

!ROCK!

★ Working to Extend Democracy to All ★

★ Volume 3, Number 1 ★

★ January 2014 ★

WHY CALIFORNIA'S NEW SOLITARY CONFINEMENT POLICY IS A HUMAN RIGHTS DISASTER

In 2011, thousands of California state prisoners engaged in a hunger strike to end long term solitary confinement and to demand changes to the way that prisoners are assigned to these torturous units, known as SHUs (security housing units). The corrections department (CDCR) agreed to make changes, which it rolled out in November, 2012. CDCR's public relations strategy is to persuade lawmakers, judges and the general public that its new program is a vast improvement. However, the new program keeps most of the objectionable elements of the old program and adds some new elements which make it even worse.

The Step Down Program: a new way to perpetuate long term solitary confinement: Under the old rules, the only way to get out of the SHU was to "parole, snitch or die", or be found "inactive" as a gang member or associate (a rare finding). The new policy offers a new way out: the Step Down Program, a 4 step program which takes a minimum of three or four years. The first 2-3 years are spent in solitary confinement, with no education or other programming. The prisoner is required to demonstrate "progress" by, among other things, filling out workbooks showing changed attitudes. The one workbook we have seen is condescending and judgmental. Whether a prisoner progresses to the next step is a discretionary decision; a prisoner can also be sent back to an earlier step. As a result, release from the SHU is still a discretionary and arbitrary decision of prison administrators; lifetime solitary confinement remains possible.

Coerced secret evidence: alive and well: The hated "debriefing" program remains alive and well under the new rules. Under this program, a SHU prisoner can get out of the SHU by confessing his/her own gang involvement and identifying other prisoners' gang involvement. This information is used to place other prisoners in the SHU or retain them there. Targeted prisoners are not entitled to know who has named them, or the specifics of the accusation. It is almost impossible to defend oneself against secret charges.

Guilt by association: alive and well: Under the old policies, prisoners were assigned a six year SHU term for simply being affiliated (as a member or associate) with a prison gang. The prisoner did not have to break any prison rule. Prisoners were validated for possessing art work or political readings, signing a greeting card, exercising with other prisoners or saying hello to another prisoner. Under the new rules, this same evidence can be used to prove a prisoner is a member, and membership alone justifies a SHU term.

CDCR has no plans to reduce SHU beds.

New disciplinary program: association evidence becomes cite-able behavior: Under the old rules, possessing certain artwork or literature was used as evidence of gang association. Prisoners and advocates objected, saying that SHU placement should only be for gang *behavior*. CDCR's responded in its new program by labeling such evidence as gang "behavior" in its new rules. Guards can now cite prisoners for rules violations for possessing these items and punishment can be imposed. Citations for serious rules violations (115s) can extend prisoners' SHU term and harm their chance of being paroled.

Widening the net: Under the old policies, a prisoner could be placed in the SHU for affiliation with any of seven prison gangs. Under the new rules, any grouping

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of three or more prisoners can be added to the list as a “security threat group”, membership in which can result in a SHU term. The coining of this new provocative term, with nuanced reference to terrorism, is deeply troubling; the *expansion* of the SHU-eligible population is of grave concern.

Rubber-stamping: alive and well: Although CDCR has inserted a new stage of review for SHU placements, this review is still within the confines of the prison system, where the dominant culture is to rubber-stamp the gang unit’s decisions. CDCR has not changed its culture. Publicly and internally, CDCR still considers SHU prisoners to be “the worst of the worst” and continues to justify the SHU’s torturous conditions as necessary for the “safety and security of the institution.” Independent oversight is necessary to curtail CDCR’s excesses.

Re-evaluations of current SHU prisoners: shuffling the deck chairs on the Titanic: As part of the resolution of the 2011 hunger strikes, CDCR agreed to re-evaluate the SHU placement of current SHU prisoners, using its new criteria. CDCR is reviewing associates first and reports that over half of its initial reviews are resulting in assignments to general population. This reclassification is a huge victory and is proof of the unfairness of the old SHU policies, but is no proof of fairness of the new policies. While we celebrate each prisoner’s return to general population, there is no guarantee that these prisoners will not be returned to the SHU in the future. Meanwhile, each prisoner’s SHU cell will immediately be filled by another prisoner. CDCR has no plans to reduce SHU beds.

Too little has changed for California prisoners under CDCR’s “new and improved” gang management policy. Other strategies would be more successful in addressing the concerns about prison gangs. In 2012, SHU prisoners themselves issued a call to end hostilities between prisoner groups, which has resulted in reduced prisoner violence throughout the prison system. Expansion of educational and vocational opportunities inside all prisons, as the prisoners are demanding, would reduce conflict and stress. We call on all people of good will to support the prisoners’ demands. ●

For more information:

stoptortureca.org
prisonerhungerstrikesolidarity.wordpress.com

DEBATE ON SOLITARY CONFINEMENT

By *The LA Times editorial board, 12/1/13*

Treatment of prison inmates has finally begun to capture the attention of California’s lawmakers and public, in large part because two lawsuits over constitutionally inadequate medical and mental health care resulted in a federal court order to reduce the inmate population by thousands. The Dec. 31 deadline has been pushed back to February as the state negotiates with plaintiffs in the consolidated suits, and lawmakers and the administration of Gov. Jerry Brown work through plans to devote more funding to treatment and alternative sentencing for mentally ill felons. Mental illness, and its pervasiveness among criminal offenders and inmates, has emerged as a major focus.

So has solitary confinement. The two-month-long inmate hunger strike at Pelican Bay State Prison brought needed attention to the use of extended isolation throughout the state’s prison system. The United Nations’ special investigator on torture, Juan Mendez, who has petitioned the State Department for permission to visit and inspect California prisons, told *The Times’* editorial board this year that the state should provide better justification for sending inmates to isolation in secure housing units, generally known as SHUs. Inmates currently are confined to SHUs either for set periods, as punishment for behavior, or indefinitely, officials say, to combat prison gangs.

Those two issues — mental illness and solitary confinement — come together in harrowing fashion. Many California inmates deal with some form of mental illness, which in turn can result in behavioral problems, which in turn can get them sent to isolation. Brief periods of separation from most human contact may be necessary for an inmate’s own well-being, but extended isolation is no treatment and can hardly be deemed a useful disciplinary measure for a person whose behavior is a symptom of illness.

A 1995 court ruling in the case of *Madrid vs. Gomez* banned solitary confinement for mentally ill prisoners at Pelican Bay. The federal court that is overseeing California’s prisons could extend that ban systemwide. That would be a welcome development.

But lawmakers need not rely on the court. A joint legislative committee conducted hearings this year that exposed the cruelty, and foolishness, of holding prisoners in solitary for prolonged periods. As

lawmakers prepare for the second half of their two-year session, they ought to work through the various definitional challenges — What constitutes solitary? What qualifies as mental illness? — and put forward a bill to apply the Pelican Bay ban to all California inmates. ●

ON THE DEATH OF NELSON MANDELA

“If there is a country that has committed unspeakable atrocities in the world, it is the United States of America.”

Nelson Mandela

V.I. Lenin once wrote: “During the lifetime of great revolutionaries, the oppressing classes constantly hounded them, received their teachings with the most savage malice, the most furious hatred and the most unscrupulous campaigns of lies and slander. After their deaths attempts are made to convert them to harmless icons....”

As I write this President Obama and former president George W. Bush, along with other past and present leaders from around the world, are converging on South Africa to praise Nelson Mandela.

Ronald Reagan — who enthusiastically hailed such scum as the US-funded Nicaraguan Contras as “freedom fighters” — fiercely opposed the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act because the African National Congress (ANC) was considered a “terrorist organization” made up of “communists.” Indeed, Mandela was kept on the US government’s terrorist list until as late as 2008. In fact, it was the CIA that helped put Mandela in prison. In 1962 they had infiltrated the top levels of the ANC and provided Mandela’s underground identity to the South African government so he could be arrested.

The early goals of the socialist ANC were to nationalize the mining and banking industries — owned by Western capital, and distribute the benefits to the indigenous population. Those goals passed to the way-side as Mandela became a black face for white South African capitalism. And that is why the global leaders of capitalism are singing his praises today.

Conditions for poor Black South Africans are as bad if not worse today than they were just before Mandela took power. ●

Ed Mead

'NOT TO SHARE WEALTH WITH POOR IS TO STEAL': POPE SLAMS CAPITALISM AS 'NEW TYRANNY'

By RT

Pope Francis has taken aim at capitalism as "a new tyranny" and is urging world leaders to step up their efforts against poverty and inequality, saying "thou shall not kill" the economy. Francis calls on rich people to share their wealth.

The existing financial system that fuels the unequal distribution of wealth and violence must be changed, the Pope warned.

"How can it be that it is not a news item when an elderly homeless person dies of exposure, but it is news when the stock market loses two points?" Pope Francis asked an audience at the Vatican.

The global economic crisis, which has gripped much of Europe and America, has the Pope asking how countries can function, or realize their full economic potential, if they are weighed down by the debts of capitalism.

"A new tyranny is thus born, invisible and often virtual, which unilaterally and relentlessly imposes its own laws and rules," the 84-page document, known as an apostolic exhortation, said.

"To all this we can add widespread corruption and self-serving tax evasion, which has taken on worldwide dimensions. The thirst for power and possessions knows no limits", the pope's document says.

He goes on to explain that in this system, which tends to devour everything which stands in the way of increased profits, whatever is fragile, like the environment, is defenseless before the interests of a deified market, which has become the only rule we live by.

Shameful wealth

Inequality between the rich and the poor has reached a new threshold, and in his apostolic exhortation to mark the end of the "Year of Faith", Pope Francis asks for better politicians to heal the scars capitalism made on society.

"Just as the commandment 'Thou shalt not kill' sets a clear limit in order to safeguard the value of human life, today we also have to say 'thou shalt not' to an economy of exclusion and inequality. Such an economy kills," Francis wrote in the document issued Tuesday.

His calls to service go beyond general good Samaritan deeds, as he asks his followers for action "beyond a simple welfare

mentality".

"I beg the Lord to grant us more politicians who are genuinely disturbed by the state of society, the people, the lives of the poor," Francis wrote.

A recent IRS report shows that the wealth of the US's richest 1 percent has grown by 31 percent, while the rest of the population experienced an income rise of only 1 percent.

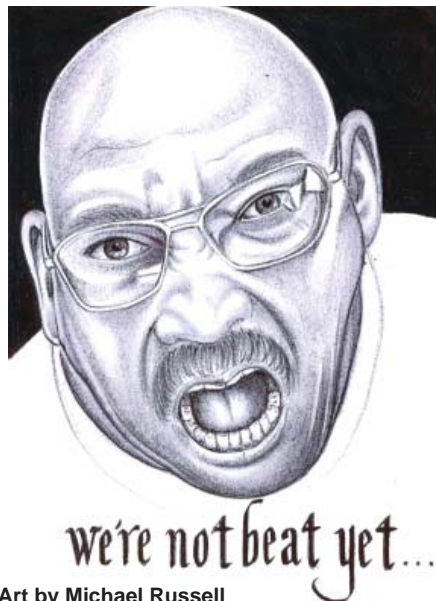
The most recent Oxfam data shows that up to 146 million Europeans are at risk of falling into poverty by 2025 and 50 million Americans are currently suffering from severe financial hardship.

"As long as the problems of the poor are not radically resolved by rejecting the absolute autonomy of markets and financial speculation, and by attacking the structural causes of inequality, no solution will be found for the world's problems or, for that matter, to any problems," he wrote.

Named after the medieval saint who chose a life of poverty, Pope Francis has gone beyond general calls for fair work, education, and healthcare.

Newly-elected Pope Francis has stepped up the fight against corrupt capitalism that has hit close to home - he was the first Pope to go after the Vatican bank and openly accused it of fraud and shady offshore tax haven deals.

In October, Pope Francis removed Vatican bank head Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, after revelations of alleged mafia money laundering and financial impropriety. •



Art by Michael Russell

WALMART HEIRS WORTH SAME AMOUNT AS BOTTOM 40 PERCENT OF AMERICANS

By Huffington Post

The six heirs to the Walmart fortune are worth as much as nearly half of all American households.

The Walton family was worth \$89.5 billion in 2010, the same as the bottom 41.5 percent of U.S. families combined, according to Josh Bivens of the Economic Policy Institute. That's 48.8 million American households in total.

Sylvia Allegreto of the University of California at Berkeley found last year that the six children of Walmart founders Sam and James "Bud" Walton had the same net worth in 2007 as the bottom 30 percent of American households. But between 2007 and 2010, that net worth rose, while the incomes of most Americans declined, explaining the three-year shift, Bivens notes.

While Walmart heirs are some of the wealthiest people in the world -- two of them are among the top five world's richest women, according to Wealth X -- many of the employees that work with the company likely fall among that bottom 40 percent of American earners. The company has driven down American wages by outsourcing much of its distribution work to warehouses across the country, according to a recent report from the National Employment Law Project.

In addition, bringing a new Walmart to town may cost a community big time in lost wages. A planned Seattle-area Walmart could cost the area \$14.5 million in lost wages over the next 20 years, a local advocacy group found in April.

The discrepancy between the Waltons' wealth and that of the rest of the country may be huge, but it's just one example of the prevalence of income inequality in America. The top one percent of American earners saw their incomes spike 275 percent between 1979 and 2007, while the bottom one-fifth of Americans saw their wealth grow by only 20 percent during the same period, according to the Congressional Budget Office. In addition, the top 10 percent of U.S. earners control two-thirds of the country's wealth. •

LETTERS

Stamps

The last issue of *Rock* was recently circulated by one of the fellas who receives them, who, along with the upstanding community, decided to take action. We wish to demonstrate our collective gratitude for your hard work and support, as well as for the many persons and organizations who've supported our struggle. Enclosed are 47 forever stamps donated on behalf of all 4B1R.

Gustavo Alviz, Corcoran SHU

More on Stamps

I am a newcomer to the *Rock* newsletter and am glad I subscribed. Most of us first heard about *Rock* in June and July 2013, right before the WS/HS started. Now we look forward to every monthly issue. I am enclosing six stamps with this letter. I know it's not much but hopefully it helps. I will be collecting more stamps from my section to send your way next month. We all need to pull our weight, am I right!

Before I end, let me just add, like you and Mark have said, this is *our* fight *our* struggle. Here on the inside we must con-

Unanticipated Consequence

"One of the major justifications for the rise of mass incarceration in the United States is that placing offenders behind bars reduces recidivism by teaching them that "crime does not pay." This rationale is based on the view that custodial sanctions are uniquely painful and thus exact a higher cost than non-custodial sanctions. An alternative position, developed mainly by criminologists, is that imprisonment is not simply a "cost" but also a social experience that deepens illegal involvement. Using an evidence-based approach, we conclude that there is little evidence that prisons reduce recidivism and at least some evidence to suggest that they have a criminogenic effect. The policy implications of this finding are significant, for it means that beyond crime saved through incapacitation, the use of custodial sanctions may have the unanticipated consequence of making society less safe."

Prison Labor and Crime in the U.S.

tinue the good fight. All we can ask is for you and fellow supporters to continue to amplify our voices. We thank you.

Avetis Vartanyan, PBSP

And Even More....

Please excuse the delay in my convict contribution to the cause of us prisoners receiving updated information. As we all know, information is hard to come by. Well, accurate information that is. It's funny sometimes when I hear other convicts spreading rumors about things they say they heard, or saw, or read about—things that are going to change for us in the future.

Later it's only proven that all that so-called information is just a bunch of BS. But with your newsletter it's a reliable source of info. So here you go, 32 forever stamps from me and my comrade Goutin. I've been receiving the *Rock* for a few months now and it is always printed in one of your sections about the low amount of funds you have to complete each monthly issue. I would think or hope that others reading the *Rock*, who have not put in any stamps yet, would so do. 30,000 prisoners took some part in the HS, which is a great number. If we could get 30,000 convicts to donate a few stamps each, that would be awesome to our cause of getting more info out in the future. I'm just saying.

Kenny Bess & Goutin, Tehachapi 4A

Lastly on stamps

In this struggle to liberate the oppressed prison class from these inhumane, torturous, and degrading prison conditions, I contribute these 20 stamps. Those who are fortunate enough should do the same. With 500 readers, two stamps per month can amount to 1,000 stamps monthly in an effort to sustain this *Rock* Tribune. For WE are the people of this town and it is OUR actions that will make a difference. Hence it is our duty to reach out for support. Standing by this newsletter is a clear illustration of our efforts in this regard.

Name withheld, Tehachapi

Life at Wallyworld

Wallyworld [the Washington State Penitentiary at Walla Walla] is handing out "indefinite programs" like candy for Christmas. Due to the Washington State Department of Corrections having seven Intensive Management Units (IMUs) and not enough prisoners committing serious infractions to keep them even half full, the

DOC had decided to give out long term indefinite programs instead of closing these money pits down. No STG needed, no serious violence required, just bodies to fill the beds to justify asking taxpayers for more money.

I was given this for conspiracy to introduce drugs; no STG, no violence. First time IMU offenders are getting crossed out Pelican Bay style with no kind of hearings or STG determination as required by law. They have always pulled this wool over the public's eye here and gouged taxpayers just as much as they gouge us prisoners.

Scott Freeburg, WSP

Solidarity from Calipatria

I would like to extend my and all of D Pod here in Calipatria ASU sincere gratitude for all you continue to do for our ongoing struggle. Enclosed are ten stamps I'm donating to the *Rock*.

Quickly, in regards to some of the comments and criticism I've been reading from letters about the short corridor's strategy for our peaceful protests, I agree with you Ed—the strategy is solid. It's up to us that are participating to fulfil that strategy and to push all that was laid out.

One has to have a deep conviction and belief in the cause one struggles for, understanding it will not be easy, yet with the courage to plunge full ahead while knowing the possible consequences. Those feeling the hunger strikes were a failure need to look deep down inside and ask themselves why?

I for one am proud to have been counted among the 30,000 participants in this last HS/WS. A couple of us here in D-Pod were hospitalized. I was also transferred out of Calipatria to Centenela for High Risk Medical Treatment. Yet we continue to be committed with spirits high for the road ahead and our ongoing struggle. We all send ours out in solidarity to all those likeminded individuals.

David Pacheco, Calipatria ASU

Solidarity from CCWF

I have been a devoted participant in the crusade to bring about much needed changes within California's prisons. I've felt the repercussions. I want to say I am grateful to the gentleman who commented on a letter that I wrote you awhile back, during the

July 8th HS. I remember that I was feeling a bit disconcerted due to the lack of support amongst the women here in CCWF, I was wondering if this [lack of support] was only taking place in the women's prisons or if it was just the mindset of a new generation of prisoners.

After 30 years in prison I have felt the shift in the change amongst the younger generation and also how DCCR has built a perpetual machine to take control by taking what little rights we have left. To hear this gentleman express the disgust he felt when the men on C yard in HDSP chose to go with the flow rather than stand up is a wonder to me. I do understand the feeling it creates in one's mind. I can only say that I choose to remain committed at whatever cost.

I am in agreement with bringing changes, if I have to keep writing letters to our legislators so be it. But I will not sit back and do nothing when so many of my fellow peers are paying the price for the sake of our greedy government and their twisted agenda.

The practices being used in the SHUs [including behavior modification programs] are inhumane and have been used for many years, dating as far back as I can remember—starting in places like Leavenworth and Marion, and now California.

The news media spreads false information by allowing the media into interview SNY prisoners who speak in rote fashion against our struggle, a tactic used in order to keep the tax payers in the blind about what's really going on in our prison system.

Lastly, my sincere condolences to Mr. Billy Sell who lost his life in our peaceful protest. And my deepest love and respect for all who endured the 60 days all of CDCR's efforts to hinder their cause. I am proud to be a supporter. Here are 20 stamps.

Diane Mirabal, CCWF

Let's Build the PAC

I am writing to comment on the last *Rock* newsletter [Vol. 2 #12, December 2013], to the piece about the "Prisoner PAC Proposal."¹ I think this is a great idea and should be turned into a reality sooner rather than later. We prisoners as a whole need to

1. PAC stands for Political Action Committee, which is a type of organization that pools campaign contributions from members and donates those funds to campaign for or against candidates, ballot initiatives, or legislation.

step up our game and go to the next level with the most logical and effective tactic, which would be something like a PAC. If such a mechanism were established I would have no problem donating money to it so that we can push our agendas in the mainstream political arena and be able to build influence where our voices are actually heard and we can take part in our own destiny and help shape the prison system in a way that favors us, our families and our communities rather than the special interests and everybody that gets rich from overflowing prisons and housing inmates in the SHU.

It may be slow going at first but once word spreads about the PAC and prisoners are educated on its purpose and goals, I can't think how anyone would not donate and get involved and spread the word to their family and friends on the streets. We make up a large part of the citizens of California with our families, friends and supporters. We could really build and maintain a substantial war chest of available funds to push what benefits us as a whole. It's time to wake up and do something different, something that can really change things and allow us to be recognized and the truth be told as it really is, without all the false and misleading information put out by those who benefit from seeing us locked up and placed in SHU.

So let's get serious about all this and whoever is putting out this proposal regarding the creation of a PAC needs to move forward with it and let us know how we can help and get involved to make this a reality. Myself and everyone in my section is for it.

Maher Suarez, Pelican Bay

JUDGE ADDS SOLITARY CONFINEMENT TO PRISON CROWDING NEGOTIATIONS

By Paige St. John, LA Times, 12/11/13

Federal judges considering California's request for more time to reduce prison crowding have asked the state in turn to limit how long some mentally ill prisoners spend in solitary confinement.

U.S. District Judge Lawrence Karlton on Wednesday said he had accepted a state of-

fer to limit the time severely mentally ill prisoners who have committed no rules violations can be held in isolation to 30 days. Hours later, he and the other two judges issued an order extending negotiations to Jan. 10, and pushing the state's deadline to reduce crowding to April 18.

Karlton is holding hearings on the treatment of mentally ill inmates and also sits on the federal three-judge panel that ordered California to reduce prison overcrowding.

California has been ordered to remove 7,000 inmates from state prisons, reductions that judges say are needed to remedy unconstitutionally dangerous conditions, including inadequate medical and mental health care. In Wednesday's order, the judges said they expect no further extension in the talks, "absent extraordinary circumstances," but that does not preclude additional delays in the actual crowding deadline.

Gov. Jerry Brown first proposed to expand California's contracts with private prison operators, mostly for beds in other states. The judges blocked expansion of out-of-state contracts and ordered the state to negotiate with prisoners' lawyers over alternatives, including the early release of frail or elderly prisoners.

Transcripts of courtroom hearings show the talks took a twist after Thanksgiving, when Karlton said he was concerned about some 230 mentally ill prisoners currently housed in isolation cells, though they have committed no infraction. State prison officials say they are there for their own protection, or while awaiting space in a mental health unit.

Karlton said he told the other federal judges "that as far as I was concerned" the state's request for an extension to reduce prison overcrowding should not be granted as long as those mentally ill inmates were being held in isolation units.

Lawyers for California made it clear that the state is eager to address the judge's concerns about solitary confinement. Transcripts show that at one point last week, state officials were rushing documents to the judge for review. At another, they offered to produce Corrections Secretary Jeffrey Beard to speak with Karlton. The judge said he was told Brown's office responded that it "understood the nature of the problem" and promised a quick remedy.

[Updated 4:26 p.m., Dec. 11: The new Jan. 10 cutoff for negotiations coincides

Judge..... Continued on page 10

THE ILLUSION OF FREEDOM IN AMERIKA

“Revolutionary suicide does not mean that I and my comrades have a death wish; it means just the opposite. We have such a strong desire to live with hope and human dignity that existence without them is impossible. When reactionary forces crush us, we must move against those forces, even at the risk of death. We will have to be driven out with a stick.”

Huey P. Newton, an excerpt from
“Revolutionary Suicide”

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

Comrades, in the year 2013, I achieved and experienced a moment of clarity as a Political Prisoner within the United States. I saw a photo of this beautiful soldier for the people, Ms. Lynne Stewart. She was in her federal prison khakis, bald headed, obviously suffering from the ravages of cancer, yet she was smiling. This hurt and touched me very deeply. In 2013, the Department of Justice saw fit to place a 65-year-old grandmother on a rewards-for-Terrorist Watch List. A \$2million price placed on Comrade Assata Shakur’s head! For what?! Exercising her god-given right to free speech? Because she damn sure is not guilty of any crime, especially after being shot in the back by the pigs in New Jersey.

Comrades, there is an all-out war being waged against our most politically advanced comrades. Look at this unselfish and uncompromising revolutionary soldier Mr. Jeremy Hammond. He has dedicated his life and utilized his gifts to battle the forces in this world who wish to destroy anything and everything that smells like freedom. And what of this government Sabu?? Where is he while Jeremy fights for his life? What about computer genius Aaron Swartz? Did he tie the rope that killed him, or did the irrational United States Prosecutor in Massachusetts help him tie the noose? What was Aaron’s crime? Dreaming of a free Internet? Free from state surveillance? Edward Snowden showed us exactly how “free” we really are. Do you see what is happening right in front of our eyes? We are being terrorized by the U.S. government into being docile, complacent, weak-minded sheep – while the pigs, wolves and foxes feast.

Comrades, as revolutionaries we must take a pragmatic and analytical look at our

current conditions. Amerika is making its transition – from capitalist state to imperialist state to totalitarian fascist surveillance state!! Am I lying? I don’t think so.

Now let’s abandon the emotion for a moment and embrace our precept of dialectical and historical materialism. As we perform a concrete analysis of concrete conditions, we have to ask ourselves: What benefits are the Labor Aristocracy in Amerika getting that the lumpen-underclass and the proletariat in Amerika not getting? If I told you there are poor white men and women who belong to the oppressed revolutionary proletariat class in Amerika, would you believe me? If not, why not? Racism and bigotry are tools in the tool-box of the Imperialist oppressor; when we who claim revolutionary socialism find ourselves using the same tools as the oppressor, we should re-evaluate our position. I am speaking directly to the comrades who embrace and follow the Vulgar Labor Aristocracy line. I personally have strived and struggled with the comrades who embrace the VLA line; the work these comrades do with prisoners in Amerika is incredible. They should be commended for their work.

However, the VLA line introduces a divisiveness into the ranks of socialists and communists in Amerika, who need unity and solidarity in order to defeat the imperialists. We must continue the debate on this subject, it is a matter of life and death. But I digress.

Welcome to Texas, Masters of Illusion!

In 2013, the State of Texas surpassed 500 executions of human beings via their state-sponsored murder program known as the Death Penalty. The governor of Texas, Mr. Rick Perry and his many cronies and sycophants are constantly using the term “sanctity of life” to describe their position on abortion. Let’s look at how seriously they adhere to this precept. In September 2013, the drugs that Texas was using to execute people expired. They had to be destroyed or returned to the manufacturer. Death Penalty opponents in Europe fought a long hard battle and won against European pharmaceutical companies that were supplying Texas with Sodium Pentobarbital, the drug that Texas misuses to murder human beings. That “well” in Europe has run completely dry. All Power to the People!

So Gov. Perry and his “Sanctity of Life” crew surreptitiously sought out a pharmacy

that would provide them with Sodium Pentobarbital so they could continue to murder human beings! Perry and the Director of the Texas Dept. of Criminal Justice found a pharmacy and purchased the drugs, but apparently didn’t tell the pharmacy that they intended to use the drugs to kill human beings. Texas tried to hide the source of their new-found stash, but word got out. The Woodlands Pharmacy, located in The Woodlands, Texas, stated that they did not know the drugs they sold to the TDCJ were being used to kill people, and furthermore they said they wanted the drugs back! The Woodlands Pharmacy is a compounding pharmacy, and their drugs are not approved by the FDA for use on human beings. Moreover, there is a Hippocratic Oath that some of the pharmacy’s doctors took that says, “Do No Harm!” Surely the benevolent Sanctity of Life crew would respect the pharmacy’s wishes and return the drugs. But no! That’s not what happened and when this hypocrite Rick Perry attempts to run for presidential office in 2016, make sure you remember his stance on “Sanctity of Life.”

We must get serious about the words Revolution, Freedom and Justice, or we will all be slaves.

In *DeShaney v. Winnebago County Dept. of Social Services*, the Supreme Court recognized that “the State” has an “affirmative duty to protect” a person whom the State has incarcerated or involuntarily institutionalized. Would someone please inform the oppressors who operate the segregated housing unit in Pelican Bay (CA) of this?! The State of Texas has failed in their “duty to protect” my respected brother and comrade Kevin “Rashid” Johnson, the Minister of Defense for the New Afrikan Black Panther Party (Prison Chapter). Rashid is a victim of state-created danger. The Bill Clements Unit in Amarillo, TX has a history of degrading, dehumanizing and abusing oppressed human beings. Rashid has been placed on a unit on which he will be physically and mentally tortured and harmed. The purpose is to break him. My question is this: Does the federal government, the Obama Administration, and the Department of Injustice, condone and sanc-

tion the abuse and torture of its citizens? Or, because Rashid is a Black man who holds political beliefs that are not popular with the regime, has the U.S. government decided he is ‘fair game’? Kill him! But don’t involve us, we don’t want to know! Texas! Masters of the Illusion of Freedom.

Comrades, for the Spring of 2014, a march on Washington DC has been planned in order to address Mass Incarceration in the United States. But how can we mobilize to end Mass Incarceration yet have failed to mobilize in freeing Lynne Stewart?! If hundreds of thousands, perhaps even millions of like-minded comrades can organize to march on Washington, DC, what’s wrong with simultaneously marching on FCI Carswell to free comrade Lynne? Seriously! If we can’t secure the freedom of Lynne, how do we intend to be successful in the overwhelming battle against mass incarceration in Amerika? As much as I love and respect our beloved comrade Herman Wallace, I don’t want Lynne to suffer the same fate as he did. I know that President Obama’s mother died of cancer and I believe his passionate attempt to deliver affordable health care was prompted by the helpless feeling he had watching his mother succumb to the disease. For the life of me I can’t figure out how he can stand by and do nothing while Lynne’s condition deteriorates in Federal prison!?

However, this all points to the illusion of freedom in Amerika, “Home of the Free, Land of the Brave.” Who determines who is Free or who is brave? We are slowly headed toward a fascist totalitarian state in Amerika. We are in financial bondage, we are subjected to a pervasive amount of covert and overt surveillance, and we incarcerate more of our citizens than any nation on Earth. These objective realities are the result of Imperialism and capitalism. We must get serious about the words Revolution, Freedom and Justice, or we will all be slaves. ●

Dare to struggle, Dare to Win!
All Power to the People!

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Or contact Twitch, Central Texas ABC &
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LETTER FROM HESHIMA DENHAM,

Dec. 2, 2013

[Note: Denise, the person who keyboarded this letter, put some things in bold to highlight the main points relating to the Jan. 7 hearing.]

Now, there is a matter of some urgency I’d like to discuss with you in hopes you will pass it along AS BROADLY AS POSSIBLE – to the rest of the coalition – and your neighbors for that matter, because it is just that serious. Now you may recall we issued a statement, “Creating Broken Men Part 2” where we voiced our outrage at the inclusion of the mandatory brainwashing components of §700.2 of the CDCR’s Step Down Program (SDP.) Since that time several things have developed; 1) the Drs took Zah to the review board and attempted to bribe him with the promise of transfer to Tehachapi and touch visits in Step 3 IF he agreed to participate in Step 2 for 6 months – most centrally the “self-directed journal” outlined in §700.2; their hope being if Zah does it, then countless other younger, more vulnerable prisoners can be herded into this brainwashing program.

He’s of course refused, and we’re putting the finishing touches on a new statement on all of this, so I’ll leave that point. 2) We had an opportunity to review one of the journals (“The Con Game”) and it’s even worse than we thought – well more accurately it’s exactly what we knew it would be: a blatant character invalidation & brainwashing tool. 3) **Most disturbing of all they’ve announced a director’s rules change to provisions of CCR §3040 which introduces mandatory brainwashing for EVERY PRISONER IN CDCR (cognitive behavioral therapy) and attaching it to this same regulation that governs mandatory work and education assignments while confined to CDCR...** all of which is in violation of Article One of the Nuremberg Code and the most fundamental basics of human rights. I don’t know if this is simply an issue most don’t genuinely understand, or if CDCR has so thoroughly hidden and downplayed what they are attempting – but this is the single greatest evil this struggle faces. It is even more urgent than the issue of indefinite solitary sensory deprivation confinement.

What we have determined is CDCR’s SDP Pilot program has zero to do with “a behavior-based path for “validated’ prison-

ers to exit the SHU,” and is in fact a systematic and mandatory brainwashing program using the prospect of eventual SHU release as the coercive component to force men and women to submit to these techniques. According to the SDP/STG policy, if you refuse to submit to the “cognitive restructuring” components of the SDP (such as “self-directed journals”), you will be “stuck” in whatever step they decide to stick you in... forever – or, like the debriefing process you finally capitulate and ask them to brainwash you. In other words you can be “STG behavior” free for, presumably, the rest of your life and you’ll still be stuck in say, Step 2, in the SHU.

They have changed nothing, but creating a new and more efficient means to produce the same broken minds and subservient slaves as the debriefing process – only on a much grander scale. It is in fact worse than the debriefing process, and not simply in the SHU, they seek to extend this to every prison and prisoner in CDCR’s custody. CDCR is in the process of changing their regulations to incorporate mandatory brainwashing – what they’re calling in this proposed rules change, “cognitive behavioral therapy” (which they define as “...evidence-based psychotherapeutic treatment which addresses dysfunctional emotions, maladaptive behaviors, and cognitive processes in all three areas to reach proscribed goals.”) to ensure everyone who enters CDCR will leave it a warped, submissive and subservient slave.

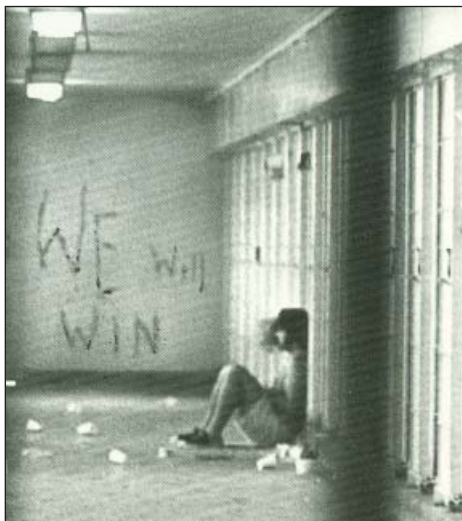
To ensure their capacity to force this conditioning on prisoners, they’ve actually attached this sick, twisted, assault on the underclass to provisions of CCR Title §3040 (participation) which makes work, education, and “other programs” mandatory for all CDCR prisoners. It in turn derives its authority from the slavery provisions of the 13th Amendment. I can only describe this as evil. EVERY ACTIVIST, FAMILY MEMBER, AND CITIZEN should be mobilizing against this manifestation of fascism in their midst.

Here they seek to instill beliefs and values which are synonymous with those of right-wing, authoritarian conservatism – while simultaneously seeking to absolve the nature and structure of capitalist society and contrapositive authoritarian conditioning inherent in the US fascist mass psychology for any of society’s ills – includ-

ing institutional racism, sexism, intentional underdevelopment, social containment and criminalization – instead they seek to lay all blame at the feet of the individual and their choices (a view rejected and debunked by sociological and criminological academia for decades.) The origin of all crime is the disproportionate distribution of wealth, privilege, and opportunity in a society – not simply individual choices. It is the lack of viable choices which coerce people into the underground economy...and inevitably into prisons where they've erected a multi-billion dollar industry built on jailing millions of poor people and people of color.

These journals stress "taking personal responsibility," but CDCR takes none for the hundreds of female prisoners they forcibly sterilized in California prisons, the tens of thousands subjected to years of psychological torture in US SHU units, the tens of billions of dollars pillaged from underclass and minority communities by lending institutions during the subprime loan fiascos, for the centuries of institutional racism, sexism, xenophobia and state-sponsored hate that adversely affects the "choices" available to the people subjected to these structural components of US capitalism. Financial corporations embezzled billions of dollars from hundreds of millions of US citizens (via credit default swaps and other exotic financial instruments) in 2008 – and not one of these Wall St. exec's or government regulators have spend a day in jail.

There's a guy in 3 block who got caught with a 20 rock of cocaine and another guy in B-section who stole 2 pizzas, and they both got 25 to life under the three strikes



"We Will Win" written in ketchup on the back wall of B-Tier in Walla Walla's Intensive Management Unit (IMU) during the historic 47-day work strike of the late 1970s.

law – and CDCR and "The Change Company" [the name of the vendor providing them with the journals] have the audacity and unmitigated gall to speak of "responsible" vs. "irresponsible" thinking. Prisons are tools of repression to enforce property rights and maintain the current social order. Social conditions in these capitalist nations are such that "perpetual growth" has met the boundaries of planetary ecological/environmental capacity. They can't keep on reaping super profits from the appropriation of surplus labor value without meeting ever increasing resistance from those suffering the ever decreasing share of wealth and resources available.

Their solution is to increase the psychological and behavioral malleability and passivity of the most potentially revolutionary segments of US society: the underclass, the working poor, the unemployed... the prisoner. CDCR is, and has always been, a model for the nation in prison "best practices." As goes California – so goes the nation. The introduction and imposition of mandatory brainwashing (cognitive behavioral therapy; cognitive restructuring; self-directed journals, behavior modification, etc. etc.) across CDCR facilities will produce a steady stream of broken men and women; who will in turn take these techniques, warped values, authoritarian beliefs, and twisted ideals out to their communities where, just like those female slaves who were subjected to "slave seasoning" would raise their sons to be "good boys," physically strong (so they could work hard) but psychologically and emotionally weak (so they would not rebel against the institution of slavery and thereby be murdered brutally by the slavemaster.) These broken men and women will warp the minds of others, who will in turn warp others, until we will have a docile, submissive, subservient US underclass population, content to continue enduring even more exploitation, more severe repression, and even greater usurpations...all because we – the progressives, the revolutionaries, the social justice activists – the common man and woman – failed to act.

I feel at times as though many simply don't understand what's transpiring, its interconnections, and its ultimate social impact. There are no disparate social forces – all it interconnected, and it is within these interconnections that the vast, horrifying, awe-inspiring scope of what these evil "people" are trying to do becomes sickeningly clear. I don't believe the legislators in

Sacramento know this is the case. Coercive behavior modification and/or cognitive restructuring techniques are prohibited under article 1 of the Nuremberg Code. The forced sterilization of female prisoners is a war crime.

The fact that we must invoke the Nuremberg Code and war crimes statutes to oppose what a prison system in the US is doing is the best proof of 1) how racist, sick, and inhumane the US actually is and 2) how completely oblivious the US population is of this fact – and the US mass media is complicit in this. It is my assessment that US journalists have so thoroughly crafted this image of what they want the world to believe American society is, they willfully conceal, under report, and investigatively ignore its vilest contradictions in order to preserve this illusion. Any journalist that claims ignorance much acknowledge it is a willful ignorance.

We simply can't stand idly by and allow something like his to sweep up untold generations in this sick process. History will judge us all harshly should we do so. EVERY ACTIVIST, EVERY ABLE-BODIED PERSON, PERIOD, should be mobilizing to oppose these violations of the Nuremberg Code. Now as it relates to §700.2 of the SDP, noise has to be made about it, like nothing before, but **as it relates to the new director's rules changes to Title 15 §3040 (and related sections) there will be a public hearing on this on January 7, 2014 at 10 – 11 am in the Kern Room at 1515 "S" Street, North Building, Sacramento, CA.**

Written comments can be sent to: CDCR, Regulation and Policy Management Branch (RPMB), PO Box 942883, Sacramento, CA 94283; by fax (916) 324-6075, or by email to RPMB@cdcr.ca.gov, by 5 pm on Jan. 7, 2014. The Kern Room should be packed with protestors on January 7th at 10 am to bring media attention to the reality of this evil. A letter writing and email campaign should be organized to flood them with complaints about this continually leading up to 1/7.

I'm contacting everyone I can on this, and I do encourage you to do the same. This is even more important than the abolition of SHU. It is these "peoples" intention to subject tens of thousands of prisoners, 95% of them hailing from underclass communities – to systematic cognitive restructuring where they begin with "character

Heshima..... Continued on page 10

EDITORIAL 3-1

Stamps and Money

Welcome to the start of the third year of the *Rock* newsletter. As of this writing the newsletter has received \$2,932 in cash and 6,092 stamps. If we take that number of stamps and multiply it by their cost of 46 cents each, we'd get a stamp contribution total of \$2,802.32. If we add the cash amount donated to the cost of stamps we'd come up with \$5,734.32 donated in stamps and cash over the course of two years. If we divide that number by the 24 issues that were produced in those two years it comes out to \$238.93 to produce and mail each issue. The actual cost of production is greater because in the early days the number of subscribers was considerably less than it is today (we currently have 415 California readers and a little over a hundred subscribers in Washington and Oregon).

While *Rock* does have some money in the bank, Mark and I prefer to use that money for laser printer toner cartridges and cases of printer paper rather than for stamps. However, this month we will be using some of that money to buy stamps. While donations of stamps continue to trickle in, they do not arrive in an amount sufficient to cover the cost of postage for this issue of the newsletter. In short, we need stamps.

Our readers in California can be broken down into thirds. A third gives more than their fair share, another third just pay the subscription amount or less, and the last third freeload off the contributions of others. There have been no contributions from Oregon, and Washington has had one prisoner pay for a subscription. Those Northwestern prisoners need to step it up by selling subscriptions to their peers and outside people. Newsletter circulation in those states needs to increase so we can eventually afford to move on to Nevada, Arizona, and Texas.

All readers must remember it will be publications such as this that will be the scaffolding needed to build the structure necessary to bring about progressive change. When you invest in such publications you are investing not only in your future, but also in the future of the men and women who come after you.

PAC proposal

I'll keep this one brief. We received a lot of letters regarding my editorial on the PAC proposal, and not one of them agreed with

my position. Although they did agree that prisoners should not be giving money to bourgeois politicians. The main complaint was that I was too far out in front of where general prisoner consciousness is at and therefore I would lose them. I agree.

Leadership

I want to talk a little about direction and strategy, not about any I suggest but rather about the course set by the men on the short corridor. I get letters from some California prisoners saying such things as the existing leadership is merely playing everyone so they can go back to the way things were; that instead of looking forward they are looking backwards. In the years before HS #1 I often thought the same way. In fact many of my editorials in *Prison Focus* railed against these same men for creating the mess California's prisons have become, and for their responsibility for the prisoner-on-prisoner violence that has resulted in the huge number of prisoners now living in SNY.

That was then. This is now. The strategic and tactical leadership they've demonstrated is not only remarkable, it is of historic importance. Never before in recorded history have 33,000 people went on hunger strike. This is an incredible foundation to build upon. If there is any weakness I can see it lies in their not moving fast enough on the issue of racial unity. Which brings us to our next topic.

Controversial Subjects

Over and over again, year after year, I've raised the issue of integrated celling. And each time I do so I receive a flood of letters telling me why it would not or cannot work. I disagree with the excuse making, yet I'm rational enough to understand it isn't going to happen any time soon—at least not by a process led by prisoners.

Well, if you don't like that, how about this: Send a message to the powers that be, and to each other, by integrating the mess halls. Racism has been the state's number one tool for keeping prisoners divided. (You know it's true.) Why is there such reluctance to challenge their ploy in this regard?

If the strength or will needed to accomplish this cannot be mustered, then do it for a single month, or week, or day. But do it! Even one day of interracial eating will send a message to guards, and they will then forward that message of prisoner unity to their overlords in the state capitol.

I've served somewhere between 35 and 40 years of my life behind bars. In all that time I've never checked into PC, even when I felt sure I would not live to see another day. My reasoning was that I'm a communist; probably the only communist most of these prisoners will ever meet. I'll die on my feet rather than take the coward's way out and thereby give a bad name to the principles I hold dear.

That's me. Others do not have such ideals to honor and thus check themselves in to PC. That fact is that between a third and half of California prisoner are SNY. If anyone thinks this struggle can be won without the active involvement that many prisoners they've got their heads up their asses. In order to win it will be necessary to seek the participation of all prisoners. "Settle your quarrels, come together, understand the reality of our situation..." He who's name cannot be mentioned was right. It's time for all prisoners to settle their quarrels and to join together in the struggle for a better world.

So here I argue for both the proposition of integrating the state's GP prison chow halls, even if only briefly, and to start the process of reaching out to SNY prisoners. If not reaching out to SNY, then at the very least, not working to further isolate ourselves from that segment of the prison population. The common bond we share is that of prisoners (slaves) of the state. This is not to say that debriefers and rats are our friends. Rather only that we share a common interest in changing the draconian system of punishments that currently exists.

Bad to rely on legislature

I know a lot of you are putting your hopes for constructive change in the state legislature. This is a mistake. It is only your unity and strength that will bring about the changes that must take place. Any thinking other than self-reliance is foolish and naive. Remember the legislators are the ones who passed all of these draconian laws, LWOP, 3 Strikes, etc. And even if they did pass a bill or two in your favor, Governor Brown would most likely refuse to sign them into law—like he did with the bill to allow the media access to prisoners. It will be nice if the legislators do something constructive, and they may, but it will not be enough to give you the rights guaranteed to every other citizen or to lift your constitutionally defined status as slaves. Only through self-reliance in all things will you ever be able to guarantee your human rights. ●

Heshima..... Continued from page 8
invalidation” and end with the complete subordination of their minds and behaviors to the dictates of authoritarian conservatism, manufacturing a docile, subservient population of men and women WHO WILL TAKE THESE SAME TECHNIQUES OUT TO THEIR COMMUNITIES, warping the minds of generations to come. In so doing, they not only make the expropriation of tax dollars, at the expense of prisoners, a more orderly process, but also make the exploitation of labor in society at large a less burdensome ordeal for corporations by stamping out the very thought of resistance or progressive, pro-people organizing.

Viewing all of this through the prism of its Hitlerian magnitude, the insidiousness of this undertaking is inspiringly horrific. We shouldn't be having this discussion – these people have gone mad! The contact person on the brainwashing provisions of the new _ 3040 (et al) is Timothy Lockwood, (916) 445-2269 or email to RPMB@cdcr.gov regarding the subject matter contact Michele Gonzalez at (916) 323-6662. Please notify the coalition of what I've shared with you here. FYI on those “self-

directed journals,” at least all those CDCR is using, they have printed at the bottom of each page and the answer sheets, “it is illegal to photocopy this in any shape or form” – that alone should show anyone interested there's something very wrong here. ●

Judge..... Continued from page 5

with the deadline for Brown's 2014 state spending plan. Senate Leader Darrell Steinberg (D-Sacramento) and a participant in the crowding negotiations, said that gives the court, as well as others, a chance to see how the governor proposes to fund prison programs. Steinberg seeks increased spending on mental health and substance abuse programs to reduce prison return rates.

Meanwhile, a team of court-appointed reviewers filed a report Wednesday declaring inadequate medical care at the state's largest women's prison, in Chowchilla. The report cites poor timeliness and quality of care at the prison, a lack of staff and medical beds. It attributes its findings to severe overcrowding: the prison was built to house 2,000 inmates but holds 3,500.] ●

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