

Coalition For Prisoners' Rights

Newsletter

Vol. 36-h, No. 9

PO Box 1911, Santa Fe NM 87504-1911

September 2011

ATTICA IS ALL OF US

This is a season of important 40th Anniversaries. The Attica Rebellion began there on September 9, 1971. George Jackson, was killed by guards in San Quentin prison on August 21, 1971. They are but two examples of on-going resistance. This year's hunger strike begun by prisoners at Pelican State Security Housing Unit on July 1, 2011, is part of the same tradition.

As Howard Zinn states in his groundbreaking book *A People's History of the United States*, "There have always been prison riots...A wave of them in the 1920s...Between 1950 and 1954 more than 50 major riots occurred in American prisons...At San Quentin prison in California...there was a series of revolts in the late sixties.

"At the Queens House of Detention on Long Island in New York in the fall of 1970, prisoners took over the jail, took hostages, issued demands...In November 1970, in Folsom prison in California, a work stoppage began which became the longest prison strike in the history of the United States. Most of the 2,400 prisoners held out in their cells for 19 days, without food, in the face of threats and intimidation..."

"The prisons in the United States had long been an extreme reflection of the American system itself: the stark life differences between rich and poor, the racism, the use of victims against one another, the lack of resources of the underclass to speak out, the endless 'reforms' that changed little..." (In the late sixties and early seventies) all over the country, prisoners were obviously affected by the turmoil in the country, the Black revolt, the youth upsurge, the antiwar movement...

"The most direct effect of the George Jackson murder was the rebellion at Attica prison...that came from long, deep grievances...Two months after the revolt at Attica, men at Norfolk prison in Massachusetts began to organize...that same week at Concord prison...There were more outsiders now

who knew about prisons..." [pp. 504-513] Sound familiar? We have just passed through another chapter of this process of resistance. As we continue, our analysis and actions will create its full meaning.

As always, the demands of the Pelican Bay Hunger Strikers and their supporters across the country were basic and simple: stop the torture of the lockdown units, stop indefinite SHU terms, allow prisoners more visitation, adequate nutrition and access to mail and phone privileges. California SHU prisoners have issued an alert that they may be forced to resume their protest because CDCR (California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation) is not moving to remedy even the smallest of their grievances.

There is currently an online petition being circulated to close Attica prison, directed to New York governor Andrew Cuomo. It says in part:

"In September of 1971, prisoners in New York State's Attica Correctional Facility staged a four-day rebellion against the inhumane conditions they were forced to endure. Some 39 [eds. note: other sources say 43 and 31] people, including 9 hostages, were brutally shot down by state police and corrections officers during the retaking of the prison despite the willingness of the prisoners to negotiate. Today, Attica stands as a testament to the inhumanity of the massacre that took place there, as well as the continued reliance on incarceration that exacerbates and perpetuates social inequality.

"You have recognized that our state's prison system is inefficient, and costly, and have begun needed prison closures. However, you have yet to close a maximum-security facility like Attica. (We) urge you to consider closing Attica Correctional Facility and turning the prison into a memorial to all who died there...(It) would be a vital step forward for dignity and human rights."

CRIME OF THE MONTH

Dick Cheney is a former president of Halliburton, a huge defense department contractor. He also is a former vice president of the U.S.

During his time as vice president, Cheney received millions of dollars from Halliburton, his "former" employer. Cheney lied about "weapons of mass destruction" and many other things in order to get us into a very expensive war with Iraq. And Cheney then steered huge contracts, worth billions, into the hands of Halliburton, his "former" employer.

Cheney was a champion of torture, in Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib prisons, and many other places. Unknown numbers died, and many others were permanently damaged by this trip he led us to the dark side.

Cheney ignored subpoenas, and has remained immune to investigation since he left public office. He led planning for a broad illegal plan to spy on people of the U.S. And Cheney led the planning for a program of indefinite detention of suspects.

Our Crime of this Month includes obstruction of justice, murder, torture and terrorism. And Dick Cheney is their poster child.

=====

"Prosecutorial intransigence, a galling inability to acknowledge that initial judgments were incorrect, is the hallmark of almost every wrongful conviction case I am familiar with."

--Scott Turow, lawyer and author

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 87604. And remember: NONE OF US ARE LAWYERS.

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 very much for your ongoing support over so many years!

¡No retrocedamos! Licencias para todos en NM

En el 2003, grupos comunitarios y religiosos defensores de derechos de victimas y autoridades policiacas se unieron para promover una ley que permite a los residentes de Nuevo México, sin importar su estatus migratorio, a obtener una licencia de conducir. Desde entonces, más de 80,000 inmigrantes han obtenido la licencia, tomado los exámenes de vista, la escrita y la de manejo, han registrado sus vehiculos y han comprado seguro vehicular. Algunos políticos han pedido que se revoque esta ley. Esto tendria consecuencias desastrosas para la seguridad pública de Nuevo México.

La ley actual de las licencias para conductores calificados está funcionando para el estado: ayuda a mejorar la seguridad pública, intensifica los esfuerzos para revenir el DWI y el consumo de alcohol en los menores, provee herramientas importantes para las autoridades y mantiene la seguridad de los oficiales, y beneficia la economía.

Protesta contra la gobernadora y sus ataques a nuestras familias y las licencias de manejo. Día de acción del inmigrante: jueves el 8 de septiembre a las 12 p.m. Frente al capitolio estatal en Santa Fe, Nuevo Mexico.

Soliciting Holiday Card Design

Imprisoned readers: please send us a black and white drawing for this year's holiday/new year's card. All designs must be respectful of our diversity: We can not use any with racist, sexist or religious symbolism. The deadline is November 1. Submission of a drawing will serve as your permission to use your drawing, credited with your name and state. Books as prize.

CCA AND MTC, FOR=PROFIT PRISONS, EXPAND

Lake Erie Correctional Institution in Ohio has been sold to the CCA, headquartered in Nashville TN, for \$72.7 million. The for-profit company says it will operate the prison at 8% less than the state has. It plans to add 304 beds.

MTC, of Centerville UT, has won the contract to operate Ohio's North Central Correctional Institution and the vacant Marion Juvenile Correctional Facility as a single prison camp, with a promised savings of 6%, which will include 398 new beds.

Ohio's prison system currently holds 51,000 people in 31 prisons built to hold 38,000. The state says it is in the process of trying to reduce its prison population down to 47,000.