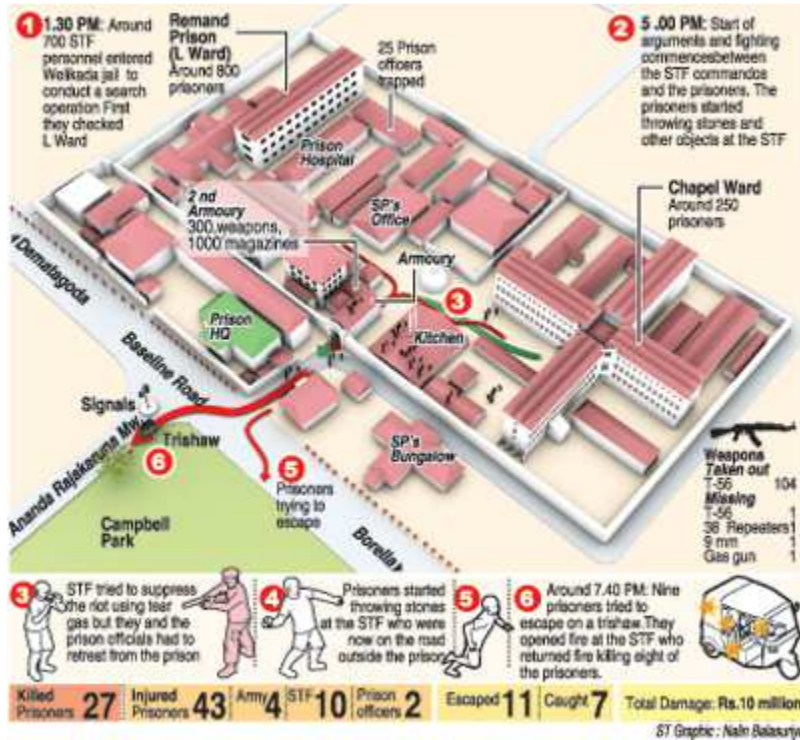


PRISON RESISTANCE - USA

Two prison probes tackle reasons for riot

Overcrowding of prisons, easy access to narcotics, resistance by prisoners to search operations carried out by the Special Task Force were the main reasons for last week's mayhem at Welikada jail, two separate committees that probed the incident revealed.



The two committees — one appointed by the Minister of Rehabilitation and Prison Reforms Chandrasiri Gajadeera and the other by the Prisons Commissioner General P.W.Kodippili this week handed over their findings about the riots that left 27 prisoners dead and 43 injured.

Mr. Gajadeera told the Sunday Times that prisoners feared STF operations as they would lead to unearthing contraband and mobile phones in the possession of prisoners.

The Committees also have made recommendations to avert the recurrence of such incidents. The Ministry on its own too has decided on a plan of action to prevent such incidents.

“We are planning to transfer some of the prisoners out of Welikada to the open prisons in Pallekelle, Angunukolapelessa and Jaffna. This will prevent prisoners from organising themselves into various groups,” Mr. Gajadeera said.

“Unfortunately a few of the prison officials too support unruly behaviour while there are guards who are controlled by the prisoners,” the minister added.

Among the proposals to improve security in the prisons is a plan to import security equipment including scanning machines costing more than Rs. 180 million and equipment that could be used to jam mobile phones.

Prisons Commissioner General P.W. Kodippili told the Sunday Times that details on how the armoury was broken into have now been revealed.

“The L-Ward which houses the remand prisoners was the first to be searched. This is like a market place where trading of narcotics, cigarettes, cannabis and mobile phones are freely traded after about five in the evening.

“There are three floors in this building comprising 800 inmates. Sixty prison guards were assisting 700 STF personnel who were involved in the search.

“The STF was called to assist in detecting mobile phones and narcotics as some of the phones were hidden inside the walls and metal detectors were used to trace them. The first round of the search ended without any problem around 4 p.m.



Overcrowding of the prisons one of the reasons for last week's clash at Welikada

“Around 4.30 p.m. the STF and the prison guards went to the Chapel ward to carry out a search. Some 250 inmates were taken out. At this point a prisoner identified as Marlon started an argument with an STF personnel. Soon, several others too got involved in the argument and as the inmates turned unruly tear gas was used to control the situation,” the Prisons Commissioner said.

Elaborating further he said the prisoners had got hold of some bricks that had been brought for the construction of a new building and started attacking the STF. “The remand prisoners too joined in and the prisoners took control of the situation. Some 25 prison guards were trapped in the building,” Mr. Kodippili said.

“Because of the tear gas some of the officers who were in charge of the armoury had to withdraw giving the prisoners the opportunity to get into the building through the roof. Another group had broken into the building by breaking the wall,” he said adding that about 104 weapons including the magazines had been removed.

The clashes continued while a group of prisoners got hold of the three-wheeler that was being used by the canteen. Nine inmates got into the vehicle and tried to break out of the premises. However, he said the escaping prisoners were confronted while 11 others who followed the vehicle managed to escape. Only seven of them have been re-arrested.

It was after this incident that the situation got intensified. At least 13 STF personnel including the commandant R.W. Ranawana were injured.

Mr. Kodippili said that Army commandos were called in after it was learnt that the prisoners were trying to break into the second armoury. Some 300 weapons and over 1,000 rounds of ammunition were stored there.

He said within an hour—shortly after midnight on Friday the commandos regained control of the situation. He dismissed allegations that prisoners were called out by name in the early hours of Saturday and shot.

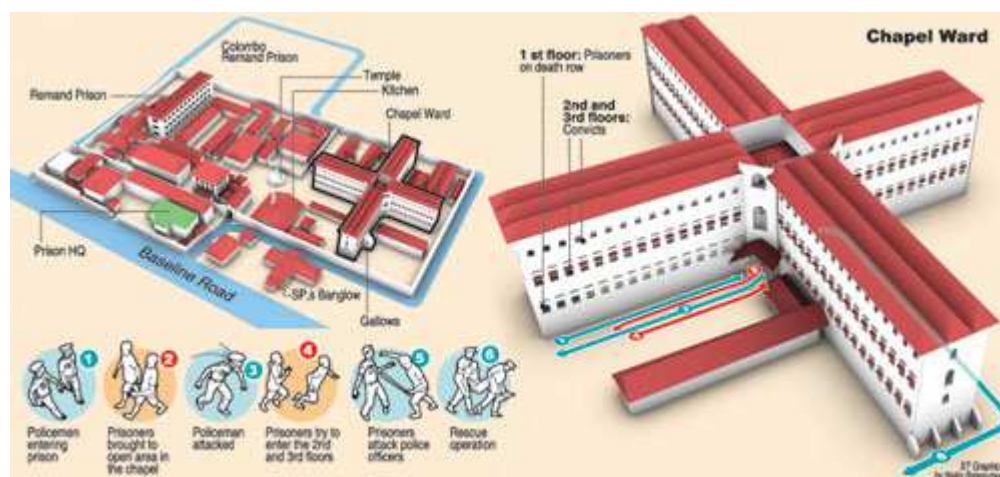
Welikada riot: 64 cops were sent to search 2,464 prisoners

Poor communication between police and prisons resulted in disastrous operation that saw convicts beating up the cops.

Report by Asif Fuard and Damith Wickremasekara

Last Sunday, 64 police officers from police stations in Colombo and suburbs assembled at the Police Grounds in Bambalapitiya for what was described as a “special duty”.

In his briefing to the officers, Senior Superintendent of Police (Peliyagoda) Kithsiri Ganegama told the men they were to conduct a search operation at the Welikada Prison. The officers had little idea how many prisoners were involved, and how the search was to be carried out.



On November 6, at 7.30 am, the police officers left the Police Grounds in a bus and arrived half an hour later at the Welikada Prison. They had instructions from DIG (Crimes) Anura Senanayake that they were to search only Welikada’s “chapel ward”, which holds more than 2,400 prisoners.

In keeping with prison regulations, the police officers went in unarmed. They would little have suspected that they were walking into serious danger, and that this would be one of the most harrowing days in their police career.

The first sign that this could be a difficult day was when a prison official refused to allow them in because they did not have a search warrant. The police officers explained that the operation had been discussed with Prisons Commissioner General, Major General (Retd.) V. R. de Silva. It was a full half-hour before permission to proceed was granted. The prison officer then wanted to know how the police wanted to conduct their search. A senior police officer said they were under orders to search every prison inmate and all the prison cells.

The Sunday Times spoke to some of the police officers who took part in last Sunday's ill-fated operation. Constable W. M. Weerasinghe, of the Kandana Police, was one of the officers who were injured in last week's prison riot.

“Some 10 prison officers joined us in the search operation,” PC Weerasinghe said. “We entered a narrow stairway. It was the only entry and exit point for that ward. We saw prisoners smoking. They seemed agitated to see us. Most of them were waiting to use the toilets. The jailors then ordered all the prisoners to line up in the middle of the chapel for inspection, and told us to proceed with the search. We found beedi, cigarettes, lighters and boxes of matches on the first few convicts.



Police officers said prisoners stoned them

and beat them with iron rods and sticks.



Police ambulances at the scene of last Sunday's riot at Welikada. Pix by M. Pushpa Kumara

his head, ran into the chapel. "At that point, the convicts broke down a locked gate and charged into the chapel and started to attack policemen. Some were carrying sticks and heavy objects.

"The prisoners then broke a second gate leading to the cells on the second floor, where we were. The 10 of us ran into a cell and locked ourselves in. In the pandemonium, one prisoner said he would help us out if we opened the cell door. We were stuck in the cell for about 45 minutes before a jailor told us it was safe to come out. He escorted us out. The prisoners shouted, telling us to remove our caps and shirts. We could see other police officers being beaten up. Some had been stripped naked.

"As we were nearing the chapel exit, I was dragged out and beaten. I managed to break away. I ran towards an office room near the chapel. Two prisoners told the mob to leave me alone. One of the two men gave me water to drink, and the other offered to lead me out of the prison through a short-cut. When we were taking the short-cut, another gang of prisoners came up and demanded my wallet. They tore off the gold chain round my neck and took my wallet and told me to leave. I saw another prisoner using his teeth to tear a gold ring off a policeman's hand.

"I finally reached the entrance gate, where about 40 jailors were blocking the way. They didn't believe I was a policeman and wouldn't let me out. It was 15 minutes before I finally got out. I jumped into a police jeep and was rushed to the Colombo National Hospital. My head was bleeding badly."

Constable S. R. Lalith, 24 years, of the Moratuwa Police, thanks a prison inmate for saving him from the prison mob.

"I was on the third floor searching cells with a six other policemen when I heard shouting. Prisoners carrying iron rods, clubs and broomsticks made their way to the top floor and started to assault us. My wallet, gold chain and cell phone were taken. I thought I would be killed. I pretended to faint. At that point, one of the prisoners ordered the mob to get off me. He said I had helped him in the past. It is true. He was caught by the Moratuwa Police for selling drugs and kasippu, and when he was in

"We were checking prisoners from the second and third floors. We were under orders not to simultaneously check prisoners from the first floor, as these men were death-row convicts. After body-searching some 2,000 inmates, we left them in an open ground next to the chapel and proceeded to check their cells.

"The 10 policemen in our team were searching two cells on the second floor when we heard the prisoners shouting. They were aiming stones at us from the ground floor. A gang started to assault a Superintendent of Police. The officer, who was bleeding from

custody I gave him tea a couple of times. I was good to him. He handed me over to one of the jailors, and I was rushed to hospital.”

A senior jail guard who was on duty at Welikada last Sunday said the trouble began when a senior police officer co-ordinating the raid chose to ignore the jailors’ advice about entering the prison discreetly, without provoking the inmates.

“He wouldn’t listen to us,” the jail guard, who did not want his name mentioned, told the Sunday Times. “The officer joked that most of the prisoners were known to him and that it was he who had helped put them in prison. This officer was badly beaten up. The prisoners pointed to various policemen, saying they had planted drugs in their homes and were sleeping with their wives while they were rotting in prison.”

According to Commissioner General of Prisons, Major-General V. R. de Silva, the police officers in last Sunday’s search operation had turned up at Welikada without a court order and were unprepared to handle such a large number of prisoners.

“The Inspector General of Police, Mahinda Balasuriya, called me last Friday to say he had a court order to search all prisons in the country,” Major-General Silva told the Sunday Times. “He asked for my help when the police arrived at Welikada. I said okay. But on Saturday, I had a call from DIG Anura Senanayake, who said the prison raids had been postponed.

“On Sunday, I was informed by DIG K. P. P. Pathirana that a police team was on its way to Welikada. I expected to see a large team, but there were only 64 policemen, and they had come without a court order. They told the guards that I had given them permission to conduct the operation. The police sent 64 officers to search 2,464 prisoners. These are all hardened criminals serving long-term sentences. The prisons officers cannot be blamed for what happened.

“Whenever the prison conducts a search, we do it one prisoner at a time. The police took all the prisoners out, giving them the opportunity to gang up and riot,” he said. “A committee of senior prisons department officers is investigating last Sunday’s riot.

According to Vijith Vijayamuni, Deputy Minister of Prison Reforms and Rehabilitation, the police came to Welikada Prison without authorisation and without sufficient manpower. “They also come at a very inconvenient time, when the prisoners were waiting to use the toilets,” Mr. Vijayamuni told the Sunday Times. “The toilet facilities are limited, and the prisoners have to await their turn. This was one of the main reasons for the anger and violence.”

According to Anura Senanayake, Deputy Inspector General of Police, Crimes Division, the safety of the police officers who conducted the raid was the jailors’ responsibility. The jailors had failed on this occasion, he said.

“In an operation like this, we should have had at least 30 jailors for our protection, but we were given only 10. We were told the prison had only 600 inmates, so we put 75

officers on the job. If we had known there were 3,000 inmates, we would have sent more men. The jailors released all 3,000 inmates for the search. We wonder whether there was some understanding between the jailors and the prisoners.

“Certainly on this occasion, the prisons staff let the police down badly.”

[Lucasville Prison Rebellion 20 years later: an interview wit' political prisoner Imam Saddique Hasan](#)

April 21, 2013

Lucasville prisoners lead spreading hunger strike at Ohio State Penitentiary

BULLETIN: The hunger strikers situation is urgent. As of April 21, Bomani Shakur (Keith LaMar) had already lost 28 pounds! He and Hasan remain on strike. No update is yet available on the other hunger strikers. Sign the online petition at <http://www.change.org/petitions/ohio-department-of-rehabilitation-and-corrections-allow-on-camera-interviews-with-lucasville-uprising-prisoners#>

by The People's Minister of Information JR

Twenty years ago, there was a prison uprising in a U.S. concentration camp commonly known as Lucasville to the community and prisoners but as Southern Ohio Correctional Facility on paper. A number of people were murdered including a correctional officer and several prisoners who collaborated with the prison administration.



Siddique Abdullah Hasan

Imam Saddique Hasan and other prisoners who acted as spokespeople for the prisoners were eventually charged with the murders and have been held on Ohio's death row ever since. This is the synopsis of a story that is all too common behind enemy lines, when it comes to Black prisoners versus white guards and administrations. Imam Saddique Hasan tells what happened during this historic prison rebellion in the Ohio concentration camp system ...

M.O.I. JR: Can you tell us how long you have been locked up and a little bit about your arrest?

Imam Hasan: I've been behind enemy lines for 29 years. My arrest came as a result of a 1983 crime of aggravated robbery with a gun specification. In short, a motor vehicle was commandeered at gunpoint, and no one was harmed. The above crime happened in Cleveland during the autumn, but I was able to post bond and was granted authorization by the court, as well as my bail bondsman, to return to my home in Savannah, Georgia. For the most part, this is why my trial did not commence until the autumn of '84.

M.O.I. JR: Prior to '93, how long had you been locked up? How long did you have to do? What were you doing with the time?

Imam Hasan: I had been imprisoned for nine years prior to the year in discussion. I was given the maximum sentence of 13 to 25 years for my alleged crime – that is, 10 to 25 years for the aggravated robbery and a mandatory three-year sentence for possession of an operable firearm during the commission of a felony. My time, prior to '93, was wisely spent reeducating myself and preparing for my reentry back into society.

To be more specific, I had secured my GED diploma and had immediately enrolled in data processing and, later on, in college classes; became a member of the African Cultural Organization (formerly Black Culture Club) and, shortly thereafter, was appointed its public relations director; took up public speaking courses; initiated some stringent studies toward becoming a certified scholar in Islamic jurisprudence and Sufism (spiritual purification and enlightenment); and, finally, was working on an apprenticeship in masonry, plumbing and electrical wiring. In addition to my own academic, oratorical, religious and vocational pursuits, a portion of my time was spent providing academic, moral and spiritual training, purification and development to those prisoners who sought my tutelage.

I've been behind enemy lines for 29 years. I had been imprisoned for nine years prior to the year in discussion.

M.O.I. JR: For the people who know nothing about Lucasville in Ohio, can you give the people a little bit of history about the institution, so '93 can be put in a political and historical perspective?

Imam Hasan: Actually, the name of this infamous maximum-security prison is the Southern Ohio Correctional Facility (SOCF); however, to the convict and inmate population it is called Lucasville or Luke. The prison is in Lucasville – a small Appalachian and conservative city 80 miles directly south of Columbus – and the city inherits its name from Robert Lucas, Ohio's 12th governor.

The prison sits on 1,625.4 acres of land – 22 under roof – and, in September of 1972, this newly state-of-the-art facility commenced housing some of the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC)'s most fearsome and notorious prisoners who came from the Ohio State Penitentiary in Columbus. The designed capacity of Lucasville is 1,638 cells, but the prison was overcrowded at the time of the uprising, namely, to 146.3 percent of its capacity.

Not only was Lucasville overcrowded, but the entire Ohio prison system was overcrowded. In fact, the inmate-to-correction officer ratio was 8.8 to 1, compared to the national average of 5.1 to 1.

Its Black prison population has always exceeded 60 percent, while both its minority staff and correction officer populations have never exceeded 10 percent. So what you had was predominantly former white farmers, who had very little or no social contact with

Blacks, overseeing and managing a predominantly Black population that emanated from inner cities throughout Ohio.

The designed capacity of Lucasville is 1,638 cells, but the prison was overcrowded at the time of the uprising, namely, to 146.3 percent of its capacity.

Indeed, a recipe for disaster. Put another way, you basically had two very distinct cultures and ethnic groups that diametrically opposed each other on almost every front. This explains why the prison officials treated Black prisoners like “Black dogs” that they could either randomly beat up or occasionally murder for trivial things and thereafter giggle among themselves, or why they covertly and overtly promoted racial strife among Black and white prisoners.

So prisoner deaths, stabbings, rapes, assaults and other violence were the norm. It was a very vicious cycle. At one time, Lucasville averaged about five to seven murders per year, and many of them involved whites killing Blacks. But Black prisoners were not the only recipients of this racial hatred. Black prison employees were also mistreated. For example, they were made to feel unwelcome by their coworkers, and some even had their tires slashed.

This ongoing racism was displayed when and after the only Black guard captured during the rebellion was released in exchange for a live prisoner broadcast on national TV. The guard grabbed the microphone and stated that “the Muslims had nothing to do with the guard’s murder, that they protected him [the released guard], and treated him humanely.”



Siddique Abdullah Hasan, tried as Carlos Sanders and described by the Associated Press as the “alleged ringleader” of the 1993 Lucasville Uprising, is heavily guarded as he is led to the jury selection phase of his trial on Jan. 16, 1996. – Photo: Al Behrman, AP

As a result of this utterance, the Black guard was ostracized and threatened by the local white community. On the other hand, when the remainder of the hostages were released at the conclusion of the rebellion, one of them publicly stated that “the Aryan Brotherhood protected him and treated him with respect.” He was praised and welcomed back in the local community.

This was the institution’s history, political backdrop and racism that Blacks were forced to live and work under for over two decades. It’s interesting to note that in the aftermath of the rebellion, the prison authorities decided to institute a mandatory cultural diversity class for all its employees. Well, it was a little too late.

JR: What led to the uprising in Lucasville in ‘93 that resulted in an officer and some inmates being murdered?

Hasan: Just like it takes a mixture of ingredients to make up the ideal male-female relationship, it was a mixture of ingredients that prompted the war between prisoners and prisoncrats. Many of these ingredients can best be understood by perusing my answer to your last query.

While Warden Arthur Tate’s uncompromising stance to administer mandatory TB testing to all prisoners under his jurisdiction and control may have ultimately been the straw which broke the camel’s back, there was a long train of abuses that spearheaded a full-scale rebellion. Contrary to the popular view the media sold to the public, the rebellion had absolutely nothing to do with the Muslims’ refusal to take the Mantoux tuberculin skin test, a test that contains an alcoholic substance (phenol) and that is religiously forbidden for Muslims to have injected under their forearm or into their system.

Instead, the rebellion was prompted by conservative guards’ elitist attitude and blatant racism toward inner-city Blacks.

The Muslims’ intention was to initiate a peaceful protest to bring Central Office’s attention to Warden Tate’s unrealistic and unsympathetic position to infringe on our First Amendment right. However, when prison guards abandoned their posts, as well as their once-loyal colleagues, young Black prisoners decided in an impromptu manner to change the game. That is, they impulsively decided to attack the guards and, in their own words, “pay those racist motherfuckers back for all the abuses they’ve dished out to Blacks” since the inception of SOCF.

The rebellion was prompted by conservative guards’ elitist attitude and blatant racism toward inner-city Blacks.

Now after the initial scene of pandemonium – where guards’ blood flowed profusely throughout L-block and where snitches’ souls were violently snuffed out – young revolutionaries made it perfectly clear that the war was not about prisoners against prisoners, but about prisoners against the administration and its sympathizers.

This is the synopsis of a story that is all too common behind enemy lines, when it comes to Black prisoners versus white guards and administrations.

M.O.I. JR: Why do you think you and your four comrades were charged and convicted of the murders, although the evidence points to the fact that as negotiators during the rebellion, y'all helped save lives instead of taking them?

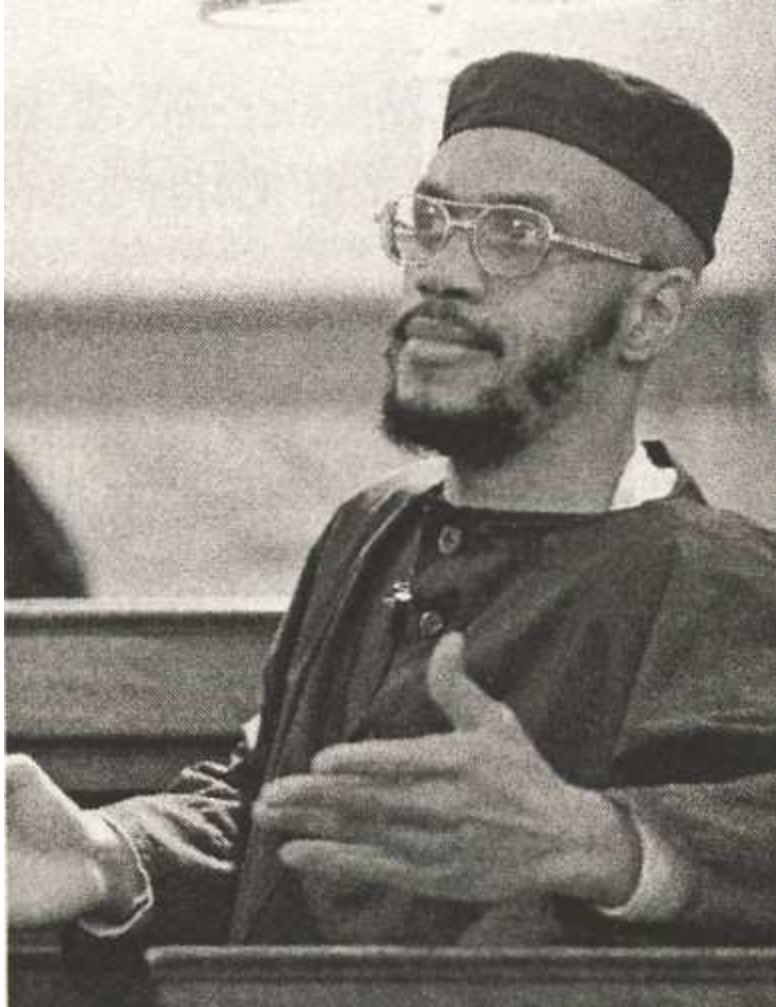
Imam Hasan: Long before it was even over, we were targeted by the state as the primary leaders of the rebellion. In my case, since I was a well-respected and influential Imam (prayer leader) of the Sunni Muslims, and since it was the decision of some Muslims to stage a peaceful protest in order to bring Central Office's attention to Warden Tate's inconsideration toward our religious beliefs, it was anticipated that I would become a scapegoat for the action of others.

As for the others, they were either catapulted into the position of spokesmen by their respective leaders, or they opted to become spokesmen in order to avoid a massacre. History has taught me that the worst seems to come out of people during this type of crisis; thus it's my honest opinion we were targeted because we were singled out as leaders and spokesmen.

In the eyes of the state, why not those at the forefront, i.e., the leaders and spokesmen? In personally looking back, it sometimes seems that it wasn't a good idea to risk our lives nor our freedom to save the lives of others, especially not when we face the possibility of paying with our own lives. But religiously speaking, as a practicing Muslim, I know in my heart I did the right thing.

M.O.I. JR: Can you describe when your trial was and the political climate surrounding the trial?

Imam Hasan: By the time my trial had commenced in January of 1996, you already had the first World Trade Center bombing that happened on Feb. 26, 1993, as well as other sporadic attacks on American institutions in other parts of the world. These attacks were regularly aired by the national media, and almost every American household was regularly expressing its fears and resentment toward Muslims.



This photo of Hasan at trial, on Feb. 14, 1996, appears in the book, "Lucasville," by Staughton Lynd. – Photo: Al Behrman, AP

Therefore, the political climate was not at all favorable during the course of my trial, a trial which was a sham in almost every respect. By virtue of the fact that I was a Muslim, my prosecutors capitalized on this by repeatedly drawing the jury's attention to my religion, race and Islamic attire, solely to create an atmosphere of Islamophobia and racial prejudice in a city [Cincinnati] which is nationally known for its racial prejudice and wholesale imprisonment of Blacks.

The prosecutors' diabolical plot and scheme was obvious to everyone in the courtroom, including my trial judge, who formerly worked in their office as a prosecuting attorney. The racism was so consolidated that you had Black prospective jurors being asked three times as many questions as White prospective jurors, all in an attempt to find fault in them so they could be removed for cause.

In fact, when the prosecutors were unsuccessful in removing a Black juror for cause, they attempted to use one of their peremptory challenges; however, the judge would not allow them to remove this particular juror because he had an immaculate profile and

was more than qualified to sit on my jury. Plain and simple, the prosecutors' intention was to secure my conviction and my lynching by an all-white jury.

M.O.I. JR: Do you see yourself and comrades as political prisoners? Why or why not?

Imam Hasan: In the aftermath of the rebellion, the state of Ohio was under enormous political pressure to bring to justice the person or persons who were responsible for murdering prison guard Robert Vallandingham. The political pressure was so intense that a local citizens' committee sought to ensure that whoever was condemned to death would be executed as rapidly as possible. This same committee also drafted a petition to Gov. George Voinovich, to President of the Ohio Senate Stanley Arnoff and to Ohio Speaker of the House Vernal G. Riffe to accept their responsibility to carry out the wishes of the voters of the state of Ohio.

One of the prosecutors, who is now a state judge, recently stated to a documentary filmmaker, "I don't think that we will ever know who hands-on killed the Corrections Officer Vallandingham." This is not what he and other prosecutors told our juries.

When no prisoners initially came forward with any information leading to the guard's killers, the state bowed to public pressure and decided to lay the blame for the murders at the doorsteps of the prisoner leaders and spokespersons. This is how I, along with my colleagues, ended up being charged with various murders.

One of the prosecutors, who is now a state judge, recently stated to a documentary filmmaker, "I don't think that we will ever know who hands-on killed the Corrections Officer Vallandingham." This is not what he and other prosecutors told our juries. So yes, we are innocent men who are political prisoners.

OSP prisoners join hunger strike to mark 20th anniversary of Lucasville Uprising and demand media interviews

by Ben Turk

April 16, 2013, Youngstown, Ohio – At least 21 prisoners at Ohio State Penitentiary (OSP) refused all three meals on Monday, April 15, in solidarity with the four Lucasville Uprising prisoners who've been on hunger strike since April 11.

Warden David Bobby says no additional prisoners are officially hunger-striking, because none have refused nine consecutive meals, but he said numerous prisoners have refused meals off and on during the hunger strike.

The four prisoners who are on hunger strike are Greg Curry, Siddique Abdullah Hasan, Jason Robb and Bomani Shakur. All have been held in solitary confinement since receiving convictions after the Lucasville Uprising in 1993. They are demanding media be granted access to sit-down interviews with them.

Statement on the hunger strike recorded by Hasan for the Re-Examining the Lucasville Uprising Conference

The warden also met with the prisoners on Monday to hear their demands, but he has not begun negotiations with them. When asked, Warden Bobby said that he does not have final say regarding media access. The decision is made by Director Gary Mohr and the Office of Communications at ODRC Central Office.

According to JoEllen Smith at the Office of Communications, there are many reasons media requests may be denied, and she insists that the same standards are applied to any and all requests. The prisoners from the Lucasville Uprising insist that this is not the case. They say other prisoners on death row and other prisoners at OSP are granted much more media access and that their constitutional right to equal protection under the law is being violated.

Supporters of the Lucasville Uprising prisoners are organizing a conference this weekend re-examining the facts of the uprising and the investigations following it. More information about the conference is available at Re-ExaminingLucasville.org.

The hunger striking prisoners request that people please call and email both JoEllen Smith and Warden Bobby to demand that media access be granted.

- JoEllen Smith: (614) 752-1150, joellen.smith@odrc.state.oh.us
- Warden David Bobby: (330) 743-0700, ext. 2006, David.Bobby@odrc.state.oh.us

Supporters are also asking people to write the Lucasville prisoners letters of solidarity:

- Siddique Abdullah Hasan, R130-559, OSP, 878 Coitsville Hubbard Rd., Youngstown, OH 44505
- Jason Robb, 308-919, OSP, 878 Coitsville Hubbard Rd., Youngstown, OH 44505
- Bomani Shakur (Keith Lamar), 317-117, OSP, 878 Coitsville Hubbard Rd., Youngstown, OH 44505
- Greg Curry, 213-159, OSP, 878 Coitsville Hubbard Rd., Youngstown, OH 44505

[Greg Curry on Lucasville Uprising and 20th anniversary hunger strike demanding media access](#)

April 21, 2013

by Annabelle Parker

Greg Curry, 48, is a prisoner in the Ohio State Penitentiary, the supermax facility in that state, serving a life sentence following a major disturbance in the Southern Ohio Correctional Facility (SOCF), in Lucasville, Ohio. This disturbance, known as the Lucasville Uprising, started 20 years ago, on April 11, 1993, after the warden, Arthur Tate, had instituted a very strict regime with no allowance for any discussion or negotiation of the rules, nor any respect for those in prison.

One of the important issues for Muslim prisoners was that the mandatory TB tests used alcohol (phenol) under the skin, which they refused. There was no discussion allowed with the warden to use alternative means of testing. This attitude of not listening to the serious concerns of a group of religious prisoners culminated in the uprising.

For more information, see <http://www.lucasvilleamnesty.org/p/background.html> and <https://justiceforlucasvilleprisoners.wordpress.com/>.

This disturbance, known as the Lucasville Uprising, started 20 years ago, on April 11, 1993, after the warden, Arthur Tate, had instituted a very strict regime with no allowance for any discussion or negotiation of the rules, nor any respect for those in prison.

I've been in contact with the people who were convicted after the disturbance ended, and one big reason the story of Lucasville has to be told again and again is that not only did this tragic, desperate uprising lead to 10 deaths, but five men are still on death row and many more have been given lengthy sentences who declare their innocence.

After the uprising, informants were used to testify against other prisoners. In some cases, one prisoner would admit to having committed a murder, yet someone else would be found guilty of the same murder. Attorney and writer Staughton Lynd details this in seven essays he has written over the past year reflecting on the 20th anniversary of the Lucasville Uprising, at <https://justiceforlucasvilleprisoners.wordpress.com/re-examining-the-lucasville-uprising-essays-by-staughton-lynd/>.

Siddique Abdullah Hasan, designated the “ringleader” during his trial following the Lucasville Uprising and condemned to death, wrote: “One of the prosecutors, who is now a state judge, recently stated to a documentary filmmaker, ‘I don’t think that we will ever know who hands-on killed the Corrections Officer Vallandingham.’ This is not what he and other prosecutors told our juries. So yes, we are innocent men who are political prisoners.”

One big reason the story of Lucasville has to be told again and again is that not only did this tragic, desperate uprising lead to 10 deaths, but five men are still on death row and many more have been given lengthy sentences who declare their innocence.

Building a supermax appears to be the one thing politicians and prisoncrats wanted in the 1990s, and the Lucasville Uprising, which they call a riot, was all that was needed to get their way.



Greg Curry

These innocent men have been treated more cruelly for the 20 years since the uprising than any other Ohio prisoners, and that injustice must be set right. More public and political outcry is badly needed. A general amnesty for all involved would be a graceful and just, albeit late, remedy for those who were wrongly convicted.

Here is the story in short of Greg Curry, one of the prisoners who received a life sentence even though he had nothing to do with the uprising or the murders.

Annabelle Parker: Greg, on the website Gregcurry.org and in a flyer you and your supporters have published, you wrote: "I was 29 years old. My interest was going home, sports, hustling and exercising, nothing more or less: no gangs, groups or religious

affiliation, nothing to prove to my peers. Therefore, I had no serious disciplinary issues. My job was a recreation aide.”

So you were not with the Muslims or affiliated with a prison gang?

Greg Curry: No, I was not part of any prison group or religion pre 1993. Most of the guys charged I had not even seen before.

A.P.: Greg, why did the prosecution or those investigating the riot turn to you? Do you have any clue? Did anyone mention your name?

G.C.: Most people knew me and Keith LaMar [now known as Boman Shakur] was close friends, brothers even, so the assumption would be natural that we’re together or have each other’s back.

Some guys in LaMar’s block where these murders took place (apparently) blamed him and his friends, all in face mask by the way. So that started a process of founding “LaMar’s friends,” and once I was interviewed by the investigators, I was told “you or LaMar going to death row.”

I told them I didn’t know anything and have no reason to blame LaMar for anything either. Some guys – Lou Jones, Ant Walker, Donald Cassell – had previous problems with LaMar and evidence suggested that they would be charged for murders, so they needed to “perform” to get paroles and no charges on themselves.

Once LaMar’s “friends” names were discovered, the investigators started giving these to their inmate conspirators (“snitches”) and those inmates repeated the lies. When you put most anyone up against anyone else, most people will save self; lying is only a minor detail.

I was given an opportunity to “save myself,” but I didn’t do anything or know anything worthy of needing saving from. How ironic that not knowing, not being involved, would put me at greater risk than had I committed a crime.

A.P.: This snitching by other inmates, this was encouraged by the prosecutors? Did the prisoners get anything out of snitching, which I gather means lying in court? Were they themselves involved maybe?

G.C.: Yes, the investigators that were state police and the prosecutors encouraged, created a narrative for the inmate conspirators (“snitches”) that wrapped up all loose ends and allowed different juries in different courts to convict different people for the exact same crime, so that four to five people individually are convicted for each murder.

Those snitches were then given parole or no charges. In Lou Jones’ case, he admitted being on this so-called “death squad,” yet he was not charged with anything and got a parole.

To clarify the commonly used term “snitching,” I prefer the inmate conspirators’ term. Yes, they helped get us divided, which in America is an easy task, and then the heavy burden of being poor, Black, male, convicted felon in a totally opposite rural community on trial makes you truly vulnerable to conviction.

Then, yes, these guys came to court to testify as well. As I said earlier, yes, these guys were the first to be accused, which is why the investigators paid them a visit. Once shown the evidence against them, they were given a “way out.”

I was given an opportunity to “save myself,” but I didn’t do anything or know anything worthy of needing saving from. How ironic that not knowing, not being involved, would put me at greater risk than had I committed a crime.

A.P.: You say on the website that deals are part of the law in Ohio but that the jurors have to know about the deals. In your case, the jurors clearly did not know, but the prosecution and the lying inmates did know about the fabrication of the case against you. In other words, they knew about a deal, but it was not disclosed in court? And the judge? Did he or she know?

What about Beckett v Haviland US App 6th cir?

G.C.: I believe the judge at trial, Stapleton, a retired judge, was in the blend to the deal between the prosecution and inmates. However, he became (at least) an unwilling accomplice when he stated, “By law if there were deals, they would have to be disclosed,” in response to my jurors’ inquiry, so that convinced my jury it was no deals when in fact it was, and the inmates and prosecutors covered it up. While my defense was based on my innocence and these inmates’ deals.

Beckett v. Haviland is just the latest in a long list of case law that clearly states this practice to be so out of bounds that the only remedy, and I quote: “The *only* remedy is a new trial.” (See <http://gregcurry.weebly.com/gregs-case.html> with attached document, Beckett v. Haviland.)

Thus far the judicial system has hid behind “procedural” walls to deny me a court hearing. The courts claim it’s too late to seek justice! Can you believe that crap from a world leader in telling other countries what justice is?!

“The *only* remedy is a new trial.”

A.P.: What were you charged with and did you know those testifying against you? What happened to them?

G.C.: I was indicted for two aggravated murders, found guilty of one and guilty on the other of attempted aggravated murder. All those who testified against me received deals ranging from paroles to lower security to choice cellmates.

A.P.: Greg, it is 20 years now since that ordeal. What is the situation now of your case, and how can we support you?

G.C.: The courts are merely a reflection of a society that “don’t wanna know,” so until people become aware and demand mainstream media look into it and the media asks questions of lawyers and pastors and civil rights leaders, then it will be 20 years more.

Our fight at present is to make people aware, skeptic or not. Just look into it. Our supporters hold rallies and events that cost money so even if you can’t physically come out, help with money. Donations help. Email blast the websites. Get to know us. Just don’t ignore this anymore. It’s been 20 years.

A.P.: Is there anything else you need us to know right now?

G.C.: As of April 11, 2013, many of us are on a hunger strike to demand access to media to tell our stories. So pray for us. But prayer without deeds can’t please our God.

Freedom first,

Greg

Annabelle Parker, who lives in the Netherlands and dedicates her life to supporting prisoners in their struggles for freedom and justice, can be reached at freegregcurry@yahoo.com.

Send our brother some love and light: Greg Curry, 213-159, OSP, 878 Coitsville-Hubbard Road, Youngstown, OH 44505. His website, created and maintained by his supporters, is Gregcurry.org.

Support the hunger strikers

The situation is urgent. As of April 21, Bomani Shakur (Keith LaMar) had already lost 28 pounds!

To support the hunger strikers, call JoEllen Smith, head of the Office of Communications at the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC) central office, and demand that she and ODRC Director Gary Mohr grant media access for on-camera interviews with the Lucasville hunger striking prisoners. Her number is (614) 752-1159.

Tell the operator you do not want to talk to the warden, because you know that Director Mohr and Communications Director Smith are the actual decision-makers. Tell JoEllen Smith that you believe they are denying this access because they do not want the truth to come out about April of 1993.

Sign the online petition at <http://www.change.org/petitions/ohio-department-of-rehabilitation-and-corrections-allow-on-camera-interviews-with-lucasville-uprising-prisoners#>.

[Stand with us in the upcoming peaceful struggle](#)

by Arturo Castellanos

Greetings to all those men and women of like minds and spirits who are going to volunteer and stand with us in solidarity in the upcoming peaceful struggle to force positive changes to CDCR that will benefit all prisoners and all our outside families and friends.



California prisoners who backed up their Five Core Demands with hunger strikes – peaceful protests – in 2011 are gearing up for another such protest to begin July 8, 2013, because their demands, though promised, still have not been met. This banner led a hunger strike support march in Santa Cruz on July 23, 2011. – Photo: Bradley, bradley@riseup.net

In this letter we wish to acknowledge and send out appreciation and great respect for those men on Death Row in San Quentin's Adjustment Center (AC) and the women in Chowchilla prison for their inspiring and motivating words published in the April 2013 Rock, Vol. 2, No. 4, at pages 7, 8; and in the Spring 2013 Prison Focus, No. 39 (<http://www.prisons.org>).

These letters were reassuring and solidified our commitment to see this through to the end. We also have no doubt that those in Corcoran, Folsom, Tehachapi and all other California prisons have written similar letters – including those men here with us in SHU D and C Facilities, as well as GP (general population) – which will only further strengthen our peaceful struggle across the state to end CDCR's decades long oppressive actions towards all prisoners and their families.

After these and other letters from across the state and nation that will be published, we find it hard to believe that any able-bodied individual prisoner will not wish to take part in this historic peaceful action in one form or another. Hell, even those among us who have a serious chronic illness are fully supporting this peaceful action in one form or another, even though they aren't able to go on hunger strike. For example, they are not going to July's canteen and they're writing family, friends, church groups and encouraging them to join our outside support groups and/or writing the governor, state legislators etc. Every single small act of support adds up to overwhelming support for our unified cause!

Greetings to all those men and women of like minds and spirits who are going to volunteer and stand with us in solidarity in the upcoming peaceful struggle to force positive changes to CDCR that will benefit all prisoners and all our outside families and friends.

And as one contemplates whether to volunteer or not, just remember all the psychological torture and personal loss (i.e., relations) that each of us in these solitary confinement torture cells have already experienced for the past 20-30 years. And, more importantly, think of all those youngsters, maybe young relatives, who will take our places after we're gone – for another 20-30 years – if this system is not changed at this time.

Therefore, we must refuse to continue to keep our heads buried in the ground while CDCR continues to deprive and oppress us and countless others to come. Instead, we must now stand up, holding our heads high and volunteer for this peaceful action to change everything that CDCR has stood for in the past 20-30 years.

We must refuse to become complacent in our surroundings and not believe the big 30 year lies that things will get better on their own as time goes by, or that peaceful protests cannot make an impact. Those are lies!

Along these same lines, don't allow CDCR to scare any of you straight into non-action by being afraid of receiving write-ups or being placed in Ad-Seg or losing the very little that CDCR returned to us, that they themselves deprived us of 20 to 30 years ago. So don't allow them to manipulate and brainwash you into non-action.

We must now stand up, holding our heads high and volunteer for this peaceful action to change everything that CDCR has stood for in the past 20-30 years.

Now is not the time to stand on the sidelines or whisper doubts or excuses to each other not to participate or be in opposition as an active obstructionist. That's what CDCR and their many minions will be doing prior to and during this peaceful action.

No, now is the time to stand up and be counted with us and those men in AC, the women in Chowchilla and countless others who will voluntarily participate in solidarity across this state and across this nation.

Finally, for anyone to allow an opportunity such as this to slip by without participating in some positive action – an opportunity of this magnitude may not present itself again – would be a very grave mistake on their part because they will only be adding another big regret to the many others they already burden themselves with, of missed opportunities to make a difference in changing the prison system for the benefit of all prisoners and their families.

Now is the time to stand up and be counted with us and those men in AC, the women in Chowchilla and countless others who will voluntarily participate in solidarity across this state and across this nation.

Always in solidarity and with great respect to all those men and women joining this peaceful struggle in one form or another, which includes all our outside supporters, who have been invaluable in this movement.

Arturo Castellanos writes this statement on behalf of all the other representatives and PBSP SHU Short Corridor Collective. His address is C-17275, PBSP SHU, D1-121, P.O. Box 7500, Crescent City CA 95532.

For families and friends to join our movement:

- www.prisonerhungerstrikesolidarity.wordpress.com
- www.StopTortureCA.org
- www.abolishsolitary.com
- www.fairchanceproject.com
- www.facts1.net
- www.prisons.org for Prison Focus and ROCK and PHSS News
- www.sfbayview.com for San Francisco Bay View
- www.criticalresistance.org for The Abolitionist
- www.SJRA1.com for Sentencing and Justice Reform Advocate

[International body slams U.S. solitary confinement practices](#)

April 9, 2013

by [Ian Kysel](#), Aryeh Neier Fellow, ACLU Human Rights Program



Solitary confinement cell – Photo: EPA/UWE ZUCCHI

There are more than 80,000 people in solitary confinement in the United States. Last week, the widespread misuse and abuse of solitary confinement in jails and prisons across the country drew international condemnation when the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights [criticized the](#) United States following [weeks of hearings](#) on human rights practices across the Americas region.

Before the hearings started, the United States government [declared](#) itself a “strong supporter” of the commission and [stated](#) that “[p]reserving the [commission’s] autonomy is a pillar of our human rights policy in the region.” The U.S. must live up to this commitment by making sure prisoners across the country have their basic human rights protected.

At a hearing on solitary confinement, the [ACLU testified](#) about the excessive use of solitary confinement in the U.S. and submitted [testimony](#) alongside a [coalition of human and civil rights groups](#). The ACLU [informed the commission](#) that in the U.S., [children](#), persons with mental disabilities, and non-citizens in immigration detention are held in solitary confinement, often for weeks and months. The ACLU suggested that the commission immediately recommend that the U.S. government and all members of the Organization for American States strictly limit the use of solitary confinement on all individuals and prohibit its use on persons below 18 years of age and persons with mental disabilities.

In its [concluding statement](#), the commission stated that “based on the fact that the prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment may not be abrogated and is universal, the [OAS](#) Member States must adopt strong, concrete measures to eliminate the use of prolonged or indefinite isolation under all circumstances ... [T]his practice may never constitute a legitimate instrument in the hands of the State. Moreover, the practice of solitary confinement must never be applied to juveniles or to persons with mental disabilities.”

The world has again taken note that abuses in U.S. jails and prisons can't be squared with our human rights commitments. On solitary confinement, the U.S. should demonstrate its leadership and prove that change starts at home.

At a hearing on the United States, the commission heard from [human and civil rights groups](#) – as well as [U.S. government officials](#) – about how children across the U.S. are charged as if they are adults, held in adult jails and prisons, and put at serious risk of physical and sexual assault. The ACLU, jointly with Human Rights Watch, [detailed](#) how officials in adult facilities use solitary confinement to supposedly “protect” children from adults and to punish them when they break rules. The ACLU urged the commission to engage the United States about the issue and has called on [Attorney General](#) Holder to [ban the solitary confinement](#) of children in federal custody.

In its [concluding statement](#), the commission specifically criticized the United States for its mistreatment of children, expressing “deep concern over the practice in the United States of incarcerating children under 18 years of age in prisons for adults, without any effective separation between the two. It is also cause of concern to the Commission the abuses, sexual rape and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, such as solitary confinement. The Commission urges the United States to identify and urgently implement a federal mechanism to identify anyone under the age of 18 as a child, to keep them from being tried as adults or incarcerated alongside adults.”

The world has again taken note that abuses in U.S. jails and prisons can't be squared with our human rights commitments. On solitary confinement, the U.S. should demonstrate its leadership and prove that change starts at home.

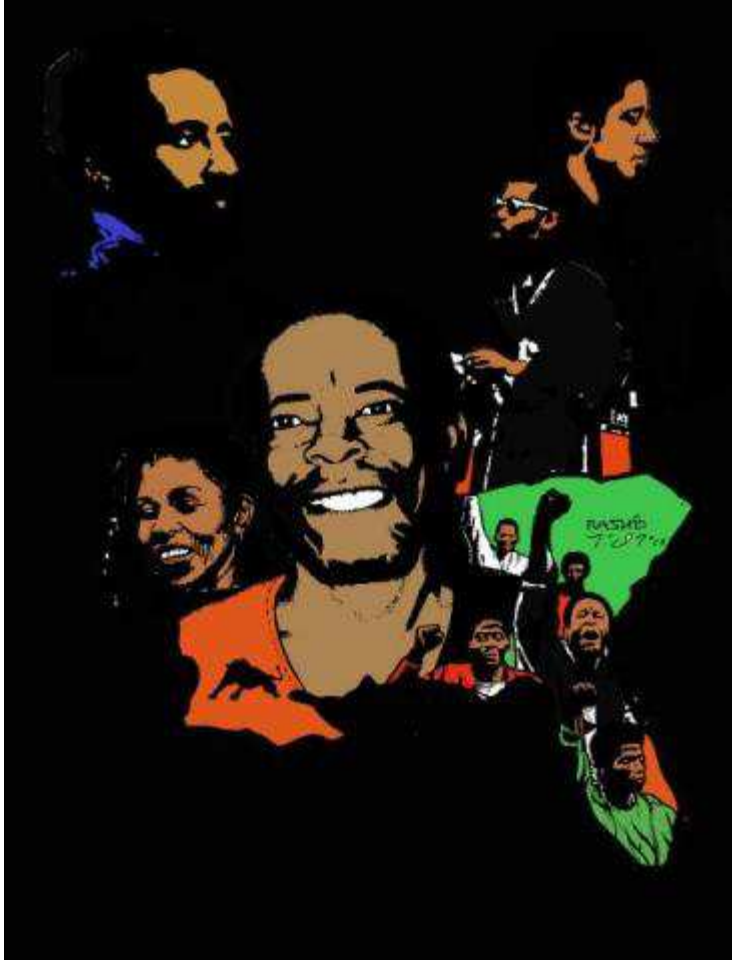
Ian Kysel is the Aryeh Neier Fellow with the ACLU's Human Rights Program and the US Program at Human Rights Watch, where he focuses on the solitary confinement of youth in the United States. He is the author or co-author of human rights reports on solitary confinement, prison conditions for youth serving life without parole and the resettlement of refugees to the United States. Contact him via <http://www.aclu.org/general-feedback>. This story was originally published by the [American Civil Liberties Union](#).

[The Prison Industrial Slave Complex, a profit-making industry](#)

April 7, 2013

by the Pelikan Bay First Amendment Rights Campaign: Abdul Shakur, Ifoma Modibo Kambon, Dadisi Yero Kambon, Raridi Yero, Abasi Ganda, Kijana Tashiri Askari, Yafeu I-Yapo

Many within society, and rightfully so, may find what I am about to allege very incredible and absurd, beyond the capacity of their comprehension, but the truth must be told if justice is truly to be served.



“Lessons from the New Afrikan Liberation Front (NALF) for Black Power, Land and Independence,” featuring Sundiata Acoli, Assata Shakur ... and how many more can you identify? – Art: prisoner artist Rashid Johnson

When the prison system transformed into the Prison Industrial Slave Complex (PISC), it became a profit-making industry and, as a profit-making industry, profit becomes the bottom line. In the agriculture industry, pork, beef, wheat, corn, just to name a few, are some of the primary commodities that fuel that industry. Well, in the PISC the poor underclass is the primary commodity that fuels its profitability, while the poor New Afrikan (Black) man and woman are its prime choice. The survival, longevity and stability of any profit-making industry is profitability, and this is dependent upon supply and demand which encompasses a steady flow of quality products and/or commodities.

People, no profit-making industry is going to intentionally deplete its resources and fall into bankruptcy, if they can help it. The PISC is no exception to the rule; it will do whatever it takes to guarantee its future existence and proliferation. Recidivism was and is the principal business plan; a genuine effort to rehabilitate prisoners would facilitate

the demise of the PISC as a profit-making industry. So genuine rehabilitation is not on their list of priorities, especially Pelikkkkan Bay and Corcoran State Prison.

Now you may be wondering, what does the above observation have to do with our First Amendment campaign. There exists a class of New Afrikan political prisoners and politically active prisoners who are committed to: 1) eradicating New Afrikan recidivism by transforming the New Afrikan criminal mentality; 2) developing proposed solutions designed to eradicate Black-on-Black gang violence, as well as criminal activities; 3) to prepare New Afrikan prisoners for release back into our communities, and 4) via our articles expose the ills of the prison industrial slave complex. As a result of our political objectives, the PISC, for the last 22 years, has launched a COINTELPRO prototype campaign designed to criminalize our agenda and censor our voices.

Since our arrival here at Pelikkkkan Bay, we as New Afrikan political prisoners and politically active prisoners have been subjugated to a CDC-sanctioned prototype FBI counter-intelligence program (Cointelpro), but this prototype was developed and executed by the CDC agents of repression, e.g., Office of Correctional Safety (OCS/SHU), Institutional Gang Investigation Unit (IGI) and the Investigative Services Unit (ISU).

As a result of our political objectives, the PISC, for the last 22 years, has launched a COINTELPRO prototype campaign designed to criminalize our agenda and censor our voices.

Their goals are similar to that which the FBI set forth in the '60s and '70s when it attempted to neutralize our New Afrikan revolutionary collective, though the methods have changed. Their goal is neutralizing and destroying any New Afrikan political prisoner or politically active prisoner who dares to struggle in the service of our people – and humanity has remained the same.

Authentic politically inspired free speech within a fascist construct is like a cancerous tumor, and if allowed to spread it has the innate capacity to facilitate the rapid demise of fascist repression. Understanding that capacity, the agents of fascist repression responded with a repressive agenda designed to neutralize those forces and voices of political fortitude and moral steadfastness. During the '60s and '70s their methods were more blatantly and racially blunt, with no intention of concealing their racist and fascist agenda. Their assassinations and false imprisonment of New Afrikan freedom fighters within the CDCR exemplify their blunt method of deploying their fascist agenda. The '90s marked a less obvious approach, but just as effective.

Their goal is neutralizing and destroying any New Afrikan political prisoner or politically active prisoner who dares to struggle in the service of our people – and humanity has remained the same.

The CDCR agents of repression have a five-point agenda: 1) to isolate the most politically active New Afrikan prisoners; 2) to criminalize New Afrikan revolutionary nationalism (NARN), the primary ideology of the New Afrikan prison rights movement;

3) to discredit the New Afrikan political prisoners being held at both Pelikan Bay and Corcoran State Prison; 4) to discourage the New Afrikan prison population from relinquishing their criminal mentality and supporting the New Afrikan prison rights movement; 5) to develop a scheme designed to justify our long-term isolation within solitary confinement (Security Housing Unit). This is only a brief glimpse of the CDCR Cointelpro prototype.

People, this campaign is more than just about protecting our First Amendment rights. It's about denying the PISC the human fuel that is required to maintain this industry of human torture and exploitation, not to mention protecting society from the ramifications of the PISC. Keep in mind it is your victimization as taxpaying citizens that the PISC relies on to fuel their profit-making industry. If we can reduce recidivism, we can reduce the need for prisons, thus facilitating the eventual bankruptcy of the PISC. And this is why they have been so determined to violate our First Amendment rights and censor our voices and political activities.

Authentic politically inspired free speech within a fascist construct is like a cancerous tumor, and if allowed to spread it has the innate capacity to facilitate the rapid demise of fascist repression.

Between 1989 and 2005, no one was aware of our First Amendment Rights Campaign, and both the state and federal courts had turned a deliberate blind eye to our political persecution and a deaf ear to our call for justice. Not only were we not allowed to mention Comrade George's name, we were actually penalized for doing so.

There's no class of New Afrikan prisoners in the entire country that have been persecuted more than our revolutionary collective for upholding the legacy of Comrade George Jackson, W.L. Nolen, Jeffrey Khatari Gaulden, Black August, New Afrikan Revolutionary Nationalism (NARN). Many of us have been denied release solely on the basis that we refused to surrender our political commitment and activities to racial repression.

2005 marked our first victory. Comrade Tashiri was granted an evidentiary hearing on the critical tenets of our political struggle, such as George Jackson, Black August and New Afrikan Revolutionary Nationalism (NARN) in *Marcus Harrison (aka Kijana Tashirip Askari) v. Pelican Bay State Prison, No. HCPB04-3034*. This hearing exposed the campaign by the CDCR and their agents of repression to isolate, criminalize and censor New Afrikan revolutionary nationalists housed in the security housing unit (SHU) at Pelikan Bay under the guidance of their Cointelpro prototype.

Our next victory was also spearheaded by Comrade Tashiri. A federal civil suit where he negotiated an out-of-court settlement that actually set the course was *Marcus Harrison v. Institutional Gang Investigation, et al., No. CO7-3824 (SI)*. Our next victory was led by me: *James Harvey (aka Abdul Olugbala Shakur) v. Puente, et al., No. 08-2894 (VRW)*.

The Institutional Gang Investigation Unit (IGI) and the Investigative Services Unit (ISU) attempted to prevent us from using our Afrikan/Muslim name on our mail. I

settled out of court. Our next victory was led by Comrade Sondai: Randall Ellis (aka Sondai Kamdibe Dumisani) v. Capt. K. Brandon, IGI/ISU, et al., No. 10-2957 (TEH). This case also addressed our captors attempting to censor Comrade Sondai from writing about Comrade George. This case was settled out of court.

Our First Amendment Rights Campaign is now beginning to kick the door down. Our next victory was led by Comrade Mutope: James Crawford (aka Mutope Duguma) on Habeas Corpus, No. A131276. The First Appellate Court overturned a Superior Court decision ordering the CDCR agents of repression to mail out Comrade Mutope's mail containing the language of New Afrikan, New Afrikan Nationalist Revolutionary Man, NARN and the New Afrikan Independence Movement (NAIM).

Our most recent and significant victory was also led by me: James Harvey (aka Abdul Olugbala Shakur) v. R. Drown, IGI/ISU et al., No. 10-4891 (RS). I negotiated a very significant out-of-court settlement under the terms and conditions No. 7 of the agreement. They were ordered to place in my file a chrono stating they can no longer confiscate my outgoing mail for merely referencing the New Afrikan movement, this encompassing all New Afrikan titled terminology from New Afrikan to NARN, as long as we're not advocating criminal activity or specific acts of violence.

Though the settlement speaks to outgoing mail, the mediation judge made it clear it would also apply to incoming mail as long as it follows the same guidelines. And this agreement will affect all New Afrikan prisoners. The CDCR cannot apply one set of rules to me and not apply the same constitutional protection to other New Afrikan political prisoners and politically active prisoners.

Because of our multiple victories, many are under the false impression that we no longer need outside support. To the contrary, we need your support more so now than before. As you know, we are dealing with a very arrogant foe, who has displayed an open disdain for our human and constitutional rights as New Afrikan prisoners. In fact in spite of these victories, many of us have federal lawsuits and state writs pending in court for the same exact issues we had already settled out of court.

I have five federal lawsuits pending. The judge ordered the CDCR to respond to two of my lawsuits already, gave them 90 days in James Harvey (aka Abdul Olugbala Shakur) v. B.Thornton IGI/ISU et al., No. C12-2866 (RS). Their 90 days was up on Jan. 31, 2013, but on Feb. 4, 2013, they filed a motion requesting an additional 60 days, which the judge granted. This lawsuit pertains to the Black August Organizing Committee.

And I just recently heard from the judge in another matter: James Harvey (aka Abdul Olugbala Shakur) v. G. Lewis, Warden, et al., No. 12-5223. The judge ordered the CDCR to respond to this complaint. They have 90 days to respond. This lawsuit pertains to the Ramadan program and the religious diet. Pelikkkan Bay served us cold hot meals on paper trays throughout the entire month of Ramadan. On some days they didn't even feed me; and the judge is in possession of all the evidence to support my complaint, and this is why he had ordered the CDCR to respond to my lawsuit.

Because of our multiple victories, many are under the false impression that we no longer need outside support. To the contrary, we need your support more so now than before.

As you can see, people, our battle is far from being over and we just received notice that validated alleged prison gang members will not be eligible to participate in the step-down pilot program. We remain in solitary confinement indefinitely, even though many of us have already spent 25-40 years in isolation. So, as you can see, we are in need of your concrete support, not your lip service. The Bay View for over 20 years has provided us with a platform to tell our story. Follow their example!

Abdul Olugbala Skakur (s/n James Harvey), C-48884, D1-119; Ifoma Modibo Kambon (s/n D. Burnett), B-60892, D4-103; Dadisi Yero Kambon (s/n L. Benton) B-85066, D2-103; Baridi Yero (s/n J. Williamson), D-34288, D4-103; Abasi Ganda (s/n C. Jackson), C-33559, D2-107; Kijana Tashiri Askari (s/n M. Harrison), H-54077, D3-124; Yafeu I-Yapo (s/n L. Alexander), B-72288, D3-120 – all located at PBSP, P.O. Box 7500, Crescent City, CA 95532.

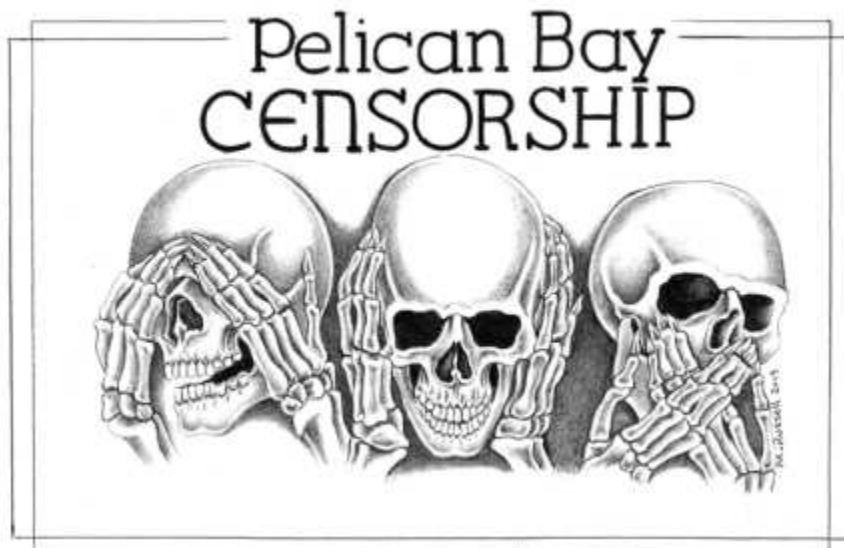
[Hands off the Bay View](#)

April 26, 2013

Statement from the Pelikan Bay Human Rights Movement First Amendment Campaign

by Abdul Olugbala Shakur, Sondai Kamdibe Dumisani, Abasi Ganda, Ifoma Modibo Kambon, Dadisi Yero, Askari Joka, Mutope Duguma, Sitawa Nantambu Jamaa, Baridi Yero, Kijana Tashiri Askari, Yafeu I-Yapo

Preamble: Fascist repression can only flourish when the voices of its victims have been brutally silenced and isolated within the concrete confines of a man-made construct where the scrutiny of the media cannot transcend the walls. Those walls are erected by legislative venality and deprive humanity of an eyewitness account of how captured human minds, spirits and bodies are being disfigured by the instrument of officially sanctioned evil that plagues this vortex of torture they call Pelikan Bay.



Drawing by Michael Russell, C-90473, PBSP SHU D7-217, P.O. Box 7500, Crescent City CA 95532

But contrary to the fascist intent, the voices of resistance reverberated within the depths of this concrete hell as New Afrikan revolutionary prisoners since our arrival have refused to remain silent and have waged a continuous campaign to put an end to this racial injustice. And for over 20 years the San Francisco Bay View has played a critical role in allowing our voices to be heard.

As a result they themselves have become a target for the CDCR (California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation) agents of repression, such as the Office of Correctional Safety (OCS), Institutional Gang Investigations (IGI) and Investigations Services Unit (ISU). The confiscation of the March [and, since this was written on April 5, also the April] issue of the Bay View is a clear indication of the agents of fascist repression escalating their attacks against the Bay View.

It is imperative for all of us to understand that the Bay View is part of us. Mary and Willie Ratcliff is our sista and brotha and they have sacrificed much to help us and serve our communities. We must now go beyond rhetoric and lip service in support for the Bay View.

We now present the following statement: The San Francisco Bay View is a national Black newspaper that serves the interests of the New Afrikan communities inside Amerikkka. Its objective is to always bring attention to the injustice that occurs against New Afrikan people by speaking out against the injustices handed down by the state and federal government, who systematically abuse their authority in order to suppress the voices of the oppressed.

For over 20 years the San Francisco Bay View has played a critical role in allowing our voices to be heard.

The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution is supposed to protect our freedom of speech, but time after time we see that the state officials tend to resort back to the Dred Scott v. Stanford Supreme Court case, where it was said that New Afrikan people “had no rights which the white man was bound to respect.”

These are the words that Warden G.D. Lewis, C.D.W. Ducart, A.W. Swift, ISU Capt. Barneburg, IGI Lt. Frisk and their subordinates live by when it comes to New Afrikans’ freedom of speech – even after several court victories in respect to our First Amendment rights to freedom of speech, in which the court clearly stipulated in their many rulings that the prison officials were in violation of our First Amendment rights.



Brad Ford, a prisoner in the federal system, uses his meager earnings to buy subscriptions for younger prisoners he mentors. The Bay View, denied for three of the last four months to subscribers at Pelican Bay State Prison in California, is currently being allowed in to federal and state prisons around the country and throughout California, except for Pelican Bay.

These same officials continue to defy the courts in order to violate our First Amendment rights. These officials have chosen a course of action where they themselves have not only violated our First Amendment rights continuously but have conspired to use their positions as state officials with the power to deprive us prisoners of our procedural due

process rights. The March issue, Vol. 38, No. 3, of the San Francisco Bay View National Black Newspaper, of which Mary Ratcliff and Willie Ratcliff are editor and publisher, was denied [to subscribers at Pelican Bay] per CCR Title 15, Section 3006(c)(3): "Except as authorized by the institution head, inmates shall not possess or have under their control any matter which contains or concerns any of the following: ... (3) Plans to disrupt the order or breach the security of any facility" and CCR Title 15, Section 3315(a)(2)(C): A serious disruption of facility operations. Yet the officials chose not to provide us a clear 1819 form per CCR Title 15 3136(a), disapproval of inmate mail per each mail item incoming or outgoing.

The officials' actions are calculating and malicious because they deliberately withheld the Bay View paper from the prisoners who actually had been consistent in their litigation against the blatant violations of our First Amendment rights. It was each of us who were not provided the CDCR 1819 forms which we have to have in order to file a 602 appeal grievance form for that which is having an adverse effect on us. In this case, it's our First Amendment violation governing our incoming mail.

By not issuing us our CDCR 1819 form, the CDCR/PBSP (Pelican Bay State Prison) officials are not only denying us our procedural due process but our right to file a civil lawsuit and petition of writ of habeas corpus to the courts for violations of our First Amendment rights. So the CDCR/PBSP official actions are arbitrarily insidious racist attacks on New Afrikan prisoners exclusively and the only New Afrikan newspaper that has chosen to stand up against the CDCR/PBSP's deliberate threats and power in the interest of the oppressed prison class held in CDCR custody.

We also want to say that CDCR/PBSP officials literally ran a test run when they confiscated the 25 Bay View issues in January 2013 from those lone subscribers while giving everyone else their subscription. Only through progressive litigation can we beat back these arbitrarily insidious racist attacks by prison officials who should have never been given authority to run no prison, let alone human beings.

We will aggressively continue to attack these actions against our freedom of speech! It is worth noting we have over 15 lawsuits pending in the federal court. Brotha Abdul Shakur has a lawsuit pending specifically pertaining to the confiscation of an article he had attempted to send to the Bay View. The judge in this matter recently ordered the defendants, IGI and ISU, via the attorney general to respond to Brotha Abdul's lawsuit. He also has a similar petition being reviewed by the California Supreme Court, so we are aggressively challenging the CDCR/PBSP campaign of repression.

People, we are all in this battle together. We cannot fight this battle by ourselves, especially from within solitary confinement. We must launch a coordinated effort in our endeavors to protect our First Amendment rights and defend the Bay View against any and all attempts to sabotage its functional capacity and impede their free speech.

We will aggressively continue to attack these actions against our freedom of speech! Your support is imperative to our success.

Our First Amendment campaign is calling on all people, especially the prison rights movement, to do the following:

1. contact Warden Greg Lewis via email or phone and demand that IGI and ISU put an end to censoring the Bay View and release the March issue [and April issue] of the Bay View to the prisoners housed within the PBSP Security Housing Unit;
2. contact Assemblywoman Holly Mitchell. Inform her how Pelican Bay State Prison Institutional Gang Investigation Unit (IGI) and Investigative Services Unit (ISU) are attempting to censor the Bay View newspaper because of their reporting on the hunger strikes, the five core demands, end to hostilities, sensory deprivation, torture and long-term solitary confinement;
3. actively help to organize support for the Bay View. This will discourage the fascist agents of repression in their endeavors to ban and isolate the Bay View. Subscriptions are imperative towards the Bay View's longevity and stability. Brotha Abdul Shakur suggested that activists should organize a Bay View subscribers' party where attendants pledge to subscribe to the Bay View in support of our ongoing campaign to defend and protect our free speech;
4. establish communication with the primary coordinators for our First Amendment campaign. We are all involved in litigation. Brotha Abdul Shakur has seven active cases presently pending, five Section 1983 civil suits in the federal courts, one in the local superior court, and one under review in the California Supreme Court.

Your support is imperative to our success.

Send our brothers some love and light:

- *Abdul Olugbala Shakur (s/n J. Harvey) C-48884, D1-119 (SHU), P.O. Box 7500, Crescent City, CA 95532*
- *Sitawa Nantambu Jamaa (s/n R. Dewberry) C-35671, D1-117 (SHU), P.O. Box 7500, Crescent City, CA 95532*
- *Mutope Duguma (s/n J. Crawford) D-05996, D1-117 (SHU) , P.O. Box 7500, Crescent City, CA 95532*
- *Sondai Kamdibe Dumisani (s/n R. Ellis) C-68764, D1-223 (SHU), P.O. Box 7500, Crescent City, CA 95532*
- *Baridi Yero (s/n J. Williamson) D-34288, D4-107 (SHU), P.O. Box 7500, Crescent City, CA 95532*
- *Ifoma Modibo Kambon (s/n D. Burnett) B-60892, D4-103 (SHU), P.O. Box 7500, Crescent City, CA 95532*
- *Kijana Tashiri Askari (s/n M. Harrison) H-54077, D3-123 (SHU), P.O. Box 7500, Crescent City, CA 95532*
- *Yafeu I-Yapo (s/n L. Alexander) B-72288, D3-119 (SHU), P.O. Box 7500, Crescent City, CA 95532*
- *Abasi Ganda (s/n E. Jackson) C-33559, D2-107 (SHU), P.O. Box 7500, Crescent City, CA 95532;*
- *Dadisi Yero (s/n L. Benton) B-85066, D1-101 (SHU), P.O. Box 7500, Crescent City, CA 95532*

- *Askari Joka (s/n J. Franklin) C-08543, D2-207 (SHU), P.O. Box 7500, Crescent City, CA 95532*

Response from the Bay View

We are deeply grateful to the Pelican Bay Human Rights Movement First Amendment Campaign and will do all in our power to support them in defending the First Amendment rights of us all. “The degree of civilization in a society can be judged by entering its prisons,” wrote the Russian revolutionary Fyodor Dostoyevsky, who served four years hard labor in Siberia. That truth is beginning to manifest to the U.S. public nationwide and especially in California in a recent flood of mainstream news stories critical of prison policy and practice and the politicians responsible for it.

Pelican Bay is on the wrong side of history. Its officials’ fear of the upcoming July 8 hunger strike and work stoppage, a reaction to their refusal to negotiate in good faith over the prisoners’ Five Core Demands issued two years ago, is apparent in their current violations of the laws and regulations that are supposed to govern them.

The Bay View has yet to receive any official notification from Pelican Bay State Prison saying why and from whom the March and April issues were withheld. Numerous subscribers, however, have written to say they did not receive their papers. All but one had not been issued the 1819 mail disapproval form, which is prerequisite to their filing a 602 appeal.

We want to thank those prisoners who did receive their papers for sharing them with those who did not. If any subscriber who was denied his paper is not located where he can share another subscriber’s paper, write to us and we will send a copy with the pages cited by Pelican Bay officials removed. – *Willie and Mary Ratcliff*

Prisoner cancels subscription for fear of retaliation

The following letter was written April 10 by a prisoner whose name must be withheld:

“I am a subscriber to your publication and have been for approximately eight years and it truly pains me to have to write this correspondence to you at this time to ask that you remove me from your subscriber list and no longer ship your publication to me due to the prison’s view of your publication.

“While I truly enjoy your publication, it would prove to be detrimental to me to continue to receive your publication. It is my hope and sincere prayer that the prison would change its view towards your publication.

“For me, your publication has been very informative and educational and it has helped me become a better person. I truly do not understand the position of the prison.

“I am aging and cannot deal with any potential fallout as a result of my receiving your publication. It is very sad that men are not allowed to educate themselves.

“I suffer from mental health conditions that would be exacerbated by being a target of the prison’s affection as a result of my receiving your publication. I just learned of the potential problem today while reading someone else’s March edition.

“I hope to someday be able to once again enjoy your publication. Just know that it is with great regret that I make this decision. As I have stated above, I am aging and my mental health is not good. I must protect myself from harm.

“I am also a grandfather with a desire to see and hold my grandchild who was born in July of last year. I have not seen her in person and I wish to transfer down south where I can visit, so I am putting my family desires ahead of everything at this time.

“I would like to close by thanking you for educating me and being a source of comfort through many lonely years. May you have continued success. God bless you and your entire staff.”

[Inmate slavery and the prison industrial complex: Resilience vs. docility](#)

April 3, 2013

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by Sara Maria Acevedo

I. Against ritualistic abuse: An introduction

Prisoner interracial and political solidarity

The much-publicized brutality and inhumane conditions suffered by prisoners in solitary confinement worldwide has once again sparked global debates on the unprecedented urgency of prison abolition and, by default, on the implementation of community-led restorative justice programs. Over the past two to three decades, the global penal system has turned increasingly roughshod and its practices have grown greatly abusive.



Drawing by a prisoner in the Pelican Bay State Prison Security Housing Unit (SHU) U.S. prison abolitionist groups, integrated largely by prisoners' families and inside-outside solidarity-advocacy networks such as the California Coalition for Women Prisoners, the Ohio Prisoner Hunger Strike Solidarity Coalition, and the Pennsylvania-based prison-activist organization Human Rights Coalition, have massively circulated evidence showing that female and male inmates in federal and state prisons are being subjected to the uttermost degrading treatment.

Evidence of abuse and extreme cruelty has been compiled and made public by prison solidarity groups on the outside through the circulation of correspondence, poems, drawings, medical and legal records, and collectively produced political documents containing riveting accounts by prisoners of the many forms of torture inflicted on them in maximum and medium security facilities, such as the supermax Ohio State Penitentiary (OSP) in Youngstown and Pelican Bay State Prison (PBSP) and San Quentin State Prison (SQSP) in Northern California.

Recent developments in cross-race solidarity movements within prisons have attracted alternative media coverage worldwide, thus giving prisoners a forceful voice. In cooperation with inside-outside advocacy networks, U.S. prison coalition movements have inspired political demonstrations throughout the world.

Using mass hunger strikes and other forms of protest, victimized inmates have further risked their physical and psychological integrity to deliver a message of resistance by means of mutual aid and cooperation. A leading example of unprecedented interracial and political solidarity – occurring simultaneously in approximately 17 of the 33 prisons in the U.S. – is the one launched by the PBSP-SHU Short Corridor Collective. This exceptionally well-organized initiative was recently solidified by a cease-interracial-violence consented resolution.

Two three-week hunger strikes in 2011 succeeded in raising local and international awareness about the psychological and physical ritualistic abuse experienced by prisoners in penitentiary facilities across the United States. The first hunger strike was launched in July and the second in September of 2011 with approximately 400 men refusing meals. Gradually, more than 12,000 inmates in prisons across the state joined in solidarity with Pelican Bay strikers.

Sentenced to life for second-degree murder in 1992 while serving a six-year sentence for burglary at Folsom State Prison, strike leader Todd Ashker has been housed at PBSP under strict solitary confinement for the past 26 years. Outrageous retaliation followed the non-violent hunger strikes and prison officials proceeded to install a plexiglass wall in Ashker's 8-foot by 10-foot cell thus cutting him from all possible communication with other inmates. Ashker spends 23 hours in his cell and his visitation rights are limited to two "no contact" visits per month (Paul Elias, Associated Press, December 2012).

Although stimulating and hope-filled – given the dehumanizing conditions under which he has been kept and the kind of mass solidarity networks he has helped create – Ashker's is but one among the many stories of cruelty and abuse that have come to light in the last decade. Hopefully, Ashker's resilient struggle to bring prisoners together across racial divides acts as an eye-opener to the racialized logic of the U.S. penal system. Put differently, the criminal justice system indulges in practices specifically engineered to break potential bonds of solidarity among prisoners by pitting them against each other. These fragmentation strategies take many forms.

Forcing prisoners to inform on other gang members is one of the tactics. "Snitching" does not grant prisoners any benefits; rather, it prevents further torture or ill-treatment in the future. Indefinite solitary confinement is intended to break possibly "dangerous" bonds among inmates. Prisoners who have been labeled "the worst of the worst," such as Todd Ashker, are kept in strict solitary confinement allegedly to prevent gang-related activity.

Recent reports reveal new abhorrent practices taking place in several prisons across the country. According to [Aviva Shen \(2012\)](#), "A group of current and former inmates filed a law suit against the St. Louis city workhouse, claiming guards forced them to fight each other in gladiator-style combat. The class-action suit claims guards took away inmates' food and privileges and attacked them if they refused to fight. The 'Workhouse Gladiators' say they were also denied medical care for the serious injuries resulting from the fights, which included a broken jaw."

Recent solidarity-related activity proves that prison officials have felt increasingly intimidated by the level of positive solidarity among prisoners. Such bonds have led to unprecedented collective action against ill treatment in several prisons across the world. Especial attention should thus be given to the immense potential for cooperation and increased resilience of prisoners acting in cohesion against an inhumane procedural justice system.

In broad strokes, the emergence of interracial solidarity as a political force can be traced back to the early 1990s. The launching of this solid interracial solidarity movement, which was spurred by increased abuse and inhumane living conditions in prisons across the U.S. galvanized politically conscious prisoners such as the renowned Lucasville Five to take collective action against a severely biased genocidal system.

Integrated by two men affiliated with the Aryan Brotherhood racist prison gang and three African American men – all on Death Row – the Lucasville 11-day uprising resulted in an automatic death sentence for all five men. Following their conviction, the five men were transferred to the Ohio State Penitentiary supermax in 1998. Inmates on Death Row in OSP live in restricted solitary confinement awaiting execution while their cases are appealed (Williams 1992; Lynd 2004).

II. A politics of death in the era of privatized punishment: The prison industrial complex

It is by narrating the horror stories of modern society's most vicious institution, the prison system, that one can begin to understand the kind of epic resilience, interracial solidarity and cooperation taking place in U.S. penitentiary facilities today. What has led the penal system to turn so obscenely cruel? What are the real social and economic causes impinging on the basic human liberties of prisoners? What has led us, as a society, to turn a blind eye on each other's suffering? What is it that has made us so arrogantly passive; so acutely indifferent?

A productive and humane answer to these questions arises from a close examination of the capitalist world system and its role in the production of bodily technologies seeking to morph human anatomies into codifiable machines. Put simply, in the wake of the global capitalist crisis, tremendous efforts have been invested into seeking new sources of brute workforce. Not incidentally, the world's penal system has witnessed the disproportionate growth of inmate population. In the United States, inmate population increase is most revealing in women's prisons, where, from 1977 to 2004, the number of women in state and federal prisons increased by [757 percent](#).

Given the highly punitive orientation of our criminal justice system today, we find that more and more state penitentiaries are being built in the United States each year. According to Tom R. Tyler (2006), "America could perhaps best be characterized as a highly 'punitive' society. The focus of public attention has been on the need to punish rule-breakers, and support has been high for harsh punishments, including the death penalty and life in prison" (p. 307).

It goes without saying that under an industrialized criminal system of this nature, the rapidly proliferating construction of correctional facilities proceeds and the need to populate them with new slave-laborers comes second. A genuinely simple idea or question underlines the complexities of “criminality” in the age of thanatopolitics (the politics of death in the age of capital): What makes a criminal? The answer is equally simple: The market makes the criminal.

At this point, it becomes clear that some would enquire about the technicalities of conviction. Although convictions may not always be staged and convicts are not always innocent, any crime committed in the last 500 years is very likely to have sprung from capitalist-led oppression: extreme poverty, gendered or classed inequity, racial violence, discrimination, segregation, ableism, poor health care, malnutrition, land expropriation, state neglect and acute abuse, among others.

Let us not be fooled, for under capitalist rule, prisons are yet another profitable market; and to keep the market afloat, new laborers must be brought on board – at any cost. Prisoners are indeed low-wage slave laborers whose identities have been deprived of all humanity and whose bodies have been turned into monster-machines. In reproducing a gothic inspired image of modern prisons using the monster/machine duality, I show the psychological and physical transformation intended for individuals “recruited” by the penal system today.

This process is twofold. First, criminalization agendas are set in motion by the different social and cultural institutions deploying nationalist discourses that legitimize exclusionary policies. For instance, as scholar and activist David Graeber (2009) argues, the so-called “war on drugs” has been widely used as a criminalizing strategy and has resulted in mass incarceration over the past decade (p. 349).

More disturbing is the fact that mainstream society rarely questions this kind of pantomime – much in the same way that society rarely questions racial profiling leading to wrongful convictions. Racial hatred leading to the massive wrongful conviction of African Americans and Latinos in the United States reproduces what Angela Davis (2003) describes as “the historical resonances of slavery, colonization, and genocide [that] should not be missed in these proliferating images of [prisoners of color] in chains and shackles.” (p. 77)

Second, once recruits, individuals are subjected to emotionally degrading interventions, and attired with what feminist and prisoner abolitionist Angela Davis calls “repressive paraphernalia.” These processes are engineered to deprive persons of any trace of personal identity or dignity. Let us consider for instance that male prisoners commonly have their heads shaved; according to the European Court of Human Rights (2007), “Shaving is in principle an act which may have the effect of diminishing their human dignity or may arouse in them feelings of inferiority capable of humiliating and debasing them” (p. 211).

In addition, inmates are robbed of all possessions – including emotionally charged items such as photographs, as well as personal items such as clothing; they are thus

forced to wear matching bright-colored uniforms that identify them not as human beings with rights, but as criminal “others” deprived of all judicial protections. (Orange is the color of choice in many U.S. penitentiaries). In this sense, modern day prisons mirror state of exception provisions, in which constitutional rights are indefinitely suspended, and subjects must exist under the unlawful status of non-citizenship (Agamben, 1998; 2005).

III. Beyond docility: Punishment and resilience

It is of particular interest to me that the one method supposed to inflict the most torturous kind of emotional punishment – that of identity erasure – re-emerges for modern prisoners as a locus of identification. This improved sense of shared personhood awakens an instinct for mutual protection which is in turn further galvanized by a feeling of unity.

Indeed, and certainly unwillingly, an essentially punitive prison system has revamped the politics of mutual recognition among racialized, gendered and functional “others.” In like manner, the experience of shared oppression has sprung a sentiment of mutual validation and fired up an inherent will for association and collective organizing across state-sponsored divisions.

Finally, increased punitive practices in prisons in tandem with ever-narrowing onsite rehabilitation and correctional programs – whose successful completion will often lead to a reduction in sentence – has gradually activated a “survival mode” feeling among prisoners who are now starting to become increasingly aware of the correlation between extreme cruelty and their power of assembly. Overcrowding, “gladiator warrior” combat and “snitch or torture” are all strategies specifically designed to break prisoners’ will of association and/or to decrease inmates’ numbers by intentionally breeding epidemic diseases or by promoting acute violence among them.

IV. The neoliberal slave machine

Why is it that the world needs more prisons? Is it the fact that markets have been so utterly successful in their expansion that they need more people to work in confinement – “sweatshop”-style – in order to increase productivity? Or is it rather that corporations and financial elites are terrified of workers’ increased awareness and power of organized struggle?

Could it be that people of color and people with disabilities have gained increased control over their cultural histories to know that “deficiency” and “inefficiency” are socially constructed categories and that, to all legal effects, their work power is as functional as white able-bodied labor is. Is it the elite’s intense fear that this kind of knowledge and power can potentially galvanize yet another fight for fair employment rights? Imminent fear surrounding the women’s liberation movement is that powerful women, including women of color and women with disabilities, have learned the value of their bodies to enhance reproductive labor power and, by extension, the damage that their collective resistance can do to capital’s imperialistic logic.

The capitalist world system, with its ambitious expansion plans, has morphed organic human tendencies towards justice, association and mutual recognition into a material culture of extreme individuation and egocentrism. Activist anthropologist David Graeber (2009) argues that the imminent crisis of the capitalist world system has led to unduly harsh sentencing and to the disproportionate growth of inmate population – especially among women.

His argument goes deep into the murderous world of corporate capital and unveils the dangers of political-party reform as a path towards deep societal change. The anthropologist is not the first to shed light on the machinations of the Prison Industrial Complex. His perspective is nevertheless unique insofar as it can be ascertained as arising from post-direct action reflection in the form of activist ethnography.

As he notes, “more and more products in the U.S. are manufactured by convicts, and corporations who employ prison labor almost invariably also provide massive campaign contributions to political candidates in favor of maintaining harsh sentencing guidelines” (Graeber, 2009, p. 439).

Having briefly discussed inmate population increase among women, exhibiting explosive growth rates, my intention is to further expand on this topic in a future article. In the era of women-led community regeneration, especially organized by women of color, the neoliberal apparatus feels empowered to destroy association and solidarity by harshening sentencing and constructing new cultural, ethnic, functional, racial, gendered and sexualized pathologies. Women are turning increasingly dangerous to the system; their wombs need to be policed, their bodies brutalized and their identities erased by means of mass incarceration.

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