

**Our collective heart beats with yours as you hold within your mind and body understanding that you are not alone, that countess around you in prisons all across the country, as well as on the outside, share a hatred for the cages of the state.**

As inmates at Menard Correctional Facility in Illinois begin the third week of their ongoing hunger strike, we'd like to draw a brief roadmap of the wave of resistance spreading through prisons across the country, now reaching even the land-locked shores of the Midwest.

It began in 2011, when those held captive in Georgia prisons shocked the country with coordinated hunger strikes that spread through six facilities.

The revolt then moved to Ohio, with a hunger strike and an inspiring sabotage campaign and then to North Carolina, with a coordinated hunger strike across three prisons. It then exploded in California with hunger strikes and work stoppages involving 30,000 prisoners spreading across the California prison system. Simultaneously, prisoners at Guantanamo Bay were going strong with as many as 106 people on hunger strike and 45 of them resisting despite being force fed.

In October of last year, these currents reached Potosi Correctional Facility, the max security prison in Missouri, where 9 inmates came together to refuse meals and 25 got their backs by signing a petition demanding an improvement in conditions. Then just this month, people held captive at Westville Correctional Facility in Indiana began a hunger strike on January 13<sup>th</sup> in resistance to prison profiteer Aramark's cost-cutting measures, which replaced hot lunches with cold, nutritionally deficient sack lunches. Those outside the walls who hate prisons responded to their efforts by holding call-in days, making posters and doing graffiti to get the word out, and with a solidarity attack on several police cars in another part of the country. The strike ended on January 21<sup>st</sup>, when the DOC granted the inmates' demands for hot lunches.

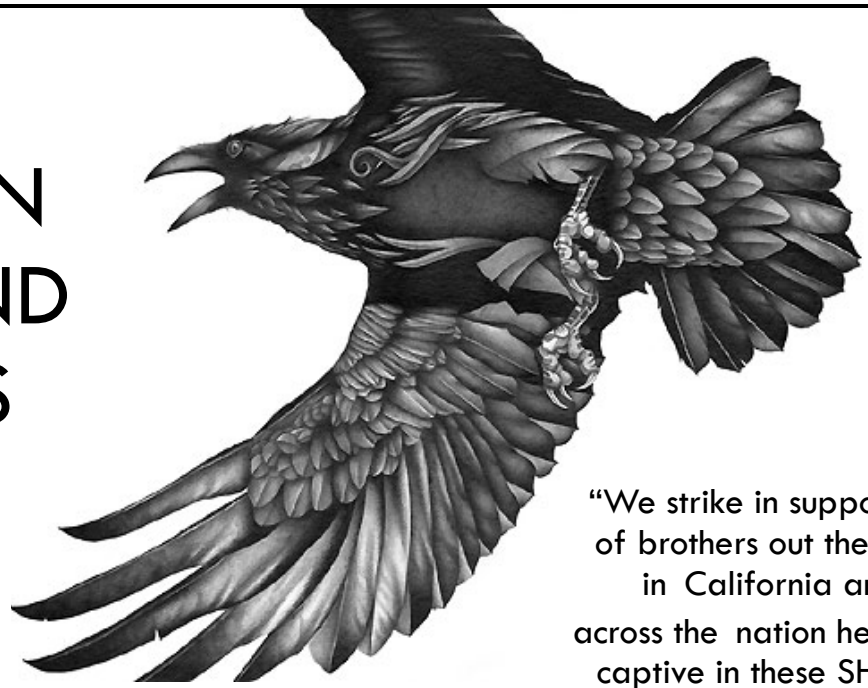
And now, a hunger strike has begun at the Menard Correctional Center, a max facility in Illinois where prisoners are refusing meals to protest the unsanitary, inhumane conditions of their confinement. 25 people there are currently refusing meals despite threats of retaliatory force-feeding and the beating of handcuffed hunger striker Armando Velasquez by pigs. Rebels outside the prison responded to the hunger strike by holding a noisy demonstration outside the prison on Monday, January 27<sup>th</sup> in hopes of being heard by those inside.

Although some of the strikes in the last couple years have won their demands and some have not, (some haven't even made any) the most powerful thing coming out of these rebellions is their demonstration of our ability to act together. Both those inside and outside of prisons have been working hard to express hatred for a world of cops, prisons, judges and snitches, and together we have built skills, relationships and unity that we can use in the future. Demands for more comfortable cages can be a springboard to a rejection of all cages everywhere. If there is to be an end to prisons, it can only come through the continued escalation of these conflicts.

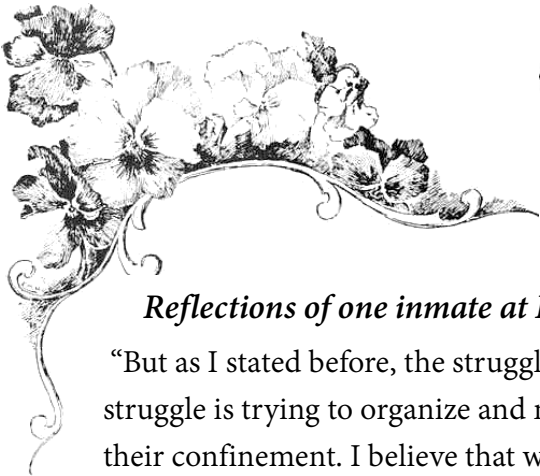


**you are not alone**

# MAY YOUR IMAGINATION SOAR BEYOND THESE WALLS



“We strike in support  
of brothers out there  
in California and  
across the nation held  
captive in these SHU  
units and Ad-Seg units.”  
-Potosi



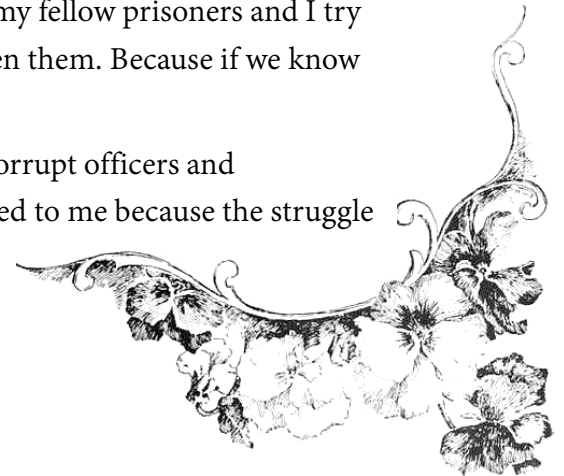
## *Reflections of one inmate at Potosi on the outcome of the action and the way forward:*

“But as I stated before, the struggle continues. The oppressors are not formidable to me--our biggest struggle is trying to organize and mobilize these prisoners to stand up and challenge the conditions of their confinement. I believe that we are our biggest problem and only we can truly liberate us and resolve our many issues through unity and solidarity.

I know that if these guys will just show a little unity and solidarity the many issues that we commonly haul can easily be resolved.

So I stay speaking and demonstrating truth to power amongst my fellow prisoners and I try to share what ever informative material I have that will enlighten them. Because if we know better we'll do better.

My being a prisoner's advocate I'm a constant target for these corrupt officers and administrators. So, I cherish all the outside support that provided to me because the struggle can become very lonely at times. However, I keep on keeping on.”



## **Recent events in the Midwest...**

Potosi Correctional Facility, Potosi, Missouri—Hunger Strike—October, 2013

Westville Correctional Facility, Westville, Indiana—Hunger Strike—January 13<sup>th</sup>-  
21<sup>st</sup> 2014

Menard Correctional Center, Menard, Illinois—Hunger Strike—Ongoing, began  
January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2014