

PROPOSALS

A NORTH CAROLINA PRISONER NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 3 | MAY - JUNE 2011



INTRODUCTIONS



Large anti-cop demonstration in Seattle, WA, March 2011

WE ARE EXCITED TO PRESENT to you the third issue of *Proposals*, a publication that aims to provide a space for critical dialogue, discussion, and news relevant to prisoners in North Carolina. Your responses have been enthusiastic about this project to say the least, as prisoners' letters asking to be added to our mailing list continue to pour in. We are happy to say that submissions and letters to the editor have also increased, prompting us to add a "letters to the editor" section to the publication. We hope this section can prove a useful place for people to respond to and debate the news and analysis presented in these pages.

It continues to be an intense time full of feverish activity on the outside. The massive rebellions which struck Tunisia and Egypt when we last went to print have now spread to Libya, Bahrain, Syria, Yemen, and other areas of North Africa

and the Middle East. It is unclear how these rebellions will proceed, but while critical of the US' involvement in Libya and the role of politicians and "opposition leaders" in recuperating these struggles, we remain steadfastly supportive of the popular roots of these rebellions. The strength and power of these uprisings lies not in the political machinations of wanna-be politicians or in appeals to "democracy," but in the riots, street blockades, strikes, and neighborhood councils of everyday people.

The rebellious air has spread to England as well, which recently experienced a series of historic riots around cuts to public spending. This was initially sparked by a large student riot that ultimately occupied and damaged a Tory headquarters. Then, on March 26th in London, a 500,000 person trade union march against government austerity mea-

sures turned violent, as masked demonstrators attacked police and luxury shops, eventually occupying Trafalgar Square and causing over \$4 million in economic damage. Several weeks later, in response to the eviction of an anarchist squat, the entire neighborhood of Stokes Croft in Bristol erupted into streetfighting with police. Large numbers of British youth are confronting the realities and miseries of 21st century capitalism, and anarchist struggle has been thrust back into the spotlight as an alternative to the bankrupt reformism of the Labour Party and trade unions.

Related tensions have surfaced in Wisconsin as in the UK, where thousands of angry workers and students took over the Capitol building after lawmakers finally passed a bill that would effectively eliminate public employees' unions. This energy has also spread to the

WHERE DA' LADIES AT?

As more and more people ask to be added to our mailing list, we wanted to take this opportunity to particularly invite the thousands of prisoners in women's facilities across North Carolina to participate in this publication.

Despite the fact that women's prison populations have grown tremendously over the past few years, the struggles of women behind bars are often overlooked or completely ignored. Inspiring histories of events like the Black August

rebellion or North Carolina's own rebellion at the Women's Correctional Center in 1975 remain absent from our collective consciousness. This perpetuates a sense of isolation, as well as the illusion that the struggle against prison is somehow a "male" struggle, when this is hardly the case.

To combat this trend, we want to invite women from the many faci-

ties in NC to submit news, analysis, personal accounts, or reportbacks of their own struggles, to be printed in future issues.

In total solidarity,
Proposals editing crew



To be added to or removed from the mailing list, or to submit materials for future issues, write to us at:



North Carolina Prisoner Legal Services
PO Box 25397 Raleigh, NC 27611

NCPLS is a private non-profit that helps North Carolina prisoners litigate their cases post-conviction, provides general information about legal rights to prisoners, and helps prisoners press civil suits under cases of abuse and rights violations.



National Lawyers' Guild
132 Nassau St., Ste. 922
New York, NY 10038

A national organization of progressive and radical lawyers active around a wide range of issues which affect prisoners. Their closest chapter is in Birmingham. They publish an excellent Jailhouse Lawyer handbook, which can be requested for free from their national office at the above address.



Support for Kids of Incarcerated Parents (SKIP)
115-A South Walnut Circle
Greensboro, NC 27409

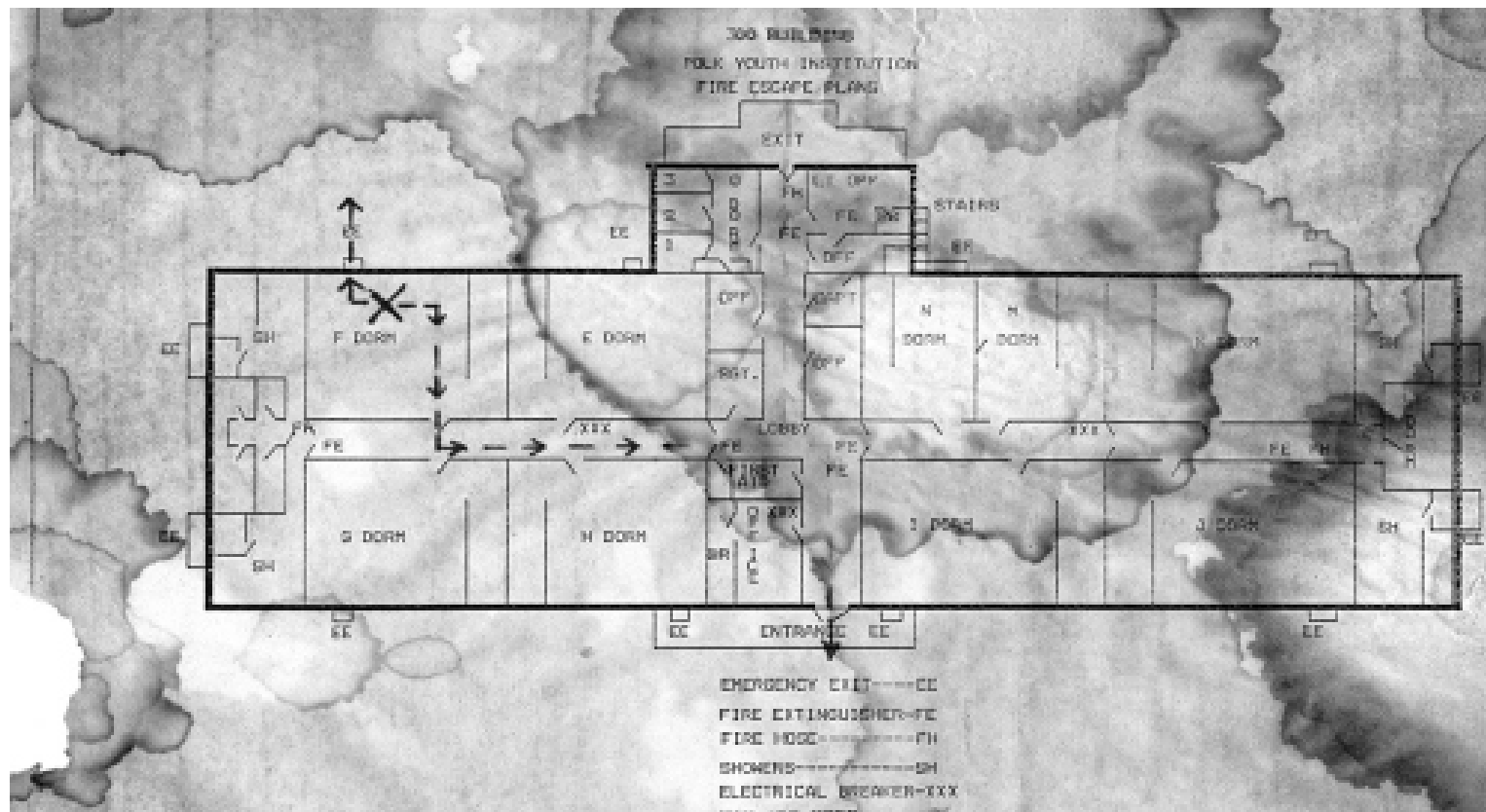
Provides in-school support groups for children of incarcerated parents, where kids can talk with others who have parents in prison, and can form or strengthen a relationship with that incarcerated parent through weekly letter-writing.



Chapel Hill Prison Books Collective
405 W. Franklin St. Chapel Hill, NC 27516

The prison books collective sends thousands of books of all kinds to prisoners by request, publishes prisoners' writing, and maintains a large collection of radical literature on topics ranging from popular history, feminism, and black power to anarchist theory and writings by political prisoners. Multiple copies can be requested for study groups, etc.

Proposals
PO Box 325
Chapel Hill, NC
27514



side for help, for medical attention, but they wouldn't open the gate for anything. They had orders.

We rioted until about 4am, and it spread throughout the whole prison. We took over the PA system and we were making announcements over the intercom to all the blocks telling them to burn the place down, tear it up, and "fuck the police." I heard that maybe a guard got beat down on another block and prisoners had captured the keys and were running around in police raincoats. I even heard that they tore a hole in a wall that separated two blocks, and busted up the plumbing in other buildings. In A-block we fought each other, looted each others' lockers, and tore the block to pieces.

Around 5am, the PERT [Prison Emergency Response Team] arrived. We saw them lining up in formations outside our windows. They were like a paramilitary group, dressed in all black or navy blue and heavily armed and equipped. They looked like the same type of outfit that is assembled to break up demonstrations and protests in outside society. They were organized, prepared, and briefed.

What I didn't know then is that PERT is a paramilitary group.

They train in preparation for quelling riots and insurrections, handling work stoppages, hostage situations, and so forth. Anyone who is a member of PERT is always on call. When the alert goes out, it goes out to all PERT members throughout the state. They receive their instructions and convene in units to pre-established locations to be full briefed on the emergency situation. Then when they arrive at the prison they arrive with the force of numbers and equipment.

If there was anything I learned from that riot at Polk, it was that these people are well-organized and can easily crush a rebellion if it isn't very well-planned and coordinated.

When they came through the gate on A-block, their presence alone instilled terror and restored order. I remember seeing 50 guards in full body armor lined up at the gate of A-block. The lead man had a tear gas gun. I didn't know what it was at the time, I thought it was a bazooka! They had gas masks on and the whole nine. I thought they were going to kill us.

But they barked orders that nobody disobeyed, and made us all line up against the wall face first,

and sit on our knees. They told us not to talk, not to move, not to turn our head to the side. And as a handful of them kept us like this, the rest of the guards from that unit went through the block and threw away everything. If you had personal property laying out, shoes, whatever, they threw it away. They stripped all the remaining mattresses bare and when everything was cleaned up, they called our names on at a time according to the bunk we were assigned and sent us to our bunk. It was freezing cold because we had busted out all the windows and tore up the heating system, and there were no sheets on the beds. Some people were in their boxers.

At about 9am order was fully restored, but PERT was still there. They prepared pack-outs for breakfast and pulled up buses to begin shipping people out. There were over 700 prisoners at Polk and the cap was supposed to be 335.

The media was out there, and they didn't want us talking to the media. So some people gagged us with tape over our mouths as we were escorted from the prison. It's crazy how my memory would be jarred almost ten years later by seeing similar images from Guantanamo Bay.

Northwestern US, where the last few months have seen a massive upsurge in anti-police activity following the police murder of an elderly Native man in Seattle. There have been large marches, street blockades, banner drops, and attacks on banks and police stations on a weekly if not daily basis in several cities in Washington State. Thanks in part to the energy and initiative of various anarchist groups, this activity has largely surpassed the usual reformist rhetoric of "police accountability" to take on a more radical perspective.

Closer to home, several of the 2010 MayDay arrestees who were facing trial this past month had their trial delayed due to the beginning of an SBI investigation into the disappearance of nearly \$20,000 worth of drugs from the Asheville Police Department's evidence room. Soon after the scandal broke, the Police Chief announced his early retirement. Though having to wait even longer for trial will be emotionally difficult for the defendants, the outcomes of the investigation could have broad political and legal implications for

the Asheville Police Department.

In part due to the busy state of affairs out here, we've decided to transition to publishing *Proposals* every other month rather than on a monthly basis. It's our hope that this will allow us more time to correspond with everyone regarding possible submissions, and will enable us to compile more content in general.

Also, as per several readers' suggestions, we want to explore the idea of focusing subsequent issues on specific themes. You'll notice this issue has several pieces that explore the necessity and difficulties of creating *prisoner unity*. For the next issue, we'd like to encourage readers to discuss amongst their own study groups and comrades the theme of *gender and resistance* for the July issue, so that dialogue can be sparked from several directions on that topic. Possible questions could include, How does gender affect the way we rebel against prisons, on both sides of the wall? How do assumptions about gender and violence relate to the way the public views prison re-

bellion? Why are women's prison rebellions so often ignored or downplayed in the media? On the outside, how does gender affect our relation to policing and the State?

Of course, as always, prisoners are encouraged to submit report backs, analysis, and news on anything relevant to their own struggles on the inside, to be printed in the fourth issue. Please keep letters to the editor under 250 words, and please remember to submit the group or individual name you wish the piece to be published under. As always, we will respect people's anonymity. If you don't immediately see your submission in print, it may still make it in a subsequent issue. We do our best to respond to every letter we receive, but please be patient.

It is our hope that this editing and publishing process can be part of a continuing dialogue between rebels and comrades on both sides of the walls. To that end, here is the third issue of this ongoing experiment.

In total solidarity,
Proposals editing crew



Anarchists attack a bank during a massive anti-austerity demonstration in London, April 2011

Themes for Different Issues

I just finished reading your first issue, which another prisoner allowed me to read. Interesting.

You request submissions – may I offer some advice? Try to start a dialogue by requesting some submissions on a specific issue within/without the prison system or regarding a government policy. Add your own opinions, us prisoners will add ours, and we can all develop our thoughts, ideas, etc. on a specific issue, then move on to the next once we start becoming redundant or going in circles, possibly returning to an issue at a later time.

I do not claim to be a “convict,” since I see that as a sort of religion. To claim/own that title requires adherence to a set of ideals and trained responses. I am for the people though, no doubt—anyone who knows me knows that—but I see every incident/situation as unique, requiring tailored responses. And I say “response” not “reaction.”

To me, a response requires clarity of mind and entails a logical thought process to make an informed, calculated decision based on facts and possibly requiring risk.

A reaction to me is emotionally based and, though not necessarily wrong in and of itself, the risk of making a mistake which could cause a collapse of previously built efforts or future gains is much higher.

I guess this letter has turned into a submission for *Proposals* and you may use it for that purpose. I may ask that you keep me anonymous because of the threat factor.

I am not afraid of retaliation, but I want to at least have the option of turning it into a tool to further my/our cause, which if I understand correctly, transcends all others—to love each other and all/make way for the freedom to do so. I believe that is the root, and other causes flow from it; i.e. prisoner rights, unity, freedom from government/prison oppression, etc. Am I correct?

It'll be interesting to be a participant in this movement from this

beginning, and I guess that I will be involved and contribute when possible in whatever manner possible. Please accept my pledge to the cause, as I understand it. May we grow with the blessing and guidance of god.

Sincerely,
A friend from Central

A Little at a Time

One of the brothers here at H-Con (Super-Max) let me see the first issue of *Proposals*. I wish to first thank you and commend you for providing a voice for NC prisoners. Thank you!

Secondly, I think a word of caution is warranted in that you may want to consider the wording of the letters published. I do not advocate censorship, but if the DOC reads material they feel promotes violence, insurrection, riots, etc. they will ban this publication. Having an outlet for our voices does us no good if we can't receive it. Please print my letter in the next issue if you can.

I have been in this system for 17-plus years now and want to share a few observations I've made concerning the state we currently find ourselves in.

Many times I've heard fellow prisoners state the conclusion that “the prisoners [in this state] are weak as hell.” I do not believe that we, as prisoners, are any “weaker” than prisoners in any of the other “hard” prisons in other states. I think the major reason NC prisoners lack unity is due in a large part to how the DOC transfers us from prison to prison on such a frequent basis.

If you go to some other state to do time, you spend near your entire bid at one prison. In such an environment those prisoners spend years together and form bonds, friendships, and almost familial ties. These relationships form a solid cross-cultural foundation for strength and unity. They stand with and for each other in a common cause.

We lack that mindset in this state. We form no strong relationships. Our general mindset is:

“Screw that dude! I don't know him! He ain't my race, religion, gang, set, etc. The police ain't doin' nothing to me, what do I care what they do to him?!” This is where we fail ourselves and each other. This is why we seem weak. Somehow we need to find a solution to our lack of unity. We all know the problem, but let's hear some constructive solutions. The police have taken and continue to take more and more from us and our lack of unity allows it to happen.

And no, it's not a new problem. And if you think all of those police are stupid, you need to think again. They know what the hell they're doing. I'll give you a short illustration.

Up until 1994-95 we were allowed to purchase real “boombox” style radios in the canteens. They took those. We could buy walkman-style radios, so not many raised hell over losing their radios and those few that did went to lock-up. That was the start, but then:

- 1996** - No smoking on lock-up
- 1997** - No more food from home at Christmas
- 1998** - No more shoes from the street
- 1999** - No more TV and canteen food on lock-up
- 2000** - No more breakfast meats on lock-up
- 2000** - No more watches and jewelry from the street
- 2001** - No more nude photos/magazines
- 2000-2001** - All prisons go cash-free
- 2009** - No more microwaves in Close Custody Canteens or cell blocks
- 2010** - No more free weights in Close Custody
- 2010** - No more tobacco in prisons

There are probably many more things that can be added and all of my dates may not be correct, but they're close enough to see what they did; one “small” thing at a time was taken every year or so. If anyone or a few raised hell...straight to lock-up. Let everyone calm down a year or

Bringing in the New Year: The Polk Youth Center Riot of 1993

The following is the first personal account by a prisoner to be published about the riot that occurred on New Year's Eve at the Polk Youth Center in Raleigh. That facility had the worst conditions of any prison in the State; prisoner-on-prisoner violence was extreme and the prison regularly held more than double its intended capacity. In an article published in May 1993, the News and Observer declared that “the Polk Youth Institution has been a sorry link in the state prison system for decades.” Politicians had promised to close the facility as early as 1974, with no action taken. Just months after the riot, however, NC legislators finally decided to close the facility, which was officially replaced in 1997 by the Polk Correctional Institution in Butner.

I was at Polk Youth Center during the riot on New Year's Eve 1993. Me and a few guys were standing around smoking cigars and talking while anticipating the New Year. It had to be around 10pm, and lights out was usually at 11pm. But since it was New Year's everybody was anticipating that we would be permitted to stay up until the new year arrived, and for the most part everybody was in good spirits and a generous mood. Back then we still had our own sneakers and jewelry, and we were allowed to get Christmas packages from the street. So everybody had homemade food, cigarettes, and cigars, and it was a pretty festive atmosphere.

I was on A-Block when the riot jumped off. The sergeant came on our block and he told everybody to get on their assigned bunk. Polk was dormitory-styled with 3-high bunks and there were over 100 prisoners in A-Block alone. We got on our bunks and focused our attention on the sergeant. He walked through the block with an air of authority and he said that lights-out would be

early that night and that nobody was to get off their bunks. We were kind of surprised because we hadn't done anything wrong, so somebody said, “Why can't we stay up to 11:00?” And he gave a response that was something like, “Because I said so.” You could hear people sucking their teeth and muttering under their breath because nobody was feeling it.

At just about that time, somebody yelled out, “Boot Call!” And while the sergeant was walking one way somebody threw a boot at him from behind. When he turned around to try and locate who had thrown the boot, somebody else threw a boot from another direction. Before you knew it boots were flying everywhere and the sergeant took off running out the block, and locked the gate.

For a minute everybody just sat there on our bunks waiting to see what would happen next. But in the next moment we heard and saw commotion over in B-Block. It was pitch black over there, because they

had busted out all the lights, and the next thing you know the picnic table came crashing against the bars on B-Block, and then the TV. We knew they were rioting, and when we saw there was no immediate response by the guards other than to lock the gate, somebody yelled “Bust out the lights!” Boots began flying again until all the lights were knocked out, and then the rioting began.

We didn't even have a cause, other than the fact that we were in prison and we just all had pent-up anger and aggression. We began to tear A-block to pieces! We busted out all the windows, tore down the heating system, broke some of the toilets, turned over the bunks, set fires to mattresses and sheets and looted peoples' lockers. Of course there was violence. Some people got hurt really bad, but it was all prisoner-on-prisoner. And the guards wouldn't come in to help. I saw a guy bleeding profusely with his face cut up and another beaten til he was unconscious. They grabbed onto the bars and begged the guards on the other



Polk Youth Center after its closure in 1997.

ANALYSIS

On the Importance of Unity

UNITY: THE MERGING of separate identities to become one seamless being, one body with the same overall purpose, the objective to succeed.

In order to be successful each and every fragment of this party, of this body, has to play their position, do their part with the understanding that regardless how minor or major that part may be it is just as essential as the others.

Look at your body, it is a commonly used example of unity. It is composed of various parts that all work together to perform their duties and succeed in accomplishing their desired effect.

Now think about how vital the head is compared to the lowly knee. What if the head were not unified with the knee, what if they did not like each other? They would disrupt the unity of the body and adversely affect every other part whether they liked it or not.

Imagine the knee being stubborn and refusing to bend just to spite the head. The shin, ankle, foot, and toes would all be rendered innocent bystanders caught in the struggle. Or what if the knee bent but the head refused to direct it because the knee got on its nerves?

The head houses the brain, which controls every part of the body. Without it the body could not function. Without the knee it could but the road to success would be harder because other parts would have to undertake the load that the knee normally carried, along with their own duties, which would prevent them from doing what they do best. The hand would have to carry the cane, operate the crutches or wheel the wheel chair. The back would have to support the extra weight, the brain would have to fo-

cus on ensuring the balance that the knee would normally have given. So the head must respect the knee.

And likewise the knee respects the head because it gives it a sense of direction, guides it to where it needs to be always conscious of its safety. So in this party (B.H.G.), in this body, every individual must respect each other because if you do not recognize the importance of their position then you are indirectly disrespecting yourself. You are preventing yourself from reaching your full potential because you are too busy wondering, questioning, paying attention to what the next man is doing. Do you think the hand cares about what the foot is doing? No, because he has confidence that the foot is doing his part not matter how minor it may seem to the hand.

Like a single body, we can be unified by our circumstances, by our past. We can be unified by the love and hate we have for the same things..

Think of a pack of wolves, they hunt as one for food knowing that their life is in the hands of their

fellow members. Once they surround their prey, no matter how large or fierce it may be, the wolves know that together they can take it down. Together, as one, we can take it

down, any obstacle that stands before us can be taken down.

Genesis 11:6 speaks of the Tower of Babel and how god himself saw the importance, the power of unity. As one the people had the ability to do whatever their collective hearts desired. And what did god do? He created confusion and separated them, not because of their

unity in itself but because of how they were planning to use the power created by that unity.

Marcus Garvey said, "The greatest weapon used against our people was disorganization." That is why unity is so important. Instead of looking at your brother searching for his differences look for ev-

We have to get past these differences and not look back but continue to look forward, so once we get released, we do not revert to our past but instead grow in the unity we've created.

erything you have in common. Look for what unifies you. Bond, mold, hold together, don't look at the color, look at the fact that you

have a color! If not, then look at your class, your conditions, for something that unifies us all.

We already do this on a smaller scale. Think of your city, and how different parts beef with each other. The whole Southside bonds against the North, creating two united fronts. But when they get locked up on State, ain't no North or Southside, they put their minor beef to the side to unite for a greater cause, it's their whole city now. Take it a step further and look at the feds. It's not the city any more, it's the state and sometimes the entire region. We take our common factor and unite.

So why can't we take it one step further and unite as a class? The entire working class. But no, once free we break all the way back down to the neighborhood, North vs. South. We have to get past these differences and not look back but continue to look forward, so once we get released, physically and/or mentally, we do not revert to our past but instead grow in the unity we've created.

That is of utmost importance because then and only then will we succeed.

La Premiere Liberte,
Black Heart Guerrillas
Raleigh, NC

so, transfer any instigators around to other prisons and then take another "small" thing.

No, they are not stupid. If they had taken all of that at one time they knew they'd have hell to pay. So they played our asses a little at a time.

There's more on the way in the near future. What are we doing to do about it? We piss and moan about other states having hot plates in their cells, TVs in their cells, personal computers, ice chests in their cells, being able to spend \$50 or \$100 at a time in the canteen, having numerous religious rights/ceremonies, care packages from home, etc...Hell, we couldn't keep what we had, why should we think NC will give us anything more?!

We had better wake up and get our act together. Put aside our differences and start promoting unity. What happens to one happens to all!

Finally, let's not ruin this outlet we have in this newsletter. Be smart about what you write!

Butner, NC

Fight Censorship

As a member of the New African Black Panther Party, I'm writing you this letter in unity and solidarity as fellow revolutionaries, conscious of the larger issues regarding the US prison system and suppression of prisoners' human and democratic civil rights. I hope that the *Proposals* writing/administrative staff will be willing to show a display of revolutionary solidarity by working together to address the wrong done to your organization and prisoners' 1st and 14th amendment rights via the Publication Review Committee's inappropriate rejection of the first issue of *Proposals*. Hopefully, after reading this letter NC prisoners will choose to challenge the wrongful rejection of this newsletter, and can count on your support in doing so.

When reviewing the reasons for rejection, it seems that the publication was censored for violating Chapter D section .0100, as

it "depicts, describes, or advocates violence, disorder, insurrection, or terrorist/gang activities against... the government or any of its institutions."

The Publication Review Committee has failed to actually state that the newsletter did in fact "depict, describe, or advocate violence, disorder, etc." as alleged, or display factual grounds to support the reasoning behind this censorship. This shows that the disapproval of the newsletter was done for subjective reasons and was of course an exaggerated response to prison concerns. This can easily be recognized by any lay person when reviewing the disapproved newsletter.

That the Publication Review Committee erred is the most that can be said about the comments on the page 8 in question. The description of the DOC/DOP as "Department of Cowards" and "Division of Pigs" could be disapproved of by DOC/DOP officials, but to go so far as rejecting the publication for this description violates the Turner reasonable relationship standards and falls short of furthering any penological interests of security, order, or rehabilitation.

It is because of the value of the *Proposals* newsletter as a medium to connect prisoners with each other

and the outside world that prisoners have decided to fight the wrongful rejection of the publication through the courts. North Carolina's prison class is very much in need of an opportunity to voice the struggles prisoners in this state have to live through, and *Proposals* offers prisoners that voice. To not challenge the newsletter's disapproval would be aiding our own oppression inside this modernized slave system.

Give NC prisoners a heads up on the lawsuit other prisoners are planning to file. In order for possible prisoner-plaintiffs to be eligible to be added to this lawsuit, they will have to have had the newsletter disapproved and have exhausted all possible grievance procedures. This suit will be filed for injunctive relief against the wrongful rejection of the newsletter. In addition it should be known that any prisoner who opts to become a plaintiff will not to have to pay the \$350 filing fee, as this will be handled by the prisoner plaintiff who initiates the lawsuit originally.

Also please print any information of relevance to this lawsuit throughout the year in future issues.

Uhuru Sasa! (Freedom Now!)
Laurinburg, NC



NEWS

Migrants Protest Detention

SYDNEY - Asylum seekers have torched nine buildings at a detention center in Sydney, Australia in a night of wild riots. The riots kicked off late on Wednesday, April 20th, at the Villawood Detention Centre with an estimated 100 detainees involved at the height of the drama.

Protesters set an oxygen cylinder alight, which led to an explosion, and nine buildings, including a medical center and dining hall, were gutted by fire. Firefighters brought the blaze under control early on Thursday and no one was injured.

Around 400 people are held at Villawood. Many of them are asylum seekers, but the facility also houses people who have overstayed their visas.

The protest started with just two inmates, apparently upset at the immigration department denying their applications for visas to remain in Australia.

Australia has a policy of mandatory detention for asylum seekers while their claims are processed, and generally holds detainees on remote Christmas Island in the Indian Ocean.

Last month the Christmas Island facility endured days of riots, with about 250 inmates setting fire to accommodation tents and hurling makeshift explosives at police, prompting them to respond with tear gas.

Prisoners Rebel in Lebanon

BEIRUT - Prisoners demanding amnesty and better conditions rioted and set fire to bedding in Lebanon's notorious main prison of Rumieh on Saturday, April 2nd, the interior ministry said in a statement.

"Riots have been going on for hours in the central prison of Rumieh by a number of prisoners demanding a general amnesty and better conditions of detention," the statement said.

A security official said that prisoners at the jail some eight miles northeast of Beirut set fire to mattresses and broke doors and windows in one building in the compound.

Security reinforcements were sent to Rumieh as negotiations began with the inmates, the same source said.

The interior ministry said it had been working to improve conditions at the facility for the past two years and urged other ministries and the cabinet to follow suit by speeding up the trials process and providing finance.

Poor conditions in prisons and a slow judicial process have sparked several riots in Lebanon's prisons down the years. Some prisoners can be incarcerated for years before their cases come to court.

Rumieh was originally built to house 1,500 inmates but is today crammed with more than 4,000 men - 65 percent of the country's prison population.

Warden Cover-up Exposed

POLKTON - A former correctional officer at a maximum security prison in Anson County, NC says her boss ordered her to destroy a video that may show a staff member using ex-

cessive force during a fight with inmates.

Richard Neely, who until last week was the administrator of Lanesboro Correctional Institution, has been arrested and charged with obstructing justice for allegedly giving the order to keep the video under wraps. Neely could face up to eight months in prison if convicted on the felony charge.

Stephanie Miller, a former sergeant at the prison, said in an interview Wednesday that Neely instructed her to destroy the video footage taken in November 2009.

Miller said she had been investigating the November 2009 fight for the prison so authorities could determine whether to charge inmates with assaulting officers.

"I was instructed not to put the video in the felony file and to destroy it," Miller said Wednesday. "It was basically a cover-up of the assault. (Neely) didn't want to be investigated."

Instead, she took her information about Neely to the State Bureau of Investigation, the agency that later arrested him.

Asked about Miller's account, a representative of the state Department of Corrections confirmed that in November 2009, a group of inmates assaulted staff members at Lanesboro. Four prisoners were charged.



"So you see John, the objective conditions are *always* ripe!"

"What the state wants is to deal with everyone alone. Because when it finds them together things are much more difficult."

-from the trial statement of Greek anarchist Nikos Mazotis



An Update on the Asheville 11

CALLED "MAYDAY" and "the International Workers Day" by some and Beltane by others, May 1st is an internationally celebrated holiday. The history of resistance on this day goes back primarily to the labor movement of the late 1800's and early 1900's.

In the United States this day has seen many different incarnations and uses, from protests and celebrations to strikes and sabotage. On May 1, 2010 nearly \$20,000 worth of damage was done to store front and car windows in a gentrified tourist section of downtown Asheville. The connection between this vandalism and "May Day" is unclear. Nevertheless, the Asheville Police Department wasted no time in arresting eleven people and charging them with the damage. Picked at random, the eleven were swept off sidewalks and into waiting police vehicles. They have become the targets of egregious attempts by the Asheville Police Department to show it maintains control.

What began as ten misdemeanor charges and \$10,000 bail was quickly ratcheted up to \$65,000 bail with an additional three felonies added to every person. This coincided with the Police Chief publicly declaring the arrested individuals to be part of a vast "anti-capitalist conspiracy." Each are facing over five years in jail; a higher penalty than is often found in domestic violence cases. The arrestees were charged nearly a year ago and still have not gone to trial.

There have been some major developments in the case in the last few weeks. Five of the defendants were slated for trial on Monday April, 11th. As of right now, their trial and all jury trials in Asheville have been suspended. They will not resume until a complete audit of the Asheville Police Department's (APD) evidence room and its evidence handling procedures has been concluded.

The State Bureau of Investigation has sealed and is investigat-



Banner from an anti-prison demonstration in Asheville, December 3rd, 2010

ing the APD property room due to 397 missing tablets of Oxycodone. On Friday, April 1, an Assistant District Attorney and the defense attorney for Terry Landrum, a man facing 19 years for drug trafficking and firearms charges from 2009, went to examine the evidence. They found that two pill containers which once held \$20,000 worth of Oxycodone were empty. Once this came to light most of the charges against Landrum were dropped.

Records obtained by local news sources reveal that the APD's longtime evidence manager, Lee Smith, was placed under investigative suspension before his resignation earlier this year. Smith had been placed under investigative suspension on January 25th and resigned on February 18th, after 21 years with the department. District Attorney Ron Moore has claimed that due to Smith's resignation he had asked for a full audit of drugs, guns and money in late February.

What the APD actually conducted was a "random 10% audit" that returned results with "some areas of concern". The DA continues to claim that he was not made aware of the nature of this audit or its results. The APD Police Chief Bill Hogan claims that a random 10% audit is standard and within the guidelines for a proper investigation.

There are roughly 2,200 cases

on hold, and about 13,000 pieces of evidence inside the sealed evidence room. An unknown amount of past cases have been jeopardized due to the APD tampering or falsifying evidence. This investigation comes on the coattails of a statewide investigation into the SBI crime lab, where it was found that technicians were withholding important blood evidence from defense attorneys in numerous cases.

Recently, several defense attorneys have requested audits of their clients' evidence, including some of the attorneys representing members of the five defendants who were scheduled for trial April 11th. Their lawyers have filed a "motion to exclude physical evidence" based on the APD being unable to produce pieces of evidence it supposedly has against defendants. The investigation into this matter could delay the defendants' trial by months.

Since this story has broken in the local media, Asheville Police Chief Bill Hogan has announced his retirement. Hogan released a statement saying he was "looking forward to retirement and a new chapter in (his) life." There was no mention of the recent evidence room scandals in his announcement, though the timing and manner of his retirement point to a direct connection to recent controversies. These developments may delay the 11's trial indefinitely.



Residents attack Tesco Supermarket in Stokes Croft, April 21st, 2011

None of the correctional officers involved in the melee have been charged.

Neely, who formerly worked as the superintendent at Charlotte Correctional Center, has been charged with a single felony count of common law obstructing justice.

After turning her information over to authorities, Miller said she faced "harassment" from supervisors at the prison. She resigned her job at the prison last week.

Neely is still on the Correction Department payroll. His annual salary is \$71,846.

8 Police Injured Defending Corporate Grocery Store

BRISTOL - On the night of Thursday, April 21st, the neighborhood of Stokes Croft in Bristol, England

erupted into a night of rioting as police attempted to evict an anarchist squat.

Clashes began when lines of officers closed off Cheltenham Road, a main route into the city center, and protesters began throwing bottles at them. Eventually hundreds of neighbors joined in, smashing police vehicles, building barricades, and engaging in running street battles with the police. Eight police were injured. The disturbances continued through the evening to 4am on Friday.

The origins of the confrontation lie in objections to the opening of the new Tesco grocery store on Cheltenham Road; the shop was severely damaged in the riot. The area is close to the St Paul's area, where the first Thatcher era, inner-city riots erupted in 1980.

Reports had been received that petrol bombs were being assembled in the squat - known locally as Telepathic Heights - for, it was alleged, an attack on the Tesco

store. The force confirmed that petrol bombs had been recovered from the house and were being examined.

More than 160 officers in riot gear were involved in the operation, which began shortly after 9pm. Four people have been arrested, Avon and Somerset police said, because they posed "a real threat to the local community" in Stokes Croft.

According to Kerry McCarthy, the Labor MP for Bristol East, "It was anti-establishment protest: against capitalism and corporations, similar to what we saw in the march against the cuts in London where Starbucks and banks were targeted."

The following morning police continued to guard the severely damaged Tesco Express store.

In discussing the culture of resistance in the neighborhood, one journalist wrote, "What happened in Stokes Croft does not stand in isolation; it is framed by the civil unrest already seen across the country over the past 18 months."

REPORTBACKS

Conditions at Bertie Spark a Response

ON SATURDAY, MARCH 12TH, about two dozen comrades and supporters of the prisoners amassed outside Bertie CI in Windsor, NC, a prison facing a tense upswing in radical thought and action. They had received word that two prisoners on Solitary Confinement had recently barricaded themselves in their cells as a protest of prison conditions and repression. This "lock-in" action lasted four days, and was timed to coincide with the outside demonstration on the 12th. It also coincided with the second of two national call-in days to the prison and NC Department of Corrections.

Facing two layers of barbed wire fencing and a row of solitary confinement cells, the demonstrators banged on drums, blew whistles, screamed chants, and held up several gigantic banners reading "Against Prisons" and "Hands Off James Graham."

They managed to stay at the rural prison for over a half an hour before being warned that they were trespassing and faced arrest. Over the course of the time there, many family members exiting the prison at the end of visitation hours responded kindly and appreciatively to the action.

This demo was a small part of a larger trajectory of recent anti-prison activity in NC, including demos at the Buncombe County Jail and Central Prison in Raleigh.

On the inside, the prison administration's priority was to keep the demonstration under wraps from everyone. Usually, when a disturbance happens, the facility will be locked down. On this occasion, the administration decided to proceed as if there was no disturbance in an

effort to minimize its impact. This proved to be very difficult, however, with there being a row of solitary confinement cells facing the parking lot and prisoners thus being able to see what was happening. Word of mouth proved to be an effective tool. When people started kicking on the door and flooding others joined in and escalated the response by setting fires.

At least one prisoner was written up for his behavior, his disciplinary report alleging, "creating a riotous type protest and causing other inmates to do the same thing." Two days later, the prisoners conducting the lock-in were forcefully extracted from their cells, and later promised that many of their demands would be met.

The following is a description of the lock-in action written by one of the prisoners involved, as well as the demands they submitted to prison authorities:

"On March 10th, 2011, myself and a comrade barricaded ourselves in our rooms and refused to come out for anything. This was done in protest of the conditions here at Bertie Correctional Institution.

On March 14th, we both sent a list of demands to prison officials demanding that we not be treated like animals and slaves and that they

institute programs that address our basic human rights. Once they received the list of demands, they sent the Unit Manager, Asst. Unit Manager, Captain,

and the Intelligence Lieutenant (he deals with prisoners who are labeled as being part of a Security Threat Group) to our doors to speak to us and ask us if we had any food trays, but neither of us answered and they left. The captain summoned his lil' "goon squad," and he came to our cells again, this time accompanied by a guard holding a camera, giving us a direct order to come out of our cells. He received no reply. He stated



Supporters and comrades demonstrate outside of Bertie CI, March 12th, 2011

on the camera that we "had weapons" and that his goons would come and extract us from our cells "to restore order."

First off, we had no weapons and I didn't know that refusing to come out of your cell was causing a disturbance. Once they saw we weren't coming out, they left. When they returned, it was the Captain along with his goons who had an electric shield and a mace canister the size of a fire extinguisher. They came to my cell first and told me to "submit to the cuffs" and come out of my cell. They received no reply. One of the guards opened my food trap and sprayed mace in my cell and closed my trap hoping that would force me to come out willingly. It didn't work. Next, they did the same thing again and it was unsuccessful too. Then, the Captain called the guard in the control booth to open my door. My door wouldn't open courtesy of my barricade. I sat back and waited patiently while listening to the guards cough and choke on the mace as they struggled trying to get my door open. After witnessing this for a good while, they finally got my door open and rushed in my cell, tackled me and held me down while I was handcuffed, chained, and shackled. I was then thrown in a shower - with the water on - for about five or six minutes, taken to see the nurse for a check-up and placed in a cage. They also ran my comrade's cell, but

I don't have the exact details.

We had the chance to speak to the Superintendent, Asst. Superintendent, Captain, Intelligence Lieutenant, Unit Manager, and Asst. Unit Manager. In meeting with them, we went down our list of demands and addressed every demand. This is what I was told in response to these demands:

- A new chaplain will be starting on 3/28/11 who will come around and visit the prisoners. Also, they will be making sure there are materials for all religions and no specific religion will be shown favoritism.
- Lack of nurses has been the reason for inadequate medical care and in timely responses to medical emergencies. More nurses are in the process of being hired.
- More dental staff are in the process of being hired as well. The dental floss issue wasn't discussed.
- The Unit Manager and Asst. Unit Manager were told to make sure we had clothes daily and they promised to contact the warehouse about making sure our clothing was sanitized.
- The food will be served according to the dietary charts in Raleigh. Basically, no change.
- Maintenance would be contacted

to make sure the temperatures are correct, and to clean the vents out.

- I was told to contact a woman in the Education Department about starting up some educational programs for prisoners in solitary.
- I was told to contact Raleigh about the publications ban list.
- I was told we would be given toilet brushes during cell clean-up--and we have been.

Prisoners' Demands and Communique:

- **Equal treatment of all religions.** Here at Bertie CI certain religions are favored over others. The chaplain only provides religious materials for certain religions and the rest he tells prisoners to "write your leader."
- **Adequate Medical Care.** Ibuprofen and aspirin are given out like a cure to all diseases - including vomiting up blood.
- **Prompt responses to all medical emergencies.** Often times it takes hours for medical personnel to respond to a medical emergency. Sometimes it's ignored altogether.
- **Adequate dental care.** Prisoners have to wait months after filling out numerous dental requests before being seen by a dentist. Also, prisoners housed in solitary are prohibited from having dental floss even though it's vital to dental care. The excuse for the denial has been "because you're on lock-up."
- **Clean clothing.** Prisoners are given clothing that has not been washed properly or not at all. Prisoners have received clothing with urine, feces, and semen stains in them with foul odors. Prisoners have caught rashes from wearing these unsanitary clothes.
- **Adequate portions and nutritional meals.**
- **Protection from extreme conditions.** In the winter, the air conditioning is blasting, in the summer, the heat is blasting. The extreme temperatures are done for psychological purposes.
- **Clean air.** The ventilation (air flow) is so poor it undermines sanitation. There's excessive dust and lint particles in the air in our cells which prisoners in solitary confinement breathe 23 hours a day.
- **Educational and self-improvement opportunities.** Prisoners on solitary realize that no guard can rehabilitate them. Only we can do that. Problem is, there are no resources for us to utilize.
- **The publications ban list be revised.** The ban list exemplifies racism, bigotry, and prejudice. It targets Black books, Black publications, and a specifically Black genre: urban fiction.
- **A toilet brush to properly sanitize our toilets.** Prisoners are in a cell for a minimum of 23 hours a day in a cell with a toilet they use daily.

"We refuse to come out of our cells in protest of these conditions. We will continue to struggle by various means until these demands are addressed."