

END THE CENSORSHIP OF *REVOLUTION* NEWSPAPER*

AT CALIFORNIA'S PELICAN BAY STATE PRISON (PBSP)

In May, 2013, Prisoners Revolutionary Literature Fund (PRLF.org) learned from several prisoners in Pelican Bay State Prison's Security Housing Unit (SHU, or solitary confinement) in California that *Revolution* newspaper, issue #302 (May 1st, 2013) was declared to be "contraband" by prison authorities and withheld from prisoners. While the prison officials were not more specific as to what they were referencing, articles on the three pages cited do have in common news coverage of the courageous and inspiring stand prisoners in solitary confinement in California have taken in calling for a peaceful hunger strike starting July 8, 2013, to end the inhumane conditions they face.

These pages also reported on calls to START NOW to build support for this hunger strike and quoted Carl Dix, "People who have been locked down in the dungeons of this country and have been condemned as the worst of the worst have stood up and said NO MORE!... **If at all possible, we must through this protest force the state of California to meet these demands and make it unnecessary for these prisoners to take such a desperate action.**" Another article was a verbatim statement from the entire PBSP-SHU Short Corridor Hunger Strike Representatives "on behalf of all racial groups here in the PBSP-SHU Corridor" announcing a mutual agreement to "put an end to more than 20-30 years of hostilities between our racial groups", and calling on all prisoners in prisons and county jails to do the same.

The censoring of any newspaper, especially alternative voices that challenge and expose the status quo, is chilling and intolerable at any time; even more so when done by government officials and agencies.

A previous attempt to ban *Revolution* newspaper at PBSP in 2010 was overturned as a result of public outcry and intervention by the ACLU Foundation of Southern California. A June 7, 2010 demand letter from the ACLU Foundation of Southern California to Matthew Cate, Secretary of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) and Greg Lewis, Warden of Pelican Bay State Prison, included the following excerpts:

"...The blanket ban on all issues of the newspaper [Revolution] that appears to be ongoing at PBSP is inconsistent with both the First Amendment to the United States and Constitution California law. Accordingly, we request that you immediately rescind it..."

"...In addition, we have carefully reviewed past issues of Revolution and do not believe that there is any legitimate basis to withhold any issue from prisoners even if PBSP was reviewing each issue individually. Indeed, the justifications for withholding issues of Revolution given by PBSP employees do not hold water...."

"...The presentation of ideas or political viewpoints that some may find controversial simply does not constitute material that "incites violence." ... In other words, the justification for withholding copies of Revolution set forth in [a prisoner's] first level appeal response [by prison authorities] is honeycombed with inaccuracies and misstatements...."

The recent allegations made in official documents issued by PBSP authorities that these three pages of issue #302 of *Revolution* newspaper contain "plans to disrupt the order or breach the security of any facility" are patently false.

Censoring *Revolution* newspaper *at this time* is an attempt to isolate, demoralize and further torture these prisoners and to deny them news of growing support beyond the prison walls for their efforts to stop the criminal and unimaginably horrible conditions of long-term solitary confinement to which they have been subjected.

This is tantamount to the torturer censoring news about torture and the efforts to end it.



One prisoner used his last stamp to write about the withholding of *Revolution* newspaper, "... it's not enough we are kept in windowless cells w/ no sunlight but we are further tortured with holding our mail hostage."

We demand that the authorities at Pelican Bay State Prison immediately return any withheld issues of *Revolution* newspaper to all the prisoner-subscribers. In speaking out against this censorship, we may not agree with all or any of the content of *Revolution* newspaper, but we stand united in opposing the withholding of *Revolution* (or any other public newspaper) from prisoners at Pelican Bay (or any other prison) as an immediate and serious threat to freedom of speech and the press as well as the basic rights of prisoners.

We call on others to join us by adding your name to this statement and to write letters objecting to the withholding of *Revolution* newspaper from prisoners at PBSP to:

Greg Lewis
Warden
Pelican Bay State Prison
P.O. Box 7000
Crescent City, CA 95531-7000

Initial Signatories (in formation):

Mike Holman, Executive Director, Prisoners Revolutionary Literature Fund
Peter Phillips, PhD, President: Media Freedom Foundation/Project Censored*
Mary Ratcliff, Editor, San Francisco Bay View National Black Newspaper
Project Rebound, San Francisco State University
Rev. George F. Regas
Stephen Rohde, Esq., civil liberties lawyer
Paul Wright, Editor, Prison Legal News
Clyde Young, revolutionary communist and former prisoner

Please also send a copy of your letter to the warden to: PRLF, 1321 N. Milwaukee Ave #407, Chicago, IL 60622.

Name

Signature

Title or Organization (include "*" if organization is for identification purposes only)

Email or phone contact information

Send endorsements to and to get more information: [censorship@PRLF.org](mailto: censorship@PRLF.org), 773.960.6952

* *Revolution* newspaper, the voice of the Revolutionary Communist Party (revcom.us), is subscribed to by about 800 prisoners in 41 states and the District of Columbia, including by more than 60 subscribers at PBSP. These subscriptions have been provided through donations made to Prisoners Revolutionary Literature Fund for more than 20 years.