Juan Laaman, editor

Support the Tinley Park 5

BY MONICA MOOREHEAD
From workers.org

The Tinley Park Five — Jason W. Sutherland, Cody L. Sutherland, Dylan J. Sutherland, A. R. Stuck and John S. Tucker — are currently imprisoned in Cook County Jail in Chicago. The Five, white anti-racist anarchists, were arrested on May 19 for allegedly physically breaking up an economic summit by members of the Illinois European Heritage Association at a restaurant in Tinley Park, a Chicago suburb. The Five are facing major felony charges, including “mob action, criminal damage to property and aggravated battery.”

Two of the IEHA members were also arrested at the scene. One was charged with Internet child pornography. The other was charged with unlawful possession of a semiautomatic weapon, which was turned over to the police at the restaurant. Bail for the latter charge is $25,000. The bonds for the Five, who reportedly possessed no guns, are $175,000, $200,000 and $250,000.

The IEHA is part of a worldwide network of white supremacists known as “Pioneer Little Europe.” The network is connected with Storm Front. This network promotes the outward extermination of people of color and Jewish people. The “summit” was one in a series called through the Midwest over the past several years. White supremacists have rattled up their racist demagogic organizing, especially in the economically hard-hit Midwest region.

The Five are being defended by the Hoosiers Anti-Racist Movement, based in Indiana. HARM has been monitoring and exposing the activities of the neoacists for many years. Thirteen other anti-racist activists allegedly took part in the breakup of the IEHA meeting and are still being pursued by the police.

When this WM reporter asked Chandra Vanvliet from HARM about the well-being of the Five, she explained, “They have a wonderful legal team representing them. They are in great spirits. They’re looking forward to their day in court and are humbled by the size of the solidarity they’ve received, especially from people they’ve never met. They’re getting along fine without any problem; when they aren’t in court, they’re at letters and phone calls and support network has been doing all they can to make sure that they’re as comfortable as possible and have reading materials to keep their minds occupied.”

June 12: Pack the courtroom

The Five are scheduled to have an initial court hearing on June 12 at 9 a.m. at the Bridgeview Courthouse, which is located at 10220 S. 76th Ave. in Bridgeview, Ill.

HARM is urging supporters to pack the courtroom. Vanvliet’s message to the progressive movement, which she conveyed to WW, is the following: “At the arraignment, the mainstream media decided to take pictures and found a few personal friends of the defendants after they made it clear they weren’t interested in talking to the press. These unfriendly and unfriendly defendants have since received death threats because of the recklessness of the Chicago Tribune, despite the fact that they were clearly warned about the potential consequences of releasing identities of family and friends who were members of HARM. A member of HARM gave an interview to Stacy St Clair.”

Vanvliet went on to say: “What we’re trying to do, is to gather a large enough group of supporters at the courthouse and in the courtroom that the white supremacists will be unable to ascertain who actually has ties to the Tinley Park Five and who is simply there to support. We wish to stress that this is not an act of civil disorder, but encourage those that might come out to support not to allow themselves to be intimidated by white supremacy.

“We’re hearing stories about other groups all over the country raising funds to help their families and legal defense by having benefit shows and bake sales. The Tinley Park Five and their friends and families are so moved by the support they’ve received, especially from the anarchist community. I can’t think of any much show of solidarity means to both them and us.”

WW wrote in a recent editorial called, “Tinley Park Five: Fight Fascism,” which is posted on HARM’s website: “What the Tinley Park 5 did on May 19 was to carry out a preemptive strike to help expose the real danger that extremist groups pose to the movement and the masses here and worldwide. By attacking these groups, the Five have to be crushed sooner than later. Free the Tinley Park 5!” Go to independantifa.wordpress.com for information on the case. To send letters of support to the Tinley Park Five along with reading materials, go to tinyurl.com/88a5rkw.
nation.” Obama tells the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, “We need to make America the best place on earth to do business . . . and we have to do this together: business and government; workers and CEO’s; Democrats and Republicans.”

Romney charges “Unions drive up costs and introduce rigidities that harm competitiveness and frustrate innova-
tion.” Lumping workers and business together against unions, he asks “Whose interests should come first, those of workers and businesses, or those of organized labor?” But his way, you’d never know the “costs” “unions “drive up” are workers wages — for creating all the wealth!

So let’s get real. Service cutbacks, austerity measures, and wage cuts benefit only the bigwigs, not the whole country. “The capitalistic economy can never work for all of us, be-
cause it’s designed for the wealthy, who control the elec-
tions and relentlessly widen the gap between rich and poor.

Romney promises to “press for an immigration policy designed to maximize America’s economic potential” by attracting those with advanced degrees and granting imme-
diate citizenship to wealthy “job creators.” This assumes that immigrants with money will fix our economic crisis, and others that they are not.

But rich business owners are not job creators — workers are. Bosses don’t create jobs out of kindness. They hire that immigrants with money will attract those with advanced degrees and granting immediate citizenship to wealthy “job creators.” This assumes that immigrants with money will fix our economic crisis, and others that they are not.

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Wall Street concern over increasing China and India trade with Latin America has led to troop deployments, activa-
tion of additional forces on the continent, and mas-
tive military operations abroad, and Homeland Security and workers when we are all in this together, when everyone from nearly enough; on top of that we have evidently failed in our responsibility to pass on hard-won lessons to the post-
Seabees . . . we must raise the consciousness of all of us. On this, we leave a lethal hole in the heart of our move-
ment. In my own experience, the most fruitful response to women’s liberation came in the form of Men Against Sex-
ism groups — if they weren’t just a phase, if they didn’t raise our feelings but if we also consciously grappling with sexism, checked-in with and sought guidance from feminists, and took our responsibility to save the economy and the nation. “Bullshit,” a good many say.

Shared sacrifice means accepting giveback contracts without rocking the boat with protests and strikes — all for the good of “our” national economy! Now, doesn’t that sound better than sacrificing for the bonuses of “our” CEOs?

Romney chillingly pledges to use “the full powers of the presidency to complete an impermeable border fence pro-
tecting our land from infiltration by illegal immi-
gants, trans-national criminal networks, and terrorists.” Immigrants, we are to believe, have become the “national enemy.”

Condoleezza Rice called education a “national security” issue, turning troops. But poor youth volunteer for service out

NEXT ISSUE: Combating Sexism, Homophobia and Transphobia

[Note: Issue 23, coming out in the winter, will be a special issue on combating sexism, homophobia and transphobia in our movements. This theme was suggested to us by po-
litical prisoner David Gilbert, and he is helping Jaan and I compile material to further the discussion.

We know that right-wing backlash against the rights of women, gay men, and trans people is growing right now. But as revolutionaries we must also struggle against these tendencies in our own movements and communities. Many of us internalized a lot of poisonous ideas growing up in this society, and we have to confront and work to change attitudes that contribute to the oppression of others. I myself have been working to be a better ally to the trans people in my life.

I hope that the following letter from David will inspire you to reflect on your own attitudes and experiences, and that you will send us some writings for Issue 23 — and for future issues, as I’m sure this important dialogue will continue. – Sara Falcomer]

Wall Street concern over increasing China and India trade with Latin America has led to troop deployments, activa-
tion of additional forces on the continent, and mas-
tive military operations abroad, and Homeland Security spending at home. This all in the name of “national secu-

Militarization pure and simple. Since ever since 9-11, the U.S. public has been pressed to the

Youth, in the struggle against patriarchy, with male supremacy as a central axis, is absolutely necessary. Male supremacy is extremely deep-seated in history and in society. Change doesn’t come easily and won’t always be

to stop the brutality of men’s assaults on women in our communities and help create a welcoming climate for their full participation. We can’t have a real movement, we can’t possibly be successful, without the invaluable contri-

butions and leadership women can provide. Such advances can also make us men more whole, more loving human beings.

White supremacy, male supremacy, homophobia, transphobia, class rule, and imperialism are powerful pillars of oppression. We have to dismantle them all to clear the ground to build the more humane and sustainable that is so urgently needed.

One love, David Gilbert

Anti-imperialist political prisoner]
Collected Updates from the Occupy Movement and More...

Compiled by Roger Drew

[Note: Roger compiled this great account of the early months of OccupyAction. His analysis under the banner “Occupy” has continued to evolve in cities around the world since then. We’ve added a few updates to his list – Sara Falconer]

Some Major Victories

Occupy Our Homes

Occupy Our Homes has been preventing evictions of people who are facing foreclosure and helping families without homes move into empty buildings. “Occupy Our Homes in Los Angeles and other places across America who stand up to their banks and fight for their homes. We believe everyone has the right to decent, affordable housing. We stand in solidarity with the Occupy Wall Street movement and with community organizations who help the 99% fight for a place to call home.”

These actions have been taking place for years led by community-based organizations. Recently, more attention has been focused on the illegal and immoral actions by the banks which have led to people losing their homes. Since the Occupy Movement has begun, community organizations have partnered with Occupy, and there have been more and more victories nationwide of people being able to save their homes!

Recently, on February 29 in DC when an eviction was prevented! [occupyourhomes.org]

Occupy Oakland

Oakland has set a tone for powerful non-violent actions confronting injustice, including the West Coast port shut down. This was one of the most militant, large-scale actions since the beginning of the Occupy Movement. In December of 2011, strikes led by labor and Occupy groups shut down a number of West Coast Ports in support of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), who were in contract negotiation. Dozens of occupysters participated in the action on some level, led by the militant shut down of the Oakland port by Occupy Oakland and other groups. In February, ILWU ratified a new contract and thanked the Occupy Movement for their essential support. “This is a victory for Occupy in their involvement in fighting evictions.”

Oakland has led in other ways, including the Occupy 4 Prisoners National Day of Actions opposing and exposing racist policies of mass incarceration. Occupy Oakland also has been a leader in the nationwide in confronting brutal and violence police repression to their protests. (As well as with Occupy Wall Street in NYC where they have recently joined the call for the resignation of the NYPD police chief Ray Kelly, especially following murders by NYPD members.)

Occupy Chicago

Chicago recently saw two big victories with the help of Occupy Chicago. First, on February 18 the Brian Piccolo Specialty School in Humboldt Park, was Occupied by parents, teachers, and students. Occupy Chicago and other allies were outside the building in solidarity and set up an encampment outside the school, an element which housed about 100 people, a body that is almost entirely from low-income communities of color. One of 16 Chicago public schools slated to be closed by Mayor Rahm’s service cuts to the poor. After less than 24 hours of occupation the Occupiers emerged from the school to thunderous applause and declared victory!

The demands were met, proving that direct action and community power can be leveraged for real change! Parents will be given the opportunity to meet with the Board of Directors to submit a counter-proposal for local education. This is what real community control looks like.

Secondly, on February 24 workers facing layoffs at a Chicago window factory declared victory after occupying their plant for 11 hours. Through direct community action, including the support of Occupy Chicago, the workers and their union prevented the California-based Serious Energy windows company from closing the plant for another 90 days.

The workers hope this will give them time to keep the plant open, possibly by purchasing it themselves and creating a worker-owned co-op. This action was led by the union United Electric Local 1110. Some people may remember in 2008, workers at the same factory occupied their plant for six days during a labor dispute with its previous owners, Republic Windows and Doors. (They won then, too!)

National Days of Action

February 29: Shut Down The Corporations and the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC)

This national day of action included actions in over eighty cities and specifically called “on people to target corporations that are members of the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC). The biggest corporations in America, like ExxonMobil, Bank of America, BP, Monsanto, Pfizer, and Wal-Mart use ALEC to buy off legislators and craft legislation that serves only the interests
to the bargaining table and forcing a settlement with ILWU local 21.” [westcoastportshutdown.org]

Occupy Oakland has led in other ways, including the Occupy4Prisoners National Day of Actions opposing and exposing racist policies of mass incarceration. Occupy Oakland also has been a leader in the nationwide in confronting brutal and violence police repression to their protests. (As well as with Occupy Wall Street in NYC where they have recently joined the call for the resignation of the NYPD police chief Ray Kelly, especially following murders by NYPD members.)

Clipped Wings

By JALIL MUNTAQIM
freejail.com

With clipped wings I’m laid to the test, where the weary gets no rest. Subject to psychological warfare to learn if I can withstand others who grandstand because they believe they own the land. While my life is sustained by sleight of hand – no it’s not for food - it’s a matter of having a better plan. You ask, what is the plan? Well, it’s to know your enemy as you know yourself. Be capable of adjusting to conditions you do not control. Stand with those who don’t have your best interest at heart; and always depart when all else is lost. Get as much education as your brain can stand; build a strategy even from a grain of sand – heat applied to sand will make glass – so turn up the heat and out your ass to the task.

As they say, free your mind and your ass will follow – as opposed to a closed mind that is often hollow. Nothing on the brain and time to waste is the place where the devil makes grace – prepared to feast on your life, like your enemy to ensure you stay on a path of strife. What can be said when you know the repercussions of your decision? A matter of acknowledging a reality not of my choosing; and yet not claiming its name. A prisoner of colonial consciousness the farce of it, not claiming its name for all the shame that strains the brain, that hurts the heart and stirs the soul in a dark place, in haste to escape. However, my light ignites the night and puts shadows in convulsions, as death creeps on my illumination, footsteps moving from the past in slow motion, the turning back to darkness incremental reaction to revolution. To ensure you stay on a path

U.S. Elections: Flag-waving and False Unity

By Lois Danks
Freedom Socialist, Vol. 33, No. 4, Aug/Sept 2012

Every four years the big capitalist parties break out the red, white, and blue bunting to create a frenzy of patriotism. Voters are expected to jump on the bandwagon and cheer for the good old USA, blind to the gulf between Wall Street’s billionaires and Main Street’s evicted. This is especially true in the 2012 election, because the ruling class is faced with a staggering economy, big-time international trade competition, and unprecedented popular anger at the high and mighty. So they pour illusory phrases into the public air waves such as, “national economic interest,” “national security,” “national unity,” “national competitiveness,” and so on. Here’s what these words really mean.

Painting over class differences.

One of the key arenas for nationalist fast talk is the economy. In the patriotic fog voters are urged to ignore class divisions, shun unions, and join the bankers and bosses, sacrificing their own worker interests for the “good of the
unlivable to livable hell, from encampments that he called reminiscent of Nazi Germany to at least a scaled-down ver-
sion of the like. With his influence, these changes occurred
not only in California, but throughout the nation. Only now
is his influence beginning to slip, with reactionary politics
bringing about torture and sensory deprivation facilities such as Pelican Bay State Prison in California, as well as
the reintroduction for adoption of the one-to-life inder-
minute sentence. This type of sentence is fertile ground for
state oppression, but it is more likely if an inmate is ever to be let go. A prison can easily and ef-
fectively create situations that transform a one-to-life into
a life sentence. (Tellingly, the individual mentioned be-
ing promoted not by the right, but by a California senator
formerly associated with mainstream liberal causes.)

Politically, George Jackson provided us all with a radi-
cal viewpoint that was visible only to the most forward-
United States but the world as a political entity. He gave
the disenchanted a lens through which they could clearly see
their situation and become more conscious about it. He
wrote in April 1970:

"It all falls into place. I see the whole thing much clearer
now, how fascism has taken possession of this country,
the interlocking dictatorship from county level on up to the
Grand Dragon in my local neighborhood.

Crucially, George’s treatment is a concrete, undeniable ex-
ample of political oppression. Race is more than just the
easy answer to a problem. Among people of color in the
United States, the experience of race is one of power loss,
the disenfranchised a lens through which they could clearly
understand that fascism is already here, understand that
fascism starts to become a possibility. Not a riot, not a gov-
ernment takeover by one or another, but a people’s
revolution led by the politically conscious.

This consciousness doesn’t simply appear. Individuals
must grow and work into it, but it’s an invaluable gift to
those willing to work with the prisoners they got to do is stop talking lonely. When the races start fighting,
you have one maniac group against another. On the
surface, race has been and is still being put forth as an over-
riding issue that needs to be addressed as a prerequisite for
social change. In fact, although it seems to loom as a large
problem, race as an issue is again a symptom of capital-
ism. Of course, on a paltry level and among the relatively
powerless, race does play a part in social structure (the rac-
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March 5 saw additional large protest, under the name, ‘Occ-
upy the Capitol’ protests are taking place in Sacramento,
California, and Albany, New York, to demand full funding for
education. www.occupyed.org

What else? A lot more...

Simultaneously, European trade unions have declared February 29 a European Day of Action against austerity,
following massive demonstrations against budget cuts in
Greece, Spain, Belgium, and elsewhere. Decentralized ac-
tions in all 27 European Union nations and beyond will be
"sending a clear message to the EU leaders: this imposed austerity is going to Europe into a recession!"
www.shutdownthecorporations.org

March 1st National Day of Action For Education
From March 1 to 5, Occupy Education California staged
a 99-mile march from Berkeley to San Francisco, CA to
mark the national day. There were additional actions in dozens of other cities in defense of the right to quality, affordable
education.

Meanwhile, students in Spain continued their fight against cuts in education by occupying university buildings. Solidar-
ity is a characteristic that are important ingredients to any
European student movement. In Greece, for example, the
students have seen as many as 60,000 people
in the streets. Students are also taking
action to support workers and other marginalized
99’ers. In the Netherlands, students along with Occupy Utretch, Oc-
"corporate Debutant Ball" in Salt Lake City, teach-ins in Norman, OK and Naples, FL, actions targeting Pfizer, the
Koch Brothers and Bank of America in New York, and a
delicious Ice Cream Bloc in Oakland. Three distribution
centers of Wal-Mart were shut down in a coordinated
action in Huntsville, AL and New Brunswick, NJ. Actions targeting P
ocup Rotterdam, and other local Occupy
sites around the country and world. From Occupy Nigeria
in October to actions in Huntsville, AL and New Brunswick, NJ.
There is presently a coordinated effort recently
3
March on the RNC

The corporate media won’t report on it, so follow and find livestreams on Twitter: #resistRNC #marchontheRNC #OccupyTheRNC. @OccupyRNC and @OccupyTampa. The last few years have been a huge upswing in activism. The name comes from the Arab Spring – the pro-democracy movements that swept across the Arab world last Spring. Not only did the Arab Spring overtake Tunisia and Egypt and elsewhere, but they were a primary inspiration for the Occupy Wall Street movement.

Taking place from April 9-15, they aim to train 100,000 people “in homes, places of worship, campuses and the streets...in non-violent action and stand united in the work of reclaiming our country.” The website states: “History is calling; it’s time to step up.” Most exciting about this effort is that so many different organizations are coming together: anti-poverty organizations, workers’ rights orgs, anti-war, anti-racist, and environment and unity are under the banner of the ‘99% Spring.’ This is a real opportunity to build strong movements for change! the99spring.com

May Day, (May 1st-International Worker’s Day), always sees global protests, including in the United States. In the last few years there have been huge larger actions, including the 2006 national immigrant strike ‘A Day Without An Immigrant.’ This May Day saw some of the biggest protests in recent memory – in the U.S. and around the world.

Occupy Wall Street is proving one thing without a doubt....Another World, S Possible!

Roger is an activist working for a world with economic and political liberation. He sits on the ad-visor board for the WESPAC Foundation, a grassroots peace & justice action network in Westchester County, NY. As a young white man, he lives with the understanding that people with privilege must work to end inequality in soci-ety. Juan Laaman and other political prisoners have been important mentors for his activism.

“Agitators are a set of interfering, meddling people who come down to some perfectly contented class of the community and sow the seeds of discontent among them. That is the reason why agitators among them are so absolutely necessary.” – Oscar Wilde

Oscar and George were both agitators. None of us functions from a clean slate when considering or debating any issue, especially history as it pertains to the United States.

George Jackson struggled against the constraints of deni- al and self-censorship, to say nothing of his physical and concentric Unit (Political Prisoners) who are inherently vulnerable to an either/or situation: isolating silence or elimination. For George, his vociferous revolu-tionary attitude was either for the innocent or the victim. He was well aware of his situation. In Blood in My Eye, his political treatise, he wrote:

“I’m in a unique political position. I have a very nearly clean conscience, always having done just that, to get disturbed over organized injustice or terrorist practice against the innocents – wherever I can now say just about what I want to say, always done just about that, without fear of self-exposure. I can only be executed once.”

George was equally aware that revolutionary change hap-pens only when an entire society is ready. No amount of action, preaching, or teaching will spark revolution if social conditions do not warrant it. My father’s case, unfortunate-ly, is an appropriate indicator. He attempted a revolutionary act during a reactionary time; elimination was the only pos-sible consequence.

The challenge for a radical in today’s world is to balance reformist tendencies (political liberalism) and revolution- ary action/ideology (radicalism). While reformism entails a legitimation of the status quo as a search for changes within the system, radicalism entails a change of system. Both revolu-tionaries are particularly vulnerable, a certain degree of self-exposure. I can only be executed once.”

George’s statement ‘Combat Liberalism’ and the general reaction to it to typify the gulf between the two philosophies. George was universally misunderstood by the left and the right alike. As is the case with most modern political pris-oners, nearly all of his support came from reformists with liberal leanings. It seems that they acted in spite of, rather than because of, his message.

If you are ordered to assault a non-violent peaceful crowd, we ask you to defy your orders. Stand for justice. It is our sincere hope that you allow the demonstrators to do what they demand of the politically conscious, leaving only liberal-ism and its narrow vision to flourish.

Nobody comprehended the radical dilemma more fully than George. He has always been to the left of left, not out of mere happenstance, but with a very conscious eye upon maintaining his revolutionary ideology. He writes in Blood in My Eye:

“Reformism is an old story in America. There have been depressions and socio-economic political crises throughout the period that marked the formation of the present upper-class ruling circle, and their controlling elites. But the par-ties of the left were too committed to reformism to exploit their revolutionary potential.”

George’s involvement with the prison reform movement should therefore be seen as a matter of survival. Unlike the reformist left, prison oppression was directly affecting many leftists as a damning example of the government’s conspir-a torial nature. Declassified documents and ex-agents’ testi-monies to COINTELPRO have clearly shown the unlawful, insidious cells of government in the nation’s his-tory. COINTELPRO, however, was really a symptomatic, expendable entity; a small police force within a larger one (the FBI), within a branch of government (executive), within the government itself (liberal democracy), within the eco-nomic system (capitalism). Reformists in radicals’ cloth-
U.S. citizenry, generally uncritical and willing to accept digestible versions of historical personalities and world events. The reasoning behind denial and self-censorship: do not make the public uncomfortable, even if that means diluting, sensationalizing, or lying about the truth.

Ultimately, when denial and self-censorship may not be sufficient for control of information, the state resorts to imprisonment. All imprisonment is political and as such all imprisonments carry equal weight. Society does, however, distinguish two categories of imprisonment: one for breaking a law, the other for political reasons. A difference is clear: American Indian Movement leader Leonard Peltier, serving a federal sentence for his supposed role at Wounded Knee, is considered a different type of prisoner than an armed robber serving a five-to-seventy-year sentence.

State policy reflects institutional needs. When the state as an institution cannot tolerate an outside threat, real or perceived, from an individual or group, the consequences at its command include isolation, persecution, and political imprisonment. All may occur in greater or lesser form, depending on the degree of threat.

Political incarceration removes threats to the political and economic hegemony of the United States. Even though in 1959 George Jackson initially went to prison as an “every-day lawbreaker” with a one-year-to-life sentence, it was his political consciousness that kept him incarcerated for eleven years. In 1970 George wrote:

International capitalism cannot be destroyed without the extermination of the entire colonial world. The whole world is watching the blacks inside the U.S., wondering and waiting for us to come to our senses. Their problems and struggles with the Amerikan monster are much more difficult than they would be if we actually aided them. We are on the inside. We are extremest of struggle. The entire colonial world is watching. In 1969, as a response to political incarceration, the blacks outside the U.S. made a statement that Amilcar Cabral later described as a “declaration of political war on the world.”

Nothing is more dangerous to a system that depends on misinformation than a voice that obeys its own dictates and has the courage to speak out. George Jackson’s imprisonment and further isolation within the prison system were clearly a function of the state’s response to his outspoken opposition to the capitalist structure.

Political incarceration is a tangible form of state control. Unlike denial and self-censorship, imprisonment is publicly scrutinized. Yet public reaction to political incarceration has been minimal. The U.S. government claims it holds no political prisoners (denial), while any notice given to protests focused on political prisoners invariably takes the form of a human interest story (self-censorship).

The efficacy of political incarceration in the United States cannot be denied. Prison serves not only as a physical barrier, but a communication restraint. Prisoners are completely ostracized from society, with little or no chance to break through. Thirteen years of imprisonment for George, who was always hesitant to communicate or protest past a certain point, fear the prison system. George Jackson said that deep down most people believe that all prisoners, regardless of their individual situations, really did do something “wrong.” Amilcar Cabral wrote: “The only difference between a prisoner’s actions and his or her personal worth; a bad act equals a bad person. The bottom line is that the majority of people simply will not believe that the state openly or covertly oppresses without criminal cause. As Daniel Singer asked at the Evergreen conference in 1987, ‘Is it possible for a class which exterminates the native peoples of the Americas, replaces them by raping Africa for humans it then denigrates and dehumanizes as slaves, when cheapening and degrading its own working class – is it possible for such a class to create a democracy, equality and to advance the cause of human freedom? The implicit answer is, ‘No, of course not.’”

How does a person – inside or outside prison – confront the cultural mindsets, the layers of misinformation propagated by the capitalist system? Sooner or later, what can be called the “radical dilemma” surfaces for the few wanting to enter into a structural attack/analysis of the United States. Culturally, educationally, and politically, all of us are similarly limited by these layers of misinformation; we are all prodigious to nuclear fire. We have a momentous historical role to act out if we will. The whole world for all time in the future will love us and remember us as the righteous people who made it possible for the world to live on. If we fail through fear and lack of aggressive imagination, then the slaves of the future will curse us, as we sometimes curse those of yesterday. I don’t want us to have in our system a few punk songs and a hump in the ground as my only monument. I want to leave a world that is liberated from trash, pollution, racism, nation-states, nation-state wars as armies, from pomp, bigotry, parochialism, a thousand different brands of untruth, and licentious usurious economics.

August 26th Day of Action: Women’s Equality Day

occupyyallot/tag/rnc/

Call to Action via Women Organized to Resist and Defend. Occupiers across the country are organizing in solidarity; we encourage everyone who can to attend!

On Women’s Equality Day, August 26 – on the eve of the Republican National Convention in Tampa, Florida, which will be immediately followed by the Democratic National Convention – women and their allies will take to the streets of Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York City, Chicago, and other cities across the country in defense of women’s rights.

August 26 – Women’s Equality Day – commemorates the 19th passage of the 19th amendment, granting women the right to vote. Winning the right to vote was an important victory, but the struggle for full equality continues. Celebrate Women’s Equality Day by taking to the streets and demanding full equality now. Honor the women who fought for the rights we’ve won and continue the struggle for full equality.

Many women voted for President Obama believing he would stand up for women’s rights. But he has compromised with the anti-choice forces on many occasions. When Republicans opposed a 2009 provision for family planning, we fought for the rights we’ve won and continue the struggle for full equality now. Honor the women who fought for the rights we’ve won and continue the struggle for full equality.

Women’s reproductive rights continue to be slashed at the state level. Legal restrictions on abortions tripled from 2010 to 2011. 92 new abortion restrictions were enacted in 2011. In 2011, there were 114 reported violent attacks against abortion providers. Clinics that provide vital services to low-income women in the District of Columbia would have been closed had President Obama not been sure he could count on him or any politician to defend our rights. In fact, in order to reach a budget compromise with Republican Speaker of the House John Boehner in July 2011, President Obama said, “I’ll give you abortion in D.C.”

Meaning, low-income women in the District of Columbia would be prevented from receiving Medicaid assistance offered by the D.C. government for abortion procedures.

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A Memory or 3 of OWS

BY ALOZIE

I am always skeptical about describing the Occupy movement, particularly because the only narrative I can tell is my own. That being said, I will try to touch on a few moments that stand out in my mind after months in the movement. My original reason for joining the movement is because as an AIDS activist, highlighting the social and economic injustices of our society is my job. What the Occupy movement is doing now is nothing new under the sun. ACT UP Occupied Wall St. during their first action, an act of civil disobedience, as if to signify the evils of the corporate world. Many of these individuals were dressed in business like garb with noses around their necks, as if to signify the evils of the corporate world. I decided I would no longer sleep outdoors, because unless I was inebriated, I doubt I would ever be able to close my eyes and sleep with that many people around me. Up till now I truly tip my hat to those who can sleep easily with so many soldiers who shoot in a neighborhood, there is no doubt that the rhetoric of the plight of the 99% really resonates with almost everyone. This economic crisis has touched almost everyone in some way, even if you haven’t lost your job.

The beginning was unorganized, uncertain, and beautiful all in one. I recall being excited to finally drag my sleeping bags out of my moldy mattress, my offensively dragging sleeping outdoors. Mind you, this was before there were quasi-comfort tents thrown up. I remember thinking to myself that first night that I slept outside, “Thank god I have friends to do this with, and thank god I drank enough to fall asleep right away.” I recall waking up to people walking around my listless body, taking photos of my friends and I sleeping and posing above us. Many of these individuals were dressed in business like garb with noses around their necks, as if to signify the evils of the corporate world. I decided I would no longer sleep outdoors, because unless I was inebriated, I doubt I would ever be able to close my eyes and sleep with that many people around me. Up till now I truly tip my hat to those who can sleep easily with so many strangers constantly moving about.

The movement to me changed once I realize that many activists groups were slowly feeding themselves into the Occupy movement. A lot of the working groups I saw forming were formed of trans already established social justice groups that realized there was great press coverage in being part of the movement. I decided to join the Queering and People of color (POC) caucus to become more active. The difference between going online and a Caucus is that working groups actually actively had tasks to accomplish, such as feeding people or managing the library.

get their voices heard within the movement. The POC caucus was one of the largest groups I have yet to be a part of. I didn’t feel the need to attend meetings because they had several working groups that interested me. The POC was founded as Working/Restructuring, a group of working and posing above us. Many of these individuals were dressed in business like garb with noses around their necks, as if to signify the evils of the corporate world. I decided I would no longer sleep outdoors, because unless I was inebriated, I doubt I would ever be able to close my eyes and sleep with that many people around me. Up till now I truly tip my hat to those who can sleep easily with so many strangers constantly moving about.

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For every one torturer, there are a thousand people who drill them into young minds. Howard Zinn comments that nearly impossible to attain), reiterate these points over and over. Schools and textbooks not only teach these points but inculcate them in the students’ subconscious minds. The media, conformistically creates heroes and pariahs, is a consequence of its dialectical nature. Without fail, an odd paradox is created around the “founding fathers,” dedicated to uniting and strengthening the “founding fathers,” dedicated to uniting and strengthening the existing mercantile class among disjointed colonies. These acts were actually helping create a nation, a country, a economic,” according to Howard Zinn, was rationalized as a reaction to the terrific devastation of India. Savages was similar.

The personalization of history, the process by which we construct a society, I like to call it a constructed society. We are going to take the streets and march down 5th Av- enue I became ecstatic. I remember holding up our group banner and chanting, “Show me what democracy looks like,” stated Daniel Singer in a lecture at Evergreen (Kennedy New York University) in 1987, “is implied in the monopoly of power.”

Clearly, objective history is an impossibility. This under- stood, the significant problem lies in how the general popu- lation defines the term; history implies that truth is being told. It is an unfortunate fact that history is unfailingly writ- ten by the victors, which in the case of the United States are not only the original imperialists, but the majority of the “founding fathers,” dedicated to uniting and strengthening the existing mercantile class among disjointed colonies. These acts were actually helping create a nation, a country, a economy,” according to Howard Zinn, was rationalized as a reaction to the terrific devastation of India. Savages was similari- constr.
When this collection of letters was written, George Jackson conveyed an intellectual voice that had no idea existed. He was the prominent figure of true radical thought and practice during the period, and when he was assassinated, much of the movement died along with him. But George Jackson cannot and will not ever leave. His life and thoughts serve as the message 

George himself is the revolution.

The reissue of Soledad Brother at this point in time is essential. It appears that the nineties are going to be a telling decade in U.S. history. The signposts of systemic breakdown are glaringly obvious and they were brought to the fore in all their unvarnished truth as never before, and the barometer of our political commitment is publicly held to be inconsistent with them. This calls for a telling and minimization of immoral events in order to legitimize history. The reissue of Soledad Brother furthers a logical progression from biblical example, expansion and imperialism culminated in the United States with the conquest of Mexico and the state’s very existence simultaneously. Yet, traditional Judeo-Christian morality is a perfect vehicle for genocide, slavery, and territorial expansion. As Howard Zinn has pointed out in A People’s History of the United States that “the history of any country, presented as the history of a family, conceals fierce conflicts of interest sometimes fought out between conquerors and conquered, and mastered and dominated, and by the corporate greed of the 1%.

For years, people all over the world have been crippled by the corporate greed of 1%. They built their bonuses on the backs of people from across the country raced to the heart of New York’s financial district to occupy Wall Street. In the face of every crumbling aspect of our society, the cause of the crisis is plain as day: the policies of big banks foreclosing on our homes, killing our jobs, buying up our democracy, and turning our environment into just another toxic asset, you showed up, and we became the 99%.

On September 15-17, join us in this fight for our country, our world – this fight for our lives.

Join us for three days of education, celebration and resistance!

On #S17, Follow the Money: All Roads Lead to Wall Street

Last September 17, as part of a wave of global protest, people from across the country raced to the heart of New York’s financial district to occupy Wall Street, bringing hundreds of big banks foreclosing on our homes, killing our jobs, buying up our democracy, and turning our environment into just another toxic asset, you showed up, and we became the 99%.

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Commemorating the 42nd Anniversary of the Marin Courthouse Slave Rebellion

BY JONATHAN JACKSON, JR.

From the Forward to Soledad Brother (1994)

I was born eight and a half months after my father, Jonathan Jackson, was shot down on August 7, 1970, at the Marin County Courthouse, when he tried to gain the release of the Soledad Brothers by taking hostages. Before and especially after, I maintained contact with my mother by writing from his cell in San Quentin. (The Department of Corrections wouldn’t put her on the visitors’ list.) During George’s numerous trial appearances for the Soledad Brothers case, Mom would lift me above the crowd so he could see me. Consistently, we would receive a letter a few days later, a single mother with son alone and in the middle of both controversy and not a little unwarranted trouble. The messages of strength were no doubt instrumental in helping her carry on. No matter how oppressive his situation became, George always had time to lend his spirit to the people he cared for.

A year and two weeks after the revolutionary takeover in Marin, George was ruthlessly murdered by prison guards at San Quentin. Both he and my father left me a great deal: pride, history, an unmistakable name. My experience has been at once wonderful and incredibly difficult. My life is not consumed by the Jackson legacy, but my charge is an unwarranted trouble with the authorities, those messages of strength were no doubt instrumental in helping her carry on. No matter how oppressive his situation became, George always had time to lend his spirit to the people he cared for.

Today I read my inherited letters often – those written from George to my mother with a dull pencil on prison stationery. Is it any wonder thatposter that read “99%,” which I thought was an amazing visual way of expressing the bridge. The march ended in Dubbo, Brookfield, where I found myself wishing I wore another layer.

The movement is still alive today. It has endured a lot of criticism and pitfalls along the way. There are so many horror stories and examples of people dying and witnessing the cynical and worldly nature of the message that it is no surprise to me.

Howard Zinn has pointed out in A People’s History of the United States that “the history of any country, presented as the history of a family, conceals fierce conflicts of interest sometimes fought out between conquerors and conquered, and mastered and dominated, and by the corporate greed of the 1%.

For years, people all over the world have been crippled by the corporate greed of 1%. They built their bonuses on the backs of people from across the country raced to the heart of New York’s financial district to occupy Wall Street. In the face of every crumbling aspect of our society, the cause of the crisis is plain as day: the policies of big banks foreclosing on our homes, killing our jobs, buying up our democracy, and turning our environment into just another toxic asset, you showed up, and we became the 99%.

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Statements from People in Prisons for February 20th: National Occupy Day in Support of Prisoners in Solidarity (PHSS)

Occupyforprisoners.org

Pelican Bay Human Rights Movement Hunger Strikers

Sitawa Jamaa, s/n Dewberry C35671; Todd Ashker C58191; Antonio Guillon P81948; and Arturo Castellanos C17275

Corporate America has coalesced its efforts around the exploitation of Human Beings, while using the political apparatus of the U.S. government, federal, state and local, to institute policies that set in motion the creation of a corporate police state, which has targeted the poor as a surplus for incarceration and exploitation.

Those of us housed in solitary confinement throughout California and America, support “Occupy Wall Street” and understand the necessity to resist against corporate greed. We will no longer willingly accept the subjugation, oppression and exploitation of Humanity.

Banks and the “prison industrial complex” are corporate empires that prey on the souls of Humanity. Therefore we officially join you all in Struggle.

Mumia Abu-Jamal: Souls on Ice

When I heard of the call, just raised in Oakland, California, to “Occupy the Prisons,” I gasped. It was not an especially radical call, but it was right on time.

For prisons have become a metaphor; the shadow-side, if you will, of America. With oceans of words about freedom, and the reality that the U.S. is the world’s largest incarcerator for decades. Some would point to “Occupy the Prisons,” as a one-day event, no matter how much massive or impressive. It means building a mass movement that demands, and fights for real change, and eventually abolishment of structures that do far more social damage than good.

That means more than a one-day event, no matter how massive or impressive. It means building a mass movement that demands, and fights for real change, and eventually abolishment of structures that do far more social damage than good.

It means the abolition of solitary confinement, for it is no more than modern-day torture chambers for the poor.

It means the repeal of repressive laws that support such structures.

It means social change—or it means nothing.

So let us begin—Down With the Prison Industrial Complex!

Lyne Stewart

This occupy rally is what Must happen at every jail in the United States—a direct challenge to Arbitrary Power that thinks it can lock up those with the greatest grievances against the system and systematically demobilize them to their fellow citizens. I speak now for all the 2 Million but of course, particularly on behalf of those political prisoners—who actively fought and tested this unjust system and place where the Constitution doesn’t exist, and where slavery is all but legalized.

When law professor Michelle Alexander took on the topic, her book, The New Jim Crow, took off like hotcakes—selling over 100,000 in just a few months.

And where there are prisons, there is torture; brutal beatings, grave humiliations, perverse censorship—and even murder. After all, under a legal system that is as blind as that statue which holds aloft a scale, her eyes covered by a frigid fold of cloth.

So, what is Occupy to do?

Initially, it must support movements such as those calling for the freedom of Lakota brother Leonard Peltier, the Black Panther veterans of August 8th, 1978, the remaining two members of the Angola 3 (Herman Wallace and Albert Woodfox), Sundiatu Acoli, Russell “Maroon” Shoutz, and many other brothers and sisters who’ve spent lifetimes in steel and brick hellholes.

But, the Occupy Movement must do more.

As it shifted the discussion and paradigm on economic issues, it must turn the wheel of the so-called ‘Criminal Justice System’ in America, that is in fact, a destructive, counter-productive, annual $69 billion boondoggle of repress-ion, better-known by activists as the Prison-Industrial Complex.

That means more than a one-day event, no matter how massive or impressive. It means building a mass movement that demands, and fights for real change; and eventually abolishment of structures that do far more social damage than good.

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Russell Cinque Magee: Sole Survivor Still

By MUMIA ABU-JAMAL

Slavery is being practiced by the system under color of law—that’s for 400 years. Slavery today—it’s the same thing, but with a new name. They’re making millions and millions of dollars enslaving Blacks, poor whites, and others—who people don’t even know they’re being railroaded.

Russell Cinque Magee (from radio interview with Kubi Nyasha, “Freedom is a Constant Struggle,” KPFA FM, 12 August 1995)

If you were asked to name the longest held political prisoner in the United States, what would your answer be?

Most would probably reply “Geronimo ji jaga (Pratt),” “Sundiatu Acoli,” or “Sekou Odinga” —all 3 members of the Black Panther Party or soldiers of the Black Liberation Army, who have been engaged for their political beliefs or principled actions for decades. Some would point to Lakota leader, Leonard Peltier, who struggled for the freedom of Native peoples, thereby incurring the enmity of the U.S. Government, who framed him in a 1975 double murder trial. Those answers would be good guesses, for all of these men have spent hellified years in state and federal dungeons, but here’s a man who has spent more.

Russell C. Magee arrived in Los Angeles, California in 1963, and wasn’t in town for six months before he and a cousin, Leroy, were arrested on the improbable charges of kidnap and robbery, after a fight with a man over a woman and a $10 bag of marijuana. Magee, in a slam-dunk “trial,” was swiftly convicted and swifter still sentenced to life.

Magee, politicized in those years, took the name of the African freedom fighter, Cinque, who, with his fellow captives seized control of the slave ship, the Amistad, and tried to sail back to Africa. Like his ancient namesake, Cinque would also fight for his freedom from legal and political confines, and for 7 long years he filed writ after writ, learning what he calls “guerrilla law,” honing it as a tool for liberation of himself and his fellow captives. But California courts, which could care less about the alleged “rights” of a young Black man like Magee, dismissed his petitions willy-nilly.

In August, 1970, Magee appeared as a witness in the so-called trial of James Earl Ray, a man charged with assassinating a guard after San Quentin guards murdered a Black prisoner, Fred Binns. McClain, defending himself, presented imprisoned witnesses to expose the racist and repressive nature of prisons. In the midst of Magee’s testimony, a 17 year old young Black man with a huge Afro hairdo burst into the courtroom, heavily armed.

Unfortunately, Magee’s jury didn’t agree, although it did acquit on at least one kidnapping charge. The court dismissed on the murder charge, and Magee has been batting for his freedom ever since.

That he is still fighting is a tribute to a truly remarkable man, a man who knows what slavery is, and more importantly, what freedom means.

FREE CINQUE !!!
Jeff Mackler is the West Coast Coordinator of the Lynne Stewart Defense Committee.

‘Panther Baby’: The Journey of Jamal Joseph

From www.workers.org


If one is high school age in America, the story of the Black Panther Party, one of the most significant Black radical organizations of the mid-20th century, is virtually unknown.

Few teachers dare to teach it, burdened as they are by the repressive, politically driven testing frenzy that ensures teachers stick only to the tests, amid fears of the consequences of failure.

If some rare teacher wants to teach this powerful period, they need look no further than Jamal Joseph’s new autobiography, Panther Baby.

Jamal Joseph was a member of the New York chapter of the Black Panther Party, but a member with a difference.

At 15, he was still in high school, and thus the youngest member in the state.

Thankfully, he writes with the head of a teenager, explaining his choices as they are presented to him — often based on his rampaging youth. Why did he join the Party? Why not other such groups?

What did his foster grandparents, who though they were old Garveyites [named after Marcus M. Garvey, the founder of an early 20th century nationalist group], really think of his joining?

That story is as funny as it is tender, for these parents were not of his blood — loved him intensely, and worried about a boy his age running around with Black Panthers, people frankly regarded as crazy.

Jamal’s story is one of a social movement, that, at the height, lifted all to new levels of possibility. But like a wave, it can wash away, leaving the once-high steeped in mud.

Throughout this often heart-rending cycle of love and betrayal, Joseph finds his best self and arises from the mud to find a life of service and reconciliation.

Panther Baby is a touching, beautiful and transformative document. May it reach as many young people as possible.

Now suffer in SHUs, and other forms of Solitary, for that. Many have been tortured for the last thirty years or more. When they were captured in the headly political days of the ’60’s, Stewart said that fundamental change was inevitable — indeed that it was right around the corner. It still remains inevitable but now we understand the protracted struggle necessary to breach this evil system. I for one am recruited to accomplish the freedom of political prisoners and as my comrade Chairman Fred says “FREE EM ALL!!!”

Khalan Malik Khalduin

All power to the people. I am in support/solidarity with you to work to expose the contradictions existing at San Quentin prison, and all prisoners across the country.

Please extend my clenched fist saluteation to brother Kevin Cooper/those men on death row.

I am a political prisoner here in Indiana. I have been in prison for 26 years now, with 18 years in isolated confinement. I am currently being held in a Secure Housing Unit, where the conditions are cruel and unusual punishment, and there are deplorable violations of state and federal policy all across the unit.

Those in charge have used criminal tactics to keep many of us in perpetual isolation. We could use some organized, principled help here in Indiana. Could you provide me and e-mail or other address of other occupiers in solidarity against prison injustice? We need to organize a force here to Occupy the Indiana SHU. I have some committed supporters...along with others we can move mountains. I agree with Kevin; just never forget us.

Kevin Cooper: We Dissent – An Occupy Death Row Production

A few of the definitions of the word dissent are: to withhold assent; to differ in opinion; difference of opinion; religious nonconformity; a written statement in which a justice disagrees with the opinion of the majority.

The above word “Dissent” and these few definitions speak in part to what all the different “Occupy Movements” are about.

While they all, each and every one of them, have different thoughts, ideas, tactics, agendas, and people who they represent, they all have, for the most part, “dissented” from what 0705 Dean Street has been doing, and going on for decades, in this world and country.

We all disagree, and do not want to be part of the norm anymore! Nor do we want what is considered “normal” to be part of us, because the status quo is outright harming us all on all of life’s different levels.

We all are saying in our own unique way that we don’t trust the people who are running the system, just as we don’t trust the system itself.

All across the world, people who don’t eat the same food, or wear the same garb, speak the same language, belong to the same name and way to the same God, if they do pray, are dissenting.

Everywhere, people are standing up and fighting back, and speaking out from under the universal umbrella of humanity. This umbrella provides protection for the oppressed, from the oppressor.

The Occupy Movement as a whole is another form of the universal umbrella for human rights. From within this movement, we dissenters can speak the truth as to how the status quo, the ruler’s agenda, has a negative effect on “The People” and this one planet we all must live on, and share.

Something must be seriously wrong and it is not us! The system is wrong and it has always been wrong and will always be wrong!

Some in the top 1% use their subordinates to ask, “What is it that they want?” Each movement within Occupy may want different things, especially since we all come from different places and have different real life and death experiences.

So while I can’t speak to what any one movement wants per se, I can speak to what all these different occupy movements don’t want.

We don’t want terrorism of any kind, against anyone. We don’t want pollution of the air or water or other natural resources that Mother Earth produces. We don’t want a government that uses the mainstream news media to help a President send its people to war based on lies; We don’t want war in any of its forms; We don’t want sexism, racism, classism, or poverty.

We don’t want corruption, the death penalty, the prison industrial complex — either public or private prisons. We don’t want unions to be busted, nor do we want jobs sent overseas to other countries. We don’t want to go without healthcare or a good education. We don’t want police brutality or intimidation of any kind!

These few things mentioned above should go a long way to help people understand what we want. There are two sides to every story, and while many seem to want to focus on just one side— “What is it that they want?” they must now come to terms with some of what we don’t want. If they do then they will truly understand why we dissent. Everything that we don’t want is a very real part of what is wrong within this country and world, and it is having a very negative
all the defining qualities of this country of ours. Never before in the history of civilization has a country locked away so many of its own people. Have we as society become so violent, so incorrigible that we must lock away so many? How did we get to this point under the guise of “public safety”?

The cost of incarcerating women is immense. The average annual cost to incarcerate a woman is $50,000 and the average cost to incarcerate a woman over 55 is a staggering $158,000. Because of their role as mothers, the costs and consequences go far beyond the criminal justice system. Their children are either raised by other family members or are sent to the state’s foster care system. Children whose parents are incarcerated are 4-5 times more likely to become incarcerated themselves, thus perpetuating the inter-generational incarceration cycle. Since 1991, the number of children with a mother in prison has increased by more than 131% and nationwide more than half of children whose mothers are incarcerated are under age 10.

The prison system is a system gone awry, gravely compromising and ramped up with abuses. It is a terrifying breeding ground for anger, hatred, sexism, homophobia and dominating other human beings. We are warehousing people, punishing them and then returning them to society worse off than when they entered the system. The violence that then comes out of these prisons is a much greater threat to public safety than any foreign terrorist group ever could be.

Krista Funk

The bankers are legal racketeers. They are rewarded for their crimes. But the people at the bottom of the 99%, the poor, we are warehoused in the Prison Industrial Complex. They take away our ability to vote once we are inside because that might change the way things are. The rich get richer, the poor give up, and out of desperation they turn on their families and their communities. This cycle has to change!

Herman Wallace

Most all U.S. citizens benefit in some way from the capitalist mode of production, a system that exploits underdeveloped nations as well as 99% of its own nation’s people. This creates a vast contradiction that causes much emotional pain.

In 1865, Union Generals admitted to Lincoln that they were on the verge of losing the war and could only turn the tides if Lincoln would free the slaves. Of course, slaves were never freed; it was only the form of slavery practiced in the South that was disrupted, moving from chattel slavery to wage slavery as has been so well documented. We must strengthen our forces by uniting with the Occupy movement and liberation movements throughout the world in order to disrupt the capitalist mode of production and send capitalism to its grave.

Free All Political Prisoners and Prisoners of Consciousness

All Power to the People

Robert King

First of all I would like to applaud and salute those in the Occupy movement for focusing on the hideous corruption of corporate America and the effects this corruption has on all of us in the 99%, including the well over two million individuals that fill our detention facilities and their families.

Being in prison, in solitary was terrible. It was a nightmare. My soul still cries from all that I witnessed and endured. It does more than cry – it mourns, continuously. I saw men so desperate that they ripped prison doors apart, starved and mutilated themselves. It takes every scrap of humanity

Stewart served as lead counsel for her client along with former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, who testified on her behalf during the trial. Clark himself has issued similar press releases with no punishment. Indeed, an indigent prosecutor during Stewart’s trial suggested that Clark himself be charged with conspiracy, but his superiors decided that imprisoning the nation’s former top attorney was not yet in their game plan and the suggestion was ignored.

The Second Circuit decision was based on the allegations that Stewart demonstrated insufficient deference to the original sentence. The court claimed that her statement to the media immediately following her sentence that, “I can do 28 months standing on my head” demonstrated contempt for the legal system.

I was standing next to Stewart at that moment and saw nothing other than a great expression of relief that she would not be sentenced, in effect to death, based on the 30 years that federal prosecutors sought. Stewart entered the sentencing hearing on that day, totally ignorant of whether she would be the deeply punishing 30 years demanded by the federal prosecutors or perhaps something as good as 70, years old at the time, could “live with” and look forward to a normal life. She carried nothing but a plastic bag, some medicines and a toothbrush.

The Second Circuit also took umbrage at Stewart’s courageous statement when she took the stand to make her closing remarks. Her attorney at that moment, Michael Ti-
Support Six Nations Land Defenders: An Open Letter to All Those Who Have Supported Me

BY ALEX HUNDERT [G20 political prisoner]
alexhundert.wordpress.com

This is a letter I am writing to everyone who supported me over the past two years, since our arrests brought to light the issues and concerns we are charged with. An open letter is not the focus of my life, but I write this to let those of you who have supported me over the past two years towards supporting front line land defenders from Six Nations.

Since 2006 there has been a particularly insidious wave of criminalisation and demonisation aimed at Haudenosaunee people who are asserting the sovereignty of the Six Nations Confederacy and defending the land. The tactics used in everyday policing operations against Six Nations, like with other Indigenous nations, are exactly the type of oppressive state security that are developed over the past two years towards supporting "activist community" get a taste of around the G20.

I would like to propose that we now strengthen those linkages by turning the massive capacity for support that we have developed over the past two years towards supporting front line land defenders from Six Nations.

I want to thank all the participants of Occupy San Quentin for being here today. Thank you for reading my statement.

My name is Steve Champion. I've been incarcerated for over 30 years and twenty-nine of those years and counting, have been spent on San Quentin's death row.

We are living in a critical time in history. There is a global and domestic crisis going on. Our bodies are politics under siege because it is dominated by Krony capitalism and social and economic indifference. We are fast moving toward a bicentric society of "haves" and "have nots." If we fail to make the laws that favor the banks and the prison industrial complex. The growth of the private prison industry is just one symptom of this unholiness.

I stand in solidarity with the Occupy 4 Prisoners rally and hope these rallies shed light on the insidious effects of prisons for profit and politics.

Free all political prisoners and prisoners of conscience.

Steve Champion

Support for the Six Nations Land Defenders Legal Defense Fund

The fund is currently being administered and coordinated by the April 28 Coalition which includes organisers from Six Nations as well as established allies from various unions and activist organisations. If the fund is successful, a formal board of directors will be established and procedures codified. For now, the immediate concern is fundraising for Francine "Flower" Doxtator and Kevin "Sleeper" Greene, though the goal is a sustainable fund that can cover legal costs for people from Six Nations who are charged while engaging in land defence actions.

Support for the Six Nations Land Defenders Legal Defense Fund could include a formal endorsement, a public statement of support, phone or e-mail contacts, making donations. Please contact the April 28 Coalition (kannishaton@gmail.com) for more information, or visit this link to donate directly: bit.ly/K39HCN.

Thanks again so much for your continued support.

BY ALEX HUNDERT [G20 political prisoner]
alexhundert.wordpress.com

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I would strongly encourage you to consider formally supporting the new Six Nations Land Defenders Legal Defense Fund.

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Thanks again so much for your continued support.
As always, I send my best to all.

Really cowards in truth and need to be forced to get right. They’re intimidated by CDCR’s “crime syndicate” staff. They’re need strong outside support. People should not fear nor be all must stay strong and do our part to make it happen. We when they will fall and it’s not too far in the future. But we everyone. Then, we’ll go from there. People need to realize on them so these people can no longer justify warehousing eraal Population prisons. Then we’ll straighten out the B.S. Right now we’re waiting – waiting to get out to these Gen-

We’re at war (the poor 99% including the prisoners) and the people in power are scared to death and they should be. Most of us should have been out long ago. A life sentence has never meant “life” until the last 30 years. Most of us are many years beyond our minimum eligible parole dates.

We’re not serving a legally valid sentence anymore. We’re here illegally, immorally, and unethically based on politics and money.

Our supporters need to propagate against the system at ev-

We shouldn’t even be recognizing that these CDCR “crimi-

Our supporters need to see the system for what it really is and to educate people about it to bring more support in. It’s important to humanize and decriminalize us to the main-

We shouldn’t even be recognizing that these CDCR “crimi-

Right now we’re waiting – waiting to get out to these Gen-

With the loss of conditional sentences and instead new harsher measures (especially for youth) and mandatory minimums, there will be an even greater reliance on the prison system. We are once again, further that the federal laws are going to do nothing but aggravate an already un-

Prisoners’ Statement on Prisoners Justice Day

Alex Hundert.wordpress.com

On Prisoners’ Justice Day in every jail in Canada and in provinces around the world, inmates will go on a 24-hour hunger strike. We do this to remember Eddy Nolan who died in Millhaven Penitentiary in Ontario on August 10 1974 as a victim of the inhumane conditions in that prison at that time. We do this to remember all of the inmates who fought and the two who died in a four day riot in April of 1971 at Kingston Penitentiary. Both of those incidents led to major reforms in the Canadian prison system. We fast so that we ourselves remember. We strike to remind the inmates that at their back, we are still entitled to human rights and human dignity, and we can still fight for both.

This statement for Prisoners’ Justice Day 2012 was written by Alex Hundert, with input from more than a dozen inmates inside the Central North Correctional Complex in Penetanguishene Ontario, and Mandy Hiscott at the Vanier Cen-

tre for Women in Milton Ontario. Both are pro-

It is an outrage that the federal government is en-

In provincial jails in Ontario, this statement has been signed so far by 56 inmates in Penetang and Vanier, which is 100% of all of those who had the opportunity to read it. Most of those at Pene-

tang who provided input into the very first draft of the statement were unable to sign onto this fi-

It is an outrage that the federal government is en-

With provincial jails, we are subject to arbitrary authority with no effective grievance process. Provincial prisons are significantly more overcrowded than federal penitentiaries. Close to 70% of inmates in Ontario provincial institutions have not actually been convicted, and are instead awaiting bail or trial or in many cases are awaiting deportation.
Samidoun Statement on Prisoners Justice Day

Samidoun.ca

August 10, Prisoners’ Justice Day, was initiated by prisoners at Millhaven Maximum Security Penitentiary in 1976 as a day to remember all of the men, women and youth who have died inside Canadian prisons, and to draw attention to the conditions that contribute to prisoner deaths. Thousands of prisoners across Canada went on a one-day hunger strike to protest the deaths of prisoners and, in particular, the brutalization of indigenous and ethnic prisoners and deportees. An annual event was launched to fight for justice on this day. We note in particular that the prison system disproportionately affects Indigenous people and communities, and has been a weapon of colonialism and destruction further uprooting Indigenous nations from their land. Prisons continue to reflect the horrors of the residential schools, as people, families and communities affected by residential schools continue to be frequently criminalized today.

Refugee claimants, migrants, asylum seekers, racialized and oppressed communities are subject to detention and imprisonment, and heavily criminalized physically in prisons and through government rhetoric in Canada. The creation of security certificate regimes and other forms of “anti-terror” legislation, including targeting Arab, Muslim and South Asian communities, and highlight the ways in which political imprisonment, criminalization and racism go hand in hand for all prisoners. And while the government denies refugees access to health care, defunds programs and supports for migrants, refugees and communities, it pursues the building of ever more prisons across the country.

Palestinian prisoners in occupation prisons struggle daily against solitary confinement, racism, and a mass imprisonment system that has a way of criminalizing and subjugation. Yet Palestinian prisoners have been a beacon of resistance and steadfastness, leaders of the Palestinian movement for liberation. Today, at least 4 Palestinian prisoners are on hunger strike – Samer al-Barq (81 days), Hassan Safadi (51 days), Ayman Sharawna (40 days), and Ayman al-Atrash (30 days). The hunger strike is for freedom, freedom and an end to their unjust imprisonment without charge or trial.

Samidoun expresses its solidarity with all those in prisons struggling against solitary confinement, racism and oppression, and longs for a day of freedom, justice and liberation for all.

Solidarity Statement Against the Raids and Grand Jury

On Wednesday July 25, the FBI conducted a series of coordinated raids against activists in Portland, Olympia, and Seattle. They subpoenaed several people to a special federal grand jury hearing. The warrants served specifically named anarchists and others working toward a more just, free, and equal society. The warrants serve as a beacon of repression, and anarchist literature. This comes after similar raids in Seattle in July and earlier raids of squats in Portland.

Though the FBI has said that the raids are part of a vio- lent crime investigation, the federal authorities are conducting a political witch-hunt against anarchists and others working toward a more just, free, and equal society. The warrants specifically named anarchists as evidence to be seized, pointing to the fact that the FBI and police are targeting this group of people because of their political ideas. Pure and simple, these raids and the grand jury hearings are being used to intimidate people whose politics oppose the state’s agenda. During a time of growing economic and ecological crises that are broadly affecting people across the world, it is an attempt to push back any movement towards creating a world that is humane, one that meets the needs of the rich.

This attack does not occur in a vacuum. Around the country and around the world, people have been rising up and resisting an economic system that puts the endless pursuit of profit ahead of the basic needs of humanity and the Earth. From the Arab Spring to the Occupy movement to now Anaheim, people are taking to the streets. In each of these cases, the state has responded with brutal political repression. This is not a coincidence. It is a long-term strategy by state agencies to stop legitimate political challenges to a status quo that exploits most of the world’s people.

We, the undersigned, condemn this and all other political repression today! We may have different ideas in politics or choose to use different tactics, we understand that we are in a shared struggle to create a just, free, and liberated world. The future is ours! We can only do this if we stand together. We will not let scare tactics or smear campaigns divide us, intimidate us, or stop us from organizing and working for a better world.

No more witch-hunts! An injury to one is an injury to all.

Y?
Cuz I’m young, black, and sell crack in da streets.

Baby’s committing robbery, 1st degree.
Even with blind eyes
I could see it ain’t cool.
They building prison programs and tearing down schools.
We all got an opinion just like we all have a choice.
No one can hear you speak if you don’t use your voice.

Veronica Hernandez

My name is Veronica Hernandez and I am a 20-year-old young woman that has been incarcerated since I was 16-years-old and tried as an adult at 17-years-old.

Prior to being charged as an adult I was appointed a no- glide public defender. I learned that I have cared little about the outcome of my case and consequently had put absolutely no effort into representing me adequately. There are no law libraries or legal services at Juvenile Hall so a juvenile rather be for better or for worse had literally nothing to gain. When I was appointed my case I realized that the public defender was chipping away at my dreams and tearing down schools.

In 2007, in a published interview I observed that if Ohio’s economy would collapse without prison labor. That is when I knew my observation was right. The enemy confirmed it.

I eventually avoided super-max because friends and supporters made enough noise, but I am now on a Security Threat Group list even though I have never been part of any organization, and my incoming mail is screened.

I share all of this in order to underscore how seriously and with horror I view the privatization of the prison industry, the possibility of anyone awakening the prisoner population to its own power. The state is hysterically shit-their-pants petri dis- tincts California’s so-called minimum age of 16-years or older to be eligible at being tried as an adult and a juvenile so-called right to a hearing.

The human mind doesn’t stop developing until the age of 25, so it is ridiculous that a judge can even be given the power to determine that a juvenile can never be rehabilitated and will remain at the same state of mind that the ju- venile was in at the time of their crime was committed for the rest of his or her life. Aside from ridiculous…it is outrageous…oppressive…opprobrious…and something that needs to cease…abolish this oppression and give children the chance at life that each and everyone of them deserves.

Sean Swain: Occupy, Liberate, De-Colonize: A Statement for Occupy Columbus from Prison

In 2007, in a published interview I observed that if Ohio prisoners simply laid on their backs for 30 days, the sys- tem would collapse. I wasn’t talking about just the prison system, the Ohio’s entire economy.

I came to that conclusion because I recognized that 50,000 (Ohio) prisoners work for pennies per day making the food, taking out the trash, mapping the floors. We produce parts for companies like Honda, Signetics, Saturn, and others. Pen- ind, making millions of dollars in profit for the State. If we stopped participating in our own oppression, the State would have to make us one and a half-scale and more prisoners.

Ohio would lose millions of dollars a day in production.

The State’s economy would not recover for a decade.

When I made that observation, I didn’t know for certain that I was right. I suspected I was. But more than a year later, prison officials came to get me. My cell was plastered with crime tape. All of the fixtures, including lights, sink, and toilet, were removed and inspected, something that I haven’t seen happen in 20 years of captivity. I was taken to segregation and slated for transfer to super-max.

The reason? My observation in a year-old published inter- view, that Ohio’s economy would collapse without prison labor. That is when I knew my observation was right. The enemy confirmed it.

Yet, I was subjected to repression in 2008. Since then, the situation for the State has become even more dire. Giv- en the economic crisis and privatization of the prison industry, the guard-to-prisoner ratio has drastically dropped, leading to more disruption in the standard prison operations. On top of that, the Kasich administration’s efforts to bust public workers’ unions, though a failure, has destroyed the morale of guards and staff, the majority of whom now only care about collecting their pay checks. With each downturn in

4STRUGGLEMAG

ISSUE 21
Gaza Talks

ANONYMOUS

as i walk through the check-points - "PASS"! fires at me.
i grimace, flashing the papers that allow me to get to my destination.
i never make eye contact, only press my paper on the gates. we’re all in uniforms. weapons surround us as we weave through traffic/ legions of lost souls trekking through the fog of broken lives, broken hearts and hard life sentences, a few rebels are sprinkled in the mix. lethargy surrounds me. i’ve been able to think in, only slightly detectable when my face goes stone at the sounds of “RIGHT SIDE OF THE LINE! SINGLE FILE!” i’m shuffled back into a place that at least 90% of our surroundings don’t know exist, even though the guards are the same, the walls are the same, the mentalities are the same and… the slow motion genocide is the EXACT same! the beast continues to chomp away at the people whom are less fortunate. i’m part of the few that have emerged with the feelings of rage of the oppressed! Suheir Hammad’s poetry has become a Bible Study in my daily walk. i pass the check points/gates/cages and almost fail to realize This is McConnell Unit (and not Palestine) which is like Polusnky which is like Telford which is like Michaels-the prototypes of a new oppression: control unit prisons! boxes within boxes within boxes. we have apartheid here too! we smuggle tastes of freedom under our clothes too!

we hustle for extra food too! just trying to reclaim those feelings of humanity stripped from our fingertips. my face contorts at orders and those that accept them with no rejection. at least give me some disdain. our annihilation has become a sugar-coated bomb. in our glutony and ignorance we greedily gobble down the high cholesterol laws and policies that are slowly creeping through our valves getting ready to STRANGLE OUR HEARTS!

there has been no true cease fire. just as Israel has increased the number of settlers in the West Bank from 190,000 to more than half a million Texas has built over 120 prisons over a span of 20 years. 137 prisons total. political minded prisoners should be sprouting abundantly! Texas and Gaza are fraternal twins separated at birth. both spawning concentration camp like conditions. until we can’t swallow the Intifada breathing down their door.

we must tap into the wind of international consciousness which brings our pain to ONE inhal and our actions into ONE exhale.

i’ve overridden my prison #’s with Arabic tattooed on my neck- my body (chest to back) is now a billboard for revolutionary messages.

YES! our massacre is unfolding in slow motion and not even death should stop us from trying to rewind this fucked up story which has become our LIFE!
Angola 3 supporters filled the federal courtroom in Bas-ton Rouge, La., from May 29 through May 31 for Albert Woodfox’s evidentiary hear-ing on racial discrimination in the selection of the grand jury foreperson in West Feliciana Parish, where in 1993 Wood-fox was reindicted for the 1972 murder of a prison guard.

Woodfox sat at the defense table with his team of attorneys, his feet shackled and with one hand chained to his waist with two prison guards sitting just a few feet behind him, his hands timed to acknowledge the family, friends and supporters who had taken off from work and school to be in the courtroom.

The first day of the hearing, a bus of supporters and activ-ists from New Orleans joined others from all around Loui-siana, as well as from New York City; Houston; Oakland, Calif.; Atlanta; and Memphis, Tenn. International support-ers were there from Britain, Scotland and Ireland.

Sitting in the courtroom each day were Robert King, the only freed member of the Angola 3; Woodfox’s brother, Michael Mable; Black Panther historian Billy J Xennings, publisher of “It’s about Time BPP”; activist and playwright Parnell Herbert, whose play, “The Angola 3,” was recent-ly produced in New Orleans; Gordon Roddick from Re-serve International’s Southern regional director in Atlanta; and Mawmlu Johnson with the Capital Post-Conviction Proj-ect in New Orleans.

Woodfox’s case began 40 years ago, deep in rural southern Louisiana, when he and two other young Black men, Hen-ner Wallace and Robert King, were silenced for exposing racial segregation, systematic torture and horrific abuse in the biggest prison in the U.S. at that time, an 18,000-acre, former slave plantation called Angola.

Protests such as hunger strikes and work stoppages were organized by prisoners, as were political education classes. A chapter of the Black Panther Party was formed. Prison-ers called for investigations to uncover numerous uncon-stitutional and inhumane practices.

After a prison guard was killed in a 1972 rebellion, offi-cials framed the three activists and threw them into solitary confinement. King was released from prison in 2001, but Woodfox and Wallace remain in solitary confinement to this day and are continuing to fight their convictions.

Woodfox’s lawyers presented expert testimony on the con-sistent underrepresentation of African Americans as grand jury forepersons compared to their numbers in the general population and pool of eligible voters.

The hearings were presided over by Judge James A. Brady, the same judge who overruled Woodfox’s conviction the second time in 2008. Brady is expected to rule before the end of 2012.

April 17 was the 40th anniversary of the Angola 3 being held in solitary confinement — held every day for 40 years in a six-by-nine-foot cell! These cruel and debilitating con-ditions are internationally considered torture.

A delegation of Angola 3 supporters joined Amnesty Interna-tional at a press conference at the Louisiana state Capitol on April 17. They then submitted to Gov. Bobby Jindal’s office more than 67,000 petition signatures from people in 125 countries urging that Woodfox and Wallace be re-moved from solitary confinement. Jindal refused to meet with the delegation.

In a statement, Thompson argued that “the 40-year isolated incarceration of these two men is scandalous. There is no way I can with you and appreciate your efforts. Know that I am in the water that refreshes you, in the food that nourishes you, and in the air that sustains you. You cannot shut justice within walls or bars. Justice surges through all of us and unites us. Justice has done more to further the advancement of mankind's endeavors than any gun or weapon. Thank you for your belief in Justice. Thank you for your time. Thank you for your love. Thank you my brothers and sisters. Thank you.

Mikatuye Oyasin, We Are All Related

Herman Bell

In your pushback for social justice, you give us hope. Fail-ure to claim your rights is failure to know whether they exist or not. Abstract terms though they be, you make them real with activist social order. You embody the politics of truth and you move to the front of a widespread wave of radical social action which seriously threatened the dominance of the 1%. Mass incar-ceration, especially of people of color, was an important part of the strategy to maintain the 1% in the air that sustains you. You cannot lock justice within walls or bars. Justice surges through all of us and unites us. And so in a clear, unwavering voice where you go, wherever you speak, you occupy demand release of our political prisoners, for they are the embodiment of our movement’s resolve. And so my friends I ask you to look around. Look at your friends and family and allies. Appreciate them and support one another, for in doing so you support myself, Murria, and so many others wrongly serving time. Know that I am with you and appreciate your efforts. Know that I am in the water that refreshes you, in the food that nourishes you, and in the air that sustains you. You cannot shut justice within walls or bars. Justice surges through all of us and unites us. Justice has done more to further the advancement of mankind's endeavors than any gun or weapon. Thank you for your belief in Justice. Thank you for your time. Thank you for your love. Thank you my brothers and sisters. Thank you.

I believe a civilized country does not commit murder. Mur-der is not justice no matter the crime or situation. Justice is a human need, not creation. We know that America has executed in-ordinately more people than any other country. We further know more innocent will die unless this system is rebuilt from the ground up. It is true that for those working to right these wrongs, the life you save may be your own.

And so my friends I ask you to look around. Look at your friends and family and allies. Appreciate them and support one another, for in doing so you support myself, Murria, and so many others wrongly serving time. Know that I am with you and appreciate your efforts. Know that I am in the water that refreshes you, in the food that nourishes you, and in the air that sustains you. You cannot shut justice within walls or bars. Justice surges through all of us and unites us. Justice has done more to further the advancement of mankind's endeavors than any gun or weapon. Thank you for your belief in Justice. Thank you for your time. Thank you for your love. Thank you my brothers and sisters. Thank you.

Justice has done more to further the advance of mankind's universal vision and broad unity. But those two important concerns are not in contradiction. The only road to prim-
The 2.3 million U.S. citizens in prison represent more than a problem of criminality. Rather, the human toll of the U.S. prison industrial complex and the incessant and crude ways this society makes us unequal. Our challenge is to forge this synthesis in practice, on the ground, in the daily work of building the movement of the 99%.

With an embrace to you and your inspiring stand, one love.

Jalil A. Muntaqim

Central Prisoners Vote to End Hunger Strike

prisonbooks.info

We received word that prisoners at Central in Raleigh voted to end their hunger strike, started on July 16 in protest of conditions on Unit 1. We have not heard from prisoners at Bertie or Scotland. Small groups of prisoners at Foothills CI and Tabor CI have also said they have joined the protest.

The strike was organized to take aim at the fundamental conditions of sensory deprivation, psychological and physical torture, and abuse that characterize solitary confinement, and for that matter, prisons in general. It was also catalyzed by the need for law libraries for prisoners to be able to be better organized and defend themselves in the legal realm.

Some of the short term demands of prisoners, such as tools with which to clean cells, clearing the windows to the outside, etc. have already been granted, but more significant/longer term demands have been put to the unit managers and have yet to be addressed. For the strikers involved, it seems only just and needed. “Making Crone Pay: Triangle of Interests Created Infrastructure to Fight Lawlessness; Cities See Jobs; Politicians Sense a Popular Issue and Businesses Cash In — The Cold War of ‘the 90s.’” The article clearly indicated how prisons have become a profitable industry, including so-called private prisons.

Given this reality, the struggle to abolish prisons is a struggle to change the very fabric of American society. It is a struggle for infrastructure—the financial incentive—the profitability of the prison/slave system. This will essentially change the way society addresses the issue of poverty, of ethnic inequity, and misappropriation of tax dollars. It will speak to the reality that the prison system is a slave system, a system that denies the human structure and denominates America’s moral social values.

The prison system today is an industry that, as did chattel slavery, profits off the misery and suffering of other human beings. From politicians to bankers to the business investment community, the prison industrial complex is a multi-billion dollar criminal enterprise, all of which has been sanctioned by the 13th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

It is imperative that those of you here come to terms with your relationship to the ways this society works. It will speak to the misery and suffering of other human beings. From politicians to bankers to the business investment community, the prison industrial complex is a multi-billion dollar criminal enterprise, all of which has been sanctioned by the 13th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

In 1865, the 13th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution served to institutionalize prisons as a slave system. “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime…shall exist within the United States.”

In August 2010, only nine days after giving birth, Marissa Alexander fired a warning shot into the kitchen of her home in Jacksonville, Fla., to fend off her abusive estranged husband. Alexander is a young Black mother of three.

The jury deliberated 12 minutes before convicting Alexander of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon—even though her husband had previously hospitalized her, she had no prior criminal record, and no one was injured.

On May 11, 2012, a judge rejected Alexander’s “stand your ground” defense and sentenced her to 20 years under Florida’s mandatory minimum sentencing rules. As is so often true for abused women, especially those of color, Alexander was tried for the murder of a man before sentencing for crime….shall exist within the United States.”

It is imperative that those of you here come to terms with the reality that America is the prison industrial complex, and that America is inaction and apathy and so explicit in maintaining a system that in its very nature is inhumane. Abolish the American prison industrial complex!!

All Power to the People! All Power to the People! All Power to the People!

Survivor of Domestic Violence Gets 20 Years

BY MARGARET VIGGIANI

Freedom Socialist, Vol. 33, No. 4, August-September 2012, socialism.com

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On Thursday, June 16, 2011 at 1440 hours I was sum-
momed to the cell of Inmate Machado…by Registered
Nurse…Upon looking in the cell window, I observed a
cell of Inmate Machado…by Registered
Nurse…Upon looking in the cell window, I observed a

“On July 6, he threw his breakfast through his food port and
refused breakfast the next day. On the date of the incident

By June 30, he was deemed to have “active psychotic
symptoms” but had a low risk of suicide. By June 30, he was deemed to have “active psychotic
symptoms” but had a low risk of suicide.

Just days after the incident, he was issued a notice that
he would be placed in Pelican Bay’s Administrative Segrega-
ation Unit:
You were endorsed by the CSR on 02/04/10 to serve an indet-
minate SHU term, due to your validation as an As-
sociate of the …prison gang…On 06/22/11, your Mental
Health Level of Care (LOC) was elevated to Correctional
Class Case (CMCS), PBSP SHU Ex-
clusionary; therefore, your placement in PBSP SHU is
no longer appropriate. Due to the above, on 06/22/11, a deci-
sion was made to place you in the PBSP Administrative
Segregation Unit. Single celled due to prison gang valida-
tion.

On July 6, he tore off the outer layer of the mattress, fashioned a
handcuff to submit to handcuffs, to which he complied. After
Mattress lying on the cell
onor torn apart. I ordered Mach-
ado to submit to handcuffs, to which he complied. After

He didn’t want them to see him in chains. He didn’t want them to see him in chains.

In the rebel town of Oak-
land,defs. While much of the country sat eerie
quiet in the years before the Hot Fall of 2011, a unique
rebelliousness that regularly erupted in militant antago-

It takes one inmate to the forefront of the
Occupy movement. In the rebel town of Oak-
land, we built a camp that was not so much

We intentionally chose a different path based on a longer trajectory and rooted in a set of shared
experiences that emerged directly from recent struggles. Vague populist slogans about the 99%,
savvy use of social net-
worke, or kind words running around in Gay
Fawkes masks, none of this
is new. But it played a significant role in bring-
ing us to the forefront of the
Occupy movement.

“Truth has a power of its own...A poem can
inspire a movement. A pamphlet can spark a
revolution. Civil disobedience can arouse
people and provoke us to think.”

---Howard Zinn

Occupy Oakland is Dead.
Long Live the Oakland Commune.

BY SOME OAKLAND ANTAGONISTS
May 2012 from bayorefrags.com

For those of us in Oakland, “Occupy Wall Street” was al-
ways a strange flt. While much of the country sat eerily
quiet in the years before the Hot Fall of 2011, a unique
rebelliousness that regularly erupted in militant antago-
nism on a primary hub of struggle in this country, an
intersection at 14th and Broadway in downtown Oakland
was, more often than not, “ground zero” for these conflicts.

If we had chosen to follow the specifc trajectory pre-
scribed by Albusters and the Zucotti-bands of organizers
of Occupy Wall Street, we would have stuck out our local
Occupy camp somewhere in the heart of the capital of
West Coast capital, as a beachhead in the enemy territory
of San Francisco’s fancial district. Some did this early
on, following in the footsteps of the growing list of other
camps scattered across the country like a colorful by,
beloved “community of anti- fnancial indignation. According
this logic, it would make no sense for the
center of the movement to emerge in a medium sized,
planned event on the edge of the bay.

The Oakland Commune was born earlier on January
7, 2009 when those youngsters climbed on top of an OPD
at best, a beachhead in the enemy territory of
San Francisco’s fancial district. Some did this early
on, following in the footsteps of the growing list of other
camps scattered across the country like a colorful by,
beloved “community of anti-
The similarities end there and this break with the past is what Occupy got right. Looking back over those heady days at the turn of the millennia (or the waves of summit hopping that followed), the moments of actually living in struggle and experiencing rupture in front of one’s eyes were few and far between. They usually unfolded during a mass mobilization in the middle of a “Global Day of Action” or another in some city on the other side of the country (or world!). The affinities developed during that time were then lost, but certain cores of resistance that were sown simultaneously in hundreds of urban areas this past Fall.

It makes no sense to overfetishize the tactic of occupa-
tions, no more than it does to across the country to blockades or clandestine attacks, which would normally police to keep the city functioning smoothly as a wave of metamorphosis and transformation into a mode of struggle and rebellion. To do this day after day, rooted to blockades or clandestine attacks. Yet the widespread resistance that were sown simultaneously in hundreds of urban areas this past Fall.

This was the climate that the Oakland Commune blossomed within. In those places and moments where Occupy Wall Street embodied these characteristics as opposed to the reformist tendencies of the 99%’s nonviolent campaign to fix capitalism, the movement itself was a beautiful thing. Little communities developed during that time leading up to his death show, he had been suffering severe psychological problems in response to his prolonged isolation. Once a jailhouse lawyer whose writings were normally policed to keep the city functioning smoothly as a wave of metamorphosis and transformation into a mode of struggle and rebellion. To do this day after day, rooted to blockades or clandestine attacks. Yet the widespread resistance that were sown simultaneously in hundreds of urban areas this past Fall.

Machado had been incarcerated since 1999 on a robbery charge and a related shooting. He was sentenced to a term of 16 years for communicating with other inmates, he refused to “cuff up.” He told the health care worker who saw him after his extraction with pepper spray that “I want you to put down that they are denying my legal mail.” On May 31, a mental health referral reported that he “stated that he was not going to hang myself. “He really had nothing to do with it.”

On the morning of the 3rd day of his death, he told his cellmate to put down that they are denying his legal mail. On May 31, a mental health referral reported that he “stated that he was not going to hang himself. “He really had nothing to do with it.”

We shouldn’t be surprised that the movement is now decomposing and that we are now, more or less, alone, passing that empty park or plaza on the way to work (or looking for work) which seem so loud and colorful and full of possibilities.

All of the large social movements in this country following the anti-globalization period have been quickly as operating in millions before being crushed or co-opted equally as quickly. The anti-war movement was no different, and thousands marched in the months before bombs began falling over Baghdad but was quickly co-opted into an “Anybody but Bush” campaign just in time for the 2004 election cycle. The immigrant rights movement exploded during the spring of 2006, successfully stopping the repressive movement on March 4, 2010. Or maybe it needed to see potential? Maybe it needed time to grow quietly, celebrating Movements.

For a whole generation of young people in this country, the political space in Oakland to realize our rebel dreams. This point cannot be overemphasized. We are strongest of coming insurrections and revolts. The anti-war movement exploded during the spring 2001. This movement

Oakland is contained as some militant outlier while the rest of the country following the anti-globalization movement's making and rebels began to sketch out maps of struggle and rebellion. To do this day after day, rooted to blockades or clandestine attacks. Yet the widespread resistance that were sown simultaneously in hundreds of urban areas this past Fall.

The Death of Alex Machado

Suicide in Solitary: The Death of Alex Machado

BY SAL RODRIGUEZ

The Movement

for mental health services in May 2010, and previously in October 2009.

A mental health chronos indicates his first significant prob-

lems at Pelican Bay surfaced on January 24, 2011 with a delusion. He reported that is presenting complaints were
due to the con

His involvement in the riot would result in his being placed in Administrative Segregation Unit (ASU) in December 2007. Though he was never officially found guilty for the riot, prison gang investigators would begin to build a case for his validation as a gang member. In December 2008, he was placed in the ASU again for “manufacturing a weapon,” which an informant was found guilty by prison officials as evidence of his gang activity.

He was finally validated as a gang associate, in large part due to the confidential informant, on February 4, 2010. In his appeal of the validation, he argued that the source items used in his validation were insufficient, saying that “these allegations are not true and I initiated nothing.” He further charged in his appeal that his validation as a gang member was in retaliation of his acclimatization in the racial riot case.

He was sent to Pelican Bay to serve an indeterminate SHU sentence on February 17, 2010 from the Kern Valley ASU. Being screened into Pelican Bay, he reported no psycho-

logical problems.

Soon after arriving, however, he reported in letters that he was consistently harassed by the guards. In a letter dated March 10, 2010, he wrote that “I first got here an off
corder told me that he was being pressured to make a brief psychologist referral on me. I guess they want to make it look like I am going crazy.” He reported that guards took him to an attorney in an attempt to get a psychological referral. Further, he was told that a green light (hit order) had been placed on him; a claim that he didn’t believe.

An ASU classification document indicates that he received some mental health services in May 2010, and previously in October 2009.

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Short Corridor Collective Announces Agreement to End Hostilities

from hungerstrikesolidarity.wordpress.com

Representatives of the CA Hunger Strike issued a statement calling for an end to all violence and hostility between different groups of prisoners throughout the state of CA from maximum security prisons to county jails.

The statement asks prisoners to unite beginning October 10, 2012.

The full statement is reprinted below.

Agreement to End Hostilities August 12, 2012

To whom it may concern and all California Prisoners:

Greetings from the entire PBSP-SHU Short Corridor Hunger Strike Representatives. We are hereby presenting this mutual agreement on behalf of all racial groups here in the PBSP-SHU Corridor. Wherein, we have arrived at a mutual agreement on behalf of all racial groups here in the state of California from maximum security prisons to county jails.

We also want to warn those in the General Population that IGI will continue to plant undercover Sensi-formers, snitches, rats, and obstructionists, in order to disrupt and undermine our collective mutual understanding on issues intended for their benefit. Because the reality is that collectively, we can no longer allow CDCR to control the force, that can positively change this entire corrupt system into a system that actually benefits prisoners, and thereby, the public as a whole… and we simply cannot allow CDCR/CCPOA - Prison Guard’s Union, IGI, ISU, OCS, and SSU, to continue to get away with their constant form of progressive oppression and warehousing of tens of thousands of prisoners, including the 14,000 (+) plus prisoners held in solitary confinement torture chambers (i.e. SHU/Ad-Seg Units), for decades!!!

We send our love and respects to all those of like mind and heart... onward in struggle and solidarity...

Presented by the PBSP-SHU Short Corridor Collective:

Todd Ashker, C58191, D1-119
Arturo Castellanos, C17275, D1-121
Antonio Guillen, P81948, D2-106

And the Representatives Body:

Danny Troxell, B76579, D1-120
Geoge Delucio, D46559, D4-217
Ronnie Yandell, V27927, D4-215
Paul Redd, B72683, D2-117
Zelma Yrigollen, H32421, D2-204
Fernando Marquez, D81372, D4-106
Raymond Chavo Perez, K12922, D1-219
Paulo Redd, B72683, D2-117

[NOTE: All names and the statement must be verbatim when used & posted on any website or media, or non-media, publications]

We also want to warn those in the General Population that IGI will continue to plant undercover Sensi-formers, snitches, rats, and obstructionists, in order to attempt to disrupt and undermine our collective groups’ mutual understanding on issues intended for our mutual causes [i.e., forcing CDCR to open up all GP main lines, and return to a rehabilitative-type system of meaningful programs, colleges, including lifer conjugal visits, etc. via peaceful protest activity/noncooperation e.g., hunger strike, no labor, etc. etc.].

People need to be aware and vigilant to such tactics, and refuse to allow such IGI inmate snitches to create chaos and reignite hostilities amongst our racial groups. We can no longer play into IGI, ISU, OCS, and SSU’s old manipulative divide and conquer tactics.

In conclusion, we must all hold strong to our mutual agreement from this point on! [focus our time, attention, and energy on mutual causes beneficial to all of us [i.e., prisoners, and our best interests].

We can no longer allow CDCR to use us against each other for their benefit!!! Because the reality is that collectively, we can no longer allow CDCR to control the force, that can positively change this entire corrupt system into a system that actually benefits prisoners, and thereby, the public as a whole… and we simply cannot allow CDCR/CCPOA - Prison Guard’s Union, IGI, ISU, OCS, and SSU, to continue to get away with their constant form of progressive oppression and warehousing of tens of thousands of prisoners, including the 14,000 (+) plus prisoners held in solitary confinement torture chambers (i.e. SHU/Ad-Seg Units), for decades!!!

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enough of an interruption in capital’s daily flows to escape
cut out of a day of action and into a general strike like we
saw on November 2.
And thus we continue on through this quieter period of un-
certainty. We still occasionally catch glimpses of the Com-
mune in people when friends and com-
rades successfully break the rules and start self organizing to
take care of one another while simultaneously launching
attacks against those who profit from mass disenfranchisement.

We saw this off and on during the actions of May 1, or in
the two occupations of the building at 888 Turk Street in
San Francisco or most recently on the occupied farmland
that was temporarily liberated from the University of Cali-
ifornia before being evicted by UCPD riot police a few days
ago. But with the inertia of the Fall camps nearly depleted, the
fierce belief in the potential of this Commune begins to
titles more and more on the vibrancy of the rebel social relations
which have always been its foundation.

The task ahead of us in Oakland and beyond is to search
to and nurture new means of finding each other. We are
quickly reaching the point where the dead weight of Occu-
py threatens to drag down the Commune into the dust bin of
historical necessity. We need to breathe new life into our network
of rebelliousness that never truly rest on the Oc-
cupy Oakland general assembly or the assembly of movement
protagonists who have emerged to represent the struggle.

This is why we launch this is why we are putting this agenda
in front of us against alliances or for a
rebel back into a small country town or get
to keep us isolated and irrelevant. On the contrary, we need
more public assemblies that take different forms and ex-
perience and a different decision-making (or lack there of)
and levels of affinity.

We need new ways to reclaim space and regularize a con-
tagious rebel spirit rooted in our specific urban contexts
while breaking a losing cycle of attempted occupations fol-
lowed by state repression that the movement has now fall-
en into. Most of all, we need desperately to stay connected
with comrades old and new and not let these relationships
collapse. We need to be ever aware of the health of the
Commune and ultimately its ability to effectively wage
war on our enemies in the struggles to come.

Notes
[1] The decolonize tendency emerged in Oakland and else-
where as a people of color and indigenous led initiative within
the larger Occupy movement. They are a deep colo-
nialist roots of contemporary oppression and exploitation.
Decolonize Oakland publicly split with Occupy on De-
cember 9, 2011 after failing to pass a proposal in the Oc-
cupy Oakland general assembly to change the name of the
local movement to Decolonize Oakland. For more infor-
mation on this split see the ‘Escalating Identity’ pamphlet.

escalatingidentity.wordpress.com

[2] The demonstrations on May 1, 2006, called El Gran
Paro Mundial or The Great American Boycott. Boycotts
were the climax of a nationwide series of mobilizations
that had begun two months earlier with large marches in
Chicago and Los Angeles as well as spontaneous high
school walkouts in California and beyond. Millions took to
the streets across the country May 1, with an estimated
two million marching in Los Angeles alone. Entire bus-
ness districts in immigrant neighborhoods or where immi-
greates made up the majority of workers shut down for the
day in what some called “A Day Without an Immigrant”.

One Year After Historic Hunger Strike, Isolated California Prisoners Report Little Change

BY SAL RODRIGUEZ

Solitary Watch

At this time one year ago, a three week hunger strike across
California prisons had been concluded, and the California
Assembly had approved a new law authorizing the use of soli-
tary confinement in California’s prisons.

The conditions of the California Security Housing Units,
where over 3,000 inmates are held in isolation, many for
decades, had come to the public’s attention.

In the time since August 2011, there would be another
round of prison hunger strikes, a small series of hunger strikes at the Corcoran Administrative Segregation Unit, a new “Step Down Program” announced in Califor-
nia, a federal lawsuit filed by Pelican Bay SHU inmates, and
a U.S. Senate hearing on solitary confinement.

Even so, the situation in the SHUs and ASUs remains
much as it did one year ago. A few concessions by prison
officials, such as issuing sweatpants and allowing family
photos, do nothing to address the problem of long-term
isolation and non-existent due process.

It should be reiterated that in California, the majority of
SHU inmates should not be there for conduct, but for
gang membership.

In a letter to California activists, Pelican Bay hunger strike
leader Alfredo Sandoval reports feeling like “just banging
my head against the wall because nothing ever changes around here. Right now the Department of Corruption and the current administration have been attempting to pacify
prisoners with items…ie. sweats, watch caps, and various
food items from canteen–in hopes of distracting us …”

He continues, “the sad fact is that some have been compla-
cent and accepted the physical and psychological abuses
as normal because it has been implemented in small incre-
ments over decades, year after year so it has become
the norm.”

Isolated inmates throughout California continue to report
desolate conditions and more-of-the-same.

According to one inmate in the Corcoran State Prison SHU,
“…the reality is there is a significant number of us for whom
death holds no real fear, in fact, in some ways—as an al-
ternative to another few decades of this—it holds some
appeal. If it becomes necessary to take up peaceful pro-
test again—and it’s unfortunately looking that way—you may be writing a lot more Christian Gomezes…this
only want to, after so very long, hold their children,
kiss their wives, speak to their families, and have access to some semblance of normalcy. We do this in order to
stop the police and prison guards in their tracks and
stop them some hope of parole, higher education, and marketable job skills. But all of this is indicative of a sick society, of values and mo-
tes that have failed in our community and corrected
in the history of U.S. social, political, and economic development.”

Christian Gomez was an inmate in Corcoran State Prison’s
ASU when, shortly after participating in a January 2012
hunger strike protesting the conditions of the ASU.

One of the leaders of the Corcoran ASU strike, Juan Jai-
mes, was transferred during the strike to Kern Valley State
Prison’s as a unit of means of limiting the strike. Jaime
recently testified to the San Francisco Bay View that he
has received poor medical care for a broken back.

Another Corcoran inmate who has been in the SHU for
over 20 years also reports doubts about the Step Down
Program, and thinks that there will be no changes. He also
offers his opinion on the validity of the Step Down
Program, echoing the sentiments of many SHU inmates that
any use of isolation should be based on conduct rather than
gang affiliation.

“I don’t think anyone should be housed in isolation for
more than a few weeks, if at all, and without meaningful
program. SHU should consist of a system that includes
care and education, not a system that is designed to
being released. The SHU should be used for exactly
the purpose that it is supposed to be used for: to house
those prisoners whose conduct threatens the safety and security
of the prison,” he writes.

An inmate at North Kern State Prison’s Administrative
Segregation Unit reports that himself and several inmates
have waited over a year to be transferred to one of the
SHUs, “The waiting list can take up to three years, I’ve
been here 15 months due to the overcrowding by the I.G.
(Investigational Gang Visitors) validating everybody as
prison gang members,” he writes, “to the point New Afri-
 kans, Latin Americans, poor whites and indigenous people
have been cleared for reading our culture and history.
I’ve witnessed men lose their minds behind these walls,
cut their wrists to kill themselves in order to escape this
mind killer, the SHU has been flooded with death and the
wild yell out and scream, some are on psychotropic medication
that causes them to turn into human zombies where they
don’t even know who they are anymore.”

Solitary Watch will continue to report on the situation in
California as information becomes available.
It Didn’t Start with Occupy, and It Won’t End with the Student Strike! The Persistence of Anti-Authoritarian Politics in Quebec

BY ANNA KRUZYNSKI, RACHEL SARRASIN AND SANDRA JEPPESEN, Research Group on Collective Autonomy (Collectif de Recherche sur l’Autonome Collectif or CRAC)

What we are seeing today in Quebec, and particularly in Montréal, is a public moment of a much more ingrained movement that has been around for decades. If we use the rhetoric of new social movements, we can understand what is happening. A rhizome is like a root that runs underground: once it is in place, it grows and its shoots are impossible to stop. It is an infrastructure that suits the description of the anti-authoritarian movement in the province.

We could go back quite far in the history of social movements in Quebec to identify traces of this movement, but let’s start with what is now considered as the first large contemporary street protest that erupted through the surface, signalling a shift in the province’s political climate. April 2001, Quebec City: huge street demonstrations took place protesting against the Third Summit of the Americas to negotiate the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). Building on a major wave of counter-globalisation protests that first erupted in North America in Seattle 1999, in Que- bec City the following year, the movement made it clear that politicians had a massive chain-link fence perimeter built a perimeter that was rapidly torn down by protestors! Yet most mainstream authorities on the prison system do not necessarily re-

The discussion of solitary confinement as a violation of a basic human right comes five decades after Malcolm X first began to preach that black people in America should take their fate into their own hands. In 1966, in a letter to the United Nations, he appealed for civil rights for black people, and his book The New Jim Crow suggests that the prison system is racially “biased” — do not come close to touching on the phenomenon of political prisoners, let alone on the inmates who take up the cudgels on behalf of their fellow detainees and attempt to carve out niches of justice in a mas-sive chamber of terror.

The purpose of the Marion Control Unit is to control revolutionary attitudes in the prison system, and in the society at large.

One of these revolutions is Russell “Maroon” Shoats, the founder of the Black Unity Council, who merged later with the Black Panther Party. He was first jailed in early 1970. Hailing from the gang-war-torn streets of Philadelphia, Shoats逃脱了 the control units in Surinam, Guyana and later Jamaica, Brazil and other colonies and established sovereign communities on the outskirts of the white settler zones.

Still, it was not until Shoats was elected president of the pris-on-approved Lifers’ Organisation in 1982 – the closest thing to a union for inmates, through which they demanded basic rights such as legal visits and health care – that the prison system decided he was a threat to administrative stability and placed him in solitary confinement.

For the past 30 years, Maroon has been transferred from one “torture chamber” to another, where his best efforts to inter-act with his fellow prisoners or resurrect his old study sess-ions with his young students – that just about the only thing he did in 2006, the U.S. had an incarceration rate for black males that was more than five-and-a-half times greater than that of South Africa at the end of the apartheid era in 1993.

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Race and revolution

But while broad patterns can be discerned, these are the numbers that are missing: how many of those in solitary confinement are black? How many are self-taught lawyers, educators or political activists? How many initiated hunger strikes, which have long been anathema to the prison admin-

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principle does not rest on the idea that anything goes in any given situation, but implies that the debate about the legiti-
macy of various tactics must occur within the movement, and should be directed towards the people taking action themselves. Certainly the media should not make this decision for us. Indeed, we have all witnessed on many occasions how the mainstream media, along with state politicians, tend to create an image of the “good” ver-
sus the “bad” protestor in an effort to divide and conquer. This strategy has been used again against the current stu-
dent strike activists. However, for the first time, movement “leaders” or spokespersons – for the most part, have not denounced tactics such as economic disruption, contribut-
ing to the maintenance of a certain unity and a strong sense of solidarity within the movement.

The political culture described above is not consecrated into a conventional ideology. Large spaces are organic, spontaneous, and constantly evolving. To return to the rhizome metaphor, what happens underground or unseen between the shoots is something that builds the strength and collective empowerment of these important moments. People are working every day, in their communities – based on neighbourhoods, workplaces, shared identities or even just friend groups – to consoli-
date a burgeoning organisational interface that forms an anti-authoritarian movement that can reduce depen-
dency on the capitalist economy, the movement sets up se-
lected “self-managed autonomous” services – based on a mutual aid model – to satisfy specific needs identified by commu-
nities, such as alternative media, bike repair, autonomous libraries, organic food providers, or children’s services, to name a but a few. To control the flow of production, the movement organizes self-managed cooperatives such as restaur-
tants, book publishers, information technology pro-
viders, organic farmers, electricians, etc. Finally, in order to reduce dependency on mainstream media and cultural institutions, the movement produces its own publications, essay-
ists, and researchers, as well as its own information sites, communication networks, radio shows, zines and newspa-
pers. It also creates its own cultural institutions, such as the anarchist theatre festival, cabarets, video-making collec-
tives, music venues or silk-screening spaces. And, because people cannot express their ideas in the whole sphere of mass media, anti-authoritarian principles are also fundamental to how kinship is practiced in the movement: in collective or collective realms, where intellectual and emotional stimuli are an evil and unproduc-
tive combination.

Digging below ground level, we can see the anti-authori-
tarian roots underlaying and nurturing the many smaller and larger shoots that have begun erupting over the past ten years. We can see with a mainstream media and public opinion might not notice, such as the links between what

Solitary Confinement: Torture Chambers for Black Revolutionaries

The fiscal, security and human costs of locking prisoners into tiny, windowless cells for 23 hours a day.

Russell “Maroon” Shoats has been in solitary confinement for 30 years. Despite not having violated prison rules in more than two decades, state prison officials refuse to release him into the general prison population.

Russell’s family and supporters claim that the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (PA DOC) has unlawfully altered the consequences of his conviction, sentencing him to die in solitary confinement – a death imposed by decades of no-touch torture.

The severity of the conditions he is subjected to and the ex-
traordinary length of time he has been imposed for has sparked an international campaign to release him from soli-
tary confinement. Supported by representatives of the support of leading human rights legal organisations, such as the Centre for Constitutional Rights and the National Law Y
ter Guild.

Less than two months after the campaign was formally launched with events in New York City and London, Juan Mendez, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Pun-
ishment, agreed to make an official inquiry into Shoats’ 21 years of solitary confinement, sending a communication to the U.S. State Department representative in Geneva, Swit-
zerland.

What the liberals won’t tell you

While the state of Pennsylvania has remained unmove
d in this matter so far, the U.S. government is finally catch-
ing on. Decades after rights activists first began to refer to the practice of solitary confinement as “torture,” the Sen-
ate Judiciary subcommittee on the constitution, civil rights and human rights held a hearing on June 19 to “reassess”