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★ Working to Extend Democracy to All ★

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CALIFORNIA PRISON HUNGER STRIKERS PROPOSE '10 CORE DEMANDS' FOR THE OCCUPY WALL STREET MOVEMENT

*By Heshima Denham, Zaharibu Dorrough
and Kambui Robinson (December 6, 2011)*

“The Constitution, then, illustrates the complexity of this American system: that it serves the interests of a wealthy elite, but also does enough for small property owners, for middle-income mechanics and farmers to build a broad base of support. The slightly prosperous people who make up this base of support are buffers against the Blacks, the Natives, the very poor Whites. They enable the elite to keep control with a minimum of coercion, a maximum of law – all made palatable by this fanfare of patriotism and unity.”

Howard Zinn

Greetings, Brothers and Sisters. A firm, warm and solid embrace of revolutionary love is extended to you all. These words by Brother Howard Zinn are particularly relevant to the survival of the evolving Occupy Wall Street Movement, as these truths have been integral to the success of populist organizing in the U.S. historically and are central to the proposal we're putting forward here.

Most of you, at this point, are familiar with the NARN Collective Think Tank (NCTT) from the many progressive programs and ideas that have come out of this body from both Pelican Bay SHU and here in Corcoran SHU, most recently our work in the Prisoner Hunger Strike Solidarity Coalition. Like the Arab Spring, which is

still rocking the Middle East, and our own struggle to abolish indefinite confinement in sensory deprivation SHU torture units (see the five core demands from Prisoner Hunger Strike Solidarity), the Occupy Wall Street Movement expresses a fundamental rule of materialist dialectics as they apply to social development – i.e., the transformation of quantity into quality – expressed eloquently by the Honorable Comrade George Lester Jackson some 40 years ago: “(C)onsciousness is directly proportional to oppression.”

The purpose of the NCTT primarily is to act as a clearinghouse for progressive and meaningful solutions to the ills of society from our unique and scientific perspective. As we have followed and supported the Occupy Wall Street Movement, discussing its great potential, analyzing its character, composition and socio-economic motive force, predicting the inevitable violent reactionary response of the fascist state in defense of its capitalist masters, the ruling 1 percent have never, nor will they ever, concede anything, surely not substantive changes, without struggle which requires unity of purpose, broad-based organization, fluid strategy and effective tactics.

Populist and progressive movements in this nation have succeeded or failed, lived or died, based on how effectively they understood and adapted to this reality. We learned this in the epoch following the Civil War as reconstruction gains were effectively repealed and Jim Crow law was introduced.

The populist movements that gave birth to the People Party, the power of organized labor and the Dorr Rebellion learned this very hard lesson on the heels of the Haymarket Massacre. The Civil Rights Movement taught us the necessity of broad-based organization and accurate agreement of the opposition's center of gravity: their point of weakness. Only a few years later we learned not to underestimate the power of the ruling 1 percent and insidiousness of its state tools when the Counter-Intelligence Program (Cointelpro) dismantled the Black Liberation Movement, imprisoned many of us, and ushered in the world of individualistic pursuits, greed, corruption, gross inequality and mass incarceration you all have now inherited.

As we watched the National (International) Day of Action unfold and the days that have followed, witnessing the predictable brutal response of the tools of the 1 percent as they beat young men and women bloody, pepper sprayed and pummeled peaceful youth at UC Davis, destroyed the people's property across the nation, and even peppersprayed and dragged away 68-year-old women and pregnant ladies alike, with great effort we detached from our rage and analyzed the comments, ideas, and responses of various political pundits, common people on the streets, agents of the state and our protestors themselves.

Three things immediately became obvious from that analysis: 1) The mass media and far too many of the various pundits were in essence counting on the national

Occupy movements to just peter out and fizzle away. It was this message that those who own these mass media outlets – the 1 percent – want to be disseminated as broadly as possible to undermine mass support for the movement.

2) We, the 99 percent, have no intention of going anywhere until substantive change is realized, and though most in this nation not involved directly in the occupations themselves agree with our ideas in opposition to corporate greed and institutional inequality, there were no clearly articulated demands around which the movement could organize the broader masses. 3) This lack of clearly articulated demands and coherent strategic and tactical organization by the national Occupy Movement was undermining its intent, diluting its potential, and degrading its motive force.

This state of affairs left unaddressed, as in most every similar movement in the U.S. historically, will lead to its isolation. This cannot be allowed. The first step in defeating an enemy as powerful, all-encompassing and organized as the ruling 1 percent is understanding the nature of struggle and the basis of their power. When you analyze opponents, you must see beyond the superficial for the origins of that power, the point of vulnerability upon which it is based. Striking this point of vulnerability will inflict disproportionate damage.

It must be understood that substantive, radical, progressive social change is no different than warfare and warfare is a form of power. Power systems, no matter their myriad manifestations, share the same basic structures. The most visible thing about them is their appearance, what is seen and felt.

Great power systems first try to ignore challenges to them, to dismiss them. When this fails, they opt to crush them. This is exactly what the Occupy Movement has experienced thus far. But all too often this outward display is a deceptive fabrication, a manifestation of insecurity, since power dares not expose its weaknesses.

The key lies in determining what their point of vulnerability is, and to do so you must understand the structure of the power system and the culture in which it operates. I began this discussion with a concise analysis of just this point by Howard Zinn.

The real point of vulnerability in American democracy is the social and political support of its citizens. Unfortunately, the key apparatus in influencing public opinion is the American mass media – yet, ironi-

cally, they are equally vulnerable to the power of the mass support of the people. The key factor thus far in failing to harness this mass support is the lack of broad-based, articulable demands around which the uncommitted people who may support our message but not our movement can be educated, organized and mobilized to join the movement and transform not only the nature and structure of U.S. society, but the WORLD.

To that end the NCTT Corcoran SHU has made a comprehensive analysis of statements from participants of all the national Occupy movements and some of those abroad and compiled these ideas into 10 core demands of the Occupy Wall Street Movement national coalition. We call on you brothers and sisters to disseminate these 10 core demands to all the Occupy movements across the nation and the world, and we call on all the Occupy movements to convene a national forum – which can take place online or at a national convention – to discuss the adoption of these 10 core demands as the definitive goals and organizing points around which the movement is based and the next level of our struggle is to be waged. These 10 core demands can be modified, augmented or amended to take into account the broadest cross-section of the 99 percent possible and the collective will of the movement:

The 10 Core Demands of the Occupy Wall Street Movement National Coalition

1. We want full employment with a living wage for all people who will work, and for employment to be enforced as the right which it is. The U.S. Declaration of Independence states in part “that all men ... are endowed ... with certain inalienable Rights; that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.” “Life” is thus a right guaranteed by this nation and the means to live – work, making a living wage for all of those who will and can work – must be equally guaranteed as the right which it is – as must a guaranteed income for those who can’t work. This is the responsibility of the federal government. If the corporate U.S. businessmen will not provide full employment even as they sit on trillions of dollars in cash reserves fleeced from the surplus value of labor, then the means of production should be taken from them and placed in the community so the

99 percent of the people can organize and employ all the people, ensuring a quality standard of life for all.

2. We want an end to institutional racism and race- and class-based disparities in access to, and quality of, labor, education, health care, criminal defense, political empowerment, technology and healthy food. We recognize institutional racism – the U.S. race caste system – and systemic class disparities in the U.S. capitalist structure as not simply an obstacle to equitable educational opportunities, labor access, wage equality, proportionate rates of chronic disease management, access to quality and preventable health care services, non-predatory community policing, equitable treatment of criminal offenders, access to the political process for all, access to communications technology, the internet and fresh, unprocessed foods but as structural features of U.S. market capitalism primarily designed to prevent broad class cooperation between the 99 percent from various racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. We will no longer allow this divide and rule arrangement to govern the socio-economic relationships upon which the nature and structure of U.S. society is based.

3. We want decent and affordable housing for all people and for it to be enforced as the right which it is. We recognize that housing, like living wage employment, is a fundamental necessity of life and as such a right that we have invested this government with securing on our behalf. Instead, government has consistently sided with those on Wall Street, who are responsible for the single greatest loss of housing in the nation’s history, while federal, state and local officials have in essence criminalized homelessness and chronic poverty and made a practice of attacking, destroying the property of and displacing the homeless wherever they’ve tried to erect shelters in this locked, anti-poor society. Since it was corporate greed, government deregulation and financial speculators that led to the creation of exotic financial instruments like credit default swaps and sub-prime loan bundles which fleeced the 99 percent of much of their wealth and home equity, the government should mandate a “cost of living” readjustment to home equity debt on all U.S. homes so what the people owe actually reflects what these properties are now worth. This would eliminate “underwater” homeowners and bail out the 99 percent of the people for a change. Simultaneously, vacated and empty federal hous-

ing authority properties (FHA) should be made into cooperatives so that our communities, with government aid, can create and build decent housing for all.

4. We want affordable and equal access to higher education for all and access to education that teaches the true history of colonialism, chattel slavery, repression of organized labor, the use of police repression and imprisonment as tools of capitalist exploitation, and the perpetuation of imperialism in the development and maintenance of modern U.S. power systems and corporate financial markets. As current trends in the national unemployment rate indicate – for the 99 percent nationally, the rate is 14 percent for Latinos, 17 percent for New Afrikans (Blacks), yet only 4 percent for those with a college degree – higher education has a direct correlation to socio-economic opportunity and prosperity. Since equal opportunity is a fundamental right of U.S. citizenship, the 99 percent should have equal access to higher education without speculative corporate profiteering in industries related to higher education driving up tuition costs and student loan interest rates to usurious levels, leaving most in perpetual debt and simply pricing the very prospect of higher education out of reach for those in communities of color and the poor.

There should be a universal higher education system open to all based on their capacity to pay with tuitions set at that capacity level, while not barring anyone for an inability to pay. Simultaneously, the usurious debt incurred by students who clearly have no capacity to pay at a sustainable rate should have those debts forgiven in full. Our public education system should give all our people a knowledge of the true nature and structure of U.S. capitalist society and its legacy of injustice, genocide, exploitation, intentional underdevelopment, unjustifiable wars of imperialist aggression to secure new markets, resources and spheres of influence, bloody conquest, ecological mismanagement, slavery and murder in service to the development and maintenance of the molding of greed that is the 1 percent ruling elite.

5. We want an immediate end to police brutality and the murder of oppressed people in the U.S., particularly in the New Afrikan (Black), Latino, immigrant and underclass communities and among those protesting in this nation. We recognize the police and other state paramilitary agencies – sheriffs, FBI, correctional guards etc. – are, and have always been, the enforcement

army of the ruling 1 percent. This was again proven when these fascist forces moved nationally, en masse, to attack, pepper spray, beat, destroy the property of, arrest and attempt to crush the national Occupy Movement and its supporters at the two-month anniversary of the worldwide action and every day since. We recognize such brutal and unwarranted treatment is the daily existence of New Afrikan (Black), Latino, immigrant and underclass communities and people in this nation now, and historically, all to ensure the 1 percent “keeps us in our place,” the unfortunate victims of the race/class arrangement.

Self-defense is a human right and both the action and means are guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution and state laws (see the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and California Penal Code Section 50). We believe community organized oversight and self-defense forces should be organized to monitor and record all police interactions with the people and defend them against ruling class directed and racist attacks when necessity dictates. The hypocrisy of the government and media is exposed as they criticize Syria, China and Iran for attacking peaceful protestors while they do the same across the U.S. daily. We will suffer no more attacks like those at UC Davis, no more Scott Olsens, Fly Benzos or Oscar Grants to be injured or killed at the hands of the tools of the 1 percent.

6. We want an end to the expansion of the prison industrial complex, as a profit base – from our tax dollars – for the disposal of surplus labor and the poor. We want an end to the use of indefinite solitary confinement torture units in the U.S. as they are inhumane and illegal. The mass incarceration of people of color and the poor will no longer be tolerated as an acceptable alternative to enforcing socio-economic equality in America. The disproportionate distribution of wealth, privilege and opportunity in a society is the origin of all crime. The U.S. has one of the greatest disparities between haves and have nots on earth. As a result, the U.S. has the largest prison population on the planet with some 2.7 million of our citizens in prison, 67 percent of them New Afrikans (Black) or Latinos, though they constitute only 26 percent of the nation’s population.

The prison population in the U.S. has exploded some 600 percent since 1981, with state and federal prison budgets in excess of hundreds of billions of our tax dollars a year lining the pockets of corporate inter-

ests that build, supply and maintain these prisons, jails, courts and staff, not to mention the labor aristocrats like the CCPOA (California Correctional Peace Officers Association) guards union, who’ve created a socio-economic and political power base that guarantees their job security and ever increasing salaries and benefits, while maintaining a lobbying stranglehold on state politicians. We recognize, in the face of such a corrupt cabal of government and business, the purpose of imprisonment in the U.S. now has little to do with public safety and rehabilitation and more to do with the development of a self-perpetuating, poverty-fueled, recession-proof industry and an accompanying socio-political accommodating labor aristocracy of prison guards, cops and staff as a support base for the interests of the ruling 1 percent.

Prison is a socially hostile microcosm of society’s contradictions, possessing the same race/class and state/class contradictions that currently define the socio-economic inequality that is capitalist Amerika. Prisons serve as warehouses for surplus labor, the poor and those who have been forced to the bottom rung of society. It is the systemic race/class disparities, intentional criminalization and underdevelopment of poor communities and social apathy which have forced most offenders into the underground economy as the only viable option to survive. This is unacceptable and unsustainable, equally repugnant, fundamentally inhumane, and illegal as the continued gross violation of the U.N. Convention Against Torture – to which the U.S. is a signatory and we agree is the law of the land – which prohibits long-term solitary confinement for extracting information, political views or as punishment for any reason – which is the very purpose of SHU units – as torture, but it is being practiced in numerous U.S. prisons with government approval. The continued indefinite confinement of human beings in SHUs, SMUs and other supermax torture units must be abolished in the U.S., as they violate the basic tenets of human rights this nation has sworn to uphold. The basis of true rehabilitation, such as tech and computer-based vocational programs, access to higher education for prisoners and community-based parole boards must become the new order of the day. This is the only way to guarantee true justice in an unjust social arrangement and see our imprisoned citizens are capable of making a meaningful contribution to our society and prosperity.

7. We want an end to all corporate and financial influences in the political process in the U.S. We recognize, since its inception, the nature and structure of U.S. society has been one of the rich, for the rich and by the rich, in which the 99 percent have served as a source of exploited labor and a consumer market for the goods and services of those who own the means of production. This pattern of usurpations has evolved into a political process in which public policies and elected officials are more often than not determined by lobbying dollars, manipulation of public opinion by corporate-controlled mass media, and the overwhelming influence of financial markets and industries on policies and policymakers, effectively marginalizing the people, their interests and their will, reducing them to pawns in a game of corporate pandering. This will stop now. The U.S. will finally become a nation of the people, for the people and by the people, where only individual citizens may have any influence in the nature and structure of the democratic process in the U.S. This means banning all lobbyists, donors, financial market proxies, strategic advisers and special interest groups from local, state and federal electoral and legislative processes in the U.S. We are sick of this "legalized" corruption.

8. We want an end to imperialist wars of aggression and sending our youth off to kill and die to enforce the economic interests of big oil and other corporate concerns seeking new resources to exploit, new markets to open for sale of their goods and services and as an impetus to keep from addressing domestic ills. We recognize, as Bolton Hall said, "If there is a war, you will furnish the corpses and the taxes and others will get this glory. Speculators will make money out of it, that is, out of you (us)." Thousands of our young men and women died in Iraq and across the Middle East and caused the deaths, either intentionally or unintentionally, of many thousands more Third World people, all based on the lies of greedy and bloodthirsty politicians with multiple ties to big oil and corporate interests. The current administration has only slightly modified this same imperialist tendency by shifting it to a more palatable target at the cost of billions of our tax dollars and thousands of our youth that could have been contributing to the prosperity of the nation and its people. We support our young men and women, but we do not support imperialism.

9. We want a bottoms-up approach to

economic development and labor-capital relations in the U.S. This nation is empowered by "we the people," the 99 percent, to secure our rights to life, liberty, and prosperity; yet we recognize the state has aligned itself so intimately for so long with the exclusive interest of the ruling 1 percent that it has become enamored exclusively to a top-down approach to socio-economic and political solutions which always favors the rich first and everyone else when or if possible. This has resulted in a 281 percent increase in the growth of wealth in the top 1 percent of this nation, while the bottom 90 percent have seen their incomes flat over the past 20 years. We recognize that this fascist alliance between corporate capital and government has become obstructive to the ends of securing the rights of life and prosperity to the 99 percent of this nation's people and will now come to an end. Socio-economic and political policy must now uplift the quality of life from the bottom rung up – empowering the disenfranchised, providing opportunities for those with no options and directing bailouts and subsidies to the people, not banks and billionaires. We recognize the state has thus far been a tool to guarantee the dominance of one class over others, of the 1 percent over the 99 percent, and that arrangement will now come to an end.

10. We want a more equitable distribution of wealth, justice and opportunity at every level of society, reflecting the objective reality that it's the socio-economic, political, intellectual and cultural contributions of the 99 percent upon which this society stands. We recognize that there is enough food in this nation that no one need be hungry, enough unoccupied structures in this nation that no one need be homeless, enough educators, institutions, knowledge and technology in this nation that no one need be without a degree or skilled trade, enough work to be done that no one needs to be without a job; and it is only due to the insistence of an entrenched, super-rich 1 percent and their stranglehold on every institution and apparatus of this nation's infrastructure from the government to the mass media that their opulence and privilege be maintained at the expense of the 99 percent. We recognize that this is not our national reality, the ruling class has mismanaged our society – woefully and criminally mismanaged – and those in power at every level are either unable or unwilling to change the nature and structure of capitalist society. So it falls to us, the 99 percent, to

forge a new basis upon which socio-economic relationships will be based, ushering in a new social order in Amerika and around the world, that serves the interests of all the people and not simply the privileged few.

It is our request that all of you please send a copy of this proposal to each individual Occupy Movement coalition, which includes but is not limited to Occupy Wall Street (New York City), Occupy Oakland, Occupy NOLA (New Orleans), Occupy San Francisco, Occupy Boston, Occupy L.A. (Los Angeles), Occupy Seattle, Occupy UC Davis, Occupy Phoenix, Occupy Fresno, Occupy Cleveland, Occupy Chicago et al. Post a copy of this proposal online at as many sites for the Occupy movement as possible. Post it on Facebook, blog sites and wherever social commentary is held.

In addition, we call on each individual Occupy Movement to begin organizing in and with the underclass communities in your city or town and for all my brothers and sisters in the ghettos, projects, barrios and trailer parks across this nation to begin organizing with Occupy Movement coalition reps around collective programs that can serve to begin realizing these 10 core demands by our unity and contributions alone. The NCTT, both here in Corcoran SHU and Pelican Bay SHU are committed to making meaningful contributions to the development of such community action programs, which we will outline in our next communication.

But what must be understood is social movements of this nature are supported only to the degree that their ideas find resonance in the psychological structures of the masses, but even this is not enough. To ensure the realization of any substantive change in the nature and structure of U.S. capitalist society and to prevent this movement from being isolated and neutralized by the forces of repression, it must be firmly embedded in as broad a cross-section of this population as possible.

There are some 47 million people in Amerika living below the poverty line, another 150 million or so barely getting by – two thirds of this nation's population, all of them part of the 99 percent. It is here that we will find our most lasting support, and thus it is here that you must begin forging meaningful ties. These are overwhelmingly New Afrikan (Black), Latino, immigrant and poor communities.

You champion us all with your ideas and

the courage of your convictions, just as we continue to support you with our sacrifices and insight. It is now time to take the movement to its next evolution and ultimately to its inevitable conclusion: victorious revolutionary change.

Your greatest power lies in your unity and cooperation and ultimately your organizational ability. The power of the people far surpasses all the repressive violence of the Babylons attacking you/us or the wealth of the 1 percent, who will stop at nothing to silence us all.

This is a protracted struggle; there will be no 90-day revolution here. Victory will require sacrifice, tenacity and competent strategic insight. The question you must ask is, are you prepared to do what is necessary to win this struggle? If you answer in the affirmative, commit to victory and accept no other alternative. The people, as we are, are with you. Until we win or don't lose, our love and solidarity to all those who love freedom and fear only failures.

A CALL FOR AID AND ASSISTANCE FROM THE N.C.T.T. CORCORAN SHU

Greetings, Brothers and Sisters.

A firm, warm and solid embrace of love and solidarity is extended to you all. As you know we are in the midst of a contentious struggle for social justice and economic equality on multiple fronts in this society, and around the world.

We have had both victories and setbacks. Some as a result of the efforts of an organized and entrenched elite, others by our own mistakes. Yet what is universally clear from all of our successes: where we mass the power of the people, where we've galvanized the political support of our friends and neighbors, where we've forced corporate controlled mass media to take notice of the will of the common man, it is THERE where we have won.

It is in this spirit of mutual sacrifice and collective success that we call upon you now to stand with us and the forces of progressive social change. There are 2 upcoming events that we ask your assistance in augmenting:

1. MARCH 20TH PRESS CONFERENCE ON U.N. PETITION ON BEHALF OF CALIFORNIA PRISONERS IN AD-

MINISTRATIVE SEGREGATION AND SECURITY HOUSING UNITS (SHU)

The Center for Human Rights and Constitutional Law has prepared a petition to the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, in opposition to the practice of long term solitary confinement in SHU and Ad Seg units in California, considered by most to be torture (and defined by treaty as such), in hopes it will lead to an abolition of the practice, or an improvement of conditions in the torture units themselves.

What we are asking of each of you who are reading these words is twofold:

(a) If you CAN get to the Ronald Reagan Building in Los Angeles, California on March 20, at or before 11 a.m., PLEASE DO. The larger the body of supporters in attendance -- the greater the media coverage it will compel; the greater media coverage we can command -- the greater the socio-political impact (both nationally and globally) your actions will have.

(b) If there is not a petition drive in support of the U.N. Petition that you can sign in your immediate environment -- we are asking THAT YOU START ONE; either a physical (paper) petition or on-line petition and get as many signatures as you can on it. It does NOT matter where in the nation - or the world - you are, your help is needed. The U.N. is an international forum and EVERY signature counts. Once completed, please mail, fax or email the petition and signatures to:

Center for Human Rights and Constitutional Law

Attn: Peter A. Schey, Attorney at Law
(Bar # 58232)

256 South Occidental Boulevard

Los Angeles, CA. 90057

Tel: 213-388-8693 ext. 301

Fax: 213-386-9484

and Kendra Castaneda: Kendracastaneda55@gmail.com

Your petitions and signatures will then be attached to the U.N. Petition and submitted to the U.N. Working Group. Your cooperation is both needed and appreciated.

2. MAY 1ST GENERAL STRIKE IN SUPPORT OF THE NATIONAL OCCUPY MOVEMENT:

On May 1st, the National Occupy Movement is calling for a general strike, and we of course support them as we have from the beginning. However, the continued decimation of occupy movement camps globally by the tools of the 1%, marginalization by corporate owned mass media, and

the sheer lack of outcry by the people, the 99% whom the movement represent, make it clear the direction and insight we've offered our movement brothers and sisters has simply not been disseminated and adopted broadly or quickly enough to prevent the encirclement campaign the 1% and its tools have employed.

It is the lack of NATIONAL adoption of an articulable platform, and implementation of a coordinated strategic approach that allows the 'USA Today,' a corporate media outlet that's always been anti-occupy movement, to run op-ed's stating "lacking clear goals and leaders the 'occupy' movement fizzles."

Because of the essential democratic imperative the movement represents to the most disenfranchised, economically underdeveloped, and politically underrepresented, the movement MUST survive, and to do so it MUST evolve, organize and build to win.

We are asking for your help in ensuring they not only have those tools, but they ADOPT AND EMPLOY them as their own. To that end, in the run up to the May 1st general strike, we ask your aid in educating, organizing and mobilizing movement activists and the community at large, around a competent platform and strategic approach. Go to the SF Bay View on line (www.sfbayview.com) and down load our 2 latest movement statements: (1) California Prisoner Hunger Strikers Propose '10 Core Demands' for the National Occupy Movement.' (Dec. 6, 2011) and

(2) 'A Discussion on Strategy for the National Occupy Movement from Behind Enemy Lines,' (Feb. 19, 2012) and disseminate them together as broadly as possible, to both occupy movement activists and organizers, AND to those individuals and organizations who in your judgment would support ANY of the 10 core demands as outlined by the N.C.T.T.

We are calling on you, and all in the movement, to adopt these 10 core demands as the platform for this NATIONAL Occupy Movement (BOTH Occupy Wall Street AND Occupy the Hood) and have them the basis of the May 1st General Strike (i.e., "General Strike in Support of the 10 Core Demands of the National Occupy Movement.") By doing so, we instantly silence our critics, give the broader masses articulable goals around which to be educated, organized and mobilized, while issuing clear demands to the pawns of the 1% as to the policies we expect.

We encourage you to print out the '10 Core Demands' themselves and spread them among your friends, neighbors, and co-workers. We encourage all who read these words to call in sick on May 1st. If you can't, find some other way to support the general strike. We here of the N.C.T.T. - COR-SHU will be supporting the general strike here, as we feel it is only through sacrifice—even small sacrifices such as these—that victories are realized, mutual interests solidified, and unity of purpose is forged.

It is our sincerest hope we can depend on your aid and assistance in these coming events. No matter where you are in the world, you are needed. We hope you hear the call. Until we win or don't lose.

For more information on the N.C.T.T. - COR - SHU or its work product, contact: Zaharibu Dorrough D-83611 (4B1L - #53) J. Heshima Denham J-38283 (4B1L - #46) Kambui Robinson C-83820 (4B1L - #49) Jabari Scott H-30536 (4B1L - #63) CSP - COR - SHU P.O. Box 3481 Corcoran, CA. 93212

A DISCUSSION ON STRATEGY FOR THE OCCUPY MOVEMENT FROM BEHIND ENEMY LINES

[BayView's editorial note: This comes from the brilliant minds who brought you "California prison hunger strikers propose '10 core demands' for the national Occupy Wall Street Movement," the Bay View's most read story, with 9,980 pageviews, from Dec. 6, 2011, to Feb. 19, 2012.]

By J. Heshima Denham, Zaharibu Dorrough and Kambui Robinson of the NCTT Corcoran SHU, February 19, 2012.

"But beneath this conventional enthusiasm and amid this ingratiating ritual toward the dominant power, you can easily perceive in the wealthy a deep distaste for the democratic institutions of their country. The people are a power they both fear and despise."

— Alexis De Tocqueville,
"Democracy in America"

Greetings, brothers and sisters. A firm, warm and solid embrace of revolutionary love is extended to you all.

As we proceed in this period of evolution in our struggles for substantive social change in the U.S. via the national Occupy Movement, the Prisoner Hunger Strike Solidarity Movement, the Anti-Imperialist Movement etc., it is imperative that we not only understand that we are all representative of a single socio-political and historic motive force, but those in opposition to our democratic aspirations are the very same political, social and economic powers that this nation has relied on to ensure the integrity of democracy, social justice and economic equality. This is a contradiction.

This historic contradiction will NOT be resolved via our disparate efforts. Substantive change will only be realized through a comprehensive strategic approach, coordinated and conducted by us all. Simply put, we are a single movement, and for us to have the social impact necessary to compel progress we must proceed with this realization as our guiding ethos. We of the NCTT (New Afrikan Collective Think Tank) in the Corcoran SHU (Security Housing Unit) have a proposal on effective strategic organizing we'd like to share with you here, but before we do so we think it is imperative that you all understand the historic significance of what we are all a part of.

It is our assessment that what is occurring today as it relates to the national protest movement (i.e., Occupy Wall Street, Prisoner Hunger Strike Solidarity etc.) is the unfinished legacy of the struggle for social justice necessary for the U.S. to fulfill its democratic potential. This struggle is part of the rich and courageous legacy of abolitionists, women's rights activists, organized labor, populists, human and civil rights activists and other democratic struggles of the nation's past.

Social revolution has always been imperative to this type of substantive change. This calls for the recognition and coming together of people – citizens from different cultural, economic and ideological backgrounds – realizing the common interest inherent in this truth: that we all inhabit the same planet, breathe the same air, are part of the human family.

The social revolution of the 1960s, once it was contained by the conservative, corporate counter-culture, was reduced to being characterized as a "sexual revolution" in the same disparaging terms that the so-

cial revolution we are waging in this nation today is being characterized as a kind of mindless, leaderless rabble who simply dislike the wealthy, or "gang members," whose only interest is imposing themselves on the larger population. These intentionally dishonest characterizations are not being made by the average reasoning man or woman – but instead by those we've vested with the responsibility of governing our political, social or economic institutions.

Was it any surprise that former Republican presidential candidate Herman Cain described Occupy Movement activists as "stupid" because they opposed the inherent institutional inequality of the capitalist arrangement? Neither were we shocked that CDCR spokeswoman Terry Thornton, when asked about the alleged "suicide" death of a "jailhouse lawyer" in Pelican Bay's ASU (Administrative Segregation Unit), responded, "Why are you concerned about that? ... Was the inmate someone important? You know, someone well known like Charles Manson?" This is typical of the wealthy and their tools.

We began this discussion with a quote from Alexis De Tocqueville to illustrate not only the disdain in which the power structure in this society holds the people's democratic expression but the fear and resentment they hold towards those who dare challenge this status quo in capitalist Amerika. We represent nothing more to these overseers and shareholders – and that's just what the politicians, policy makers, prison industrialists and corporate executives are – than billions of dollars in potential profit to be extracted from our human misery.

For example, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) and its lobbying body, the California Correctional Peace Officers Association (CCPOA), has succeeded in extorting budgets in excess of some nations' gross national product by using us as the centerpiece of their distortion and false propaganda campaign of fear and dehumanization. They've duped taxpayers so successfully for so long at the expense of our very humanity that we had no choice but to take up a strategy in which the ultimate sacrifice may yet be necessary.

Following the ending of the last hunger strike in October, most of us, particularly those of us in these short corridors here and in Pelican Bay, were refused any medical treatment though we lost over 20 pounds in the 13-day period the second hunger strike

lasted – and we hadn't yet recovered from the first.

Our hunger strikes were the only way to effectively resist the nonstop assault on our humanity which is the inevitable consequence of burying us indefinitely in these sensory deprivation torture units. Equally, when working wages or employment itself are so shamelessly inconsistent with the cost of living, resulting in conditions of poverty, there is a corresponding poverty of spirit. The success of the Occupy Movement, like the hunger strikes, requires sacrifice and strategic insight. The kind of sacrifices being exemplified by courageous nationalists and activists like you – we love it, we love you and we stand with you.

Seizing the reins of history

What we all must come to understand is our struggle – like the vision of a new social structure inherent in this movement – must adopt new methods of ensuring its survival and expansion. The sheer absurdity of some of the political pandering and positions in this election season, from Newt “Gingrinch’s” espousal of the merits of exploiting child labor in the underclass to discussions of cutting unemployment benefits by Tea Party Republicans in the face of record unemployment and cash-fat corporations refusing to hire, highlights how out of touch these puppets of the 1 percent ruling elite are with the daily challenges of the common man or woman.

Simultaneously, we are being asked to trust these same people who are responsible for creating conditions for, and exploitation of, human misery. We have been doing so for centuries and it has only moved us from one socio-economic crisis to the next.

Only when the people, the 99 percent, seized the reins of history has the democratic destiny of humanity and its most noble ideas – unity, equality, self-determination, cooperation, freedom, justice and human rights – been advanced to any appreciable degree. Each progressive step forward – from the Suffrage Movement, which seized a woman’s right to vote from an entrenched chauvinistic privilege, to the nonviolent protests of the Civil Rights Movement that repealed segregation, to the empowerment and self-defense tactics of the national liberation movements that followed – was punctuated by a coherent strategic approach whose relative success or failure has been equal to the resonance it found in the nation’s mass psychology.

No one with a modicum of intelligence

would disagree with the validity of our message, the righteousness of the Occupy Movement’s 10 core demands or the correctness of our aspirations. Yet this is not enough to sustain a movement so vocally opposed to the entrenched power structure of the 1 percent and all the tools of repression at their disposal.

No, what will be needed is nothing short of the unified might of the 99 percent, most if not all of us speaking with one voice, with one will, animated by this same spirit throughout. We cannot expect paths to social change to be laid by the forces of oppression, which means we must pursue self-determination and self-sufficiency, demonstrating the validity of our vision of society through social practice. We possess all the tools necessary to transform our occupations into practice programs which address some of the core inequities in the capitalist arrangement we currently stand in opposition to by imbedding them in the most underdeveloped and disenfranchised communities of the 99 percent, where the effects of corporate greed and institutional inequality are most visible.

There is another common thread running through the Occupy Movement, Hunger Strike Solidarity Movement and Anti-Imperialist Movement: Most of us engaged in these movements either champion, hail from or have been forced into the underclass of the U.S. socio-economic strata. I want you all to ask yourselves, after a cursory examination of U.S. society, who has done most of the work, most of the dying, most of the time in prison or on the unemployment line? Who has little or no interest in the maintenance of the current status quo, who has been disproportionately affected by the sub-prime loan fiasco and the socio-economic impact of corporate greed and political corruption?

Invariably we must answer it is the underclass communities of this nation, Amerika’s ghettos, hoods, barrios, trailer parks and projects. Their unfortunate position in the capitalist arrangement and desperate historical relationship to the productive system forces this segment of society to the forefront of any revolutionary scheme.

When the honorable Comrade George Lester Jackson expressed this same analysis some 40 years ago, people did not fully grasp what he meant. Yet here we are still pursuing the victorious conclusion of the same democratic process.

Three pilot programs

What we propose is harnessing the full spectrum potential of the Occupy Movement at every level and lining it with the untapped power and potential of the millions and millions in underclass communities across Amerika via three pilot programs which are complimentary, self-sustaining and socio-economically empowering for all of the 99 percent, while proving definitively that the spirit of cooperation is more socially fulfilling and impactful than the greed and avarice promoted through capitalist competition.

We propose organizing major segments of the movement and those they serve to not only safeguard the survival and forward progress of the cause itself, but open an entirely new front for the struggle. The Occupy Wall Street Movement, Occupy the Hood and the underclass communities, each working in coordination, could prove an unstoppable force if organized and mobilized with unity of purpose. Each segment of this broader organizing force possesses mutually beneficial qualities whose socio-economic and political impact far exceeds the sum of its individual parts.

We of the NCTT Corcoran SHU urge you to distribute this strategic proposal to all the various Occupy Movement groups nationally, all the various chapters of Occupy the Hood, especially its founder, Malik Rhasaan, and that together they bring this proposal to the underclass communities across Amerika. We want to urge all our brothers and sisters in lumpen organizations within these communities, no matter what set you claim, nation you ride, Sureño or Norteño, hood you represent or crew you roll with, to support and defend these brothers and sisters from all aspects of the Occupy Movement as they enter your/our communities, many living in and being from those same or similar communities, to build with us a new dynamic that will enrich us all.

Equally we want to urge all our brothers and sisters in the Occupy Movement to learn from the people as you enter and work with the underclass community so we all may better serve the interests of the 99 percent. For some of you, it will be a new and sobering reality, completely outside of your experience, and should provide an uncensored view of the human misery and socio-economic inequality in Amerika. It is imperative that you all look upon the interests of the movement and those communities as your very own; the survival of the movement and hope for substantive change

in the daily dynamic of economic desperation and despair in the underclass communities of the U.S. may well depend on it.

The three pilot programs we are proposing are NCTT word-product, either drawn from our archives or uniquely developed to ensure the success of this enterprise. This venture will require some structural organization amongst you. We suggest you adopt a democratic centralist organizational structure which will allow everyone to air their views, opinions and suggestions – be they popular or unpopular, correct or incorrect – in group discussions on policy decisions. Yet those with the greatest knowledge and insight on the specific subject matter being disclosed should have the greatest influence on the policy ultimately adopted.

Such an approach will encourage the broadest possible participation in the decision making process, while securing the most viable and sagacious ideas and preventing the cropping up of ultra-democratic ideas, where someone has something to say on every little thing and nothing ever gets accomplished, just bourgeois aversion to the collective will.

These programs are intentionally designed to be universally adaptive, modifiable and amendable to work in any community. The success of some aspects of these programs will be benefited by specialized knowledge, insight or skill sets. We are aware that the Occupy Movement in its various permutations, as well as the underclass communities in which these programs will be imbedded, possess intellectuals, professionals and technicians whose knowledge and participation will prove essential, and we urge you all to begin taking stock of these skill sets and maintaining – or creating – a local database of each activist or participant's skill sets, such as computer engineering, drywall, agricultural expertise, technical engineering, plumbing, visual art etc.

To facilitate the success of these collective work initiatives and as we see success, we expand these efforts into new areas of development. Our brothers and sisters already doing vital work in the Occupy the Hood chapters, such as the "Feed the Hood" program, we ask you now to expand your relationship with the Occupy Wall Street Movement beyond the confines of the people of color working group and enter a new and broader phase of community development and social organization which will see a true union of all of our social forces in the practical work of building an

entirely new basis for relating to the productive system.

Occupy the Hood is the natural bridge between all aspects of the 99 percent, and it is only through a functional union such as this that our movement can be transformed into a true social revolution and perhaps more. Those of you who've been engaged in these historic hunger strikes across the nation in support of the five core demands and in opposition to the maintenance and expansion of these sensory deprivation torture units and the prison industrial complex as a whole – especially those of you in these short corridors with us here and in Pelican Bay – if you retain any influence in your hood, barrio, trailer park or community, we urge you to have those on the streets from your community, if they don't have an Occupy the Hood chapter established, to contact Malik Rhasaan on Twitter (#Occupy the Hood) and establish one, as the broader and deeper the movement is out there, the greater the positive impact will be on every aspect of this society, including on our struggle here (see No. 6 of the 10 core demands of the Occupy Movement).

To all you brothers and sisters on college campuses or in unemployment lines across this nation, if you don't have an Occupy Movement chapter established in your city, contact the nearest Occupy Movement chapter to you and establish one of your own. It is in your interest to alter the fundamental dynamic of human relationships and the basis for prosperity in this nation, and what we propose here may well give us the greatest possible chance to do just that.

The three pilot programs we propose are: 1) the closed circuit economic initiative; 2) the sustainable community agricultural commons; 3) the block vote democratic initiative. We will explain each here in basic terms and should you need detailed program formats or other help, you need only contact us directly. We have done our best to give you all the necessary information needed to start here. Please bear with us. I assure you it's worth your time.

Closed Circuit Economic Initiative

The Closed Circuit Economic Initiative (CCE Initiative) is a cooperative economic venture designed to amplify local wealth by re-circulating it in the community in which it originated, while providing collective ownership of the venture to the community and movement, while simultaneously addressing local unemployment in the community in which the venture is based. The

CCE Initiative was originally designed to address the flight of wealth from New African communities to more affluent ones that actually owned the businesses in New African (Black) neighborhoods.

We discovered that a single dollar will circulate in the Jewish community for some 35 days, in the Korean community for 28 days, yet a dollar circulates in the New African (Black) community for an average of 70 seconds. Yes, seconds. However, what we also learned through further analysis was this was in fact, to a greater or lesser degree, a universal disparity throughout underclass communities regardless of their racial or national makeup.

The wealth of underclass communities rarely, if ever, went to enriching those same communities. But there is within our power a way to change that.

Similar to the electrical charge fulfillment action of a closed circuit capacitor – where circulating a charge through a catalyst in a closed circuit will ultimately fulfill a storing device's capacitance with no need to increase the voltage yield of the charges – it is possible to increase the economic capacity of a community by circulating its wealth in that community for a longer period. This capacitance is increased if the community itself controls the economic circuit in which current exchanges flow.

Here is how we will accomplish this: The Occupy Movement will prepare fliers and pamphlets outlining this initiative in clear, easy-to-understand terms, specifically referencing the unique conditions on the ground in the local underclass communities you hope to begin in. The larger the community, the more impactful it will prove.

Occupy the Hood activists, organizers and leaders from the community slated for the initiative, along with Occupy Wall Street activists, will canvas the hood together distributing these educational fliers door to door, to churches, mosques, synagogues and temples, pool halls, the street corners, the hood spots and homie hang-outs, salons, barbershops and wherever our people congregate, answering questions and promoting the value of the initiative.

Next a survey flier will have to be produced which asks each individual in that community the three top goods and services they most frequently spend their money on – and/or the largest portion of their money on – and/or the largest portion of their money every month. This may vary depending on the community, from groceries to gasoline, from laundrymat services to

parking. Once these surveys are collected and their results compiled and we have the top three goods and services that particular community spends their money on, we'll have the basis for our first economic venture and a business plan to produce based on the No. 1 pick.

For example, let's say food and home supplies is the area where the most money is spent in Southeast San Diego's Skyline community. The first venture in this community's CCE Initiative would be a grocery store, which brings us to our next step: a true community organizing meeting – or several – will have to be held with the entire community and movement activists participating to elect economic trustees for the CCE Fund: one from Occupy the Hood, one from Occupy Wall Street, and two from the community in which the venture is based.

These four will collectively oversee the CCE Fund for that community, allowing those funds raised to be accepted only by those four persons together – no single individual will have access to the fund – and only for the CCE Initiative venture agreed to via the democratic will of all involved. This will ensure checks and balances are maintained and trust is assured.

To fund the grocery store, we will ask each individual in that community to contribute \$1 or \$2 bi-monthly, along with their names, addresses and phone numbers to the CCE Initiative for a six-month period. Let's say there are 10,000-15,000 residents in this community, along with those local Occupy Movement activists who wish to contribute. Each individual will receive a CCE certification card for their contribution, no matter how small.

All these funds will be deposited in the CCE Fund's interest earning account, which would raise an estimated \$100,000 in that six-month period. We use the lion's share of those funds to purchase or build our own grocery store in that community, owned by that community collective who are on the CCE registry; if you contributed, you're on the registry.

We will then hire only people from that community or from the local Occupy Movement who are unemployed. Those Occupy Wall Street activists with accounting, business, tax, zoning, law, real estate, grocery or other related expertise should provide that expertise to ensure the success of these ventures and receive a CCE certificate for their contributions to the effort's creation and continued success.

Once established, we need not worry about patronage or marketing because those who own the venture – the community itself – will, of course, shop in their own grocery store and encourage others to also before going elsewhere. All the profits, minus overhead, will go back to the CCE Fund with 60 percent being paid out monthly to all CCE Initiative registrants – those with a CCE certificate of contribution – in the form of a dividend check, the other 40 percent gaining interest in the CCE fund.

We will keep contributing and collecting the \$1-\$2 every two weeks, depositing it in the CCE Fund. Also, in the next six months, we purchase a "sympathetic-support venture," one that depends on or contributes directly to the initial venture; let's say a bakery. The grocery store will purchase its baked goods inventory exclusively from the CCE Initiative bakery. Again, the bakery will hire only people from that community or local movement without a job.

Again, we repeat the process. In the next six-month period we purchase a second sympathetic-support venture; let's say an organic grain and produce farm, again hiring only those from the community and local movement who are unemployed. Grain, flour and product inventories for the bakery and grocery store will be purchased from our farm – all of these ventures buying and selling to one another while servicing the broader community which owns them.

Again we repeat the process in six months, this time acquiring a small cannery and packaging factory to begin offering our own canned foods and packed goods from both our farm and bakery to our grocer – and on to the broader market. Again, we hire only from that community and local movement's unemployed.

As this proceeds with each expansion of the CCE Initiative venture, the local unemployment rate drops, the amount of dividend checks paid out to CCE Initiative registrants rises, until eventually that community reaches 100 percent employment, with a second revenue stream directly linked to their own consumer choices. As the prosperity of our collectively-owned businesses grows, we will inevitably reach complete community economic interconnection and social empowerment for the people and the movement.

The CCE Initiative dividend checks may begin as small as \$.30 or \$.40, yet in 18 months could be \$30-\$40. The CCE Fund can then turn its attention to establishing a local credit commons, where the commu-

nity can invest in its own people's interests, not to generate profit from usurious interest rates, but to promote community prosperity and meet human needs. Here, people from the community and local movement can get micro-loans, home and auto financing, and standard banking services.

In this way, the underclass community becomes entirely independent of the standard competitive capitalist economy through simple unity, cooperative economics and collective work, distribution of wealth and ownership. All dividend adjustments will be distributed equally amongst everyone in the CCE Initiative, regardless if you contributed \$1 or \$2 or your specialized knowledge and insight. So long as you contribute to the CCE Initiative, you'll receive an equal share of dividends.

Once a full community economic circuit is closed, it can be joined to others in the region or nationally, providing a socio-economic alternative to the yoke of wage slavery offered us all by the 1 percent ruling elite. We need only touch the corporate capitalist economy where our own innovation and enterprises fail to meet the capacity or are simply unable to. But we here of the NCTT are always thinking and, in truth, the only limitation to the CCE Initiative meeting the material needs of the 99 percent is your own imagination; we assure you there are further options.

By means of the CCE Initiative, we can clearly demonstrate cooperation serves the interests of the 99 percent where competition has clearly been unequal to the task. By those means we establish a true transfer culture from which substantive change in the nature and structure of U.S. society can be realized. This CCE Initiative corresponds to Nos. 1, 2, 9 and 10 of the 10 core demands of the national Occupy Movement.

The Sustainable Community Agricultural Commune

Chronic poverty and underemployment – the legacy of corporate greed and political corruption in Amerika – can be directly linked to chronic disease, high obesity rates and the plethora of health problems that accompany them. These types of physical debilities impact underclass communities disproportionately due primarily to anemic access to quality produce, meats, grains and vegetables in our communities.

Of equal concern is the ecological impact of multinational corporate agri-concerns, from the exploitation of Third World broth-

ers and sisters – some 90 percent of the produce consumed in the U.S. is grown in the Third World, while the majority of the rest comes from large corporate farms – to the adverse environmental impact of greenhouse gas emissions from shipping food thousands of miles to reach our tables. Yet it is within our power to change this dynamic by embracing sustainable urban farming as a viable alternative.

Throughout the underclass communities of Amerika, especially in the wake of record foreclosures and the intentional gentrification of our communities, there are vacant lots, open plots and tracts of aimless dirt that we can reclaim and transform into urban gardens that will not only feed the communities healthy and nutritious food, but also provide a valuable and significant source of revenue for them.

Consider that less than 2 percent of the food consumed in metropolitan areas in the U.S. is grown there. Yet urban areas consume billions of dollars worth of food each year, including junk food, sodas, fast food, condiments and processed snacks that, unfortunately, are staples of many poor folks' diets because the stuff is cheap and filling. But if our food was locally produced, it would not only be healthier and 50 percent cheaper than if you bought it at your supermarket, but also serve as a source of revenue for the community by selling the surplus to local chefs, restaurants and our own farmers markets, while relying on organic and other agricultural advances to increase both quality and yields.

I'd like to illustrate what we propose more clearly using Cleveland, Ohio, as an example. According to Entrepreneur Magazine (October 2011), by increasing local urban farming by 5 percent in greater Cleveland it would translate into \$750 million more in revenue for local purveyors. When was the last time a \$750 million business was relocated to your community, let alone the hood, barrio or trailer park?

Cleveland based business development analyst Michael Shuman did a study on what would happen if northeast Ohio managed to provide 25 percent more of the food it consumed. This report revealed that such a move would create over 27,000 new jobs, increase annual regional output by \$4.2 billion and grow tax revenue by more than \$125 million.

In 2007, Cleveland became the first city in the U.S. to zone for community gardens. It now subsidizes farms in the city's core and the 6-acre farm plot that opened re-

cently in the heart of the Ohio City neighborhood of Cleveland, only a few blocks from the Riverview Towers projects, not only services surrounding restaurants, but our brothers and sisters from the Riverview projects can buy fresh produce just outside their building, closer than the Safeway, Kroger or fast food joint, and 50 percent cheaper than its regular price. Now imagine if that 6-acre farm was collectively owned and operated by the residents of the Riverview Towers projects. That's exactly what we are proposing here.

We call on our Occupy Movement brothers and sisters – both Occupy Wall Street and Occupy the Hood – to link with local underclass community organizers and pool their assets, expertise and labor to educate, organize and mobilize the community's residents for the sustainable community agricultural commune (SCA commune). Our first step will be in canvassing the community, distributing fliers to everyone, about our intention of building the SCA commune with that community, then going through the meticulous process of cataloging each square yard of land, no matter how large or small the plot – who owns it, and what it will take to get it zoned and secured for community use.

Simultaneously, another survey of that community and the local businesses which use produce and poultry must be conducted to determine which fruits, vegetables, herbs and grains are most widely consumed, popular and commercially valued in that community and area. Once done this must be compared to which crops among those will grow most effectively and profusely in that unique climate and environment.

In so doing we must also consider new agricultural innovations such as vertical urban gardening, poultry cultivation through modern chicken coops such as those offered by "chicken cribs" (go to Backyard-chickens.com) and free range techniques. The diversity of industry and innovative insight based in the Occupy Movement will prove particularly valuable as we seek contacts and assistance from conscious industry proponents, such as Jac Smit of the Urban Agriculture Network, Michael Shuman, author of "Community Food Enterprise," who is currently a consultant at Cutting Edge Capital in Oakland, California, or Dickson Despommier of the Vertical Farm Project and those amongst movement activists with the same expertise, insight or skill set.

Equally essential at this stage will be our

brothers and sisters of Occupy the Hood in organizing movement activists, community organizers and residents into the divisions of labor necessary to initiate the commune. Following the collective ownership format, we go to the people soliciting contributions of \$.50-\$1 from community residents and movement activists over a 90-day to six-month period, while securing volunteers from across the community and local movement to work the farms on a rotating basis. If one cannot contribute money, they can contribute their labor or both if they like.

Everyone who contributes something to that cycle will be given a commune membership card entitling them to 50 percent in produce and 50 percent in dividends. Therefore 50 percent of the seasonal yield will be set aside to feed the commune and 50 percent will be put on the market for sale. All produce sold to residents of that community will be discounted at our farmers' markets, while chefs, restaurants and other businesses interested in our locally grown produce will receive it at the going rate.

Sixty percent of all profits (minus overhead) from the SCA commune fund will be divided amongst commune members equally as dividends, while 40 percent will continue to incur interest in the fund as the \$.50-\$1 that community residents and local activists continue to contribute to the fund to expand our farms and branch out into poultry production and other husbandry. This will provide quality, organic and free range meats for our commune and potential customers in the same percentages and allotments previously discussed.

We encourage the movement to reach out to conscious businesses like Greenaid, a L.A.-based guerilla gardening company that makes clay, compost and seed balls that can be tossed in derelict urban areas to make them green spaces, and Urbio, a San Francisco-based company that makes planters for vertical urban gardening, for donations to this effort of equipment and material. As the commune grows, the SCA fund can turn its attention to funding other sympathetic ventures, such as a mobile slaughterhouse and produce distribution trucks, all employing only people from the communes or that community's local movement who are unemployed, broadening the scope of our farms and their positive impact on the underclass communities in which they are based.

The SCA commune will serve to liter-

ally root the movement in the community while effecting positive change in the daily lives of the people. By providing these communities with healthy and nutritious food, creating a vital source of collective wealth, reclaiming and breathing life into what would be eyesores or an impetus for fascist tools of the ruling 1 percent – police, sheriffs etc. – to harass poor people in their own communities, we improve the quality of life for those of us most adversely affected by the current social order.

Our urban farms will provide a safe place of peace and prosperity for our people, our children and our youth to fellowship as they build a brighter future for themselves, their communities and this world, all from the power of their hands, heads and hearts. In addition we open an entirely new industry with limitless economic potential in the center of the underclass communities of Amerika, and it's owned, operated and patronized by those who are its residents, the 99 percent. This program corresponds to No. 2 of the 10 core demands of the national Occupy Movement.

The Block-Vote Democratic Initiative

In our last communique we definitively established that the ruling 1 percent had successfully hijacked the political process in Amerika. If any of you have been watching the partisan insanity playing out in Congress, the tripe being spouted by mental midgets like Newt Gingrich and Donald Trump, the ultra-right wing pandering of Mitt Romney or the fence straddling timidity and status-quo maintenance of the Obama administration, you should have no doubt we speak the unvarnished truth.

We have also articulated the fact that the reason so few people vote in underclass communities is the socio-economic and race-based disparities that are responsible for the human misery in these communities are institutional and systemic to U.S. capitalist economics. No matter who they vote into office, their plight does not change. The problem is not the democratic process, which is as yet unfinished in Amerika. No, the flaw lies in the legalized corruption of politicians at the local, state and national level.

Similar to the conflict between federalists and republicans during the inception of the U.S. two-party system in the 1700s, once the people elect these pawns of the 1 percent, they feel the people should just sit down and shut up, while their ears turn

only to the voices of lobbyists, special interests, and those who can improve their political careers and coffers. But it need not be this way if the incalculable power of the democratic will of the underclass can be awakened.

Before the sleeping giant of underclass democratic power – the poor man and woman's vote – can be strategically harnessed, there must be some assurance that their interests will be realized. This effort will provide that interest for all the 99 percent.

What we propose in the Block-Vote Democratic Initiative (BVD Initiative) is to do just that by bypassing these corrupt politicians altogether by putting the policies we, the 99 percent, support on the ballots of local, state and national elections via petition with a simultaneous voter registration "block" comprised of Occupy Movement activists and entire underclass communities, so the sheer number of affirmative votes passes the policy measures outright.

What we propose is to have Occupy Movement activists – both Occupy the Hood and Occupy Wall Street – prepare informative pamphlets specifically targeted to their local underclass communities and districts containing our 10 core demands and issues of particular interest to that community which the vast majority of the people support. Once we've assessed the will of the people, ballot measures and signature petitions should be prepared based directly on those policies most widely supported, with voter registrations drives to register everyone in the community and movement who supports the policy. Each local policy initiative or position on a bill should be organized as a block capable of passing – or defeating – the initiative outright.

On the state level, greater coordination between underclass communities will have to be organized through Occupy Movement activists, and again if possible our "block" should be so overwhelming as to pass the initiative outright. On the national level that will prove even more difficult as the concurrence on the specific policy will lose resonance in direct proportion to the size of the population we seek to serve.

Nevertheless, we should still seek to pass these measures outright. To facilitate this, each measure's vote should be preceded by at least two weeks of demonstrations corresponding in size to the measure's social impact – i.e., local measures warrant local demonstrations, state measures should war-

rant a statewide wave of demonstrations, and national measures should see demonstrations from coast to coast. This will raise awareness and galvanize support in other segments of the social strata ensuring the measures pass.

There are three possible measures reflective of our 10 core demands we are fairly certain would find overwhelming support in underclass communities across Amerika:

1) A total ban on all corporate and financial influences, including lobbyists and "strategic analysts," from any aspect of the electoral process. Only individuals should be able to influence the polls with their votes and campaign contributions – see No. 7 of the 10 core demands of the national Occupy Movement.

2) Establishment of community based parole boards, with a panel from the community where the offender actually lived and would return, determining when an indeterminate term – such as 25 to life, three strikes etc. – has been sufficiently satisfied and he or she is ready to return home. This contrasts with the current panel of DAs, police and other law enforcement officials that make up parole boards today. Most prisoners hail from underclass communities and it is these communities who should decide when they are sufficiently rehabilitated to return. This corresponds to No. 6 of the 10 core demands of the national Occupy Movement.

3) Establish universal health care for the poor. All individuals making under \$25,000 a year and families making under \$50,000 a year should be provided access to a comprehensive universal health care system. This corresponds to No. 2 of the 10 core demands of the national Occupy Movement.

Such measures would pass overwhelmingly in the underclass communities of Amerika, serve to empower those most disenfranchised segments of society, and improve the quality of life for over 100 million people in the U.S., all because we, the 99 percent, via the BVD Initiative, removed corrupt politicians from the policy creation and implementation process. Any force opposing this undiluted expression of the will of the people would be by definition undemocratic.

It is our sincerest hope that you all see the merits of what we propose here and act in accordance with it. In any conflict resolution scenario, the first step that should be made is a strategic analysis of yourself and those forces aligned against you to ascer-

tain your relative strengths and weaknesses. The wise know such assessments, especially in socio-political conflicts, must be constantly studied and reassessed because they are in a state of constant change.

If this is done correctly, we can calculate the prospects of victory or defeat. Conflict resolution and warfare are based on identical principles. Sun-Tzu, in his sage masterwork, "The Art of War," stated, "If you know your enemy and you know yourself, you need not fear the outcome of 100 battles."

If we analyze the actions and reactions of the tools of the ruling 1 percent, it's clear they are pursuing a course of encirclement, isolation and marginalization against the national movement, hoping that their control of the mass media and a lack of broad-based organization in the movement will allow them the opportunity to erode support for it over time, isolate it from positive public opinion and ultimately destroy it. It is a posture and strategic approach that has worked for them in the past. This is possible only if we allow it.

The most prudent way to counter such an attempt is to place the movement in a position of invincibility, while simultaneously redefining the nature of the conflict itself. The movement is strong – we've shown that on every front, be it on the streets or behind these walls – yet it's largely unanchored to the material interests of those we represent. A seed in the ground is easily uprooted, a tree with deep roots, however, is a monumental task to remove.

Zhuge Liang, a famous general from ancient China's "warring states era" (180-234 A.D.), in the chapter, "Discerning Bases," in his essay, "The Way of the General," said: "If you attack evils based on social trends, no one can rival you in dignity. If you settle victory based on the power of the people, no one can rival you in achievement. If you can accurately discern those bases of action and add dignity and faith to them, you can take on the most formidable opponent and prevail over the most valiant adversary." Truly basing the movement in the people ensures no force on earth can prevail against it. It truly becomes invincible.

Conclusion: You can transform the world

For all of you reading these words, we want you to really understand what you are involved in and what's at stake. You are on the cusp of making history, of quite literally

changing the world. Right now you have it within your hands to transform the nature and structure of the most powerful nation on earth, and thus transform the world.

You represent the ongoing struggle for democratic change in the U.S. A historical legacy reaching back hundreds of years is now in your hands. The means for victory are at our collective fingertips; you need only reach out and seize this opportunity. Will it be easy? Of course not. Nothing of value comes without cost or sacrifice. Power concedes nothing without demand.

But what must be understood is that we, the people, the 99 percent, are the most powerful force in this world and our cause is just. Proceeding from this truth with strategic intent we cannot lose. We are on the right side of history. Our ideas are moral; our cause is just.

But understand we cannot assume this is self-evident, nor that it will be enough to win. We must promote and demonstrate the correctness of our view through social practice. Understand we will not win this conflict without public and political support, but people who may agree with us will still not join the movement unless it's clear our cause is righteous and just.

Yes, the corporate-political power structure is authoritarian, hypocritical and avaricious. Greed and corruption define the very fabric of U.S. institutions and power considerations. You are expressing the frustration and hostility the people already feel. But still this is not enough. There must be a qualitative transformation in that moral outrage.

If we view morality from a historical perspective, it has evolved over time into a system of ethics societies use to create values that serve the public good. If these values cease to fit the vast majority of the people's interests, the morality of society slowly shifts, evolving new values. The morality of corporate capitalism, where "Gordon Gekko" clones live, the ethos "Greed is good" does not fit the vast majority of the people's interests; it never has. Yet now, that moral self-realization is inescapable.

Articulating this is not enough, and leaves us – even occupying the moral high ground that we do – vulnerable. But demonstrating the righteousness of our cause and moral integrity of our ideas, while simultaneously imbedding the movement within the population most adversely affected by the entrenched interests of this greedy and corrupt elite, our ideas become

an interest, our movement becomes a social revolution and any hope of opposition to the successful realization of our 10 core demands becomes academic.

The highest form of strategy is to win without fighting. When time is not an option, we must rely on an approach just as good: to win first and fight second. This is what we are proposing here. If you succeed in waking the sleeping giant of socio-political and economic potential lying dormant in the underclass communities of Amerika in pursuit of this equalitarian democratic imperative, we will have already won. Should the 1 percent, or their tools, be fool enough to oppose the inevitable conclusion of such a social revolution, they will reap a fool's reward.

U.S. Army Col. John Boyd, in his analysis of how to suppress guerrilla insurgencies or popular revolutions, stated the only effective countermeasure to our strategic approach: "Undermine the ... cause and destroy their cohesion by demonstrating integrity and competence of government to represent and serve the needs of the people rather than exploit and impoverish them for the benefit of a greedy elite. (If you cannot realize such a political program, Boyd noted, you might consider changing sides now to avoid the rush later.) Take political initiative to root out and visibly punish corruption. Select new leaders with recognized competence as well as popular appeal. Ensure that they deliver justice, eliminate major grievances and connect the government with its grass roots."

In essence, to defeat us they would have to capitulate to our 10 core demands without struggle. Well, brothers and sisters, with the unholy alliance of corporate interests and political patronage that defines the modern political and economic power structure in the U.S., we need not fear such countermeasures anytime soon.

It is our sincerest hope that you all find some value in our counsel and take up these ideas as your own. Our love, loyalty and solidarity to all those who love freedom, justice and equality and fear only failure. Until we win or don't lose.

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INCARCERATION NATION

By Fareed Zakaria, *Time Magazine*
March 25, 2012

Mass incarceration on a scale almost unexampled in human history is a fundamental fact of our country today," writes the New Yorker's Adam Gopnik. "Over all, there are now more people under 'correctional supervision' in America - more than 6 million - than were in the Gulag Archipelago under Stalin at its height."

Is this hyperbole? Here are the facts. The U.S. has 760 prisoners per 100,000 citizens. That's not just many more than in most other developed countries but seven to 10 times as many. Japan has 63 per 100,000, Germany has 90, France has 96, South Korea has 97, and Britain - with a rate among the highest - has 153.

This wide gap between the U.S. and the rest of the world is relatively recent. In 1980 the U.S.'s prison population was about 150 per 100,000 adults. It has more than quadrupled since then. So something has happened in the past 30 years to push millions of Americans into prison.

That something, of course, is the war on drugs. Drug convictions went from 15 inmates per 100,000 adults in 1980 to 148 in 1996, an almost tenfold increase. More than half of America's federal inmates today are in prison on drug convictions. In 2009 alone, 1.66 million Americans were arrested on drug charges, more than were arrested on assault or larceny charges. And 4 of 5 of those arrests were simply for possession.

Bipartisan forces have created the trend that we see. Conservatives and liberals love to sound tough on crime, and both sides agreed in the 1990s to a wide range of new federal infractions, many of them carrying mandatory sentences for time in state or federal prison. And as always in American politics, there is the money trail. Many state prisons are now run by private companies that have powerful lobbyists in state capitals. These firms can create jobs in places where steady work is rare; in many states, they have also helped create a conveyor belt of cash for prisons from treasuries to outlying counties.

Partly as a result, the money that states spend on prisons has risen at six times the rate of spending on higher education in the past 20 years. In 2011, California spent

\$9.6 billion on prisons vs. \$5.7 billion on the UC system and state colleges. Since 1980, California has built one college campus and 21 prisons. A college student costs the state \$8,667 per year; a prisoner costs it \$45,006 a year.

The results are gruesome at every level. We are creating a vast prisoner underclass in this country at huge expense, increasingly unable to function in normal society, all in the name of a war we have already lost.

Read the full article at TIME.com

OCCUPY 4 PRISONERS

Notes for March 28, 2012

Discussion

We talked a bit about needing to clarify who we are as a group, how best to be in solidarity with incarcerated people, and how that interacts with the actions we do. Tha said that this group is not necessarily the best one to define how to be in solidarity with imprisoned people. There's a lot of excellent writing on that, and he can give a long list of organizations with great ideas.

Jerry and Tha also spoke about the national platform for the Formerly Incarcerated and Convicted People's Movement that was approved this past Nov. 2. It would be good for us all to familiarize ourselves with that and see how it applies to what we're doing.

All of Us or None also has films of community forums they've done, one is called "Locked up, Locked Out," that can help with education and direction.

Tha also noted that we need to continue building capacity, so we'll have more ease in pulling off actions...for example, having robust subcommittees happening.

We need to always remember that we're connected to Occupy movement, and how to work with those connections

Ideas

- Having a general list-serv we can add people to and using it for sharing info and publicizing events
- Conference or 1-day forum for Bay Area prison activist groups...this summer?
- As part of the solidarity action for the day, put money in people's commissary accounts in the jails. Point people: Kevin and Rachel
- Add O4P meetings to Occupy Oakland calendar

Action Decisions

- Flying at the Oakland jail in morning

of April 24th

- Add money to incarcerated folks commissary accounts at that time?
- Gather at [location omitted by editor] and give a shout-out (stay as long as we can without getting arrested) then go to [location omitted by editor] to stage a mock trial, i.e. "Putting the system on trial"
- Mock trial will basically be a speak-out with courtroom trappings, including the Scales of Injustice. System reps can be in suits; prosecutors and judge in CDC jumpsuits?
- Action proposal will go to Occupy Oakland GA on Sun. April 8

Subcommittees For April 24th Action PROGRAM—Point Person: Denise

This involves putting the mock trial together (lining up "witnesses," coordinating staging and quick and easy set-building), and any other educational actions we may do along the way

Please let Denise know as soon as possible if you're interested in helping with program!

OUTREACH-- Point Person: Mishka (Denise and Molly will help)

Outreach Opportunities we know of so far:

- Occupy San Francisco action, April 1st
- April 6th—Solitary Confinement event in SF
- April 1st- I Love Capitalism march

Next Meeting: Thursday, April 5, 7 pm, at 1904 Franklin, 3rd Floor Conference Rm.

"Let us dream of tomorrow where we can truly love from the soul, and know love as the ultimate truth at the heart of all creation."

-Michael Jackson



LEADING MENTAL HEALTH EXPERTS URGE ILLINOIS LEGISLATORS TO CLOSE TAMMS SUPERMAX

By James Ridgeway and Jean Casella

When it comes to the psychological effects of solitary confinement in U.S. prisons, there are three acknowledged experts: Drs. Stuart Grassian, Craig Haney, and Terry Kupers. The three have collaborated on a joint statement on the closure of Tamms supermax prison, which was proposed last month by Illinois governor Pat Quinn. The statement is directed at the relevant committee of the Illinois state legislature, which will hold hearings on the prison closure next week. We are publishing this important statement in full.

Comments by Dr. Stuart Grassian, Dr. Craig Haney, and Dr. Terry Kupers to the April 2, 2012 Hearing of the Illinois Legislature Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability regarding the proposal to close Tamms Correctional Center

Tamms Correctional Center has been open for over ten years, and some of its resident prisoners have been at the facility since it opened. We have been informed that the Governor of Illinois has recommended that the Tamms facility be closed. As three long-time researchers and nationally recognized experts on the psychological effects of solitary confinement, we write to express our strong support of that recommendation.

We believe that the Governor's recommendation is entirely consistent with a growing national trend away from the use of long-term solitary confinement.[1] Of course, there are compelling economic justifications that partially explain this trend. Supermax prisons such as Tamms are very expensive to operate. In addition, however, there are important mental health concerns and public safety justifications that support this development. Research has shown that long-term solitary confinement places prisoners at grave risk of significant psychological harm.[2] Because this kind of confinement is not only painful but also potentially damaging—and, for some prisoners, perhaps irreversibly so—it can be a cruel and singularly inappropriate form of punishment. Beyond doing more to debilitate than rehabilitate the prisoners who are subjected to it, solitary confinement undermines the ability of many of them to suc-

ceed in the community after their eventual release from prison.[3] This evidence—that it appears to increase rather than reduce recidivism—raises public safety concerns.

The structure and operation of supermaximum security units such as Tamms are conducive to the creation of a punitive atmosphere and even a “culture of cruelty” that can harden and dispirit prisoners and correctional officers alike. Aspects of its negative atmosphere and culture may spread to and negatively affect prevailing attitudes and practices in the larger correctional system. Moreover, supermax prisons such as Tamms do not reliably reduce violence or disciplinary infractions within the larger prison systems in which they function; in some instances they appear to make it worse.[4] Nor do they alleviate the problem of prison gangs. The California Department of Corrections has aggressively pursued the use of long-term solitary confinement for more than 20 years and the state prison system is now plagued with perhaps the worst gang problem in the nation.

Our views on these matters are based on a careful review of the existing literature on solitary confinement and our own direct observations and analyses of the effects of long-term solitary confinement in work that we have been engaged in for more than three decades. Each of us has toured and inspected numerous “supermax”-type penal institutions, interviewed and evaluated numerous prisoners confined under these severe conditions, and discussed isolation practices and procedures with correctional staff and officials from around the country. We have sometimes been asked to render expert opinions in legal cases that were focused on whether being housed in supermax facilities such as Tamms constitutes “cruel and unusual punishment.” One of us (Dr. Haney) is an academic psychologist and two of us (Drs. Grassian & Kupers) are university-affiliated psychiatrists.

More specifically, Dr. Haney is a social psychologist and Professor of Psychology. He began his study of prisons as one of the principal researchers who conducted the well-known “Stanford Prison Experiment” in the early 1970s, and has studied the psychology of imprisonment in actual prisons since then.[5] Dr. Haney's study of

long-term solitary confinement includes a systematic analysis of the effects of confinement inside a “state-of-the-art” supermax prison that housed prisoners who had committed serious disciplinary infractions or were suspected of prison gang activity. [6] Haney's use of a random (and therefore representative) sample of prisoners in supermax confinement allowed him to establish prevalence rates (i.e., an estimate of how widespread the psychological reactions were among the group of persons confined in supermax). This study found extraordinarily high rates of symptoms of psychological trauma. More than four out of five of those evaluated suffered from feelings of anxiety and nervousness, headaches, troubled sleep, and lethargy or chronic tiredness, and over half complained of nightmares, heart palpitations, and fear of impending nervous breakdowns. Equally high numbers reported specific psychopathological effects of social isolation: obsessive ruminations, confused thought processes, an oversensitivity to stimuli, irrational anger, and social withdrawal. Well over half reported violent fantasies, emotional flatness, mood swings, chronic depression, and feelings of overall deterioration, while nearly half suffered from hallucinations and perceptual distortions, and a quarter experienced suicidal ideation.

Dr. Grassian did pioneering work on the harmful psychological effects of solitary confinement and is responsible for drawing heightened attention to its harmful consequences in the early 1980s. In his initial article on the topic, Dr. Grassian reported on 15 prisoners kept in isolation for varying amounts of time at a Massachusetts prison. [7] Dr. Grassian described a particular psychiatric syndrome resulting from the deprivation of social, perceptual, and occupational stimulation in solitary confinement. This syndrome has basically the features of a delirium, and among the more vulnerable population, can result in an acute agitated psychosis, and random violence – often directed towards the self, and at times resulting in suicide. He has also demonstrated in numerous cases that the prisoners who end up in solitary confinement are generally not, as claimed, “the worst of the worst”; they are, instead, the sickest, most emotionally labile, impulse-ridden and psychiatrically

vulnerable among the prison population.

Two-thirds of the prisoners Dr. Grassian initially studied had become hypersensitive to external stimuli (noises, smells, etc.) and about the same number experienced “massive free floating anxiety.” About half of the prisoners suffered from perceptual disturbances that for some included hallucinations and perceptual illusions, and another half complained of cognitive difficulties such as confusional states, difficulty concentrating, and memory lapses. About a third also described thought disturbances such as paranoia, aggressive fantasies, and impulse control problems. Three out of the fifteen had cut themselves in suicide attempts while in isolation. In almost all instances the prisoners had not previously experienced any of these psychiatric reactions.

Dr. Terry Kupers has been studying the plight of mentally ill prisoners for decades. [8] In part because of the high prevalence of serious mental illness he discovered in many of the supermax facilities that he toured, he has written extensively about the harm that long-term isolated confinement causes in prisoners, especially those suffering from serious psychiatric conditions. As one stunning index of the magnitude of this harm, national data indicate that fully half of the suicides that occur in a prison system occur among the 4% to 8% of the prisoners who are consigned to segregation or isolation. Recently, he served as an expert witness, and then as a court-approved monitor, in litigation in Mississippi that required the Department of Corrections (Mississippi DOC) to ameliorate substandard conditions at the super-maximum Unit 32 of Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman, remove prisoners with serious mental illness (SMI) from administrative segregation and provide them with adequate treatment, and re-examine the entire classification system. Pursuant to two federal consent decrees, the MDOC greatly reduced the population in administrative segregation and established a step-down mental health treatment unit for the prisoners excluded from administrative segregation. After 800 of the approximately 1,000 prisoners in the super-maximum security unit were transferred out of isolated confinement, there was a large reduction in the rates of misconduct and violence, not only among the prisoners transferred out of supermax, but in the entire Mississippi Department of Corrections.[9]

Supermax prisons and the long-term

solitary confinement to which they are dedicated represent an unjustified return to a long-discredited 19th century penal practice, one seized upon at a time of dangerous and unprecedented overcrowding that overwhelmed correctional systems across the country in the 1980s and 1990s. Rather than a “best practices” approach to the impending crisis that overcrowding threatened to bring about, correctional administrators turned to supermax isolated confinement because they perceived themselves to have few alternatives. However, in addition to the substantial psychological risks that they create for prisoners, the promise of supermax—as a last ditch, “stop gap” measure designed to contain the “worst of the worst”—has always exceeded their actual accomplishments.

Thus, as we have noted, long-term solitary confinement places prisoners at grave risk of psychological harm without reliably producing any tangible benefits in return. There is no hard evidence that supermaximum security facilities actually ever reliably reduced system-wide prison violence or enhanced public safety. Fears that a significant reduction in the supermax population or the outright closure of a facility will result in heightened security threats and prison violence have not been born out by experience. In fact, as the example cited above makes clear, recent experience in Mississippi found exactly the opposite—that a drastic reduction in the supermax population was followed by a reduction in prison misconduct and violence.

As prison populations slowly decline, and the nation’s correctional system re-dedicates itself to program-oriented approaches to positive prisoner change, the resources expended on long-term solitary confinement should be redirected to more cost-effective solutions. In Mississippi and elsewhere, supermax prisons are beginning to be seen as an expensive anachronism. We agree with the Governor that it is an anachronism that Illinois should do without.

Thank you for considering our comments.

[Stuart Grassian, M.D., Clinical Faculty, Harvard Medical School, 1974 through 2002, Craig Haney, Ph.D., J.D., Professor of Psychology, University of California, Santa Cruz, Terry A. Kupers, M.D., M.S.P., Institute Professor, The Wright Institute]

tion, Saving Money, Lives and Sanity, New York Times, March 10, 2012 [available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/11/us/rethinking-solitary-confinement.html?pagewanted=all>]

[2] Haney, C., and Lynch, M., *Regulating Prisons of the Future: A Psychological Analysis of Supermax and Solitary Confinement*, 23 *New York University Review of Law and Social Change* 477-570 (1997); Haney, C., *Mental Health Issues in Long-Term Solitary and “Supermax” Confinement*, 49 *Crime & Delinquency* 124 (2003); Cloyes, K., Lovell, D., Allen, D., & Rhodes, L., *Assessment of Psychosocial Impairment in a Supermaximum Security Unit Sample*, 33 *Criminal Justice and Behavior* 760-781 (2006).

[3] For example, see: Lovell, D., Johnson, L., & Cain, K., *Recidivism of Supermax Prisoners in Washington State*, 53 *Crime & Delinquency* 633-656 (2007); Mears, D., & Bales, W., *Supermax Incarceration and Recidivism*, 47 *Criminology* 1131 (2009).

[4] Briggs, C., Sundt, J., & Castellano, T., *The Effect of Supermaximum Security Prisons on Aggregate Levels of Institutional Violence*, 41 *Criminology* 1341-1376 (2003).

[5] See, for example: Haney, C., Banks, C., and Zimbardo, P., *Interpersonal dynamics in a simulated prison*. *International Journal of Criminology and Penology*, 1, 69-97 (1973); and Haney, C., *Reforming Punishment: Psychological Limits to the Pains of Imprisonment*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association Books (2006).

[6] Described in detail in Haney, *Mental Health Issues in Long-Term Solitary and “Supermax” Confinement*, supra note 2.

[7] Stuart Grassian, *Psychopathological Effects of Solitary Confinement*, 140 *American Journal of Psychiatry* 1450-1454 (1983). See also, Stuart Grassian and Friedman, N., *Effects of Sensory Deprivation in Psychiatric Seclusion and Solitary Confinement*, 8 *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry* 49-65 (1986).

[8] For example, see: T. Kupers, *Prison Madness: The Mental Health Crisis Behind Bars and What We Must Do About It*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass (1999).

[9] See T. Kupers, T. Dronet et al, *Beyond Supermax Administrative Segregation: Mississippi’s Experience Rethinking Prison Classification and Creating Alternative Mental Health Programs*, 36 *Criminal Justice and Behavior* 1037-1050, October, 2009.

[1] Erica Goode, *Prisons Rethink Isola-*

PALESTINIAN CONS FIGHT ISRAELI ATROCITIES WITH 'EMPTY STOMACHS'

OCCUPIED RAMALLAH

Inspired by Palestinian prisoner Khader Adnan, who pressured Israel with a 66-day hunger strike, a growing number of his fellow detainees are launching similar protests.

The tactic appears to be spreading among the thousands of Palestinians held in Israeli prisons, who see themselves battling for their rights with the only weapon they have: 'empty stomachs'.

Adnan went for more than two months without food before a military court agreed to free him, on April 17, when his four-month administrative detention order ends.

Inspired by his example, 30-year-old Hanaa Shalabi began a hunger strike after her detention in February, reaching her 39th day without food on Sunday.

An Israeli military court rejected her appeal, her lawyer said.

Hanaa Shalabi was appealing a four-month administrative detention order allowing her to be held without charge.

"The Israeli military court rejected the appeal and now we will go to the High Court," Jawad Bulus said. "Hanaa will continue her hunger strike."

Across the Israeli prison system, around 30 Palestinian prisoners have followed suit, according to the Palestinian Prisoners' Club, which tracks Palestinian detainees in Israeli jails.

The Israeli prison service puts the number at around 20, a spokeswoman said.

"Consultations are underway at all the occupation's prisons, and while a hunger strike is always individual, there will be a large hunger strike in different Israeli prisons in the next two months," Qaddura Fares, president of the Palestinian Prisoners' Club, said.

"The prisoners in the occupation's prisoner are using the weapon of 'empty stomachs' as a result of increased repression and in the absence of a channel of dialogue with the Israeli side or negotiations with the Palestinian Authority to improve their conditions," he said.

Those involved, according to the PPC's media director Amani Sarahna, are drawing inspiration from the hunger strike protests launched by Irish prisoners in the 1980s, in which 10 people died, including IRA militant Bobby Sands.

"All the messages we have received

from prisoners in Israeli jails say that they are following the example of the Irish hunger strikes," Sarahna said.

While prisoners have cited various reasons for their protests, Fares said the current wave began in part when improvements expected in the wake of a prisoner exchange deal last year failed to materialise.

Palestinian prisoners had expected improvements after the exchange, which saw Gaza fighters release captured Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit in return for the freeing of 1,027 Palestinian prisoners.

"The exchange deal and the release of Shalit didn't change the conditions of their detention in the occupation's prisons. On the contrary, it got worse," Fares said.

Shalabi was among the 1,027 prisoners freed under the deal, after being held for more than two years without charge, but she was rearrested on February 16.

She says her hunger strike, which has resulted in her hospitalisation in recent days, is intended to protest her imprisonment without charge under a procedure known as administrative detention.

The procedure allows a military court to order a detainee to be held for up to six months at a time without trial or even revealing the evidence against them. The decision can be appealed and an order can only be renewed by the court.

More than 4,700 Palestinians are currently detained in Israeli prisons, including 320 held under administrative detention orders, according to the most recent statistics from the Palestinian prisoners' ministry.

Agence France-Presse

<http://www.omantribune.com/index.php?page=news&id=115201&heading=Middle%20East>

DEATH PENALTY 2011

Alarming levels of executions in the few countries that kill

Countries that carried out executions in 2011 did so at an alarming rate but those employing capital punishment have decreased by more than a third compared to a decade ago, Amnesty International found in its annual review of death sentences and executions. Only 10

percent of countries in the world, 20 out of 198, carried out executions last year.

People were executed or sentenced to death for a range of offences including adultery and sodomy in Iran, blasphemy in Pakistan, sorcery in Saudi Arabia, the trafficking of human bones in the Republic of Congo, and drug offences in more than 10 countries.

Nearly 20,000 people remained under sentence of death at the end of 2011 and at least 676 people were executed worldwide. But these figures do not include the thousands of executions that Amnesty International believes were carried out in China, where the numbers are suppressed.

"The vast majority of countries have moved away from using the death penalty," said Salil Shetty Secretary General of Amnesty International.

"Our message to the leaders of the isolated minority of countries that continue to execute is clear: you are out of step with the rest of the world on this issue and it is time you took steps to end this most cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment."

In the Middle East there has been a steep rise in recorded executions – up almost 50 per cent on the previous year.

Thousands of people were executed in China in 2011, more than the rest of the world put together. Figures on the death penalty are a state secret. Amnesty International has stopped publishing figures it collects from public sources in China as these are likely to grossly underestimate the true number.

The organization renewed its challenge to the Chinese authorities to publish data on those executed and sentenced to death, in order to confirm their claims that various changes in law and practice have led to a significant reduction in the use of the death penalty in the country over the last four years.

The United States was again the only country in the Americas and the only member of the G8 group of leading economies to execute prisoners – 43 in 2011. Europe and former Soviet Union countries were capital punishment-free, apart from Belarus where two people were executed. The Pacific was death penalty-free except for five death sentences in Papua New Guinea.

In Belarus and Vietnam, prisoners were not informed of their forthcoming execution, nor were their families or lawyers. Public judicial executions were known to have been carried out in North Korea, Saudi Arabia and Somalia, as well as in Iran.

In the majority of countries where people were sentenced to death or executed, the trials did not meet international fair trial standards. In some, this involved the extraction of ‘confessions’ through torture or other duress including in China, Iran, Iraq, North Korea, and Saudi Arabia.

Foreign nationals were disproportionately affected by the use of the death penalty, particularly in Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand.

But even in those countries that continue to execute on a high level some progress was made in 2011.

In the USA, the number of executions and new death sentences dropped dramatically from a decade ago. Illinois became the 16th state to abolish the death penalty. A moratorium was announced in the state of Oregon. And victims of violent crimes spoke out against the death penalty

“Even among the small group of countries that executed in 2011, we can see gradual progress. These are small steps but such incremental measures have been shown ultimately to lead to the end of the death penalty,” said Salil Shetty.

“It is not going to happen overnight but we are determined that we will see the day when the death penalty is consigned to history.”

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases without exception regardless of the nature of the crime, the characteristics of the offender or the method used by the state to carry out the execution. The death penalty violates the right to life and is the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment.

Regional summaries

The Americas

The US was once again the only executioner in the Americas. A total of 43 executions were recorded in 13 of the 34 states that retain the death penalty, a drop by a third since 2001, and 78 new death sentences were recorded in 2011, a decrease by half since 2001.

The Caribbean

An execution-free area, with the number of countries imposing new death sentences appearing to be in decline. Only three countries are known to have handed down a total of six death sentences: Guyana, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago.

Asia-Pacific

Positive signs questioning the legitimacy of capital punishment were evident throughout the region in 2011. Not counting the thousands of executions that were

believed to have taken place in China, at least 51 executions were reported to have been carried out in seven countries in the Asia-Pacific region. At least 833 new death sentences were known to have been imposed in 18 countries in the region. The Pacific sub-region was death penalty-free with the exception of five death sentences handed down in Papua New Guinea. No executions were recorded in Singapore and, for the first time in 19 years, Japan. The authorities in both countries have previously shown strong support for capital punishment.

Sub-Saharan Africa

Significant progress in 2011 - Benin adopted legislation to ratify the key UN treaty aimed at abolishing the death penalty. Sierra Leone declared, and Nigeria confirmed, official moratoriums on executions. And the Constitutional Review Commission in Ghana recommended the abolition of the death penalty. There were at least 22 executions in three countries in sub-Saharan Africa: Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan. Only 14 of the 49 countries in the region are classified as retaining the death penalty.

Middle East and North Africa

At least 558 executions could be confirmed in eight countries. At least 750 death sentences imposed in 2011 could be confirmed in 15 countries. The continuing violence in countries such as Libya, Syria and Yemen made it particularly difficult to gather adequate information on the use of the death penalty in the region in 2011. No information was available about judicial executions in Libya, and no death sentences are known to have been imposed. Extrajudicial executions, torture and arbitrary detention were often resorted to instead.

Four countries – Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Yemen – accounted for 99 per cent of all recorded executions in the Middle East and North Africa.

The authorities of Algeria, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco/Western Sahara and Qatar imposed death sentences but continued to refrain from carrying out executions.

Europe and Central Asia

Belarus was the only country in Europe and the former Soviet Union, and apart from the USA the only one in the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), to have carried out executions in 2011, executing two men.

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/death-penalty-2011-alarming-levels-executions-few-countries-kill-2012-03-27>

CORCORAN SHU REJECTS CDCR PLAN

[The following is the formal rejection of the CDCR's new SHU and validation scheme by men in the Corcoran SHU. Written to Kendra Castaneda on March 16, 2012, postmarked March 19.]

By J. Heshima Denham and Zaharibu Dorough, NCTT Corcoran SHU

For decades the California Department of Corrections (and Rehabilitation) has, with the support of the U.S. government, operated a domestic torture program in California SHUs – at Pelican Bay, Corcoran and CCI state prisons – whereby men are consigned to indefinite solitary confinement, sensory deprivation and constant illumination with the sole intent of compelling these state victims to become state informants.

This domestic torture program employs as its key feature the “validation process,” by which innocent “source items” – a tattoo, address, group exercise etc. – which evidence no “overt unlawful acts” in furtherance of a “gang.” And the arbitrary and subjective determinations of a staff gang investigator of these “source items” is the entire basis for consignment to indefinite confinement in these sensory deprivation torture units.

Following unprecedented peaceful, non-violent hunger strikes by tens of thousands of state prisoners and a global social outcry, CDCR has submitted a new “Security Threat Group” management proposal that states its intent to move to a “behavior-based model” that focuses on prevention of actual gang related criminal acts.

We have reviewed the proposal. Unfortunately, in its current form, it fails to meet its stated intent and instead seeks to retain the “arbitrary and subjective determination” standard for gang investigative staff. That standard is the foundation of decades of abuses and the very focus is the prevention of horrible crimes as the basis of moving to a behavior-based model in one breath; yet draft regulatory definitions, language and policies maintain the same status quo of arbitrary and subjective staff determinations that are responsible for perhaps the largest, most well hidden domestic torture program on earth.

A truly behavior based “gang” interdiction model, by definition, calls for a com-

plete abolition of arbitrary and subjective determinations as a basis for consigning these men, fellow humans, to eternity in these torture units. By doing so, investigative staff will be free to focus their energy and resources on actually prosecuting overt unlawful acts – i.e., actual criminal conduct – as opposed to punishing men for an address, photograph or their political ideas that have NO relation to the violation of civil or criminal law. Anything short of this calls into question the validity of their stated intent and their dedication to the public good.

Editorial Comments

The content of this issue of *jRoca!* is an expanded edition because I wanted to get all of the material I had from the prisoners at the Corcoran SHU into one issue of the paper. I tried to keep it at one stamp to mail but failed so I added some more pages.

In terms of the primary content of this issue, reader feedback is important. How do the ideas presented by the NCTT (New Afrikan Collective Think Tank) in the Corcoran SHU sound to you? Write and let me know and I'll publish as many of your responses as possible.

Yesterday I had to buy a new toner cartridge for the laser printer I use to print this publication. It cost me \$154. Out of that cartridge I can print about 5,000 pages. This issue will use up almost 2,000 of those pages. The postage to mail this issue will be \$65. The labor involved in formatting, printing, collating, stapling, folding, labeling, stamping, etc. I do myself. I'm in my 70s and my only income is Social Security, which isn't much for someone who has spent 35 plus years behind bars.

Your financial help in keeping this newsletter going is not only essential, it is also the yardstick by which I measure the importance of this effort. If it's not important enough to readers to materially support, then I would prefer to spend my "golden years" doing something a little more fun. Two or three stamps a month from each reader will help to keep *jRoca!* going. As is the case with all prisoner-oriented publications, if you like them support them.

In addition to being the publisher of this newsletter, I also edit *Prison Focus* newspaper and do the formatting (but not the editing) of the monthly *PHSS News*. Some of you may also know that I run the Prison Art Project, a web site that sells the arts and crafts of prisoners—a labor of love

that I've been doing since starting the site back in 1999. This is why you see advertisements for Prison Art (such as the one below) in the publications I edit.

The web site runs off a server that I maintain in my home. That server suffered a catastrophic hardware failure awhile back and the site was down. It took me some time to build a new server, and then figure out how to configure the shopping cart software, credit card processing, and all that. Well, you artists in there will be pleased to learn that the site is finally back up and running.

That's it for this edition.

Ed Mead

	Sell Your Art On the Web
	Sell prisoner-created art or crafts (except writings). Send only copies, no originals!
Prison Art is a nonprofit website. It charges a 10 percent fee if your art or craft sells. Send SASE for a free brochure. No SASE, no brochure. This offer void where prohibited by prison rules.	Prison Art Project P.O. Box 47439 Seattle, WA 98146
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