

ROCK

★ Working to Extend Democracy to All ★

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GUANTÁNAMO IS NOT AN ANOMALY PRISONERS IN THE US ARE FORCE-FED EVERY DAY

Ann Neumann, May 4, 2013

I know a hunger-striking prisoner who hasn't eaten solid food in more than five years. He is being force-fed by the medical staff where he's incarcerated. Starving himself, he told me during one of our biweekly phone calls last year, is the only way he has to exercise his first amendment rights and to protest his conviction. Not eating is his only available free speech act.

The prisoner has lost half his body weight and four teeth to malnutrition. He and his lawyer have gone to court to stop the force-feedings, but a judge ruled against him in March. If I asked you to guess where Coleman is being held, you'd likely say Guantánamo — "America's offshore war-on-terror camp" — where a mass hunger strike of 100 prisoners has brought the ethics of force-feeding to American newspapers, if not American consciences. Twenty-five of

those prisoners are now being manually fed with tubes.

But William Coleman is not at Guantánamo. He's in Connecticut. The prison medical staff force-feeding him are on contract from the University of Connecticut, not the U.S. Navy. Guantánamo is not an anomaly. Prisoners — who are on U.S. soil and not an inaccessible island military base — are routinely and systematically force-fed every day.

The accounts of force-feeding coming out of Guantánamo, including Samir Najj al Hasan Moqbel's "Gitmo is Killing Me" in The New York Times two weeks ago, are consistent with how Coleman has described the process to me — and to the Supreme Court of Connecticut.

On Oct. 23, 2008, medical staff and corrections officers first strapped Coleman at four points to a vinyl medical table and snaked a rubber tube up his nose, down his throat and into his stomach. When the tube kinked, they thought his reaction to the pain was resistance and tied him across the chest with mesh straps. They reinserted the tube and Coleman gagged as they drained Ensure, a nutrient drink, into it. He continued to gag. He bled. He vomited. He felt violated, not medically treated. Coleman is still being force-fed; sometimes the staff put a semi-permanent tube up his nose, sometimes they don't. They no longer strap him down. He knows the staff. They are, he says, following orders.

The fact that force feedings are being discussed in the context of Guantánamo is dangerously misleading; it obscures the routine use of feeding tubes in American prisons. Other recent feeding tube cases

have taken place in Washington state, Utah, Illinois and Wisconsin — all prisoners who had the resources to contest their treatment in court. No sweeping study of force-feeding has been done, so statistics on usage don't exist. Only three states have laws against force-feeding prisoners: Florida, Georgia and California, where a hunger strike in 2011 at a facility in Pelican Bay effectively caused a court examination of prison conditions. Just this week Leroy Dorsey, who sued New York state to have his force-feedings stopped, lost his case. "Force-feeding order did not violate inmate's rights," the Reuters headline reads.

No matter where force-feedings take place, whether in Guantánamo or Connecticut, they are considered torture by most of the world's medical and governing bodies. As U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Rupert Coville said this week about



By Fernando Bermudez

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tube usage, “If it’s perceived as torture or inhuman treatment — and it’s the case, it’s painful — then it is prohibited by international law.” At The Daily Beast, Kent Sepkowitz, a doctor, writes, “Without question, [force-feeding] is the most painful procedure doctors routinely inflict on conscious patients,” and calls it “barbaric.”

In 2005, when 142 Guantánamo detainees stopped eating, their subsequent force-feedings caused 263 international doctors to write an open letter in the medical journal The Lancet that denounced the practice and called on doctors to stop participating. They wrote, “Physicians do not have to agree with the prisoner, but they must respect their informed decision.”

To little effect, the American Medical Association condemned the force feedings in 2005, 2009 and again last week, saying that “every competent patient has the right to refuse medical intervention, including life-sustaining interventions.”

Yet most media outlets continue to portray feeding tube use as a “complex ethical debate.” It’s not. Competent prisoners go on hunger strike because they have something to say and no other way to say it. Prison officials choose not to hear — and silence them with tubes. In court documents, wardens cite two primary concerns: the health of the prisoner, whose well-being they are responsible for (and for whose “suicide” they could be blamed); and prison order, including disruption of facility routine, copycat hunger strikers, and low morale among corrections officers and staff.

According to Mara Silver, who wrote

about prison hunger strikes for Stanford Law Review in 2005, there is scant evidence that hunger strikers disrupt prison order. In fact, she notes, wardens often aren’t required to show proof when challenged. Consistently, routinely, wardens are deferred to in these cases.

Last week The Chicago Tribune reported that President Obama, who has not yet fulfilled a campaign promise to close Guantánamo, had courts on his side:

Most U.S. judges who have examined forced feeding in prisons have concluded that the measure may violate the rights of inmates to control their own bodies and to privacy — rights rooted in the U.S. Constitution and in common law. But they have found that the needs of operating a prison are more important.

Prisoners’ rights activists have long acknowledged courts’ reluctance to reconsider application of common law and constitutional rights to those inside. This status quo works so long as it is supported by public opinion — or public ignorance of the practice.

Hunger strikes have the power to change public opinion. This might be why the warden of Coleman’s prison has refused my request for a visit — and that of any other journalist. As the warden put it in a brief letter, they think my presence might “exacerbate” the inmate’s condition or “contribute to his detriment.” Or, perhaps, bring attention to Coleman’s case. So long as force-feeding is considered an exceptional practice, applied to less than two dozen men from foreign countries, and on foreign soil, the public and the medical community can remain ignorant of the torture within our growing domestic prison industry.

For an article on William Coleman that appeared in Guernica magazine in January, I spoke with American bioethicist Jacob Appel, who has written extensively about Coleman and feeding-tube usage in U.S. prisons. The public discourse about Guantánamo, Appel told me, had falsely assumed that torture and abuse are an exception rather than the general rule. Guantánamo, he said, “was presented as ... an extraordinary set of circumstances, not an outflow of American law.” ●

<http://wagingnonviolence.org/feature/guantanamo-is-not-an-anomaly-prisoners-in-the-us-are-force-fed-every-day/>

LATE ARRIVING LETTERS

CSPAL

We, the “California SHU Prisoners Activist League” (CSPAL) extend our profoundest of regards and gratitude to your unflinching dedication to prison reform and progressive consciousness building among all races, ethnicities, classes, and geographical affiliations.

We are the 4B-4R pod progressive-minded prisoners of all dimensions above, and we are constantly seeking and adding to our small reserves of information and knowledge, forever moving forward as a collective to gain higher and higher ground in our understanding and collective powers.

We of the CSPAL in such pursuit request that you accept our collective stamps (47) for the donation/purchase of a subscription to both the *PHSS News* and *Rock!*. We will continue to do our best with sending stamps, our finds are meager, but we will stand strong and together, we will continue to support those who support us.

[Name Withheld by Ed]

From Tehachapi SHU

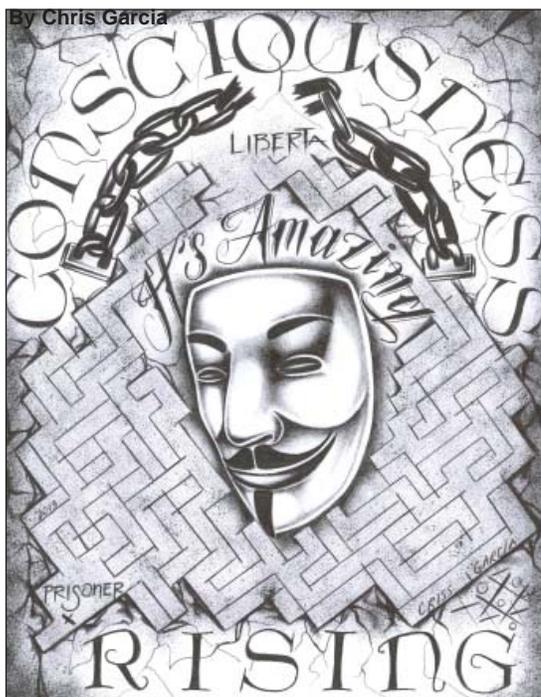
Greetings from Tehachapi SHU 4A yard. We have been receiving the newsletters and appreciate the time and effort that gets put into them. Hearing the thoughts and opinions of others on such topics are always appreciated.

We agree fully on all points of demands, and are committed on bringing change, not only for those who’ve been “labeled” in the past and present, but as well as those in the future. We stand firm and in solidarity with all those who feel and think as we all do. As it was mentioned, it’s time to stand up and be counted. We especially appreciate the sacrifices and effort on the legal aspect from all of the collective reps. It is nice to know that we are not alone in our battles. Thanks for all the support from those of you on the outside.

*In solidarity,
Mino Korn Villalobos*

Out of State Inmates

CDCR still must reduce their inmate population by 9,000 inmates to meet the population cap imposed by the court. California inmates who are housed out of state do not count towards the population cap.



California inmates who are housed out of state are there voluntarily. There are about 10,000 California inmates currently housed out of state, voluntarily. Those inmate do not count towards the population cap. If CDCR asked me to volunteer to be housed out of state, I will refuse. Why would I agree to help them meet their population cap by agreeing to be transferred out of state? Instead of transferring me out of state to meet their cap. They should focus on much needed and long overdue sentencing reform for first and second strikers (not just “low risk” offenders).

[Name withheld by Ed]

EDITORIAL 2-6

Censorship

California’s written regulations require that CDCR issue the written reasons for a rejection or censorship of any publication. Those regulations require that the publisher be notified within 15 days of the rejection. California Prison Focus received notice of the rejection of their last issue of *Prison Focus* from Pelican Bay about two months later. The reason given for the rejection, was that it promoted prohibited group activity by prisoners. What your captors fail to understand, and what they will eventually learn in the courts, is that reporting the news is not the same as encouraging. In other words, if this writer reports that a prisoner killed his cell-mate, as I have done in the past, I am not advocating that prisoners kill their cellies. Similarly, if I report that there will be a state-wide hunger and work strike taking place in California prisons on July 8th, I am not advocating that this happen. This very information, including dates, has been printed in the *L.A. Times* and frequently reported elsewhere. It is news!

What’s interesting is that in the rejection notices given to prisoners immediately after the rejection of the last *Prison Focus*, prison officials at Pelican Bay cited the content in pages 8, 9, and 10 as the reason for the rejection. Those pages contained an open letter to the governor and to the new corrections boss—public documents! The fact that they were censoring a publication because it contained a public document must have finally dawning on them, as a month or so later they told the publisher the reason for the rejection was because it supposedly promoted prohibited group activity by prisoners. I say to those supporters of slavery, to those enemies of

freedom and democracy: “Nice try; see you at the finish line.”

Corrections Theory

Moving right along, on September 1, 1939, W.H. Auden wrote a rather lengthy poem, one stanza of which says:

I and the public know
What all schoolchildren learn,
Those to whom evil is done
Do evil in return.

Thus follows the failure of rehabilitation and accompanying high recidivism rate, not only in California, but across the nation. Simply put, you don’t get good results by doing bad things to people. As you well know, it would be cheaper to enroll a prisoner into Yale or Harvard than to keep them in prison for a year. And the state would get far better results, too. But like they say, there are none so blind as those who won’t see.

Newsletter Stuff

I have noticed some errors in the *Rock* mailing list. For example the word “unknown” in a part of your name. If I have any part of your contact information spelled wrong or otherwise incorrect please send me a note letting me know so I can change it in the database. Also, when you send stamps, try not to get the tape over the face of the stamps, put the tape on the back, as I ruin the postage when trying to peel off the tape.

A couple of prisoners have written asking if they could donate art in place of postage or money. The answer is yes. I’ll post the artwork on the Prison Art website and the proceeds from any sale will go to support the newsletter. Just make it clear that the art is a donation.

Speaking of art, many thanks to the fine artists who grace the pages of this miserable little rag. In this issue they are Michael Russell, Chris Garcia, and Fernando Bermúdez. Thanks guys for a great job.

Our readership in Oregon is now up to thirty prisoners; nearly all are Intensive Management Unit (IMU) convicts. It would be nice to see that grow some more, and expand into Washington as well.

In the past few issues there has been a paucity of letters from readers. This month I am making up for that failure. There are more letters from readers than news. Which I suppose is the way it should be, since you’re paying for it. Like they say, he who pays the piper calls the tune. Actually, I usually do try to strike a balance between

news and reader comments.

I am getting letters from prisoners asking me to print stuff about their cases, you know, the innocent victims of blind justice, etc. Just so you know, I don’t publish material about individual cases. I don’t care if you were railroaded; you are one of millions who’ve been similarly messed over by a process of systematic injustice. It is that system of injustice I want to change, not your individual case. Moreover, when I was in prison people offered to form defense committees and what not for me. I turned them down, saying all resources need to go into the struggle. If I won’t pimp myself I’m not gonna pimp you.

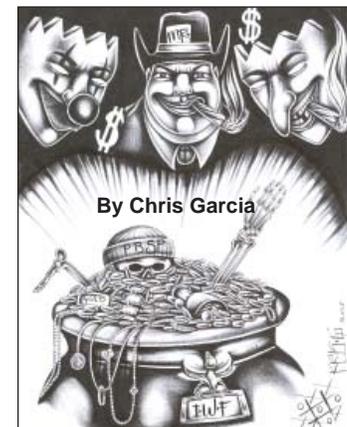
Political Babbling

I was watching Dan Rather back before he retired from the news business—he was on the David Letterman show. When Letterman asked him “why do they [the terrorists] hate us” the response from Rather, parroting George W. Bush, was “because they are jealous of us.” Really, people strap on bombs and blow themselves up out of mere jealousy?

Why do they hate us? Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, the surviving Boston Marathon bomber scribbled the following on the side of the boat as he lay bleeding from multiple gunshot wounds. Here is what his note said:

“The [Boston] bombings were in retribution for the U.S. crimes in places like Iraq and Afghanistan [and] that the victims of the Boston bombing were collateral damage, in the same way innocent victims have been collateral damage in U.S. wars around the world. Summing up, that when you attack one Muslim you attack all Muslims.”

It is important to understand why, what is the motive. Understanding “why” does not mean you agree with what someone did, it is merely a path toward a better understanding of reality. ●



LETTERS

[*Note: Names of letter writers will be withheld unless the author of the letter explicitly approves printing of their name.*]

C-9 Update

Greeting and salutations, I send mines in full to you as well as to all those who continue to push for equal justice both inside as well as outside the walls. I wanted to keep you abreast of what's been going on around here in Pelican Bay SHU C-9 and in my immediate vicinity.

Now first and foremost I wanted to acknowledge that you are correct in the fact that it is only fair that most of us pull our weight and assist this newsletter financially. I say this because it is a very informative newsletter that helps many throughout California and beyond stay up to date as to the current status of a great number of issues. Therefore if we wish to continue to help the Rock thrive and keep the information flowing then it is of the utmost importance that we support it both financially and information ally.

However, let's not forget those less fortunate because there are a fair amount of solid individuals who are not financially stable but still are pushing for prisoners' rights. That's why it's up to those of us who can to contribute so that we can pick up the slack for those brothers who don't have it like that. Anyhow, I'm enclosing some stamps for now and my cellie will be sending out a fifteen dollar mail out in your name to help you out. You should get the check within a couple of weeks if not sooner. Thank you for the work that you do, it is appreciated by us all.

Moving right along, I received the April issue of *Rock* as well as the most recent issues of *Prison Focus* and *P.H.S.S. News*. So mail has been making it in to us more often but it is still being denied far too frequently. Although I received the *Prison Focus* I heard that the mailroom started denying it from coming in shortly thereafter so I don't know what that's about. I believe that they stopped it because of the short corridor collective's open letter to the Governor and the forty supplemental demands. None the less I still received it and shared it with all the groups segments around me so the information was spread and will continue to be spread.

It is to be expected that the prison admin-

istration and the gang investigators will begin to censor more and more mail the closer that we get to the July 8, 2013 hunger [and work] strike date. It's up to us to keep as many different avenues of communication open that we can. Write to the *Rock*, write to *Prison Focus*, write to *P.H.S.S. News*, write to *M.I.M (prisons)* as well as any other prisoner's rights activist publications that you can. This way they won't be able to stop the entire flow of information from coming in because they fear us continuing to be on the same page as one another. Therefore they are going to try to silence our voices from being heard but they will once again see through our collective actions during the hunger strike that we will no longer sit by an idly do nothing. There is no silencing us any longer.

In regards to the upcoming peaceful hunger strike/work stoppage in July, everyone is preparing mentally as well as physically for the struggle that lies ahead. Some people are going to participate for four days, others for ten. It all depends on who you talk to. However most agree that in order for someone to be added to the overall statewide count and be recognized as participants in a hunger strike a person must refuse all for at least seventy two hours. Then and only will they be counted account to CDCR's own guidelines.

Some people are planning to only buy hygiene and stationary from canteen during the month of July because if you order food and accept it then you will not be counted once you take the food into your possession. Others are going to order coffee, hygiene and stationery. It's all up to that person and what they feel comfortable with because some people think that since coffee has calories then staff will attempt

to manipulate the situation and count it as food. So use your better judgment and proceed from there.

A new arrival just came from Pelican Bay SHU stand-alone Ad-Seg and he said that it is fairly empty over there right now. Apparently they are not even double celling mainline Ad-Seg inmates because they don't need the space. I think that almost all of the validated inmates waiting in the Ad-Seg for a SHU bed space have all made it back here already and pretty soon SHU inmates getting off the buses will once again start coming straight back to the SHU. So that is an improvement because up to a hundred SHU inmates had been in PBSP Ad-Seg awaiting SHU bed space.

The reason that Pelican Bay Ad-Seg is so empty is due to the fact that the agreement to end hostilities had been holding on both "A" and "B" yards. All programs were up and running and every group segment was giving each other common courtesy and respect that they deserve. They even put northern Hispanics back out on "A" yard once again after a five year hiatus, there are being housed in A-350. Hopefully other prisons and yards are taking heed and acknowledging the agreement to end hostilities because we are all affected by the crooked validation process as well as the debriefing process.

Nobody on this end is being reviewed for release back to the mainline besides those who have been back here for six years and are going for their inactive review. CDCR is attempting to manipulate the numbers and use smoke and mirrors to make it look like people are being reviewed and released out to the mainline solely based on the new STG/SDP 7.0 but that is a lie. Yes, seventy something people may in fact have been released to the general population but almost all of them were going up for their inactive reviews so they were already eligible for released out to the mainline.

All CDCR is doing is allowing most of the inmates who go up for their six year inactive review to be classified as inactive and then releasing them out to a mainline. Nothing has changed besides the fact that before the gang investigators would always come up with some bogus ass (10-30) confidential memo showing that you were active and now they are only doing that once in a while. So a great deal more of inmates



By Fernando Bermudez

who are going up for their inactive reviews are being released, which is a good thing for sure but it's not a result of anything new as CDCR wants everyone to believe. They are only doing what they should have done years ago.

Nobody is being placed on any step down program right here and if they try to do so we are not even acknowledging it in the first place so it won't work. We are getting our one photo per year and art supplies as long as we remain disciplinary free for a year. However, we are not getting any phone calls or added privileges such as more canteen or anything like that. This is the reason that the short corridor collective decided that another peaceful hunger strike/work stoppage was necessary because no positive changes have been made and CDCR did not follow through with their end of the hunger strike negotiations.

Anyhow, in closing I wanted to request that Antonio Gullen and/or George Franco please share their thoughts and opinions on all of those issues because there are many who are interested in what they have to say. I am from the east side of San Jose, where the palm trees stand tall and it's always sunny, and I for one would be honored to be enlightened by them. I've only seen what the entire short corridor collective has to say and a couple of the other representative individual opinions but nothing from them. I know that right now communication is not easy but if it's at all possible it would be very much appreciated. I've been trying to get enrolled in college courses so I can get my degree but can't even get that done so any sort of guidance on all of these issues would be a plus.

[Name Withheld by Ed]

Out of Cell Time

First and foremost, I would like to thank you on behalf of all of us in the SHU for all the time and work that you put in getting the *Rock* out to us every month. Your newsletter truly helps us stay informed. Thank you. I am enclosing some more stamps to help out.

I am in the SHU indeterminately as a validated A.B. Associate and would like to comment on one of the articles written in your April issue of *Rock*, namely, "Solitary Confinement Reviewed by California Assembly As Prisoners Threaten New Hunger Strike". It seems that Assembly members Tom Ammiano and Holly Mitchell did raise some very good points at the California Assembly for Public Safety meet-

ing. Hopefully, such opinions will open the eyes of the public and our State Legislature and bring about some meaningful change. I would also like to point out that in many articles we read (including the one mentioned above), they state that we prisoners in the SHU spend 22 ½ hours a day in solitary confinement which insinuates that we actually get out of our cells every day for an hour and a half and that could not be further from the truth. Typically, we are let out of our cells once a week for out-of-cell exercise for about two hours, maybe twice a week if we are lucky. Showers are three times a week for 10 minutes each, if they decide to run them. In fact, in the past 31 days and as of the writing of this letter, we have made it out to the cages for out-of-cell exercise only five times, for a maximum of only 12 hours, in 31 days' time.

CDCR's own code of regulations states that we are to get a minimum of 10 hours of out-of-cell exercise *per week*. In *Toussaint vs. McCarthy*, 597 F. Supp 1388, 1402, 1412 (N.D. Cal 1984), the 9th Circuit Court upheld that eight hours *per week* of out-of-cell exercise is the Constitutional minimum. Obviously, none of these regulations or court decisions are being adhered to. Definitely not here in the Tehachapi SHU and most like not in any of the other SHUs either. So, the statements in many different articles saying that we only spend 22 ½ to 23 hours a day in solitary confinement are very wrong and misleading. I just felt the need to comment on that.

I have also been wondering if any of your readers of *Rock* have any information with regard to cases challenging Senate Bill X3-18. If so, please inform us all of any news. Thank you. Again, I thank you for all of your help and support in our struggle, Mr. Mead. It's truly appreciated. Those of us here in Tehachapi SHU 4A stand in strength and solidarity behind the five core demands and the upcoming peaceful protest.

"Sacramaniac" Danny Boy Cisneros
Tehachapi State Prison

From Chowchilla

Greetings to you and I hope this letter finds you in the very best of spirits. As I write this letter, I'm feeling a little disconcerted. Other than a handful of women that are supportive in bringing change in this corrupted system, many others and I speak in the majority. Many fear retaliation and serve as individualist who believes that the hunger strike only pertains to the men. However, I have done my best to enlight-

en the women on what the hunger strike movement is about and how it does and will affect us as a whole being. Any rule that is put into the Code of Regulations Title 15 also affects us women. Some also say I'm only supporting this cause for the men in Pelican Bay. In truth, a big part is true being I have loved ones who are housed in those inhumane conditions, but I believe in change for all of us who are housed in California prisons. I have to take a moment to also realize that unlike some, I've been in prison almost 30 years so I am from another generation where we were once united and referred to as convicts. I've been through many sit outs in my time, now it's like this new generation would rather go with the flow in fear of losing out on canteen or privileges. How can I compete with this new generation? I find that my heart and core is that of the old school where we had a mutual belief in us against them. I have to wonder, is it also like that in the men's prisons? Who will stand up when July 8th approaches? I know I have done my part and will continue to fight for justice because I believe in the old school ways and I demand to be treated as a human being. I guess I have also experienced the stays in our Ad-Seg and SHU's so I'm more in tune with corruptions that goes on. I want to thank you for keeping me abreast with the newsletters. Please continue to reach out as I continue to spread the word and contribute support. I also hear that there was a riot in CIW women's prison. I'm not clear on the details but I am heartbroken that the



By Michael Russell

women there do not acknowledge the call to end all hostilities. I'm at a loss for words in all. I do hope we women who are part of the system open their eyes and take things seriously because we all stand to be targeted by CDCR's changes. With that said, I will close this letter to you.

*Diane Mirabal #W27148
Chowchilla*

Toss a Rock (I mean stamp)

I received the new *Rock* newsletter. As always, thank you. I am enclosing a sheet of 20 Forever stamps on behalf of myself and another homeboy. He is not on your mailing list but would like to be. His name and info is listed on the back of the sheet of stamps.

I would also like to address what you have said about the 113 freeloaders not sending you any stamps personally. I can't speak for all of them but many of us here in the SHUs are indigent and we don't have stamps to send you personally. So, we (I) ask the homeboys who do, if they could send a couple extra on our behalf. They don't put our names on their letters to you, because if they did, then IGI could use it to claim that we are gang associates. What I am getting at is that before you start cutting people off your mailing list, you consider the fact that not all of us have the stamps to send you personally. We do what we can to help out by asking others to help cover costs and to show our appreciation for all of your hard work to keep us all apprised of what is going on within the CDCR. It is highly appreciated.

*William D. Brandon
Tehachapi State Prison*

84 stamps

Thank you for another very informative newsletter. I am enclosing 82 Forever stamps from some of us prisoners here on B-yard, Level 4, 180 General Population at Pelican Bay State Prison. Understanding not everyone can donate, the enclosed stamps are a donation/gift knowing that you'll put them to good use, Ed. I really appreciate your due diligence in continuing to keep the media, public and us prisoners informed of the sham that is CDCR, because communication is a right and should not be deterred by false propaganda from our captors. So I hope these stamps help. Thanking you again for all you do and looking forward to the next up-and-coming newsletters.

*Johnny Aguilar, Jr.
Pelican Bay State Prison*

29 Stamps

All of us here at Corcoran 4B3R SHU extend our very best your way. Okay, Ed, here goes 29 stamps that we've put together for the cause this month. I'm sure you'll put them to good use. Also, can you please print this below message in *Rock*?

Message is: Enclosed are 29 stamps from all of us here in Corcoran SHU 4B3R. These newsletters that keep us informed are a useful tool, so hopefully to all people reading this can take the initiative to collect one stamp per month from friends around them and make the donations to the newsletter(s). This is an instance where we can use "numbers" in our favor because a donation of one stamp individually adds up. If we all make that small contribution. We'll continue to do so here and we here at Corcoran SHU 4B3R encourage others who are able to do the same.

*Matthew Kropp et al.
Corcoran State Prison*

End of Hostilities?

Word from new Delano, speaking as an average non-influential, run of the mill, mainline prisoner. I'm certain my now people has heard or know about the incident that occurred in K.V.S.P. B-Yard Facility (riot). It is sad to see such effort that some people have been putting into to end hostilities amongst all prisoners, but gone to waste, when others have had a different agenda on their minds. Just like in the February issue, where someone wrote "it seems like it's not being taken too seriously and treated as if nothing has changed." Some people can't seem to see the bigger picture of the struggle for causes that benefit us all, either they don't understand it or are being manipulated, or influenced by the wrong people. It's always expected the worst and hope for the best.

Just that so many people were too comfortable with the end of hostilities. It's sad that they have thought, took this opportunity (not all of them) to make such a shameful act.

*Ramon Ruiz
Delano*

Don't Believe the Hype

First off, thank you for continuing to keep us all updated on the ongoing struggle that's taking place within these walls. Your newsletter is very informative and educational.

Most of us here in Calipat ASU have endured both hunger strikes and still await

the changes in CDCR's validation criteria. We've been told "Oh, it's gonna be this month...it's gonna be next month." But, at the end of the day, it's all talk. It's a stall tactic that's being used statewide.

All the time and effort that you and every person has put into this historic human rights movement is appreciated beyond your imagination. There are many reasons to support this fight and the inspiration to do so is all around us.

Enclosed are 58 stamps that our pod gathered together to donate to the mailing of your newsletter. We hope that this can help you to send *Rock* to more people so that they too can be up-to-speed on our fight against isolation and end to long-term segregation. We close with our support and respects to the short corridor and all of those with the like mind and heart across the state and country. ¡ Si se puede!

Oh, It was printed in a newsletter that we have pull-p bars installed in our yard cages. That's not true! Don't believe the hype.

*Robbie Riva et al., Calipatria ASU
Calipatria State Prison*

Paranoid?

I wanted to write and tell you the latest. All of Corcoran SHU has been searched over the last ten days. It's not unusual for staff to do its usual "spring cleaning search." What is unusual is that staff is telling us that there are orders from Sacramento that as soon as the other 1/2 of the SHU here has been searched, they are going to search us again and again. That is highly unusual and I have suspicions. Let me share them. July 8th is right around the bend. I think Sacramento has ordered this to try to get us to react violently to this multi-search (devastating over search) in order to acquire a reactionary or violent response such as cell extractions, etc. so that California can say "see they have violated the stand down of hostilities agreement." There is no other reason for these multiple over searches. There have been no inmate or staff assaults that would merit it.

I'm naturally a little suspicious, maybe even paranoid but to be safe about it, I would publish something ASAP about my idea. After all I've seen and been through, I put nothing past this scheming lot.

Robert Dragusica #E-15148

There are Nations, Not Races

The discussion on desegregation was brought up in an earlier issue of *Rock*

newsletter, unfortunately the feedback was censored here where I am at, so wanted to add to this discussion where I could.

I hear a lot of talk of “the difficult Races” or “Racial groups” in prison, this is parroted and talked about as if correct terminology, the truth is there is no such thing as “Race”, rather there are “nations” or “nationalities”. In America there are nations like the Chicano nation, the Boriqua, the Black nation, the White nation etc etc. These are nations not “Races.” The idea of “Race” is a fairly new concept and does not correspond to material reality, for example there is no such thing as the “Brown Race”, rather there are Chicanos, Mexicanos, Peruvianos etc. and the same can be said for all the nationalities in America.

Internal Nations developed in America living under an oppressive state which is steered by Imperialism, at the same time each respective nations contains class contradictions within, which more or less are the lumpen , the petit bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie, these classes develop as do nations on a material and historical basis. One cannot simply claim a group is a nation, rather, there has to be concrete developments particularly in the realm of economic development and the interaction with the capitalist system. To be precise, comrade Stalin defined a nation as follows:

“A nation is a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make – up manifested in a common culture.”¹

So within America there exists internal nations comprised of different peoples who after living for generation in America developed into nations, those of us who can be found in American prisons derive mostly from the “lumpen proletariat” or more appropriately what’s known in America as simply the “lumpen” of our respective nations. The lumpen of any nation is the underclass, it is the unemployed, the disabled, the criminals, those who are drug addicts, and sporadically employed or who don’t work at all, it is the street elements, the prisoners. The lumpen refuse to support Imperialism and suffer the most then the rest of their respective nation; it is the lumpen who fill the SHU cells across California and who have the least to lose and the most to win in any struggle for human rights or any effort to transform society, all we have to lose is our chains that prevent us

from tasting time liberation!

I think there is segregation in prisons, it is more of nations consolidating in the in the most primal forms, this is reflected in many different nationalities crossing over and adopting non-birth nations as their own and thus this spills over into cell living, with two people not of the same nationality but living together because they share the same nation.

One should not see this as “racism” but simply as survival or simply nation building.

I think someone may have over thought living conditions without looking at all possibilities, for example those who are out in society how about you “end segregation” and pick someone off the street who may be walking past your house right now and let them move in with you? And if you don’t do it I call “racism” or you are practicing “segregation” and well, would I be correct in doing so? Look contradictions exist in prison just like out in the street between the people but this is nothing new, indeed if we look to prison writers, prison revolutionaries going back say, for the past 50 years you will not read some of the things that have been spoken of in regards to “segregation.” This is because as prisoners we do constitute a class – a prison class, at the same time we derive from distinct nations and they cannot be left out of the conversation. For the same reasons you out in society would rather live with one of your constructive projects or nation building, so too do prison revolutionaries share this same perspective and so one wanting to be housed with ones comrade should not be seen as negative event, I agree, the gang bogeyman needs to be simmered down. I myself have been housed several times with prisoners who were not of my nationality by birth, but they were all of my nations and I have seen many others for the many years in the same situation. Most have moved past the 1950 era “skin color” and see nation as primary, but there are still many contradictions within each nation that is worked on as the people advanced as a class. In all that we do we must understand that as we indeed push forward as a prison class, those who deny our human rights and who feel because we are prisoners that we are thus castaways will increase all the vile trickery to impede our momentum but change is inevitable and transformation is in perpetual motion always and this will not change. Mao once said of change: “changes in society are due chiefly to the development of

the internal contradictions in society, that the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production, the contradiction between classes and the contradiction between the old and the new; it is the development of these contradictions that pushes society forward and gives the impetus for the supersession of the old society by the new.”²

Change occurs even within the torture chambers across America, this change was seen in the 2011 strikes and continues to manifest but we are in the early stages of real revolutionary change. Our future generations will taste what we only dream of today, a time when our oppressor no longer has the power and when our nations finally obtain self – determination.

*Jose Villarreal
PBSP SHU*

It’s All Connected

It’s been off the radar screen for a while; however, a discernible shift in the public and prisoner consciousness has awakened my spirit. Many people will recognize my name. I’ve been down a quarter century (for a senseless crime committed as a juvenile) and the majority of that time (about 20 years) has been spent in one SHU or another.

At 18 I entered the system and stepped into the decades – old war at New Folsom. Less than 2 years later I was among those first prisoners heading to PBSP-SHU. I was there the entire first decade when doors were being popped 24/7, gladiator-style warfare was common, and everyone lived in a perpetual state of hyper-vigilance.

Like *many* of the fellas there, I immersed myself in studies and writing to maintain my sanity. As I did so, I became increasingly conscious on *many* levels. This consciousness led me inward and, one day, I came face to face with the real me, whom saw things differently than my surface personality (represented by ego). The real me had the courage to ask questions, look *past* surface realities, and envision ideal circumstances (both for myself and my fellow convicts). My idealism was a threat to the status quo of prison politics. I understand that completely. But I also understood history and was learning how to detect the things that made people, societies and entire nations tick. On one track, I began working with outside people of conscience – human rights advocates, prisoner rights

1. “Marxism and the National Question” by J.V. Stalin.

2. “On contradiction” (August 1937), Mao’s selected works, vol. 1 pg. 314.

activists, attorneys – and launched numerous legal and journalistic endeavors to shed light upon this broken system. On another track I worked with like-minded prisoner to establish line of communication, talk about our predicament, and reign in some of the overkill in the pods. As time went by, I began to see my alleged “enemies” in their true light and developed relationships with them which made it impossible for me to want to hurt them – even when we came face to face and politics dictated that we at least *act* like we were fighting. (afterwards, we would ask one another, “you alright?”; and more often than not our worst wounds would be from the guards’ block guns. Hours later, we’d be back in the same cells exchanging magazines, coffee, treats, etc. Most of us *never* truly agreed with the politics but, as a matter of survival, we were forced to obey those politics).

Many people who were around in those days will know exactly what I am talking about. Few will *admit* it, but we were suffering and powerless for a long time simply because we didn’t dare to challenge the status quo. We were *thinking* the same thing: *this is nuts!* Yet, only a handful of us ever gathered up the courage to voice and act upon it. The politicians rewarded us speakers and actors by publicly denouncing us, but behind the scenes many of them secretly supported us and encouraged us to plow ahead on various fronts. Now, most of us are no longer active, and those whom betrayed the cause for peace are either dead or doing time in the Feds, where they are an endangered species. The new guard, many of whom I know, including half of the short corridor collective, are currently implementing the necessary reforms and solidarity practices that myself and others attempted to implement a decade ago. For that, I tip my hat to them, even though I am no longer in the mix and stir clear of *all* politics. I am *still* haunted by my experiences at PBSP-SHU and care for every person.

Having said all that, I’d also like to comment upon the connectivity of *all* rights, which are *human rights* in the final analysis. This speaks to Ed’s indelicate but well-intentioned attempt to raise LGBT awareness / support in the greater struggle, and also to the lessons learned from struggles *beyond* the struggle for justice and decency within America’s vast prison industrial complex (which is the largest in the world).

My method for understanding things is a combination of dialectical analysis and

metaphysical training. I am an Toltec, which means I practice *Mexicayotl / Toltecayotl* in the tradition of my Mesoamerican ancestors, whom saw everything comprised of interconnected light. My people believe in One God with many faces but that God is indefinable. The closest we can get to understanding the One God is to look at ourselves and all that we are connected to. This perspective of Oneness encourages me to look beyond my individual conditioning to observe creation as it truly is. I am not religious at all but I have respect for all the traditions of the world and feel each person is entitled to live the way they wish to live (as long as they are not hurting others).

Coming from this perspective, it is no longer important for me to push my ideas upon others, nor is it important for others to think about me in a certain way. I share my opinions conservatively, but only with those with whom my opinions might resonate. A decade ago, the system was not ready for something like this, but today I believe it *is*, so I am putting it out there.

The world we live in is changing. A generation ago, we adopted the beliefs of those that had come before us by *agreeing* that the words they spoke were the truth. After decades of war, we are now learning that those words were *not* true.

Humans are domesticated animals. We are conditioned to adopt beliefs, habits and routines in the same manner that dogs and other animals are conditioned (i.e., utilizing a system of rewards and punishments). A good con gets praised. A bad con gets regulated. Those in power decide what is “good” and “bad”.

At this moment we are at a crossroads. Progressive movements in society are en-

gaged in pulling America back toward the center. It was the right-ward shift in society which created the current system. Now, there is an opportunity to *reverse* many of the policies which had us drowning in a sea of madness. Legislative reform is on the agenda. Society, once more, is reconsidering policies on crime and punishment, immigration, gun control, special interests and civil rights. Ears are open. The prison system *must* be emptied significantly. Rights must be restored. All the shit they took from us over the last three decades must be returned. But this will only happen if those qualified to talk step up to the microphone, and if those whom aren’t qualified are kindly asked to practice discipline.

On a personal level, I support *all* rights and believe the movement should be representative of the entire prison population, but I also understand how deep some prejudice runs so I wouldn’t propose forcing the movement to publically debate issues it is not mature enough to debate. Right now, the pressing issue is to end the wards, open up the SHU’s, and begin the process of demilitarization, reunification and social integration. It is not necessary to have states opinions on gay rights, women’s rights or immigrants rights – even though all those groups experience incarceration. It is sufficient to say, “we are for the rights of all prisoners”. The prejudices emanating from society and amplified in prison are better dealt with at focus upon the life or death matters we face as we attempt to stand down and reclaim our humanity. As we feel more human, we will learn to see more humanity around us.

In the meantime, I encourage all prisoners to look *within* for solutions. Domesticated beliefs can be changed if we properly study them and replace them with *new* beliefs. Men and women of principle can’t help but transform beliefs into action.

Again, I applaud the new guard at PBSP-SHU. As prisoners, we are often forced to do a lot of bad things but it *is* possible to cancel out the bad with heroic feats of awareness, kindness, and love.

Anthony Murillo
Tehachapi – SHU



By Faustino Hernandez

ISO/High Power

I’m currently in the hole doing an indeterminate SHU term. Can you please send me a copy of *Prison Focus* and place me on your subscription list? I’m including some stamps. I hope they help and you guys are doing a great job. I read your spring issue.

I have my own opinion on the 40 demands. Most of that stuff could have been solved if they would have requested for all validated inmates to become A2B. They would have had all the privileges of inmates in the mainline minus the housing. It would be fair, in my eyes, for the SHU is where these guys live forever; it's their mainline. They have a similar thing in my county jail in Orange County. It's called Total Sep/High Power. These inmates live in the hole but have all the privileges as the other inmates in the mainline. CDCR is wrong/cruel to punish these validated inmates when they haven't done anything wrong such as getting into trouble. I hope you put this in your next issue. You might want to contact the Orange County Sheriff's Department and ask about their Total ISO/High Power Program. It doesn't endanger inmates or staff to allow these inmates to have their privileges but still be isolated from the GP, just like SHU.

*Victor Perez,
Corcoran State Prison*

Actions speak louder than words, and so far the non-action and intransigence of the CDCR speaks volumes.

News From Tehachapi

Received and read the April 2013 issue of the Rock, I and everyone was glad to read that some people in Sacramento are finally getting tired of the lies coming from CDCR. Here we are one month closer to July and so far nothing but silence coming from the department of corrections.

The so called step down program is a Joke, the DRB has not come back to Tehachapi since January 2013. We here at 4B are going to the DRB and should they release us from here we are going. But we are not participating in the step down part of the program, but we have seen people who were released and are now on the mainline.

Also there is a big misconception going around concerning the yard, this place is nothing like the bay where you are asked every day if you want your 1½ hours of yard, here we are stuck from 24 to 48 hours in the cell before we can go to yard and that is for 2½ hours! Sometimes if we are lucky we get our mandated 10 hours of yard per week, but sometimes in a calendar week we only go outside one time. The excuses are a dime a dozen, the fact is that these people are overpaid for the amount of work

they actually do around here, and when we do say something to them they act offended, how can you become offended when you are told to do your job? That makes no sense, does it? I think that the sooner the legislator in Sacramento mandates what CDCR must do the better this ongoing situation will become.

Actions speak louder than words, and so far the non-action and intransigence of the CDCR speaks volumes. Can you please print this letter and use my name, before I depart enclosed you will find 50 first class stamp's collected from the fellas here at 4B-5B section, not much but hope that it helps, what you do is appreciated by everyone here, thank you and continue the good work.

Carlos Sainz

A Passionate Declaration

We are men & women, we are not beasts and do not intend to be beaten or driven as such. The entire prison populace has set for the, come July 2013, to change forever the ruthless brutalization and disregard for the lives of the prisoners here and throughout the United States. What has happened and what will happen beyond this point, is but the sound before the fury of those who are oppressed.

We will not compromise on any terms except those that are not agreeable to us. We call upon all the conscientious citizens of America to assist us in pulling an end to this situation that threatening the lives of not only prisoner's but each and every one of us in society as well.

We have set forth demands that will bring closer to reality the demise of these prison institutions that serve no useful purpose to the people of America, but to those who would enslave and exploit the people of America.

- Additional Demands
- Better food and medical care
- Independent Grievance process
- Improved training for the guards
- Intervention by the Federal Government
- Prisoners participation in restructuring the prison
- And a team of "Negotiators" and observers
- Amnesty from reprisals for all who are participating in peaceful food strike

Hopefully the insight is noticed and declaration & demands adopted

*Independent Thinker in Solidarity,
Michael Hawkins
Corcoran SHU*

FREE US ALL MEETING

Here's a quick update on our May 18th Free Us All meeting in Seattle. We are a group preparing to support the peaceful struggle for justice by California prisoners. We met at the American Friends Service Committee's worship hall, where we had hung anti-SHU artwork by prisoners on the walls. The purpose of this meeting was to bring in representatives from other groups who will join us in providing outside support for this important struggle. The meeting went well. People left feeling a lot of hope and enthusiasm for what is to come. We divided into two groups, outreach and inreach. The former is of course the usual, media, a day of action, flyers, public education campaigns, etc. The latter is reaching in to prisoners and their families, handing out flyers to loved ones on visiting days, letters to prisoners, etc. The idea being to raise consciousness on the inside.

Representatives from the following organizations were at this meeting:

- Washington Incarceration Stops Here
- Red Spark
- GLITTER gay liberation
- First Baptist Church
- AFSC
- Freedom Socialists
- O.W.L.S. (an organization of rank and file union members from various unions)
- E.P.I.C. (End Prison Industrial Complex)
- SCIU (progressive union)
- Prison Art Project (that's me)
- Who You Calling Illegal
- Wake Up God Damn It
- Occupy Seattle
- ISO (international socialist organization)
- Seattle Solidarity Network
- Gateway for Incarcerated Youth
- Evergreen State College Students

There are similar meetings taking place in Portland, Oregon, the Bay Area, and elsewhere. ●

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By Chris Garcia

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