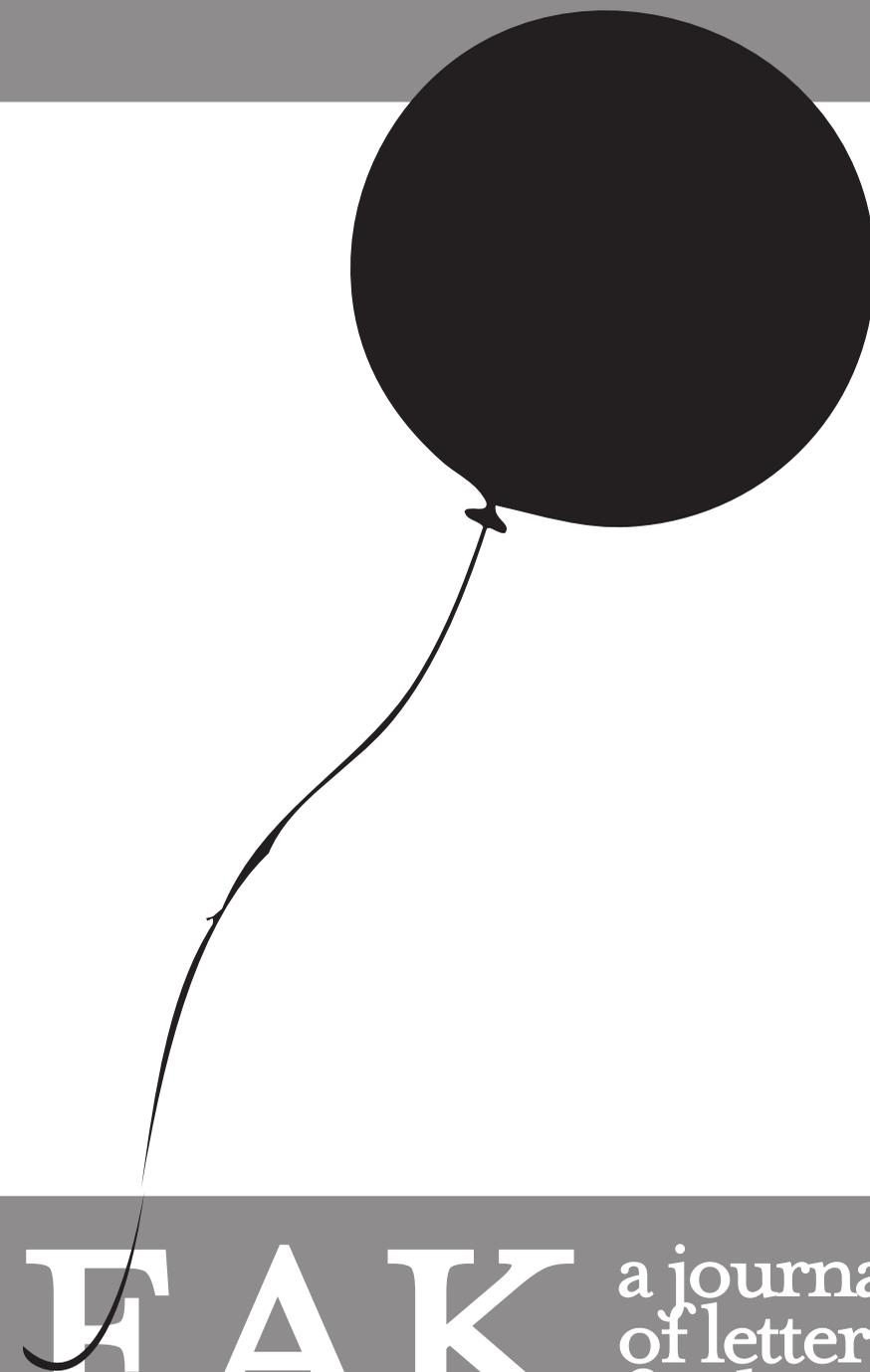


*God gave Noah
the rainbow sign—
No more water,
the fire next time.*



BREAK a journal
of letters
& ideas

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“Anarchists need to actively expose this process of deliberate manipulation. Our solidarity with prisoners cannot depend upon concepts of amnesty, nonviolence, or negotiation.”

the prison “abolitionist” Left tends to avoid engaging with actual prisoners, and instead focuses on policy campaigns and community-building efforts.

Never was this more apparent than in the lack of response from anarchists and prison ‘abolitionists’ around the Georgia prison strike. Outside of a few solidarity demonstrations, the response of radicals was almost nonexistent. The lead-up to this particular action was fairly insular, and there was little opportunity for outside influence to find its way into the prisons before the strike happened. But as the strike entered into its 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th days the information was finally becoming available to all.

Though prisoners did not take over their facilities or seize hostages, the geographic expanse and number of participants vastly outnumbered more celebrated uprisings of the past. Most importantly, this strike had the unique ability to spread itself from facility to facility. The major element of prison - the isolation one is forced to feel - crumbled for a moment under the weight of contraband cell phones and word of mouth organizing. Prisoners in Georgia remain connected with each other and have threatened future, more extreme action if their demands are not met. Effectively prisoners managed to demonstrate their power without showing their full hand.

The means in which prisoners were able to communicate are hardly reproducible or sustainable. A combination of outside organizers with vast experience, former Black Panther Party Chairwoman Elaine Brown being the most notable, and the ability to smuggle in and buy massively overpriced cell phones from COs were major contributing factors to this strike’s success. While these exact conditions may not present themselves again in any near future, a fissure in the state’s ability to cause disunity and isolation amongst its prison population has begun to grow.

Obviously, this makes it all the more important for anarchists to seize their own initiative when these challenges are overcome. The reality though, is that prison rebellions in general escape the recent North American anarchist’s imagination. Somehow they do not fit our understandings of struggles that are “important,” “winnable,” or “strategic.” Perhaps the violence of prison riots, with their hostage-taking, gang involvement, and shoot outs, cause discomfort for a political milieu more accustomed to the dragging around of newspaper boxes and “nonviolent” property destruction. This does not go to say that such activities are bad or pointless, but merely that our habits might constrain our perception of what is possible or necessary.

Of course this anarchist distance from prison struggle has not always been the case, nor is it always the case overseas

today, where anarchists on both sides of the wall have played important roles in helping prison and detention center rebellions to generalize in several Mediterranean countries. Those activities might point a way forward to the important role there is to play in spreading word of revolt from one facility to another; not just encouraging rebellion to happen, but of helping it to become contagious and expand geographically.

We also have to engage in such a way as to undermine efforts at recuperation. During the Georgia strike, for example, a petition was circulated and signed by such notables as Noam Chomsky, Rosa Clemente, and a multitude of NGOs, coalitions, and lawyers. Many such petitions had the same basic message: “we support the strikers as long as they remain non-violent”. In doing so, they helped cement the old divide of “good” protester and “bad” protester; the good prisoner interested in reform and the violent thug.

This is typical of the role of the NGO or nonprofit—harness the rage and indignation of any group of people, so long as they can stamp their organization’s name on the rebellion and as long as that rebellion fits into specific parameters. Once it steps outside of those guidelines all support and solidarity must be withdrawn in order to save face and maintain the social capital necessary to further a political agenda. Anarchists need to actively expose this process of deliberate manipulation. Our solidarity with prisoners cannot depend upon concepts of amnesty, nonviolence, or negotiation.

The issue of urgency and rapid response is raised as well. With the Georgia strike, prison rebellion has finally entered the digital age, an era where social struggles can grow and spread rapidly in a matter of hours. Anarchists on the outside therefore need to be able to grasp the urgency of a situation and mobilize quickly. We need to assist in this process of rapid growth, not be overwhelmed by it. This means we cannot wait until such rebellions occur to build relationships from scratch; friendships and political affinity must already exist between prisoners and anarchists on the outside, or these struggles will quickly pass us by.

There has been a unique task set before the anarchists of this country, one of deciphering and deciding how and when to strike against capital and its protectors. The “movement” is diffuse and the geography of the terrain is massive. Choices set before those willing to demonstrate what such generalization of revolt could look like are muddled at best. Knowing how to answer them is often as difficult as knowing *when* to answer them, but we cannot sit on the sidelines.

The Strike! On the Georgia Prison Rebellion of 2010

The following is reprinted from a longer article in issue 11 of Fire to the Prisons, a North American anarchist magazine. Though generally directed at a broader audience, we hope that it can generate discussion with regards to the role of prison solidarity on the outside.

The Revolt

IT TOOK A FEW MONTHS OF PLANNING and more than one contraband cell phone, but this past December prisoners of the Georgia Department of Corrections pulled off the largest prison strike in US history. Thousands of people in well over half a dozen facilities across the state participated in the unprecedented strike. Isolation is one of the largest tools used against prisoners. Kept from each other and out of view of the public, the idea of coordinating an effort on this scale had seemed impossible.

Through a series of gang truces and uncommon allegiances, prisoners from Augusta, Baldwin, Hancock, Hays, Macon, Smith and Telfair State Prisons among others, initiated this strike to press the Georgia Department of Corrections (DOC) to adhere to their demands.

Georgia currently incarcerates 60,000 prisoners and has 150,000 people on probation, with the highest prisoner to resident ratio in the country. Almost every state has a policy forcing prisoners to work. Prisons cloak these programs in the language of ‘rehabilitation’ and ‘vocational training programs’ in an effort to keep them from being seen for what they are. At best they are a form of indentured servitude; at worst they are the last legal form of slavery in this country. Prisoners on average are paid between 12 and 40 cents an hour for their labor in a variety of fields. While OSHA regulations apply to the work prisoners are forced to do, there are currently many lawsuits against various States’ Departments of Corrections and the Federal Bureau of Prisons in regards to unsafe labor practices, and in particular around electronics and computer recycling.

Georgia is one of two states that does not pay it’s incarcerated population at all, with the other being Texas. Prisoners are still required to do prison chores, cook and serve meals, and perform government building maintenance without compensation for their labor. This, compounded with a stranglehold on money transfers from their families by a corporation call J-pay, as well as another private company called Global Tel-Link charging \$55 a month for once a week 15-minute phone conversations, were part of the impetus for many of the Georgia prisoners’ demands.

People being forced into labor situations without compensation, required to buy time to speak to loved ones, and having an overpriced and poorly maintained commissary have been the

reality for decades. But the thing that pushed many over the edge was a statewide smoking ban in all prisons that was to be set in place on January 1st of this year. A truly ‘bread and roses’ moment.

Organizers spent months building a web of divergent factions and gangs — groups not known to cooperate — into a mostly unified coalition using text messaging and word of mouth. The strike was scheduled for December 9th, and was only to last the one day. It ended up lasting 6 days with thousands of participants. Prisoners refused to work, participate in activities, or leave their cells, forcing the prison administration to ‘lock down’ many facilities. A man at Hays State Prison in Trion, GA was quoted as saying “We’re hearing in the news they’re putting it down as we’re starting a riot, so they locked all the prisons down,” But, he said, “We locked ourselves down.”

The wants and desires of those involved with this strike must be treated as serious grievances. They are an avenue to widening a fissure, to exploring the capacity of organizing on the inside. To make such demands, even in the realization that they will never be actualized, is a step forward in the possibility of prison revolt generalizing past the walls it wishes to destroy.

The Response

The tools available to those incarcerated in this country are few. Their bodies and the capability of disrupting imposed order are some of the only options afforded to them. Whether against corrections officers, cops, and snitches or upon prisoners from the administration, violence is a well-worn tool in these battles. Often when prisoners decide to stand in defiance of their captivity there are dire physical and emotional repercussions. The 43 dead at Attica in 1971; the 5 dead at Alcatraz in 1946, those dead at Lucasville in 1993 and thousands of others are testament to the immense danger prisoners face when they rise up.

Sacrifice and fortitude in the face of massive repression is not a skill the US anarchist movement has managed to master. It often falls short of the simplest goal of merely ‘supporting’ those incarcerated or faced with incarceration. The Anarchist Black Cross communities that once dotted the US have fallen to the same internal power battles that has plagued the discourse for years. Of the few prisoner support organizations that still remain, most have dedicated themselves to a charity-orientated role. Mailing pamphlets and books to prisoners has too often taken the place of creating friendships and building affinity with those on the inside. Many anarchists in the US would rather “educate” prisoners on their own oppression than build the material and theoretical frameworks necessary to grow multiple entry points for a diversity of “movements,” all capable of attacking prisons from multiple angles.

Prison revolt does not fit well into a utilitarian or “campaign-based” approach. If one understands the purpose of a prison riot to be the winning of demands, it is clear that prisoners almost always “lose,” at least in the short term. Revolt on the inside generally ends with more punishment and violence, not less. Perhaps this explains why the gradual, movement-building approach of

SUMMER HAS BEGUN AND THE HEAT IS SETTLING across North Carolina. The spring and summer seasons usually bring a flurry of activity with them. From prisoner resistance across the state to anti-gentrification struggles in the triangle and the plethora of Western North Carolina police scandals, this year is shaping up to be no different.

The national efforts to further criminalize poor people, especially those without the “privilege” of citizenship, have taken new proportions. There are international austerity measures tearing Europe apart, and popular uprisings are momentarily toppling tyrannical regimes in Northern Africa. The responses are changing as well. Anarchists in the Pacific Northwest have decided to respond to the policing of their neighborhoods with force. In the Rockies, radical communities reacted to the arrest and unprecedented charges against one of their own with a highly successful pressure campaign resulting in a number of her charges being dropped.

With so much activity in the region a publication with the ability to communicate the depth of these struggles has become an even greater necessity. This newsletter is a continuance of past efforts at communication. Its intentions are to continue the dialogue started between those inside and outside of the apparatuses designed to control them. It is not an attempt to further the inside vs. outside dichotomy or perpetuate the idea that those locked inside the prison system need us on the inside to change their material conditions for them. Break is one of the many tools employed in the effort to break down isolation and despair.

This publication started as an idea, the natural outgrowth of several different group projects and individual relationships between anarchists on the outside and prisoners on the inside. Since it began we have had the fortune to meet many, many more like-minded people on the inside, and have hopefully played some role in reminding prisoners that there are many others on the inside with the same visions of struggle and freedom.

At the same time, it has become clear: the world out here is changing.

Social media and the internet are being used by a wider spectrum of people and are becoming a requirement for organizing in a portion of the developed world. The strike in Georgia prisons last December represented the spread of this technology into the world of prison resistance. Broad radical social movements in this country have been replaced by well-managed non-

Introductions

profits and a new class of social activists. Old alliances have withered away while new affinities have sprung up, sometimes in the most unlikely of places. Neighborhoods we used to call home are becoming too expensive to live in as the steamroller of “progress” moves across the city. More privatized prisons are being created across the country and more private corporations are entering prisons every day. This world contains both new opportunities for struggle but also new pitfalls, and this is just as true on the inside as the outside.

As we fight back and gain a few inches of ground towards lives with some semblance of dignity, the State simultaneously grows larger and more fierce. Our methods of resistance must stay current and able to change with these trends. Continuity can be created through varying means and throughout various groupings of people. The struggles that make up the eclectic radical movement in this country can work in concert with one another. We hope that this publication can be a part of that process of cross-pollination.

As always, we invite submissions in the form of communiqués, report backs from study groups, analysis and critiques, updates on struggles on the inside, and letters to the editor. Authors’ names will be kept anonymous unless otherwise requested. We aspire to have an ongoing dialogue with those who submit works for the publication, as part of the process of building relationships across prison walls. We also reserve the right to refuse to print anything that we think might jeopardize the project.

The world outside is getting louder. Our enemies would have the prison remain quiet, a silent monument to slavery and racism, to the logic of social control and the consequences for those who step out of line. This publication exists as a venue for the thousands of voices who would not be silent, who would find each other through the walls and tear down that monument once and for all.

Until that day,
BREAK editors

Submissions can be sent to:

BREAK Publishing
PO Box 754
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

Letters to the Editor

We recently began including a letters to the editor section, as a way to offer additional space for prisoners to respond to each others' ideas and experiences. Please make letters no longer than 250 words. Unless specifically told otherwise, it is our policy to maintain the author's anonymity.

A Little at a Time

One of the brothers here at H-Con (Super-Max) let me see the first issue of your magazine. I wish to first thank you and commend you for providing a voice for NC prisoners. Thank you!

Secondly, I think a word of caution is warranted in that you may want to consider the wording of the letters published. I do not advocate censorship, but if the DOC reads material they feel promotes violence, insurrection, riots, etc. they will ban this publication. Having an outlet for our voices does us no good if we can't receive it. Please print my letter in the next issue if you can.

I have been in this system for 17-plus years now and want to share a few observations I've made concerning the state we currently find ourselves in.

Many times I've heard fellow prisoners state the conclusion that "the prisoners [in this state] are weak as hell." I do not believe that we, as prisoners, are any "weaker" than prisoners in any of the other "hard" prisons in other states. I think the major reason NC prisoners lack unity is due in a large part to how the DOC transfers us from prison to prison on such a frequent basis.

If you go to some other state to do time, you spend near your entire bid at one prison. In such an environment those prisoners spend years together and form bonds, friendships, and almost familial ties. These relationships form a solid cross-cultural foundation for strength and unity. They stand with and for each other in a common cause.

We lack that mindset in this state. We form no strong relationships. Our general mindset is: "Screw that dude! I don't know him! He ain't my race, religion, gang, set, etc. The police ain't doin' nothing to me, what do I care what they do to him?!" This is where we fail ourselves and each other. This is why we seem weak. Somehow we need to find a solution to our lack of unity. We all know the problem, but let's hear some constructive solutions. The police have taken and continue to take more and more from us and our lack of unity allows it to happen.

And no, it's not a new problem. And if you think all of those police are stupid, you need to think again. They know what the hell they're doing. I'll give you a short illustration.

Up until 1994-95 we were allowed to purchase real "boombox" style radios in the canteens. They took those. We could buy walkman-style radios, so not many raised hell over losing their radios and those few that did went to lock-up. That was the start, but then:

- 1996 - No smoking on lock-up
- 1997 - No more food from home at Christmas
- 1998 - No more shoes from the street
- 1999 - No more TV and canteen food on lock-up
- 2000 - No more breakfast meats on lock-up
- 2000 - No more watches and jewelry from the street
- 2001 - No more nude photos/magazines
- 2000-2001 - All prisons go cash-free
- 2009 - No more microwaves in Close Custody Canteens or cell blocks
- 2010 - No more free weights in Close Custody
- 2010 - No more tobacco in prisons

There are probably many more things that can be added and all of my dates may not be correct, but they're close enough to see what they did; one "small" thing at a time was taken every year or so. If anyone or a few raised hell...straight to lock-up. Let everyone calm down a year or so, transfer any instigators around to other prisons and then take another "small" thing.

No, they are not stupid. If they had taken all of that at one time they knew they'd have hell to pay. So they played our asses a little at a time.

There's more on the way in the near future. What are we doing to do about it? We piss and moan about other states having hot plates in their cells, TVs in their cells, personal computers, ice chests in their cells, being able to spend \$50 or \$100 at a time in the canteen, having numerous religious rights/ceremonies, care packages from home, etc...Hell, we couldn't keep what we had, why should we think NC will give us anything more?!

We had better wake up and get our act together. Put aside our differences and start promoting unity. What happens to one happens to all!

Finally, let's not ruin this outlet we have in this newsletter. Be smart about what you write!

Butner, NC

"Some people gagged us with tape over our mouths as we were escorted from the prison. It's crazy how my memory would be jarred almost ten years later by seeing similar images from Guantanamo Bay."



onstrations and protests in outside society. They were organized, prepared, and briefed.

What I didn't know then is that PERT is a paramilitary group. They train in preparation for quelling riots and insurrections, handling work stoppages, hostage situations, and so forth. Anyone who is a member of PERT is always on call. When the alert goes out, it goes out to all PERT members throughout the state. They receive their instructions and convene in units to pre-established locations to be full briefed on the emergency situation. Then when they arrive at the prison they arrive with the force of numbers and equipment.

If there was anything I learned from that riot at Polk, it was that these people are well-organized and can easily crush a rebellion if it isn't very well-planned and coordinated.

When they came through the gate on A-block, their presence alone instilled terror and restored order. I remember seeing 50 guards in full body armor lined up at the gate of A-block. The lead man had a tear gas gun. I didn't know what it was at the time, I thought it was a bazooka! They had gas masks on and the whole nine. I thought they were going to kill us.

But they barked orders that nobody disobeyed, and



made us all line up against the wall face first, and sit on our knees. They told us not to talk, not to move, not to turn our head to the side. And as a handful of them kept us like this, the rest of the guards from that unit went through the block and threw away everything. If you had personal property laying out, shoes, whatever, they threw it away. They stripped all the remaining mattresses bare and when everything was cleaned up, they called our names onat a time according to the bunk we were assigned and sent us to our bunk. It was freezing cold because we had busted out all the windows and tore up the heating system, and there were no sheets on the beds. Some people were in their boxers.

At about 9am order was fully restored, but PERT was still there. They prepared pack-outs for breakfast and pulled up buses to begin shipping people out. There were over 700 prisoners at Polk and the cap was supposed to be 335.

The media was out there, and they didn't want us talking to the media. So some people gagged us with tape over our mouths as we were escorted from the prison. It's crazy how my memory would be jarred almost ten years later by seeing similar images from Guantanamo Bay.

The Polk Youth Center Rebellion of 1993

The following is the first personal account by a prisoner to be published about the riot that occurred on New Year's Eve at the Polk Youth Center in Raleigh. That facility had the worst conditions of any prison in the State; prisoner-on-prisoner violence was extreme and the prison regularly held more than double its intended capacity. In an article published in May 1993, the News and Observer declared that "the Polk Youth Institution has been a sorry link in the state prison system for decades." Politicians had promised to close the facility as early as 1974, with no action taken. Just months after the riot, however, NC legislators finally decided to close the facility, which was officially replaced in 1997 by the Polk Correctional Institution in Butner.

I WAS AT POLK YOUTH CENTER DURING THE RIOT ON New Year's Eve 1993. Me and a few guys were standing around smoking cigars and talking while anticipating the New Year. It had to be around 10pm, and lights out was usually at 11pm. But since it was New Year's everybody was anticipating that we would be permitted to stay up until the new year arrived, and for the most part everybody was in good spirits and a generous mood. Back then we still had our own sneakers and jewelry, and we were allowed to get Christmas packages from the street. So everybody had homemade food, cigarettes, and cigars, and it was a pretty festive atmosphere.

I was on A-Block when the riot jumped off. The sergeant came on our block and he told everybody to get on their assigned bunk. Polk was dormitory-styled with 3-high bunks and there were over 100 prisoners in A-Block alone. We got on our bunks and focused our attention on the sergeant. He walked through the block with an air of authority and he said that lights-out would be early that night and that nobody was to get off their bunks. We were kind of surprised because we hadn't done anything wrong, so somebody said, "Why can't we stay up to 11:00?" And he gave a response that was something like, "Because I said so." You could hear people sucking their teeth and muttering under their breath because nobody was feeling it.

At just about that time, somebody yelled out, "Boot Call!" And while the sergeant was walking one way somebody threw a boot at him from behind. When he turned around to try and locate who had thrown the boot, somebody else threw a boot from another direction. Before you knew it boots were flying everywhere and the sergeant took off running out the block, and locked the gate.

For a minute everybody just sat there on our bunks waiting to see what would happen next. But in the next moment we heard and saw commotion over in B-Block. It was pitch black over there, because they had busted out all the lights, and the next thing you know the picnic table came crashing against the bars on B-Block, and then the TV. We knew they were rioting, and when we saw there was no immediate response by the guards other than to lock the gate, somebody yelled "Bust out the lights!" Boots began flying again until all the lights were knocked out, and then the rioting began.

We didn't even have a cause, other than the fact that we were in prison and we just all had pent-up anger and aggression. We began to tear A-block to pieces! We busted out all the windows, tore down the heating system, broke some of the toilets, turned over the bunks, set fires to mattresses and sheets and looted peoples' lockers. Of course there was violence. Some people got hurt really bad, but it was all prisoner-on-prisoner. And the guards wouldn't come in to help. I saw a guy bleeding profusely with his face cut up and another beaten til he was unconscious. They grabbed onto the bars and begged the guards on the other side for help, for medical attention, but they wouldn't open the gate for anything. They had orders.

We rioted until about 4am, and it spread throughout the whole prison. We took over the PA system and we were making announcements over the intercom to all the blocks telling them to burn the place down, tear it up, and "fuck the police." I heard that maybe a guard got beat down on another block and prisoners had captured the keys and were running around in police raincoats. I even heard that they tore a hole in a wall that separated two blocks, and busted up the plumbing in other buildings. In A-block we fought each other, looted each others' lockers, and tore the block to pieces.

Around 5am, the PERT [Prison Emergency Response Team] team arrived. We saw them lining up in formations outside our windows. They were like a paramilitary group, dressed in all black or navy blue and heavily armed and equipped. They looked like the same type of outfit that is assembled to break up dem-

Fight Censorship

As a member of the New Afrikan Black Panther Party, I'm writing you this letter in unity and solidarity as fellow revolutionaries, conscious of the larger issues regarding the US prison system and suppression of prisoners' human and democratic civil rights. I hope that the writing/adminstrative staff will be willing to show a display of revolutionary solidarity by working together to address the wrong done to your organization and prisoners' 1st and 14th amendment rights via the Publication Review Committee's inappropriate rejection of the first issue of this publication. Hopefully, after reading this letter NC prisoners will choose to challenge the wrongful rejection of this newsletter, and can count on your support in doing so.

When reviewing the reasons for rejection, it seems that the publication was censored for violating Chapter D section .0100, as it "depicts, describes, or advocates violence, disorder, insurrection, or terrorist/gang activities against...the government or any of its institutions."

The Publication Review Committee has failed to actually state that the newsletter did in fact "depict, describe, or advocate violence, disorder, etc." as alleged, or display factual grounds to support the reasoning behind this censorship. This shows that the disapproval of the newsletter was done for subjective reasons and was of course an exaggerated response to prison concerns. This can easily be recognized by any lay person when reviewing the disapproved newsletter.

That the Publication Review Committee erred is the most that can be said about the comments on the page 8 in question. The description of the DOC/DOP as "Department of Cow-

"There's more on the way in the near future. What are we doing to do about it?"

ards" and "Division of Pigs" could be disapproved of by DOC/DOP officials, but to go so far as rejecting the publication for this description violates the Turner reasonable relationship standards and falls short of furthering any penological interests of security, order, or rehabilitation.

It is because of the value of the this newsletter as a medium to connect prisoners with each other and the outside world that prisoners have decided to fight the wrongful rejection of the publication through the courts. North Carolina's prison class is very much in need of an opportunity to voice the struggles prisoners in this state have to live through, and this newsletter offers prisoners that voice. To not challenge the newsletter's disapproval would be aiding our own oppression inside this modernized slave system.

Give NC prisoners a heads up on the lawsuit other prisoners are planning to file. In order for possible prisoner-plaintiffs to be eligible to be added to this lawsuit, they will have to have had the newsletter disapproved and have exhausted all possible grievance procedures. This suit will be filed for injunctive relief against the wrongful rejection of the newsletter. In addition it should be known that any prisoner who opts to become a plaintiff will not to have to pay the \$350 filing fee, as this will be handled by the prisoner plaintiff who initiates the lawsuit originally.

Also please print any information of relevance to this lawsuit throughout the year in future issues.

Uhuru Sasa! (Freedom Now!)
Laurinburg, NC



News

Supreme Court Tells California to Cut Prison Population

WASHINGTON — Conditions in California's overcrowded prisons are so bad that they violate the Eighth Amendment's ban on cruel and unusual punishment, the Supreme Court ruled on Monday, ordering the state to reduce its prison population by more than 30,000 inmates.

Monday's ruling in the case, *Brown v. Plata*, No. 09-1233, affirmed an order by a special three-judge federal court requiring state officials to reduce the prison population to 110,000, which is 137.5 percent of the system's capacity. There have been more than 160,000 inmates in the system in recent years, and there are now more than 140,000.

Prison release orders are rare and hard to obtain, and even advocates for prisoners' rights said Monday's decision was unlikely to have a significant impact around the nation.

"California is an extreme case by any measure," said David C. Fathi, director of the American Civil Liberties Union's National Prison Project, which submitted a brief urging the justices to uphold the lower court's order. "This case involves ongoing, undisputed and lethal constitutional violations. We're not going to see a lot of copycat litigation."

State officials in California will have two years to comply with the order, and they may ask for more time. Justice Kennedy emphasized that the reduction in population need not be achieved solely by releasing prisoners early. Among the other possibilities, he said, are new construction,

transfers out of state and using county facilities.

At the same time, Justice Kennedy, citing the lower court decision, said there was "no realistic possibility that California would be able to build itself out of this crisis," in light of the state's financial problems.

California prisons have a recent history of tension and struggle, including a large riot in August 2009 at a facility in Chino, CA as well as a hunger strike currently under way at the segregated housing unit at Pelican Bay.

Prisoners Expose Censorship Scam at Lanesboro CI

NORTH CAROLINA - According to a press release recently sent to major media outlets across the state, which supplies numerous quotes from both guards and prisoners, prisoners' mail at Lanesboro CI has been repeatedly censored as part of an alleged profit-making scheme.

When mail is "disapproved," the prisoner is given the option of either having it destroyed or reshipped back to the sender or to friends and family. Many prisoners choose this second option. It is then the job of the mailroom guard, the same person who chooses whether or not to censor mail, to weigh the package which needs to be reshipped and charge the appropriate amount of money to the prisoners account.

However, in the words of one corrections officer, "Once inmates choose to send home the rejected publications, they must then sign the form giving CO

Westley [the mailroom guard] the permission to deduct the money from their accounts. The scheme works because prisoners are prohibited from being present while their packages are being weighed. Inaccurate weights are written down in order to deduct more money from inmates' accounts, and Westley can pocket the difference."

When asked about his difficulties in receiving mail, one prisoner is quoted as saying, "That woman Westley been stealing my money! I done had a lot of things rejected. The guards told me she be putting down fake weights to send my books and stuff home. I told my Mom to take my things to the post office and weigh them. Westley said it weighed more than it did! She's stealing our money."

If this is true, it would suggest not just that the mailroom guard is stealing money from prisoners' accounts, but that there is a financial incentive for guards to censor material and violate prisoners' first amendment rights.

Pelican Bay SHU Hunger Strike Slated To Start July 1st

CALIFORNIA - Prisoners in the Security Housing Unit (SHU) at Pelican Bay State Prison (California) have called for an indefinite hunger strike, to begin on July 1, 2011, to protest the cruel and inhumane conditions of their imprisonment.

A coalition of grassroots human rights activist groups in the Bay Area called "Prisoner Hunger Strike Solidarity" has also been formed to support the demands of the prisoners participating in the

"A Letter to the Law"

*Dem boy wanna talk like dem wanna gon come
But what you gon' do if you got one gun?
I sing a song for the hero unsung
With faces on the mural of the revolution
No looking back, cousin, Back is what's done
Tell the preacher that God got more than one son
Tell the law my Uzi weighs a ton
I walk like a warrior from them I won't run
On the streets they try to beat us like a drum
In Cincinnati, another brother hung
Again he won't see the sun, with his family stung
They want us to hold justice,
but you've handed me none*



An Update on the Asheville 11

Called “MAYDAY” and “THE INTERNATIONAL WORKERS DAY” by some and Beltane by others, May 1st is an internationally celebrated holiday. The history of resistance on this day goes back primarily to the labor movement of the late 1800’s and early 1900’s.

In the United States this day has seen many different incarnations and uses, from protests and celebrations to strikes and sabotage. On May 1, 2010 nearly \$20,000 worth of damage was done to store front and car windows in a gentrified tourist section of downtown Asheville. The connection between this vandalism and “May Day” is unclear. Nevertheless, the Asheville Police Department wasted no time in arresting eleven people and charging them with the damage. Picked at random, the eleven were swept off sidewalks and into waiting police vehicles. They have become the targets of egregious attempts by the Asheville Police Department to show it maintains control.

What began as ten misdemeanor charges and \$10,000 bail was quickly ratcheted up to \$65,000 bail with an additional three felonies added to every person. This coincided with the Police Chief publicly declaring the arrested individuals to be part of a vast “anti-capitalist conspiracy.” Each are facing over five years in jail; a higher penalty than is often found in domestic violence cases. The arrestees were charged nearly a year ago and still have not gone to trial.

There have been some major developments in the case in the last few weeks. Five of the defendants were slated for trial on Monday April, 11th. As of right now, their trial and all jury trials in Asheville have been suspended. They will not resume until a complete audit of the Asheville Police Department’s (APD) evidence room and its evidence handling procedures has been concluded.

The State Bureau of Investigation has sealed and is investigating the APD property room due to 397 missing tablets of Oxycodone. On Friday, April 1, an Assistant District Attorney and the defense attorney for Terry Landrum, a man facing 19 years for drug trafficking and firearms charges from 2009, went to examine the evidence. They found that two pill containers which once held \$20,000 worth of Oxycodone were empty. Once this

came to light most of the charges against Landrum were dropped.

Records obtained by local news sources reveal that the APD’s longtime evidence manager, Lee Smith, was placed under investigative suspension before his resignation earlier this year. Smith had been placed under investigative suspension on January 25th and resigned on February 18th, after 21 years with the department. District Attorney Ron Moore has claimed that due to Smith’s resignation he had asked for a full audit of drugs, guns and money in late February.

What the APD actually conducted was a “random 10% audit” that returned results with “some areas of concern”. The DA continues to claim that he was not made aware of the nature of this audit or it’s results. The APD Police Chief Bill Hogan claims that a random 10% audit is standard and within the guidelines for a proper investigation.

There are roughly 2,200 cases on hold, and about 13,000 pieces of evidence inside the sealed evidence room. An unknown amount of past cases have been jeopardized due to the APD tampering or falsifying evidence. This investigation comes on the coattails of a statewide investigation into the SBI crime lab, where it was found that technicians were withholding important blood evidence from defense attorneys in numerous cases.

Recently, several defense attorneys have requested audits of their clients’ evidence, including some of the attorneys representing members of the five defendants who were scheduled for trial April 11th. Their lawyers have filed a “motion to exclude physical evidence” based on the APD being unable to produce pieces of evidence it supposedly has against defendants. The investigation into this matter could delay the defendants’ trial by months.

Since this story has broken in the local media, Asheville Police Chief Bill Hogan has announced his retirement. Hogan released a statement saying he was “looking forward to retirement and a new chapter in (his) life.” There was no mention of the recent evidence room scandals in his announcement, though the timing and manner of his retirement point to a direct connection to recent controversies. These developments may delay the 11’s trial indefinitely.

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– Chapel Hill resident

hunger strike.

The hunger strike was organized by prisoners in an unusual show of racial unity. The prisoners developed five core demands, including the elimination of group punishments, the abolition of a “debriefing” (informing) policy and modification of gang status criteria, the end of longterm solitary confinement, adequate food, and the expansion of constructive programs for indefinite SHU prisoners.

North Carolina has thousands of prisoners held in similar conditions in either Supermax facilities or Security Housing Units.

Denver Anarchist Charged with Attempted Murder During Anti-Police March

COLORADO - On Friday May 6th, over one hundred people, mostly young, poor, and angry, took to the streets in defiance of the Denver Police Department. They participated in a march called to confront “police terror” in the Denver Metro area. Specifically, they marched to remember the deaths of Marvin Booker and Oleg Gidenko, two people murdered by area police departments in the last year. This was the fourth in a series of recent, similar anti-police marches held in the Denver area.

As the the march ended, a small firework was set off in the street. Police used this act as a justification to chase one alleged participant down an alley, where she was tackled and beaten by police. This person would later be identified as Amelia Nicol, a 20 year old Colorado resident.

She initially faced a host of outlandish charges, including two counts of attempted murder and arson.

After a pretrial hearing, in which the police officers on duty during the march were questioned by Nicol’s attorney, the Judge threw out the majority of her charges. She is now being charged only with felony possession of an explosive and three misdemeanors. Support work has been done by local comrades with Denver Anarchist Black Cross.

Three Charged with “Rioting” After Takeover of Luxury Condos in Chapel Hill

NORTH CAROLINA - On Saturday, June 18th, dozens of anarchists and other community members staged an angry protest against gentrification and green capitalism at Greenbridge, a “green” development of condos for eco-yuppies.

According to reports, two groups of demonstrators converged on the development around 2 PM; one group of around 20 stood on the street in front while a second group of approximately 25, some masked, entered the lobby of the building and staged a feisty occupation, clapping and chanting anti-gentrification slogans. Police allege that a table, some pieces of art, and the floor of the lobby were damaged. Outside, demonstrators held banners while passing out flyers. When police arrived, the demonstrators inside dispersed, while the protest outside continued for another 45 minutes.

For more than the past three years, anarchists in Chapel Hill, NC have

joined a broad constituency of tenants, homeowners, churchgoers, service workers, and students to fight the development. Many believe that the project has hastened the pace of gentrification and displacement in nearby Northside, a historically African American neighborhood that, despite influxes of students, remains largely multi-racial and working-class in character. In the words of one resident, “The current situation in these communities has caused low morale, confusion and distrust among many longtime homeowners and low-income renters. We feel as if we are treated like dirt.”

Resistance to Greenbridge has taken many forms, including community forums, church-hosted gatherings, media hoaxes designed to undermine the project’s image, banner-drops, a call for a city-wide boycott, smashed windows at the development’s office, an “eviction” of the project’s general contractor, the founding of a center aimed at preserving Northside residents’ life stories and history, graffiti, thousands of wheatpasted posters, and even bomb threats.

Despite support for the development from wealthy developers and the local Left, the opposition (along with an economic recession) has succeeded in bringing the development to its financial knees. Greenbridge has recently been forced to enter foreclosure proceedings, and almost the entire first floor of commercial space remains empty and unfinished. Though some remain supportive, the once popular project has become a highly controversial symbol of racist liberalism and wealthy elitism.

Conditions at Bertie CI Spark a Response

ON SATURDAY, MARCH 12TH, about two dozen comrades and supporters of the prisoners amassed outside Bertie CI in Windsor, NC, a prison facing a tense upswing in radical thought and action. They had received word that two prisoners on Solitary Confinement had recently barricaded themselves in their cells as a protest of prison conditions and repression. This “lock-in” action lasted four days, and was timed to coincide with the outside demonstration on the 12th. It also coincided with the second of two national call-in days to the prison and NC Department of Corrections.

Facing two layers of barbed wire fencing and a row of solitary confinement cells, the demonstrators banged on drums, blew whistles, screamed chants, and held up several gigantic banners reading “Against Prisons” and “Hands Off James Graham.”

They managed to stay at the rural prison for over a half an hour before being warned that they were trespassing and faced arrest. Over the course of the time there, many family members exiting the prison at the end of visitation hours responded kindly and appreciatively to the action. This demo was a small part of a larger trajectory of recent anti-prison activity in NC, including demos at the Buncombe County Jail and Central Prison in Raleigh.

On the inside, the prison administrations priority was to keep the demonstration under wraps from everyone. Usually, when a disturbance happens, the facility will be locked down. On this occasion, the administration decided to proceed as if there was no disturbance in an effort to minimize its impact. This proved to be very difficult, however, with there being a row of solitary confinement cells facing the parking lot and prisoners thus being able to see what was happening. Word of mouth proved to be an effective tool. When people started kicking on the door and flooding others joined in and escalated the response by setting fires.

At least one prisoner was written up for his behavior, his disciplinary report alleging, “creating a riotous type protest and causing other inmates to do the same thing.” Two days later, the prisoners conducting the lock-in were forcefully extracted from their cells, and later promised that many of their demands would be met.

The following is a description of the lock-in action written by one of the prisoners involved, as well as the demands they submitted to prison authorities:

“On March 10th, 2011, myself and a comrade barricaded ourselves in our rooms and refused to come out for anything. This was done in protest of the conditions here at Bertie Correctional In-

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stitution.

On March 14th, we both sent a list of demands to prison officials demanding that we not be treated like animals and slaves and that they institute programs that address our basic human rights. Once they received the list of demands, they sent the Unit Manager, Asst. Unit Manager, Captain, and the Intelligence Lieutenant (he deals with prisoners who are labeled as being part of a Security Threat Group) to our doors to speak to us and ask us if we had any food trays, but neither of us answered and they left. The captain summoned his lil’ “goon squad,” and he came to our cells again, this time accompanied by a guard holding a camera, giving us a direct order to come out of our cells. He received no reply. He stated on the camera that we “had weapons” and that his goons would come and extract us from our cells “to restore order.”

First off, we had no weapons and I didn’t know that refusing to come

out of your cell was causing a disturbance. Once they saw we weren’t coming out, they left. When they returned, it was the Captain along with his goons who had an electric shield and a mace canister the size of a fire extinguisher. They came to my cell first and told me to “submit to the cuffs” and come out of my cell. They received no reply. One of the guards opened my food trap and sprayed mace in my cell and closed my trap hoping that would force me to come out willingly. It didn’t work. Next, they did the same thing again and it was unsuccessful too. Then, the Captain called the guard in the control booth to open my door. My door wouldn’t open courtesy of my barricade. I sat back and waited patiently while listening to the guards cough and choke on the mace as they struggled trying to get my door open. After witnessing this for a good while, they finally got my door open and rushed in my cell, tackled me and held me down while I was handcuffed, chained, and shackled.

I was then thrown in a shower – with the water on – for about five or six minutes, taken to see the nurse for a check-up and placed in a cage. They also ran my comrade’s cell, but I don’t have the exact details.

We had the chance to speak to the Superintendent, Asst. Superintendent, Captain, Intelligence Lieutenant, Unit Manager, and Asst. Unit Manager. In meeting with them, we went down our list of demands and addressed every demand. This is what I was told in response to these demands:

- A new chaplain will be starting on 3/28/11 who will come around and visit the prisoners. Also, they will be making sure there are materials for all religions and no specific religion will be shown favoritism.
- Lack of nurses has been the reason for inadequate medical care and in timely responses to medical emergencies. More nurses are in the process of being hired.
- More dental staff are in the process of being hired as well. The dental floss issue wasn’t discussed.
- The Unit Manager and Asst. Unit Manager were told to make sure we

had clothes daily and they promised to contact the warehouse about making sure our clothing was sanitized.

- The food will be served according to the dietary charts in Raleigh. Basically, no change.
- Maintenance would be contacted to make sure the temperatures are correct, and to clean the vents out.
- I was told to contact a woman in the Education Department about starting up some educational programs for prisoners in solitary.
- I was told to contact Raleigh about the publications ban list.
- I was told we would be given toilet brushes during cell clean-up—and we have been.

We have made great strides in the right direction. We will definitely continue what we have started and will continue in the struggle. Whatever repressive tactics that may be used against us won’t be anything we haven’t experienced at one time or another. The only thing to fear is fear itself and the only thing to lose is these chains.”