



the BLACK ROSE

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Occupy Movement Grows and Spreads Worldwide

WORLD - The Occupy Wall Street movement continues to grow and has now spread across the world, motivating thousands to voice their anger at financial and social inequality, and in some places merging with existing anti-government protests. On October 15th, in response to a call to action from Occupy Wall St., a global "Day of Rage" was observed, and demonstrations took place in at least 951 cities in more than 80 countries around the world. Protesters took their messages and anger to the streets from Hong Kong to Fairbanks, from Miami to London, from Berlin to Sydney, and hundreds more cities large and small.

In Rome, the large demonstration turned into a massively destructive riot, with protesters in masks smashing shop and bank windows, attacking police and burning their vehicles. Italian police, dressed in riot gear, retaliated by firing tear gas and water cannons at the unruly crowd. The riots were the most intense Italy has seen in years, as the population becomes increasingly angry about austerity measures imposed by the government.

Since October 15th, more encampments have been established across the US, and solidarity demonstrations have continued abroad. Despite attempts by liberal outfits like MoveOn.org to shape the occupations, the movement has remained largely self-organized and diverse, and has refused to declare traditional political demands.

In many cities across the US, police and local politicians have responded to the growth of the Occupy movement with a complicated mix of verbal tolerance and outright repression. Occupiers of public parks and plazas in a number of cities, including Denver, Atlanta, Raleigh, St. Louis, and many others, have been beaten and arrested. Protesters have often re-seized their encampment the very next day. Despite the oncoming winter, there is currently no end in sight for the Occupy movement.

California Prisoners End Second Hunger Strike

CALIFORNIA - Mediators who met with hunger strike representatives at Pelican Bay, one of whom had been transferred to Corcoran due to the strike, confirmed on October 13th that prisoners there have decided to stop their hunger strike after nearly 3 weeks. The prisoners have cited a memo from the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) detailing a comprehensive review of every Security Housing Unit (SHU) prisoner in California whose SHU sentence is related to gang validation.

The review will evaluate the prisoners' gang validation under new criteria and could start as early as the beginning of next year. "This is something the prisoners have been asking for and it is the first significant step we've seen from the CDCR to address

the hunger strikers' demands," says Carol Strickman, a lawyer with Legal Services for Prisoners with Children, "But as you know, the proof is in the pudding. We'll see if the CDCR keeps its word regarding this new process."

The mediation team stated that while the memo indicates statewide changes in the gang validation process for SHU prisoners, the CDCR did not address the status of hunger strikers at Calipatria or Salinas Valley prisons, who are not SHU prisoners.

The strike continued in Calipatria for several more days, but prisoners there soon decided to temporarily end their hunger strike as well to regain strength. Hunger strikers were subject to extreme retaliation at the hands of warden Leland McEwen and guards, including withholding water and vitamins. Reports from prisoners indicated that many men were collapsing in their cells and that the guards were doing nothing when alerted. A family member said that the infirmary there was full and that prisoners needing medical care were being transferred to Centinela.

A recent letter from a prisoner at Calipatria states "Men have...placed their lives on the line in order to put a stoppage to all these injustices we are subjected to day in and day out. People would rather die than continue living under their current conditions. ...It is a privilege, an honor to be a part of the struggle, to be a part of history for the betterment of all those inside these cement walls... I will go as far as my body allows me to go."

The historic hunger strike in California, which has now experienced two waves, had at one point spread to eleven facilities across the state. Nevertheless, the CDCR (their DOC) has still not changed any of the core policies surrounding solitary confinement that were being protested, in particular the practice of "debriefing" (snitching) as the only way to get off solitary. Their struggle continues.

Occupy Oakland Declare Historic General Strike, Thousands Shut Down Port

OAKLAND - On Wednesday, November 2nd, tens of thousands of people shut down large segments of the city of Oakland, CA in the first general strike to hit the US in over 65 years. Banks and other corporate stores that refused to shut down were picketed, and in several cases had their windows smashed out. In one instance, Whole Foods, a large corporate grocery chain that threatened to fire workers if they joined the strike, was attacked by a mob of black-masked anarchists hurling chairs and shopping carts.

The strike was initially called for by Occupy Oakland, one of the many protest encampments that has popped up around the country. On Monday, October 24th, Oakland police raided and shut down the occupiers encampment in what they are calling Oscar Grant Plaza, named after a young black man murdered by an Oakland cop two years ago. The following day, hundreds of occupiers at-

tempted to break through police lines and retake their encampment. Police brutally attacked the crowd with rubber bullets and tear gas, and fractured the skull of a young Iraq war veteran named Scott Olsen. Olsen was nearly killed.

The following day, protesters again attempted to retake the park, this time succeeding with minimal police interference. That same night, in an assembly that drew almost 2,000 people, the camp voted overwhelmingly to declare a general strike the following Wednesday.

Though only a fraction of Oakland's overall workforce joined the general strike, it succeeded in shutting down large parts of downtown. Critically, a march late in the day succeeded in shutting Oakland's port, which is the fifth largest in the country. Police were largely hands-off during the daytime, but later cracked down on protesters who attempted to occupy a vacant building in the downtown area. Protesters had set fires to break up the tear gas, and running street battles ensued between cops and protesters on into the night.

Overall, the strike represents a significant escalation, both in terms of tactics as well as political content, for the occupy movement. Since the strike, discussions have centered around occupying foreclosed or empty buildings and establishing neighborhood assemblies throughout the city.

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Friends, Family, and Supporters Protest NC Division of Prisons

RALEIGH - Roughly 60 protesters gathered on Friday, November 4th in the freezing cold rain at the headquarters of the NC Division of Prisons in Raleigh to show our anger and resentment towards the prison system, and solidarity with prisoners struggling on the inside. The crowd represented folks from multiple cities, and in addition to anarchists and anti-prison activists was co-organized with and brought out about 25 family and friends of folks on the inside.

Due to the harassment and recent segregation of many family members on the inside, as well as the constant targeting of politically active NC prisoners and the recent hunger strike in CA, the demo particularly focused on solitary confinement. Folks carried banners like, "Against Solitary - Love for All Prison Rebels," "Solitary is Torture," and "Against Prisons," and shouted chants and slogans against cops and prisons.

Needless to say, cops arrived quickly on the scene and appeared increasingly nervous as the afternoon went on. A delegation of anarchists and prisoners' family members attempted to go in the building, but were prevented from doing so by armed guards and a terrified-looking Director.

After an hour and a half of drumming and screaming, the protesters marched down the street so as to be in view of the rear half of Central Prison, located just behind the

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Division of Prisons building. Though prevented from marching to the fence by a line of police cars, prisoners apparently could see the protesters well enough to gather at the windows in the corridors of the facility, banging on the glass and pointing.

Job Discrimination Alleged at Alexander CI

TAYLORSVILLE - In a grievance filed this past March at Alexander CI in Taylorsville, a prisoner exposed the fact that since 2010 not a single Black inmate has been given a maintenance, tutoring, canteen, or library job. According to our information, this is still the case.

These jobs are significant in part because of the higher pay associated with them (\$1 a day), but also because these jobs enhance a prisoner's chance of being released on their minimum release date do to "gain time" and "merit days."

According to the prisoner who filed the grievance, there are still no prisoners in these occupations, despite the fact that the "majority of the money spent in canteen is spent by black inmates, the majority of the books are read by black inmates, and the majority of the inmates assigned to ABE and GED are black."

The grievance statement asserts that, "Blacks have applied and inquired about these positions," but that none have been given the job. The positions in question are filled by recommendation from program staff and approval by the assistant superintendent.

Prisoner Exposes Abuse and Torture at Lanesboro CI

POLKTON - The following excerpt is from a letter written by a prisoner wishing to expose the long train of abuse visited upon prisoners at Lanesboro CI, particularly those held in solitary:

Dear Sir or Madam,

"I was a close custody prisoner housed at Lanesboro from March 9th, 2004 until November 26th, 2008, at which time I was transferred. During my stay at Lanesboro I was on several occasions subjected to chemical agents such as pepper spray, mace, and tear gas, while locked securely behind a steel door in a single cell where I posed no threat to staff, myself, or anyone else. This was done in response to alleged rule violations for which I was never even written up.

On one occasion I was tear gassed, then placed in full mechanical restraints (handcuffs, waist chain, black box, and shackles) for a period of four hours before being allowed an opportunity to decontaminate, and was never evaluated by medical staff. I was not written up for any type of rule violation. This incident took place because I simply asked an officer to hand me a newspaper that lay on the floor approximately fifteen feet from my cell.

On another occasion I was subjected to tear gas, placed in restraints, then physically beaten by at least two correctional staff (til I lost consciousness), then awakened by having my head held under hot water, then had my head slammed into the shower wall, then had my feet pulled out from under me, at which time I was dragged by shackles back to my single cell where I was placed nude on a steel bed frame and strapped down in four point restraints, then sprayed in the face and genitals with pepper spray and again physically assaulted by guards. I was not seen by medical personnel and was restrained physically for approximately seven hours without a bathroom break, and no staff member ever checked on me to see if I was alright during the entire time I was restrained. I was not charged with any type of rule violation.

Lanesboro staff routinely beat prisoners in single cell units at the prison on the Richmond and Anson units, and teargas single cell-confined inmates on a weekly basis for minor or non-existent rule violations, then destroy grievances that are submitted in order to cover their illegal actions.

If contacted, many former employees of Lanesboro will admit that they quit their jobs there due to the way other staff treated prisoners, not out of fear of attack by us. Turning a blind eye cost former superintendent Rick Jackson and former assistant superintendent Kevin King their positions after some of this abuse was exposed in the past.

I hope you will print my letter to show the public the type of injustices that take place at Lanesboro CI. Maybe it will other prisoners a reason to write them or someone they know, or that they personally witnessed."

Anarchists Occupy Vacant Building, Evicted by Police with Guns Drawn

CHAPEL HILL - On the night of November 12th, a group of about 50 - 75 people occupied the 10,000 square foot Chrysler Building on the main street of downtown Chapel Hill. Notorious for having an owner who hates the city and has bad relations with the City Council, the giant building has sat empty for ten years.

Following the Carrboro Anarchist Bookfair, a group "in solidarity with occupations everywhere" marched to the building, amassing outside while banners reading "Occupy Everything" and "Capitalism left this building for DEAD, we brought it back to LIFE" were raised in the windows and lowered down the steep roof. Much of the crowd soon filed in through one of the garage door entrances to find a short film playing on the wall and dance music blasting.

Others remained outside in case of police attack, and passed out "Welcome" packets to passersby explaining the reason behind the building occupation and detailing the possible uses of the space once "freed from the stranglehold of rent." The text declared the initial occupation to be the work of "autonomous anti-capitalist occupiers," rather than Occupy Chapel Hill, but the building takeover quickly drew the involvement of many Occupy Chapel Hill participants, who are camped just several blocks down the street.

A concert happened later in the night, and people began bringing furniture and tools into the space. By the following day, occupants had assembled a makeshift kitchen, radical library, and tool area, removed all the boards nailed to the windows, and hosted an assembly on anti-prison struggle in NC.

Occupants received word that eviction was likely to come later that day. As preparations were being made and support being sought elsewhere in the city to defend the space, a massive police presence blocked both sides of Franklin St., established a perimeter, and rushed onto the property with assault rifles and handguns drawn. Taken unawares, people on the sidewalk, including media, were made to lie on the concrete with gun barrels in their backs. Eight people were ultimately arrested, seven charged with breaking and entering, and one with resisting arrest. This was the largest police raid of its kind in Chapel Hill in recent history.

As the police raid occurred, a crowd of occupiers, supporters, and others gathered around the building, screaming at the police and chanting. A benefit concert was quickly organized for that night, and as people were bailed out at the jail, a march was organized to leave from the concert. At approximately 10:30 pm, a group of around 75 masked demonstrators bearing black flags, drums, and a banner that read "Capitalism leaves us all at gunpoint" took to the streets, with no arrests.

Corporate media coverage of the event has framed it largely as a police overreaction, with front page stories bearing images of cops with guns pointed at old women and legal observers. In response, on November 14th the city called for a press conference so that the police chief could justify his actions. The strategy backfired, with Town Hall packed full of occupation supporters and angry civilians. While the media asked critical questions, people in the back of the room held signs and booed and screamed at the Mayor. Upon the end of the conference, the crowd marched out of the building chanting, "Occupy Everything."

It seems clear that more is soon to come with this new movement, as anti-capitalists seek to take public space for their struggle, and the general population backlashes against "excessive" police force.

SUBMIT YOUR NEWS!

Prisoners will be a large source of the news and updates for this bulletin. If you have any reportbacks or news from your facility, including reportbacks, relevant personal accounts, communiqués, news, or proposals, please submit them to:

News Bulletin
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