

YOU ARE NOT ALONE



IN THE SILENCE OF ISOLATION, YOU ARE NOT ALONE. IN THE LOUD ROAR OF A PRISON FLOOR, YOU ARE NOT ALONE. WE DO NOT WANT THE BARS BETWEEN US TO EXIST. THOSE PRISON WALLS CAN'T KEEP US APART.



IN RECENT HISTORY



It is exciting to reflect upon the past to gain creative energy for the present moment. As prisoners in the secure housing unit at Pelican Bay State Prison in California begin their third hunger strike in two years, a brief note on the context that this strike occurs within seems in order.

In the last two years we have seen an upsurge in resistance globally beginning with the uprisings in Tunisia that set off the Arab Spring and the occupations in New York that spread across the country, becoming the Occupy movement. These years have also marked a growth in resistance within prisons in the U.S., which began in 2011 with a coordinated hunger strike that spread through six prisons in Georgia.

The momentum continued in 2012 with a coordinated hunger strike in three facilities in North Carolina, followed by a strike in the Ohio State Penitentiary, where those inmates accused of participation in the Lucasville Uprising of 1994 demanded an end to their conditions of isolation.

In the late summer of 2012, a group calling itself the army of the twelve monkeys began a campaign of creative physical resistance within Mansfield Correctional in Ohio, that led to more than a

few dents in the prison infrastructure and the appearance of guerrilla manuals aimed at spreading the revolt in all six pods of the prison.

At each stage this escalation has inspired solidarity in other prisons, in other states and beyond the walls. In 2011 and 2012, the momentum from the hunger strikes in Pelican Bay spread throughout the California prison system and even to prisoners in Ohio.



On the outside, prison noise demos have been heard across the country, as well as actions in solidarity with striking prisoners in the form of attacks on prison-profiteers, state and private property, banner-drops and graffiti.

In 2012, in response to the incarceration of anarchists refusing to testify before Grand Juries in the Northwest, support campaigns, fundraisers and many other solidarity actions have inspired even more attention to the reality of incarceration and state repression.



The current hunger strike at Pelican Bay is the most recent manifestation of this wave of resistance. If there is to be an end to prisons, it can only come through the continued increase of these conflicts. You aren't alone in the desire for freedom.



NEVER GIVE UP



Our collective heart beats with yours as you hold within your mind and body the understanding that you are not alone, that countless around you in prisons all across the country, as well as on the outside, share a hatred for the cages of the state. July 8th marks the beginning of another national hunger strike and work stoppage by prisoners to protest solitary confinement and other deprivations and conditions in their own individual state and federal prisons. Over the past couple years, during two different waves of hunger strikes, at least 12,000 prisoners participated in the strike. The strike received widespread support from outside prisons as well as international media attention. The current five core demands, originating from Pelican Bay state prison in California are as follows: 1. Eliminate group punishments and administrative abuse. 2. Abolish the debriefing policy and modify active/inactive gang status criteria. 3. Comply with the recommendations of the US Commission on Safety and Abuse in America's Prisons recommendations and end long-term solitary confinement. 4. Provide adequate and nutritious food. 5. Create and expand constructive programming. We are inspired by those who revolt in the face of the most repressive and controlled conditions. In the last two years, the hunger strike has been the dominant tactic used by those participating in the public, coordinated acts of resistance discussed here. While the hunger strike as the dominant tactic of prison resistance has limitations—as it necessitates self-inflicted bodily harm on the part of those resisting, rather than harm to the prison itself or to those who maintain it—we joyously stand with all who create disruptions. Please know you are not alone.



PLEASE KNOW
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