

!ROCK!

★ Working to Extend Democracy to All ★

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HEARINGS CONTINUE

CDCR Set to Defend Policies; Prisoners and Advocates Call for Comprehensive Change

*By the Prisoner Hunger Strike
Solidarity Coalition*

Advocates and loved ones of California prisoners will travel across the state on Tuesday to attend a special hearing of the California Public Safety Committee on “new policies” being proposed by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR). Tuesday’s hearing is the second hearing convened in direct response to this past summer’s massive prisoner hunger strike in protest of California’s use of solitary confinement in its notorious prison system.

The CDCR will tout so-called reforms in its “Inmate Segregation” policies, and is expected to claim that comprehensive changes to its isolation and anti-gang poli-

cies are underway. Advocates, activists, lawyers, and prisoners themselves have reviewed the CDCR’s new policies and will show the department’s changes do little to diminish the use of extreme isolation.

Prisoners and their supporters are calling for elected officials to enact legislation that will comprehensively diminish, if not all together do away with the state’s use of prolonged solitary confinement. A lively rally will be held right after the hearing.

“Isolating large numbers of inmates in the SHU for long periods of time is an expensive and deeply troubling practice that undermines effective rehabilitation and long-term public safety,” said state senator Loni Hancock in a press release. “We are working towards meaningful change, and at the end of the day we want to get it right,” continued Hancock, who has spearheaded the hearings along with Assemblyperson Tom Ammiano.

The CDCR has congratulated itself on developing comprehensive changes to its prisoner management and segregation policies, issuing a lengthy and often confusing “revision” of its policies where it claims to have made reforms to how it targets, or “validates” prisoners as members of “security threat groups (STG)” and how a prisoner held indefinitely in solitary confinement could work their way out based on its “step down program (SDP).” Pelican Bay prisoner Antonio Guillen has been held in solitary confinement in Pelican Bay’s Security Housing Unit (SHU) has reviewed every iteration of the policy. “The new policy outlines who is eligible for validation as a STG member or associate and subse-

quently placed in the Step Down Program. Which, for all intents and purposes, is the SHU,” said Guillen in a written message. “The way the new STG policy is drafted goes far beyond the practices used to validate prisoners in the past. Under the old process a prisoner could only be validated if he or she was considered a member or associate of the several, so-called “traditional prison gangs.” But under the new STG policy ANYONE can be subjected to this abusive practice, as a wider net has been cast. Thus, making no one safe from the validation process and ensuring and increase in the SHU population.”

Indeed, under the new regulations the CDCR identifies at least 1500 security threat groups and reserves the right to categorize any group of three or more prisoners that “presents a potential threat to the security of the institution.” The new step down program still hinges on prisoners de-briefing – or snitching – in order to be considered for any increase in privileges or the possibility of returning to general population from solitary.

“CDCR’s proposed regulations are just smoke and mirrors.” Say civil right attorney Anne Weills, who will be a panelist at Tuesday’s hearings. “Behind the turgid and confusing language of the CDCR’s documents is the same unconstitutional practice of indefinite detention and solitary confinement. The new policy with its draconian disciplinary matrix gives prison officials almost total discretion to find someone guilty of alleged gang activity, allowing a prisoner to remain in the SHU for the rest of their lives.” ●

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SO THIS IS OUR BANNED TESTIMONY

Pelican Bay prisoners statement to legislators

For Release Tuesday, February 11, 2014

We are prisoners at Pelican Bay State Prison who have all lived for over 15 years locked 23 hours a day in small windowless cells, without ever being able to hug or touch our families, without ever seeing birds, trees, or the outside world, with no programs or chance for parole. California keeps us in these torturous conditions not because of any violence we have committed, but because it believes we are affiliated with a gang, often based on artwork or photos we possess, tattoos we have, literature we read, who we talk to, or anonymous informants statements that we have no way of challenging. We are put in Pelican Bay not for any specific term of months or years for misconduct we have committed, but indefinitely, which in practice means forever- unless we become informants.

Last summer we went on hunger strike - we were willing to starve ourselves to death rather than continue to endure these dehumanizing conditions forever. We ended the strike because several compassionate legislators promised to call the hearings that are taking place today. Yet today the legislators will hear from psychologists, lawyers, other experts, corrections officials - but not from us - who have the most experience with the conditions we face - because California (CDCR) prison officials refuse to let us testify, even remotely via video or audio which they could easily do.

So this is our banned testimony: CDCR claims to have now instituted a reform program. It is a sham, just like the so called reform they instituted a decade ago after a court settlement which resulted in no real change. This new reform effort still maintains the basic conditions at Pelican Bay, and will continue to keep prisoners in isolation for vague gang affiliation based on artwork, literature, communications, or informants' testimony that does not meet California's judicial standards for reliability in criminal trials. California is still unwilling to move to a real behavior based system where prisoners are given determinate terms in solitary after due process hearings at which they are found guilty of some serious misconduct such as assault,

murder, rape or drug dealing. Instead, these new policies widen the net of prisoners who can be labeled as gang affiliates and isolated based on that label. These unjust and ineffective policies are very expensive and have already cost our state millions of tax dollars which could be put to better use.

Moreover, even those prisoners who need to be isolated from the general population because of the violence they have committed while in prison ought to be treated humanely. There is no reason California can't run very high security prisons that allow prisoners held in segregation to have contact visits with family, phone calls to family and friends, educational and rehabilitation programs, more out of cell time, cells with windows, recreational yards that allow for small groups to recreate together and see the outside world: in short, segregation from the general population, but not torture or dehumanization.

We have written petitions and letters to the Governor, filed a class action Federal lawsuit, and gone on hunger strikes seeking real reform, not the bogus reform Californian officials now propose. It's time for California to do the right thing. It is time for the legislature to enact meaningful reforms. •

Todd Ashker, C58191, D4 121

Arturo Castellanos, C17275, D1-121

Sitawa Nantambu Jamaa (Dewberry),

C35671, D1-117

Antonio Guillen, P81948, D2-106

SOLITARY CONFINEMENT

CDCR get Slammed at Legislative Hearings

Prisoner Hunger Strike Solidarity, 2/11/14

Hundreds of people from across the state packed two hearing rooms of both public safety committees of the state legislature today to represent the interests of California State prisoners.

Despite attempts by the California Department of Corrections to insure the public that they are acting with prudence to change people's gang validations, and correct injustices and general inhumane conditions in prison Security Housing Units, testimony from experts and the public continued to unmask the basic torture and impunity of the CDCR's policies in maintaining prolonged isolation and prisons that fundamentally violate human rights.

While the CDCR claimed that new regulations would change their inhumane system, panelists, the public, and the legislators themselves seemed unconvinced. Testimony charged that the CDCR's changes to its regulations did not end California's use of indefinite extreme isolation; violations of basic human rights by the state's solitary confinement units will not change by its new policies; and that the controversial use of debriefing—or informing on other prisoners—were still the primary way a prisoner could get out of indefinite solitary confinement.

Assemblyperson Tom Ammiano cut off the CDCR several times during their presentations, saying they were “over answering” simple questions. Ammiano said its regulations “missed the point,” and said that CDCR's so-called changes were counter-intuitive in regulating a system that was predicated on the use of solitary.

Professor Craig Haney, a leading expert on the use of solitary testified that “the United States' prison system is an outlier compared to the rest of the world. California is an outlier compared to the rest of the US.” He said while much of the rest of the world has condemned solitary confinement as torture, California's use of such an extreme form of the practice was unprecedented and shocking. California as an outlier continued to be echoed throughout the day.

In a statement released today by prisoners from the Pelican Bay Short Corridor Human Rights Movement who “have all lived for over 15 years locked 23 hours a day in small windowless cells, without ever being able to hug or touch our families, without ever seeing birds, trees or the outside world, with no programs or chance for parole,” they assert “California keeps us in these torturous conditions not because of any violence we have committed, but because it believes we are affiliated with a gang, often based on artwork or photos we possess, tattoos we have, literature we read, who we talk to or anonymous informants' statements that we have no way of challenging.”

The prisoners also make clear that the “CDCR's reform program widens the net of prisoners who can be labeled as gang affiliates and isolated based on that label. These unjust and ineffective policies are very expensive and have already cost our state millions of tax dollars which could be put to better use.”

The prisoners go on to say that “Cal-

ifornia is still unwilling to move to a real behavior based system where prisoners are given determinate terms in solitary after due process hearings at which they are found guilty of some serious misconduct, such as assault, murder, rape or drug dealing. Instead, these new policies widen the net of prisoners who can be labeled as gang affiliates and isolated based on that label. These unjust and ineffective policies are very expensive and have already cost our state millions of tax dollars which could be put to better use.” •

ALABAMA'S WOMEN PRISON POPULATION: A 930.7 PERCENT INCREASE SINCE 1978

By Charles J. Dean | cdean@al.com

A developing and disturbing story has been the allegations leveled at the staff of Julia Tutwiler Prison for Women that for decades the women imprisoned at Tutwiler have been subjected to violence in the form of rape and other abuses by staff.

An investigation by the U.S. Justice Department found what it termed the “toxic, sexualized environment” at Tutwiler and the failure of prison officials to address the problem, despite having knowledge that it persisted for decades.

Alabama has seen a 930.7 percent increase in the number of women in prisons since 1978

No one has yet to put a number to how many women may have been sexually assaulted over the years. But what one can do is conclude that the opportunities for abuse have increased over the years as the female prison population has dramatically increased in Alabama and across the nation.

So, here are some numbers for you to mull as the Tutwiler story continues to evolve.

In 1978, the total number of women in Alabama prisons and jails, both state and federal inmates, numbered just 257. As low as the number was, it was still high enough to rank Alabama 13th in the nation in the number of women in prison.

In terms of women prisoners per 100,000 populations, Alabama's 1978 number put

the state at 12 women behind bars for every 100,000 Alabamians. The national average at the time was 10 women for every 100,000 Americans.

Fast forward to 2012. By the end of that year there were 2,649 women in Alabama prisons, both state and federal – a 930.7 percent increase from the number in 1978. That number ranked Alabama at 12th in the nation in total female prison population.

But in terms of women prisoners for every 100,000 Alabamians, that ratio had increased to 101 women in prison for every 100,000 in state population. Nationally, that number was 63 per every 100,000 Americans.

Only Oklahoma, Idaho and Kentucky had more women in prison per every 100,000 in state population in 2012.

Alabama has long had one of the highest rates in the nation for male prisoners for every 100,000 Alabamians. Overall, Alabama in 2012 had 650 persons imprisoned in either a state or federal prison ranking the state number three in the nation. •

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AMMIANO ASSEMBLY BILL COULD MARK PROFOUND CHANGE IN CA SOLITARY CONFINEMENT

By Prisoner Hunger Strike Solidarity
Coalition

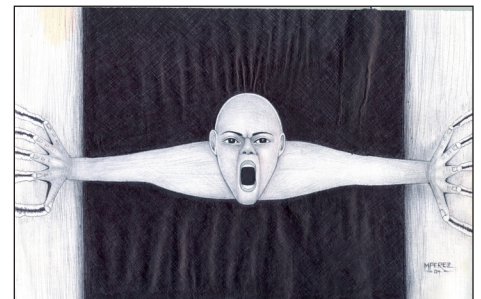
Oakland—California Assembly member Tom Ammiano has proposed legislation that could significantly restrict how solitary confinement is used in California prisons. Assembly Bill 1652 comes after massive public pressure and expert testimony exposed the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's (CDCR) feeble attempts to defend its notorious solitary confinement and gang management policies at a special hearing on Tuesday.

“Hundreds of prisoners have been sent to the Security Housing Unit (SHU) isolation cells for reasons that have nothing

to do with crimes they have committed, and without adequate opportunity to challenge those assignments,” said Ammiano in a statement released this week. “Today, in public hearing, we heard the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) say it's changing those practices, but the changes are not enough. I've seen the conditions at Pelican Bay State Prison, and agree with international groups like Amnesty International who say these deprivation conditions do not meet accepted human rights standards.”

Ammiano's bill (AB1652) would put a 36-months cap on how long someone targeted as part of a “security threat group” could be kept in solitary confinement. Current CDCR practice allows for prisoners to be thrown into extreme isolation indefinitely. During Tuesday's hearing, solitary confinement expert Prof. Craig Haney noted that most other countries in the world have abolished the use of indefinite solitary, upholding international human rights standards condemning it as torture. The proposed bill would also make prisoners held in solitary eligible to receive the “good time credits” all other prisoners are able to earn toward a reduced sentence.

“This could mark a very profound shift in California's shameful and torturous use of solitary confinement,” said Azadeh Zohrabi of the Prisoner Hunger Strike Solidarity Coalition. “We are glad to see that assembly member Ammiano seems to be understanding that we must aim at this most egregious use of violence against imprisoned people as a starting point to the serious changes that need to happen within California's prisons. Moving forward, we would like to see these reforms be applied retroactively to the people who have been living under these horrendous conditions for decades, and we'd like to work to get as many of our loved ones out of solitary, to keep them out, and to fight against anyone ever having to be subjected to this torture to begin with.” •



Mario Perez "The Voiceless"

HINDSIGHT IS 20/20

[This article was written during HS3, on September 2, 2013, and has been edited for length by your editor.]

If indeed hindsight provides 20/20 vision for us as a people then it is high time that we see clearly today what did not work in the past, what does not work in the present and yes, what will not work toward a better future morally or economically regarding the penal system. There is nothing new about getting tough on crime here in America or how to break the so-called hardened criminal—especially as a concept here in California.

The most notorious control unit in U.S. history was built here on an island in the San Francisco Bay. Alcatraz 1933-1963 was designed specifically for the “incorrigibles” or as they call us today the “worst of the worst.” The conditions at Alcatraz were so harsh that being sentenced to serve time there was roundly dubbed “death by regulation.” By 1962 American experts were expanding on the new advances in “behavioral therapy” by studying techniques practiced and mastered by China, Russia, and North Korea which had managed to break and/or train hardened soldiers. A diabolical consensus here decided to use these techniques in the American penal system, mainly because they leave behind no physical evidences for the American society to measure their moral compasses against. The construction of these new style control units not only comported with the then federal mandate on prisons in the U.S.A. to adhere to the “evolving standards of decency”, these techniques also satisfied the guard’s union and victim rights groups’ thirst for blood, for administrative dominance, and for class supremacy over minority prisoners and their families—all under the color of law.

Everyone knows that it is critical to think, yet very few know what it is to think critically or to engage in the process of critical thinking. This is why it has been difficult for us as a society to rally around and explore our own positive change, even in areas like this, where we are so informed by past missteps, mistakes, and the economic miscalculations we’ve endured. California spent an approximate \$9.6 billion on prisons versus \$5.7 billion on the whole U.C. system (and state colleges). California has built only one college since 1980 versus 21 prisons, and is currently fighting to build even more. California spends ap-

proximately \$8,667 per college students versus 45,006 per prisoner (*Time* magazine 2-2-2012). Gov. Brown resists the court’s orders to ease the overcrowding even while society, now being armed with a moral compass, orders him to end the torturous practice of long term isolation. Experts have already found the brain (be it dog, ape, or human) does not function normally without stimulation (including the nervous system), and likewise it does not function normally with too much stimulation—confirming that long term isolation for any reason actualizes torture. This new style of sensory deprivation, coupled with the components of perceptual isolation over a period of years or decades is repugnant to the consciousness of any thinking person.

So let’s be clear, we are already confined and sentenced to prison but suddenly we are then deemed a “threat to the safety and security of the institution” for being “associated” with “gang” and “criminal” activity. These are vague and relative terminologies which are pushed into the hearts and minds of citizens just the way racists produced oppressive Jim Crow laws, then repressive J. Edgar laws, but now there’s this sort of angry, inebriated chunk of the working middle class with no conscience other than their belief that being a good citizen means supporting any law or war that justifies their anger. The war on gangs and crime are old favorites.

Truth is there’s a distinct and qualitative difference between one breaking a law for one’s own individual self-interest and one violating in the interests of a class or group of people when the laws being broken are a source of oppression. Imagine the premise which emboldened the early Americans who revolted against the Crown. This was a crime that today could be characterized as “gang activity” and “criminal behavior” threatening safety and security, and immediately landing all of the signatories of the Declaration of Independence in eternal isolation (here in the Short Corridor) because a groups is a gang, their ideas are called conspiring in criminality and the hyperbole would’ve convinced society that they are monsters. It takes 20/20 vision to recognize these terms as relative and a critical thinker would follow the money and find a multi-million (even billion) dollar warehousing consortium behind all the language and eloquently framed media responses and political wordings that keeps our society so fearful and divided against ourselves—even to the point of bankrupting our own

government programs and education system. Worse, there’s no solution in sight.

My point is this; we need folks to think deeper now, and to think outside the box. Our hunger strikes are only making a sinister penal system even more sinister with this new STG1 and STG2 setup down program that will only work to broaden their web of deceit. Like Cube said in Higher Learning, “We’re behind enemy lines dog!”

Real eyes realize real lies! •

Donnie Phillips, D3-214

Pelican Bay, CA

EDITORIAL COMMENTS 3-3

Stamp and money donations are way down. Mark and I had to buy 200 stamps to get the January issue of *Rock* out to California readers (Washington and Oregon prisoners did not receive the January issue due to a lack of stamps). I would have had to buy two hundred more to get the February issue out had it not been for a last minute donation of 200 stamps by a prisoner on San Quentin’s Death Row. This issue is done and ready to the printer, but as it stands I have just over 100 stamps, about 450 less that we need, or more than \$220 just for postage. Even so, due to a donation from a Washington prisoner, we have restarted sending out newsletters to prisoners in Washington and Oregon.

Mark and I will finance as much as needed to get the next couple of issues out. At a rate of approximately \$600 per issue this can get costly fast. If contributions don’t pick up we will first drop those who have received the newsletter for a long time without contributing so much as a single stamp. If that doesn’t work we’ll stop publishing *Rock*.

If this newsletter is not important enough for a sufficient number of prisoners to pay for it, then it is not important enough for Mark and me to continue publishing it. Mark is 76 and I’m 72 years old. There’s no use in us wasting our few remaining years (and resources) on something you don’t think is important enough to support.

If I make the financial situation of *Rock* seem like it is all the fault of prisoners; that is clearly not the case. I know that many of you don’t like my leftist editorial comments and are not willing to support what you feel amounts to communist ideology. I can respect that. So why read it then? If it’s only for the prison-related news, then this

MISSION STATEMENT OF THE PELICAN BAY HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT FIRST AMENDMENT CAMPAIGN

*By Kijana Tashiri Askari, Baridi Yero,
Abdul Olugbala Shakur, Kamau Askari,
Sitawa Nantambu Jamaa, Sondai Kamdibe*

We, the captive class of New Afrikan Black Revolutionaries at Pelican Bay State Prison in Crescent City, Calif., are confronted with a dilemma by having our mail and our revolutionary reading materials stolen or confiscated by fascist vigilantes under the spurious premise that we are promoting or involved in gang activity related to the Black Guerilla Family (BGF). These tactics are largely designed to target, attack, sabotage and neutralize the many initiatives, proposals, books, pamphlets and projects that we have developed for purposes of empowering, informing and rebuilding our communities with positive ideas of nation building.

Hence, this negative contradiction has made it necessary for us New Afrikans to formulate the Pelican Bay Human Rights Movement First Amendment Campaign for purposes of not only combating this contradiction, but to also protect and defend against the litany of human rights abuses that all oppressed people are confronted with. Thus we need the immediate support of all demographics from every community to get involved so that we can press forward with this objective.

For those who are unaware, in January and February of 2006, our captors created a “Communications Management Unit” (CMU) within the short corridor of the D-Facility Security Housing Unit (SHU) in housing units D1-D4. The institution and application of this CMU is illegal and arbitrary for the following principal reasons: 1) It was never promulgated through the Administrative Procedures Act for purposes of reclassifying the prisoners who have been designated to be housed in the CMU; 2) the staff assigned to operate the CMU is poorly trained with no concrete training in constitutional law, in particular from the standpoint of how our First Amendment freedoms of speech, expression and association are guaranteed to us in spite of our captive status; and 3) staff have no diversity training, knowledge or understanding of the many cultures, races and nationalities of individuals who now find themselves housed in the CMU.

This truth is particularly made evident as it relates to the captive class of New Afrikan Black revolutionaries, as there is not a single Black officer assigned to the Institutional Gang Investigators (IGI) Unit, which is largely responsible for trampling upon our human rights to free speech, expression and association.

The standing reason given for the implementation of the CMU in the SHU at the U.S. colony of Pelican Bay was your atypical sensationalized story of “the need to control, neutralize and negate unlawful criminal activities by alleged prison gang members.” But there is a distinct absence of any mechanisms in place that would deter our captors from violating our human rights.

We are well aware of the fact that where there is a void, by not having any qualitative oversight or control over any typical operation, the propensity for totalitarian control – abuse of power – becomes the primary focus of its operative existence. The Bernie Madoff Ponzi schemes are a prime example of this truth. Hence, the urgent need for the First Amendment Campaign, which will operate under the social principles of communal-cooperative work – Ujima-Ujamaa – via the construct of New Afrikan dialectical materialism.

Objectives of the First Amendment Campaign

The First Amendment Campaign will be centralized and compartmentalized into various teams in order to scientifically aid the strategic and cohesive preparation of effective responses as we struggle towards helping those whose human rights are being abused. The campaign’s primary function will be to serve as an “oversight committee” as it relates to responding to any and all potential First Amendment constitutional violations, as predicated upon the concrete material facts presented to our subsidiary teams focusing on investigation, research, propaganda and community relations and community defense. Through these teams the oversight committee will serve as the “brain trust” by coordinating the logistics for appropriate action regarding actual First Amendment constitutional violations.

The investigative team’s primary responsibility will be to identify the potential First

Amendment constitutional violations and gather all related material facts, data and evidence for purposes of processing it to the oversight committee.

The research team’s primary responsibility will be to research the potential First Amendment constitutional violations for purposes of determining their degree and extent. All relevant findings will be forwarded to the oversight committee for assessing constitutional standing.

The propaganda and community relations team’s primary responsibility will be to maintain communication with the public regarding the importance of prisoners’ First Amendment constitutional freedoms of speech, expression and association and how we still maintain these human rights in spite of our captive status, yet our oppressors are depriving us of them for arbitrary and unjust reasons.

This team will also be responsible for updating the community on any active legal cases being fought in the courts and any current First Amendment human rights abuses being perpetrated by our captors. This entails creating viable working relationships and technology infrastructure in our communities, using, for example, public radio, the internet, newspapers, magazines and the state Legislature.

The community defense teams will operate upon the final synthesis reached by the oversight committee by putting into social practice the material interpretation of its conclusion concerning the First Amendment violation and/or human rights abuse that the people are being subjected to, as it is our duty to ensure the people that we’re here to serve them by defending and protecting their human rights. The personnel of the community defense teams will consist of human rights activists, volunteers and recruits who are attorneys, paralegals and those with some type of knowledge about prisoners and prison history and conditions.

All of the teams will be responsible for identifying material resources and establishing contacts with people who are willing and able to assist in the advancement of the First Amendment Campaign through financial donations, organizing community fundraisers, internet searches, media outreach and volunteering their time.

The success of the campaign will largely

depend upon the pool of human rights activists and volunteer recruits who will be willing to struggle in harmony with us New Afrikan Black revolutionaries – who have the desire, commitment and courage to see humanity advanced through defending and protecting the human rights of all oppressed people. There is hardly a single community or family not impacted by these First Amendment abuses in light of the ominous proliferation of slave kamps (prisons) that has led to the removal – kidnapping – of many from the oppressed communities.

Current litigation needs support

Efforts are still being made by Kijana Tashiri Askari to obtain a permanent injunction to negate this fascism in the legal case of *Harrison v. D.E. Milligan, et al.*, No. C-09-4665-51(PR). Brother Kijana is also currently challenging the arbitrary bans on the Swahili language and George Jackson's book "Blood in My Eye" in the legal case of *Harrison v. S. Burris, et al.*, No. C-13-2506-JST (PR). We encourage the community to send letters of support to the court to voice your outrage on what literally amounts to "cultural terrorism" that the captive class of New Afrikans is being subjected to.

Please write to Judge Susan Illston, U.S. Northern District Court, 450 Golden Gate Ave., San Francisco, CA 94102, regarding the case of *Harrison v. D.E. Milligan*, C-09-4665-51, and Judge Jon S. Tigar, U.S. Northern District Court, 450 Golden Gate Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94102, regarding the case of *Harrison v. S. Burris*, C-13-2506-JST. •

One aim! One goal! One purpose!

SUPPORT THE PRISONER-LED MOVEMENT TO END LONG TERM SOLITARY CONFINEMENT!

In response to the largest prison hunger strike in US history, California lawmakers are holding the 3rd legislative hearing on solitary confinement in CA prisons.



ALL OUT TO SACRAMENTO TUESDAY FEB 11TH!

State Capitol - 11th & N
9:30am HEARING, Rm 4203
12:00pm RALLY
2:00pm LOBBY legislators

"We will be with the prisoners... in the courts, in the legislature, and out in the community. We will use every venue available to us, UNTIL THE TORTURE IS ENDED."

- Marie Levin of Prisoner Hunger Strike Solidarity Coalition, sister of Hunger Striker Sitawa Jaama.

RIDESHARES: [RSVP: http://bit.ly/1dUAH68](http://bit.ly/1dUAH68)

Southern CA Contact Virginia Classick 818.225.0410
 Oakland Contact Tynan 415.361.8436
 rides from MacArthur BART, 7am on Tues, Feb 11
 Northern CA Contact Verben 707.442.7465

prisonerhungerstrikesolidarity.wordpress.com

DECLINING A DEAL WITH THE DEVIL: COERCIVE JOURNALING REQUIRED TO 'STEP DOWN' FROM SOLITARY CONFINEMENT

By NCTT-Cor-SHU, 1-30-2014

"The chief function of the disciplinary power is to 'train'... It 'trains' the moving, confused, useless multitudes of bodies and forces them into a multiplicity of individual elements – small, separate cells ... combinatory segments.

"Discipline 'makes' individuals; it is the specific technique of a power that regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise ... The exercise of discipline presupposes a mechanism that coerces by means of observation: an apparatus in which the techniques that make it possible to see [the] induce[d] effects of power, and in which, conversely, the means of coercion make those on whom they are applied clearly visible."

– Michel Foucault: "Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison"* (1977)

Salutations, Brothers and Sisters,

Our need to have this discussion comes on the heels of a number of people who were taken before the Departmental Review Board (DRB) here at California State Prison-Corcoran SHU (Security Housing Unit) on Nov. 12, 13 and 14, 2013, pursuant to the new SDP (Step Down Program) pilot program.

Comrade Zaharibu Dorrrough also attended the DRB on Nov. 13, 2013, and was placed in Step 2 of the SDP with an understanding that, if accepted and completed, Zah would be transferred to Tehachapi SHU and placed in Step 3, where, according to Section 3334 (k) (Page 153), contact visits are allowed.

Contradictory positions are being taken by administration officials as to whether or not participating in the self-directed journals portion of the CDCR's cognitive restructuring program (brainwashing), as described in Section 700.2 of the pilot program, is mandatory. [SFBayView.com, at <http://sfbayview.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/CDCR%E2%80%99s-Oct.-11-2012-Security-Threat-Group-Pilot-Program.pdf>, is the only place online where the SDP can be found.]

But since implicit in making it a requirement that people participate in those programs available in each step and that any failure to do so will result in a person being moved back to Step 1 until that person agrees to subordinate him/herself to the dictates of Section 700.2, the cognitive restructuring/brainwashing program is, clearly, mandatory.

It has also been established that a facility has been opened at Pelican Bay in Del Norte County for those prisoners who have medical and mental health problems.

If prisoners choose not to participate in the Step Down Program or any aspect of it, retaliation follows, ranging from a person being put back in Step 1 to a person being transferred to Pelican Bay.

There is absolutely nothing at all that distinguishes the DRB and STG (Security Threat Group) Committee from any other committee. And while the new policies will result in some prisoners being released to general population, these new policies do not represent a pathway to general population or even a less restrictive housing environment, as the CDCR is quick to claim for certain prisoners.

Specifically though, it is the CDCR's attempt to brainwash us all through their behavior modification program. And that is exactly what the cognitive restructuring program is.

We have had the opportunity to see and read the self-directed journals. They are insidious.

The NCTT-Cor-SHU (New Afrikan Revolutionary Nationalism (NARN) Collective Think Tank Corcoran SHU) has articulated in previous statements** how the self-directed journals, their themes, and the additional "integrated, cognitive behavior change program" are a systematic and progressive brainwashing initiative designed to emulate in those subjected to it the same personality restructuring as the debriefing process – i.e., character invalidation, Skinnerian operant conditioning (learned helplessness) etc. – introduction of state-approved new attitudes through "thought reformation," criminalization of cultural mores, disorganization of group standards, prohibition of group activities not consistent with brainwashing objectives, encour-

ter group sensitivity sessions, Synanon Attack Therapy etc.

It is our assessment that politically mature and ideologically advanced men and women could be subjected to such brainwashing techniques and suffer no deleterious effects, save the insult towards one's dignity that the state would dare attempt to use such transparent and futile techniques against us.

However, that is not the case for younger and/or less developed prisoners. Many of these young men and women may view the themes of some of these journals and have no experiential basis from which to even understand their meaning, let alone the processes attendant to them, thus leaving them all vulnerable to these brainwashing techniques.

In order to successfully complete this aspect of the Step Down Program, you must be willing to accept and believe all of the absolute worst things that the state has said about us all and continues to say – and invalidate yourself completely.

Prison is not conducive to the maturation process, and the less developed we are, the easier it is, even in the face of resistance, for us to be turned into whatever the state wants us to be. That is why study is so very important.

Taking certain people before the DRB and placing them in certain steps is an effort by the CDCR to try and exploit the perception of influence of principled people and to try and legitimize the Step Down Program itself and the brainwashing components thereof.

It is the CDCR's hope that they will be able to use as leverage the decades of sensory deprivation confinement of many of us. The prospect of our having access to our families and loved ones will persuade us to comply, and they will use what they perceive as our influence to herd untold numbers of underdeveloped and impressionable men and women into a process we know full well will result in them being transformed into broken people, a submissive and subservient population of prisoners who will make the misappropriation of tax dollars a more orderly enterprise.

There is no set of circumstances in which any principled person would agree to aid the state in carrying out such an insidious, vile and patently evil process.

The Step Down Program and Cognitive Restructuring Program that the CDCR is attempting to implement seems to have been first introduced in the New Mexico

Penitentiary after the riot there in 1980. In a book titled "The Hate Factory" by G. Hirliman, there is a discussion about the efforts to implement the Cognitive Restructuring Program as part of a "behaviorally based step program," as well as efforts to defeat it – by prisoners, their families and prison reform advocates, as well as a lawsuit filed by the ACLU to stop its use. From Hirliman's book (Pages viii-ix; see Google Books for a digital version of these pages):

"The genius who shaped the Cognitive Restructuring program for prisons is Dr. Stanton Samenow. He believes that people are born criminals. It's not the environment or anything else that makes a criminal: it's in his genes, he's predisposed. Therefore, there's only one cure: reprogramming. ... Doctor Samenow began applying this process to the treatment of criminals during a study he conducted with criminally insane inmates at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington, D.C. ...

"He did not prove the rehabilitative success of Cognitive Restructuring during his six-year study at St. Elizabeth's, however."

In spite of this, and it should come as no surprise, Dr. Samenow is popular within law enforcement, corrections and the political establishment. The American Community Corrections Institute or ACCI, for instance, uses cognitive restructuring.

There is no marked difference between asking us to endorse – via our participation – a state-sponsored brainwashing program like this and asking us to convince the women in Valley State, CIW and CCWF prisons to submit to sterilization!



The above art was drawn by Chris Garcia

That we are having a conversation about behavior modification, forced female sterilization and human experimentation in the modern California Department of Corrections should arouse this entire nation to arms against such structural fascism in its midst.

Despite the historic and heroic efforts of numerous activists and principled journalists across this state, nation and globe in raising public awareness of U.S. domestic torture units in supermax prisons across America, this particular issue, the active pursuit of brainwashing prisoners against their will, and now the revelation that hundreds of women were sterilized by the state – on American soil or anywhere else on this planet for that matter – has simply not garnered the degree of public discourse that it warrants.

Consider for a moment: The Center for Investigative Reporting (CIR) and Justice Now found that the CDCR conducted 116 illegal sterilizations for purposes of "birth control" during caesarian section without the consent of their victims, though this is prohibited under federal, state and common law. This was not only common practice in CDCR facilities for women but, like mass incarceration itself, medical staff disproportionately targeted New Afrikan (Black) and Latino women.

With this in mind, this same agency seeks to instruct and alter the values, moral compasses and thought processes of prisoners via thematic journals with themes such as "Social values," "Thinking errors" and "Values" – the latter which proposes to "guide inmates through an evaluation of the criminal values that have influenced their lives and help them weigh the consequences of living a life based on criminal values versus responsible values"!

The sheer manglesque authoritarian hypocrisy of this department is breathtakingly horrifying.

The CDCR is presiding over the largest domestic torture program in the U.S. engaged in forced sterilization and advocating the mandatory brainwashing of scores of SHU prisoners – and they want to instruct us in "social values," "thinking errors" and what is and is not "criminal"? Seriously?!

Where is the Legislature, the Congress, Department of Justice while this resurgence of Nazi-era pseudo-science is being codified into CDCR policy with taxpayer funding? Where is the Sacramento Bee, CBS, Oakland Tribune, NBC, LA Times, ABC,

San Diego Union Tribune, Fox News or the Associated Press while horrors prohibited by the Nuremberg Code are given new life in contemporary penal best practices?

Has this society truly decayed so thoroughly that our culture, our communities – all of us: free and bond, rich and poor, all cultures and religions – will tolerate public officials engaging in such repugnant assaults on the very fabric of humanity without the most vocal and vigorous organized outrage?!

What must be understood is that these are not assaults on prisoners but on the very nature of human civilization. We ask you all, have we truly sunk so low into the quagmire of individualistic pursuits and sidewalk escapism indicative of the capitalist arrangement that we cannot even be roused to mass resistance against state-sponsored torture, sterilization and brainwashing? The NCTT, indeed all of us simply refuse to believe this. The past two and a half years in particular give credence to the dynamic influence of people power and its transformative potential.

If the CDCR were genuinely sincere that the SDP is a legitimate path out of the torture unit for prisoners – as opposed to another venue to break men’s and women’s minds, Section 700.2 of the STG Pilot Program would be discretionary, not mandatory. Under such circumstances, perhaps, prisoners confined to these torture units might be amenable to at least giving the program a try. Unfortunately, that’s simply not their position. And that is the best proof of the program’s actual intent.

We should all consider that while to some, including some of us in prison, these may simply be compelling words on paper, in truth this really is about human lives and minds – some of who will, consciously or unconsciously, spread these techniques to those communities that they go back to.

This alone should move us all to action.

“Non-cooperation with evil is as much a duty as is cooperation with good.”

– Mahatma Mohandas S. Gandhi

Long live the spirit of the beloved Herman Wallace – love and with you always. ●

SHOUT OUT BOX

A very special shout out to **Freddie Fuiava, who resides on San Quentin’s Death Row. He gave 200 stamps to the cause. Rock on!**

MENARD HUNGER STRIKERS REFUSING WATER UNTIL FACE-TO-FACE HEARINGS BEGIN

By Attorney Alice Lynd

The Menard hunger strikers have apparently decided to go without liquid as well as food, and their physical condition could deteriorate rapidly.

According to Illinois Department of Corrections Director of Communications Tom Shear’s Feb. 7, 2014, update, nine offenders remain on hunger strike. “They apparently stopped taking in water yesterday [Feb. 6] and it takes 36-48 hours for THAT to evidence itself, which is pretty quick. So, we’ll admit them to the infirmary as a precaution.”

Before the end of January, the Menard hunger strikers presented a proposal to the warden (reproduced in the third update from Menard). These are the main points:

- Begin giving the inmates in Administrative Detention informal face-to-face 90-day review hearings and issue them a written disposition stating the basis for whatever decision is reached.
- Within 30 days, pass out an orientation manual for inmates who are in Administrative Detention or Segregation status.
- Implement a Behavior Incentive Program that allows inmates who are housed in high security the opportunity to earn the privilege of buying limited food items and coffee.
- Continue to work on resolving grievances, including weekly rounds by the major and/or warden to prevent issues from piling up.

“Once the informal face-to-face hearings begin, we will take your word that the other issues are going to be addressed and we will ALL come off our hunger strike.”

Supporters can urge IDOC Director Godinez and Warden Harrington to accept the hunger strikers’ proposal immediately. Contact:

- Illinois Department of Corrections Director Salvador Godinez, (217) 558-2200, ext. 2008, Illinois Department of Corrections, P.O. Box 19277, Springfield IL 62794-9277 or <http://www2.illinois.gov/idoc/contactus/Pages/default.aspx>
- Warden Rick Harrington, (618) 826-5071, P.O. Box 711, Menard IL 62259

Source: <http://sfbayview.com/2014/menard-hunger-strikers-refusing-water-until-face-to-face-hearings-begin/>



Art by Robert Garcia

Free Electronic Copy

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Outside folks can also have a free electronic copy of the newsletter sent to them each month by way of e-mail. Have them send requests for a digital copy of the newsletter to rock@prisonart.org.

JUDGE OKAYS 2 MORE YEARS

On February 11th the Federal Court granted California a 2-year extension to reduce the prison population. Now it’s up to us to make sure that we don’t use that time to just build more prisons. It is very URGENT that you weigh in immediately!

Join us in targeting a few key legislators to demand that California cancel all prison expansion plans and expand the parole & sentencing reforms outlined by the court.

Here are a few of our initial thoughts on the ruling:

What We Won:

- Parole Reform & No Additional Out-of-State Transfers
- No additional loved ones will be sent out-of-state
- Expansion of parole reforms: including medical parole, the alternative custody

Judge..... Continued on page 10

Stockton..... Continued from page 5

tions within California’s prisons are unconstitutionally unsafe and put prison medical operations under the management of a receiver. The judges have deemed that overcrowding is at the root of those problems and given the state until April to reduce prison populations to within 137.5% of what they were built to hold.

State officials since January 2013 have attempted to persuade the courts that California is ready to regain control of its prison system. “We are serious about the health and well-being of the inmates entrusted to us,” corrections Secretary Jeffrey Beard said at the Stockton prison’s dedication ceremony in June.

As of this week, the Stockton complex had 1,299 inmate patients, including half of the expected 1,622 long-term, high-risk patients it was designed to hold. Previous court filings show entire wings of the prison remain unopened because the state cannot hire enough staff, psychiatrists in particular. ●

<http://www.latimes.com/local/la-me-ff-prison-stockton-20140205,0,5767187.story#axzz2sSQofqCc>

Judge..... Continued from page 9

program for women & expedited parole for some lifers

- Prospective good-time credits for non-violent 2nd strikers & 2 for 1 credits for minimum custody prisoners
- Implementation of elder parole for some prisoners over 60

What We Might Lose:

- 5,000 More Prison Beds
- 5,633 new in-state contract beds
- 2,500 new cages at Donovan and Mule Creek Prisons
- Activation of beds at the Northern CA Reentry Facility, Dewitt Nelson & prison hospitals
- The delapidated Norco prison remaining open
- 8,988 people still in out-of-state prisons

What We Need You to Do:

Keep the Pressure on and Contact the Legislature NOW!

California now has until February 28, 2016. If we don’t immediately cancel all of Governor Brown’s current plans to expand California’s prison, we will not solve this crisis, instead we will have more people in cages in California. ●

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