

# Coalition For Prisoners' Rights Newsletter

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PO Box 1911, Santa Fe NM 87504-1911

July 2011

## WE APPLAUD AND STAND WITH YOU IN THE ONGOING STRUGGLE

A postcard received from Pelican Bay dated July 25 said "Just went through a strike protesting SHU conditions and treatment." This low key statement refers to the most important and wide ranging example of prisoner resistance since the Attica uprising 40 years ago. Such actions never come out of nowhere, but result from years of oppression and torture. It was preceded, among other acts of resistance, by another hunger strike, also at Pelican Bay, in 2001.

The strike, which began on July 1 and lasted three weeks, was one of the largest and longest strikes in California history, with more than 6,600 prisoners in a number of California prisons participating. Prisoners at Calipatria, Corcoran and Tehachapi state prisons were reported to still remain on strike as of July 21.

According to a statement issued by Prisoner Hunger Strike Solidarity for a press conference on July 22, the prisoners collectively decided to end their strike when they were presented with an offer by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) which met one of their five core demands. The prisoners were offered cold weather caps, calendars and the possibility of some educational opportunities in the Secure Housing Unit (SHU).

The strike generated tremendous international outcry and support. Not only were concessions offered, but the increased public awareness concerning the conditions under which so many prisoners survive for so long makes it possible to move towards lasting changes for prisoners. It prompted California lawmakers to initiate hearings on conditions in the SHU, including the practice of long-term solitary confinement. The CDCR is already in federal receivership because it provides substandard medical care to prisoners. As the organization All of Us or None

pointed out, "This strike has been really significant in terms of the media attention it has received, but more importantly because it marks a shift in terms of 'business as usual' for the CDCR.

The *New York Times*, among other establishment media, saw the horrors of the issues publicized by the strike. In an August 1 editorial, it stated:

"[People in the United States] should be disgusted and outraged that prolonged solitary confinement, sometimes for months or even years, has become a routine form of prison management. It is inflicting unnecessary, indecent and inhumane suffering on tens of thousands of prisoners.

"The strike began in the Orwellian Security Hosing Unit, where inmates are held in wretched isolation in small windowless cells for more than 22 hours a day, some for many years.

"California's huge prison system is dysfunctional in so many ways. In May, the Supreme Court found conditions at the overcrowded prisons so egregious that they violated the Eighth Amendment's ban on cruel and unusual punishment and ordered the state to cut its prison population by more than 30,000.

"The protest has raised awareness about the national shame of extended solitary confinement at Pelican Bay and at high-security 'supermax' prisons nationwide."

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JURY RIGHTS DAY -- SEPTEMBER 5

Sponsored by the Fully Informed Jury Association (FIJA - 1-800-TEL-JURY, [www.FIJA.org](http://www.FIJA.org)). FIJA Activists inform potential jurors:

- \* of their traditional legal authority to refuse to enforce corrupt laws;
- \* that they cannot be required to check their conscience at the courthouse door;
- \* that they cannot be punished for their verdict.

# CRIME OF THE MONTH

Let's boycott Israel. Oops! if I were in Israel and said that, I could be sued by anyone who might object to my opinion. They wouldn't have to show that boycott strategies harm or damage them, just be in disagreement with my suggestion. Let's commemorate Al Nakba ("the Catastrophe"), the Palestinian term for the ethnic cleansing which occurred in 1947-48 resulting in three-quarters of a million Palestinians being driven from their homes. Sorry! Do that in Israel, or even use the term as an historical reference in a classroom, and your school could be denied funding.

Well, how about this: let's go to Palestine to support the nonviolent resistance to Israel's illegal occupation. Wrong! Try to enter the West Bank, which can only be done through Israeli controlled entry points, and unless you lie and tell them you're going to visit holy sites, you will be denied entry and/or deported. Duggone it, what's left? I know! Let's take humanitarian supplies to Gaza by sea. Too bad! The Israeli Navy will attack our boats in international waters, possibly execute us (nine unarmed civilians were killed on the Freedom Flotilla last year), steal our cameras and computers, then deport us.

Our Crime of the Month is the continued pretense that Israel is a democracy for all its residents.

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Copies of the Newsletter will be included in all correspondence we send out. To receive our monthly issues regularly, send us self-addressed, stamped envelopes (with the CPR return address)--up to 12 at one time.

Please continue to send us address changes and renewal requests in order to receive the year-end holiday card/new calendar. This is especially important for those in California and Texas.

Also, please note that the ONLY address to use to be sure to reach us continues to be: PO Box 1911, Santa Fe NM 87504.

Many, many thanks to the Real Cost of Prisons Project for making our Newsletter available on-line for free downloading and distribution. It is at: <http://www.realcostofprisonsproject.org/coalition.html>. This is an outstanding site!

We continue to depend on our readers' financial contributions to be able to go on with our work. Thank you so much for your ongoing support.

# VOICES IN SOLIDARITY/FROM INSIDE

Florence AZ

March 1, 2011

Just wanted you to know that finally we have gotten rid of Keefe. The bidding was in May 2010 and in September 2010 the decision was made. They have until April 1, 2011, to be out. In their stead comes Aramark. We have no full knowledge of them, but rumor has it that their track record is littered with lawsuits and the like....

Warren ME

April 5, 2011

I'm secretary of the N.A.A.C.P. branch here at Maine State Prison, which is one of only two in corrections nationally recognized. Geoffrey Reese, 108526, Maine State Prison, 807 Cushing Road, Warren ME 04864.

Transformative Justice Law Project (TJLP)

The TJLP is facilitation the publication of a 'zine with content created entirely by transgender and gender non-conforming people who have been or are currently incarcerated. The 'zine will be a mix of survival guides, "how to" guides, personal stories, visual art, and creative writing. Our primary goal is to facilitate connecting people inside with other transgender and gender non-conforming folks to share stories of resilience, thoughts, and tips for survival. We are a collective of radical lawyers, activists, and community organizers. We provide free legal services with a commitment to: the right to gender self-determination, vision towards a long-term goal of prison abolition, and dedication to resisting state sponsored systems of control through transformative justice and community empowerment models. TJLP, 2040 N Milwaukee Ave, Chicago IL 60647.

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**Que puede hacer si usted es arrestado o detenido por Inmigración?**

Los inmigrantes arrestados o detenidos por Inmigración tienen ciertos derechos. Sin embargo, estos derechos cambian si son arrestados o detenidos en la frontera o en un aeropuerto. En estos casos, los inmigrantes podrán tener menos derechos.

Usted probablemente tiene más derechos si es arrestado por Inmigración en el trabajo, en la calle, después de cometer una infracción de tránsito, o en casa. Si es arrestado y detenido, es importante que mantenga la calma. Usted tiene el derecho de permanecerse callado. Pida hablar con un abogado. No firme nada. No acepte "salida voluntaria" sin hablar primero con un abogado.