



JUNE 11

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY
WITH LONG-TERM ANARCHIST
PRISONERS

2016

JUNE11.ORG

AGAINST MAXIMUM SECURITY PRISONS
AGAINST ALL PRISONS



Alabama prisoners during a recent uprising

For June 11th, 2015, we emphasized transition in the struggle and in the lives of the prisoners we support. This year we're focusing on a different kind of transition: the restructuring of the prison system and thus doubling down on opposition to Maximum Security, isolation, and Communications Management Units. High-security facilities are not new: for example, Communications Management Units isolated Daniel McGowan and Andy Stepanian for years. But now we are at a new juncture: there is both a fresh focus on the part of the authorities reorganizing prisons to maximize repression against long-term and combative prisoners, while simultaneously cutting costs. In response there has been a wave of resistance and revolt--in the streets and in the prisons. As this wave spreads organically, we feel impelled to contribute in support of our imprisoned friends and comrades.

AROUND THE WORLD WE SEE AN EXPANSION OF THE PHYSICAL

and temporal aspects of prison society. Annexes and new pods are added on to old facilities and new facilities are built. More ground is physically covered with camps and infrastructure: a tangible representation of its encroachment on our lives and a violent appropriation and toxification of the places that sustain us: land, wilderness, communities. Increased sentences in the form of mandatory minimums, three strike laws, terrorism enhancements, and legislated or functional termination of parole means that nobody is getting out. Everywhere we look: prison swells in its scope and depth.

Around the world, repression intensifies against anarchists, their comrades, and their families. The left-wing SYRIZA government in Greece continues the isolation of rebellious prisoners in the C-type maximum security prisons. The Spanish state attempts to criminalize anarchist solidarity through an “anti-terrorist” spectacle of raids, arrests, and show trials. Anarchists from Santiago to Kansas City face decades in prison for choosing the path of revolt and for their refusal to bow before pressure from the state. Everywhere we look: the state’s jaws clamp down on rebellion.

But all this cannot break our comrades or the spirit of our struggle. As Mónica Caballero and Francisco Solar are sentenced to twelve years in prison, anarchists respond to their persecution with smoke and shattered glass. As the Greek state levels its force against the families of the imprisoned comrades of the Conspiracy of Cells of Fire and condemns Nikos Maziotis to life in prison, fugitive comrade Pola Roupa attempts to hijack a helicopter to free

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the imprisoned fighters. As Osman Evcan and Eric King both fight the state’s attempts to starve them for their refusal to consume flesh, comrades mobilize to ensure that their demands are backed with acts of solidarity. As the Chilean state continues to arrest and imprison anarchists,

an intransigent minority strikes back in vengeance. As the State of Ohio continues to restrict Sean Swain’s communications, those holding the controls find their names and addresses spread online. As the state constructs an “anti-terrorism” roundup in Belgium, the multiform struggle against prison society there continues, unflinching and defiant. As the United States prison system continues its brutal enforcement of white supremacy and the social liquidation of undesirables, prisons from Alabama to Nebraska face the flames of rebellion. Everywhere we look, the revolt against prison society deepens and spreads.

INCREASED CONTROL WITHIN PRISON...

THE MOVEMENT TOWARDS ABSOLUTE CONTROL WITHIN PRISONS is the state’s movement towards complete “security”: maximum and supermax security prisons, secure housing, isolation, control, and communication management units. In Spain, FIES; in Greece, C-type. Though they go by many names, they serve

the same function. These institutions are an exaggeration of the tools and logic of prisons: complete isolation in small, windowless cells for 22-23 hours per day; restricted phone access; few, if any, write-outs. Non-contact visits means one might not touch another person for months or years. Guards, cameras, and mail censors maintain constant surveillance. Erratic administrations and useless grievance procedures mean pervasive uncertainty, indefinite punishment, and no recourse for one's placement. Anarchist prisoner Sean Swain explains, "What you are experiencing is designed to be painful...to cause debility, dependence, and dread." Greek prisoner Angeliki Spyropoulou wrote that "prison has always been built upon...submission of those who do not conform to the predefined standards of society [and]...domination aims at dissemination of fear." This illuminates who these prisons are designed for.

Control units in the US are primarily populated by Muslim "extremists" (mostly young men entrapped by the FBI) and black and brown people labeled as gang members. There are also politically outspoken prisoners and rebellious "troublemakers." What they have in common is that these are the people the state does not want communicating: with each other, or with the outside. Subversive communication and real relationships would be a threat to security. While in the US these control units are often justified by the threat of terrorist bogeyman, in other cases the motivations are more explicit. It is clear C-type prisons in Greece were created in response to combative anarchists, guerrillas, and other rebels.

While these facilities are intended to isolate and control rebellious populations, the inverse often results: instead of dampening the fires of rebellion, high security facilities spark powerful resistance. In 2013 30,000 California prisoners started an indefinite hunger strike followed by years of ongoing struggle, initiated by some prisoners confined to isolation in the maximum security

Pelican Bay facility. They focused their demands on the intolerable conditions of the control unit, and their struggle contributed to minor but meaningful reforms to California's procedures for solitary confinement. Isolation is now banned from federal juvenile facilities. Last year Greek prisoners engaged in a hunger strike for 48 days against the creation of the C-type prisons, anti-terrorism laws, and forced DNA sampling, ending in renewed indications of government capitulation. And earlier this year Fabio Dusco¹ chose to reject the State's attempt at neutralization and to fight against the conditions of his detention. Sean Swain has seen some of the deepest and darkest parts of the ODRC, yet still he continues to fight, laughing in the face of his censors. In defiance of the state's attempt to silence and punish him, Marius continues to write and fight in defense of the earth, animals, and trans prisoners. In March at Holman prison, Alabama DOC's notorious high security facility, an uprising took place in which a guard and the warden were injured, prisoners temporarily took control of some spaces, and one participant declared, "We're tired of this shit, there's only one way to deal with it: tear the prison down."²

...INCREASED CONTROL WITHOUT PRISON

EVEN AS GOVERNMENTS AROUND THE WORLD INSTITUTE harsher forms of control within prisons, they spread glib platitudes about prison reform, community accountability, and the unmanageable size of prison populations. Prison reform has been in the air for several years now, due both to pressure from rebels and the resulting bad press, as well as an economic imperative: prisons are expensive and unwieldy, unfit for the lean, flexible new governmental and productive regime. Conservatives want to cut back spending, and the president has decided that prison

1 <http://325.nostate.net/?p=18924>

2 <https://itsgoingdown.org/uprising-currently-underway-holman-prison-alabama>

is a human-interest issue.³ However, we know that the controlled shrinking of the prison system will not look like the liberation that some prison abolitionists dream of. Rather, it will advance a rationalization of control: cheaper, smaller prisons targeting the incorrigible, non-adaptive, and rebellious prisoners, alongside expanded surveillance and “smart” state intervention on the outside of the prison walls. Razor wire and guards are being replaced by GPS monitoring, strict probation requirements, “soft” policing, and privatized community security forces.⁴

While we can't deny our tenuous relief when daily conditions improve for those in prison, we remain deeply suspicious of these improvements. We know that the goal remains increasingly sinister social control, even if the techniques are softened or made more palatable. We know that these measures, while improving conditions for some, simply serve to justify the heaviest repression against others. The state separates the sheep from the goats, while the reformists look on silently. This world relies on imprisonment and social control, and it is only by fighting against this world and against control in all of its forms that we might grasp moments of freedom.

“We’re tired of this shit, there’s only one way to deal with it: tear the prison down.”

3 http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/10/opinion/a-conservative-case-for-prison-reform.html?_r=0 is an excellent example of this reformist position critical of the prison system.

4 <http://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/citizen-anti-crime-movement-afoot-in-seattles-neighborhoods>

LONG-TERM IMPRISONMENT

WE ARE OPPOSED TO PRISON IN ALL OF ITS FORMS, AND WE remain skeptical of dividing prisoners into “political” and others. June 11, however, is a specific day of solidarity with long term anarchist prisoners. By focusing on long-term imprisonment, we want to ensure that none of our comrades are forgotten, even if they’ve already been behind bars for decades. But when we speak about long-term imprisonment, we aren’t making reference to a specific criteria, a length of sentence or extended limbo (for us, any day that anyone spends in prison is already too long). Rather, we want to bring light to those who’ve been identified by the state as the most guilty and intransigent, the ones who won’t be first in line for a pardon as certain aspects of prison are phased out. Marius Mason, Marco Camenisch, Monica and Francisco, among others, act as reagents, by which we can test various proposals for addressing the prison system. Will such-and-such proposal lead to their release? The reformist proposals will leave the eco-arsonists, the anti-nuclear saboteurs, and the desecrators of cathedrals inside the prison walls, condemned to expanded maximum-security units.

All of the appeals to liberal compassion have been exhausted or deemed inadequate. There’s only one proposal we know of which will lead to their release: the destruction of the prisons, from below, through social revolution.

SOLIDARITY, LOCAL AND NETWORKED

WE HAVE WORKED TO SPREAD INFORMATION, INSPIRATION, and decentralized solidarity with long-term anarchist prisoners. The existence of a diffuse network of support is vital for both durable aid to our imprisoned comrades and the growth of a subversive movement. It’s deeply exciting that this network is not only

diffuse but multiform, with solidarity expressing itself in many forms – from widespread efforts to fundraise and support prisoners, to efforts to link them with ongoing struggles, to combative actions that continue the fight against domination and ecological destruction.

But this network can't only express itself in local forms without risking either isolation or a reliance on digital "communication." We want to experiment with new and flexible modes of convergence and conversation in order to revitalize the struggle and enrich our discussions. As Avalanche magazine puts it in their argument for a new anti-prison coordination:

*"This international proposal doesn't aim at the creation of some organisation, but at the opening of spaces of exchange, of mutual knowledge and debate. We won't doubt this will permit a better knowledge of what is going on elsewhere, creating the conditions for interventions considered in the perspective of international solidarity and common struggle, to give birth to temporary coordination between different struggles and fights, to deepen the informality out of which, according to affinities and projects, create initiatives. In this way, through the mutual knowledge of the projects of struggle, this international proposal aims at stimulating "organisational occasions", not with the aim of a growth in quantity but of the quality of revolutionary intervention."*⁵

For these reasons among many others, we welcome the call for a convergence in Washington DC this June 11th, combining a demonstration against the Bureau of Prisons with an occasion for

5 See <https://avalanche.noblogs.org/files/2015/07/Avalanche-EN-5.pdf> for the reflections on the C-Type hunger strike and the proposal for anti-prison coordination.

discussion and sharing of ideas.⁶ We hope this will create new combinations of diffuse, local action with coordinated, regional and international activity. Against the attempted greenwashing of prison initiatives,⁷ we know that prisons are fundamentally toxic to human life: both the social conditions that they sustain and create, and the literal toxins that litter the site of a newly proposed maximum security prison in Letcher County, KY. Once Capital finished stripping coal from mountaintops, the State moved in to build a prison on the ravaged landscape.

JUNE 11: EVERY YEAR, EVERYWHERE, UNTIL THE PRISONS BURN AND OUR COMRADES WALK FREE.

WE HOPE THAT JUNE 11 REVITALIZES SOLIDARITY FOR THOSE comrades facing the longest sentences and builds momentum against the cages they're locked in. Recent struggles against the expansion of these cages continue to demonstrate the expansive possibilities of solidarity. In situations of prison construction, by weaving together locals, residents, and prisoners who would both be harmed by a new prison. Or, in the case of the hunger strikes against the new C-Type maximum security wings in Greece, by knitting together prisoners from different groups, outside radicals, and family members. The potential of subverting the state's plans for restructuring prisons opens another front in the struggle, beyond supporting individual comrades and organizing to help prison rebellions. These struggles are currently proliferating in the US, from the opposition to the new youth jail in Seattle,⁸ or the construction of the ICE facility in Gary, Indiana,⁹ to the community fight against the maximum security facility in eastern Kentucky. Let's link these experiences together

6 <https://fighttoxicprisons.wordpress.com/2016/03/18/convergence-in-support-of-eco-prisoners-against-toxic-prisons/>

7 <http://www.pugetsoundanarchists.org/node/100>

8 <http://www.pugetsoundanarchists.org/node/17>

9 (<http://fusion.net/story/241657/gary-indiana-immigrant-detention-center-activists/>)

in order to strengthen ourselves, whether we're inside or outside the existing prisons. Successfully challenging the restructuring of the prisons and the existence of the Maximum Security and Communications Management Units, particularly through the combined power of organizing inside and outside of the walls, is a clear step towards the power to destroy prisons and the society that requires them.

The struggle against prisons must take many forms. It must be both slow and reliable *and* fast and unpredictable. Supporting prisoners requires diligence, patience, and time to grow real relationships. Our imprisoned comrades remain in the struggle, and we will continue to support them and conspire with them in whatever ways we can. But we also want to relentlessly attack the infrastructure and logic of prisons, to become complicit with struggles inside and against prisons. June 11 can be many things: a fundraiser; an opportunity to spread the word and raise awareness; a chance to connect personally with long-term anarchist prisoners via letter or phone; an intervention to begin struggling determinedly against a prison construction project; an attack; a chance to find a crack in the structure of prison society and exploit it. Whether by yourself or with a hundred comrades, we hope that you take action this June 11: against prisons, and in solidarity with long term anarchist prisoners.

Support Longterm Anarchist Prisoners

a partial list

CHILE

Freddy Fuentevilla
Hans Niemeyer
Juan Aliste
Marcelo Villarroel
Tamara Sol

GERMANY

Thomas Meyer Falk

GREECE

Giorgos Karagiannidis
Alexandros Mitrousias
Tasos Theofilou
Andreas-Dimitris Bourzoukos
Argiris Dalios
Fivos Harisis
Giannis Michailidis
Dimitris Politis
Giannis Naxakis
Grigoris Sarfoudis
Nikos Romanos

ITALY

Alfredo Cospito
Nicola Gai

SPAIN

Francisco Solar
Gabriel Pombo da Silva
Monica Cabellero

SWITZERLAND

Marco Camenisch

TURKEY

Osman Evcan

UNITED STATES

Bill Dunne
Casey Brezik
Cleveland 4
Eric King
Jeremy Hammond
Jennifer Gann
Justin Solondz
Marius Mason
Michael Kimble
Rebecca Rubin
Sean Swain

MORE INFORMATION AND CONTACTS AVAILABLE AT JUNE11.ORG