

# Walla Walla Prison Revolt Continues

Fifth Estate Collective

During the last five months, the ongoing battle between prisoners and prison administrators over the inhuman conditions at the Washington State Prison at Walla Walla, Wash., has escalated to the savage beatings of hundreds of people by guards after an unprecedented one month lockdown, and 230 prisoners from Eight Wing have been forced to camp out in the “big yard.”

Although the principal cause of this and past clashes has been the overcrowding inside the prison (originally built for 850 people, the prison population now numbers over 1,600—four people for each two-man cell), the most recent incident began on May 9, when three prisoners, Carl Harp, Clyde Washburn and Shane Green, held ten people hostage, in an attempt to publicize and force negotiation on prisoners’ demands (See the June 1979 FE article: Walla Prisoners Revolt).

In addition to the three’s demands to alleviate the overcrowding and inhuman conditions, they asked for out-of-state transfers for fear of guard and administration reprisals against them for their actions. The negotiations for the demands and the release of the hostages lasted for twelve hours and the prisoners were interviewed for one hour by the TV news—of which only snatches were aired to the public—the demands have yet to be met by the prison administration.

Since that time, the deteriorating situation at the prison rapidly escalated when, on June 15, a guard was killed when he reportedly attempted to break up a fight between two rival prison groups in Eight Wing. Immediately, the prison administration put the 230 prisoners in the wing on a “lockdown” that lasted for one month, culminating in a prison “shakedown” on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> of July and a riot by prisoners on the 7<sup>th</sup>.

The riot on July 7 stemmed from the so-called-shakedown (a term used by prison authorities to indicate a systematic searching of all cells on the pretense of looking for weapons). After being forced to spend two days in the prison yard during the “shakedown,” with minor skirmishes with the guards, the prisoners were allowed to return to their cells, only to find that the guards had gone throughout the block, destroying all of the men’s personal belongings (glasses, false teeth, personal letters, legal papers, family pictures, etc.). This was the final degradation and the prisoners started to riot and set fire to their cell block.

At the same time, the men in segregation started to destroy the toilets, chairs and beds in their cells as a sign of solidarity with their brothers in Eight Wing.

This is when dates seem to get a little muddled. It seems that the prisoners justifiably rioted on the 7<sup>th</sup>, but reports from some of the prisoners in Walla Walla and the news media, state that the prison guards went on a rampage—beating the prisoners in Eight Wing and severely beating some of the prisoners in segregation—on the following day, July 8. But, whether the prisoners rioting started late on the night of July 7, or the guards waited until the following day to take their revenge, the brutality of the guards is not questionable. The indiscriminate beatings of the people in Eight Wing and the singling out and brutal beatings of Carl Harp, Danny Clark, Buddy Rampola, Gary Issacs, Lynn Brooks, and Danny Atteberry—all prisoners in segregation—is a fact that cannot be denied; although the Wash- State government and prison administration are trying hard to do so.

The July 21, 1979 issue of the Seattle Post-Intelligencer reported that some of the prisoners who were beaten on July 8, sent out two tape recordings of the events of July 8—one a description of the police attack and the other a recording that was made during the beatings.

In the first tape, which included several testimonies, Danny Clark said a guard sergeant opened the solid steel door to his cell and sprayed chemical mace into it. “He sprayed for thirty seconds to a minute. He just filled my cell up. Then he closed the door.” Shortly afterwards, a guard wearing a lead-lined glove went into his cell and asked if he was “coming out peacefully.” When Clark replied “Yeah,” he was attacked by “four or five” guards.

“They knocked me up against the wall. Other pigs pinned me up against the wall...beating me on the legs and rib cage.” After that, Clark was handcuffed “spread-eagle” to the bars of the cell block and two guards “grabbed my legs and spread them apart while another guard kicked me in the testicles and jabbed me with a nightstick.”

In a letter sent to Washington’s *Northwest Passage* newspaper, Buddy Rampola added, “About 6:30 p.m., five inmates, including myself, tore the steel desk seats off the wall and demolished our sinks and toilets. Then around 7:45, a goon squad of fourteen or more deep came on the tier and starting with Lynn Brooks, B-3, came in and beat us with clubs after we offered no resistance, and handcuffed us to the bars. After Brooks’ cell, they went to Daniel Atteberry, B-7, and then Gary Issacs, B-9, and then myself in 17-B. Then around 9:30 they came back...and they opened Brooks’ cell again and just kicked the living shit out of him with sticks and mace while he was still cuffed through the bars...They threw me against a wall so hard in front of Carl Harp’s cell, B-15, that my front tooth was broken in half, then I saw them go into Carl Harp’s cell, and he never even participated in destroying his cell, and they beat him, and “I swear on my mother’s grave,” an officer named Nuget pulled down Carl’s pants and sat on his back and shoved a nightstick at least 16 inches up Carl’s ass.”

Each of the above named men had equal horrors carried out upon them by the guards and Carl Harp was raped three times with the nightstick.

Since the police attacks that took place on July 8, 1979, the prisoners of Eight Wing have been forced to camp out, under heavy guard, in the “big yard,” with little or no shelter or facilities.

As of this writing, little has changed for the prisoners in Walla Walla, and the special investigation into the actions of the guards, the Jackson/Russell report, has been covered up and dismissed by Washington’s governor Dixie Lee Ray. Even though the report stated that the beatings did take place, Ray stated that there would be no further prosecution of prison personnel and that no further investigation was necessary. (Shortly after the beatings of July 8, 5 guards were fired. The *Northwest Passage* reported that Judy Graybill, of the Walla Walla Brothers Support Committee, pointed out that “the five were chosen, in part, because they were young, had less seniority, and were relatively new to the community, not because they were most responsible or involved in the beatings.” The president and vice-president of the guards union were among the 12 who were initially suspended with pay, but are now working again).

On top of all of this, Walla Walla county prosecutor, Arthur Eggers, stated that “no charges would be filed...We do not feel there is the degree of proof to establish criminal conduct by the guards. It just doesn’t exist.” He went on to say that he would “no longer prosecute cases based on inmate testimony alone;...juries need objective witnesses other than inmates.” Consequently, Prosecutor Eggers has given the Walla Walla guards a free hand to do whatever they want with the prisoners inside.

Prison officials have also refused to allow independent medical aid in the prison, either to help treat people or to verify officials’ statements that their was no guard brutality (as usual, prison and state officials have insisted that any injuries inflicted on prisoners were “self-inflicted”!) Meanwhile, the ACLU has reported that they have over 300 letters from individual prisoners, telling of the continuing beatings from guards and the destruction of the prisoners’ private property. According to the ACLU’s Executive Director, Peter Judge, “the number of letters that corroborate the events, coming from prisoners in different parts of the prison, who couldn’t possibly have collaborated on their stories given the continuous lockdown, shows their (the prisoners) accusations to be true.”

Without taking away from the seriousness of the situation for all of the prisoners at Walla Walla, it should be observed that perhaps the most precarious situation of all is that of Carl Harp, a member of the Walla Walla prisoners’ group the Anarchist Black Dragon Collective.

After the assault by prison guards, Carl disappeared from sight for two weeks and then reappeared in California’s San Quentin Prison—one of the toughest in the country.

In a recent letter, Carl discussed his situation, "From July 8<sup>th</sup> until July 17<sup>th</sup> I was in the Walla Walla General Hospital where guards from the prison attempted to get me. On the 17<sup>th</sup> I was taken to the Walla Walla City Jail and held until the 19<sup>th</sup> where threats to my life were made through the jail windows to me, and due to this I was immediately transferred to the Franklin County (Jail), and I remained there until July 20<sup>th</sup>..."

After that, Carl was given a lie detector test, which he passed, and was flown, against his wishes, to San Quentin. "I wasn't off the plane ten minutes when San Quentin guards took me in a back room of the airport security office to strip me and I was told, 'We know all about you so one funny move and you're dead.'"

He went on to say that although he was being given "excellent medical care," he expressed his fear that he might be "silenced literally...when the heat dies down."

"Some people are calling for an unconditional release in my case and that is not an unrealistic demand in my situation. I am dead at the worst, in the least always to fear for my life and therefore subjected to transfers, segregation, etc. from guards. Misery on top of the misery of prison life. I'm not afraid, just sad. I will stand again and again no matter the outcome for Human rights, no matter the pain, suffering, the misery, the exile, even if I am alone in my stand. The support out there, which I am here just now learning, moves me deeply and I love you all..."

The last we heard, Carl is being held in double maximum security ("handcuffed everywhere I go outside my cell") and kept in a cell 5 feet wide 10 feet long, with inadequate lighting and ventilation or heat.

It's obvious to us that Carl and some of the other five prisoners who received such savage beatings last July 8, did so not only for their outspokenness concerning their rights, but also because they are members of the Anarchist Black Dragon Collective. It's also obvious that, if allowed, the prison guards will continue their brutal treatment of these men along with the rest of the prison population. They may even go as far as killing them—it's not as if it doesn't happen.

Defense actions for the prisoners are well on the way, but these brothers need as much of our assistance as is possible.

Finances are critical at this time and money donations are the biggest need.

Also, if you'd like to drop a letter to any of the prisoners, we're sure they would like to hear from you. Below are some addresses of the prisoners mentioned in this article and their defense groups. PLEASE DO NOT MAKE ANY MENTION OF THE ANARCHIST BLACK DRAGON COLLECTIVE IN LETTERS OR ON ENVELOPES WHEN WRITING PRISONERS.

Send donations to: Walla Walla Support Committee, c/o Withey, 2101 Smith Tower, Seattle WA 98104, or Barbara Connolly, Box 98772, Seattle WA 98104.

Robert Washburn, 25117, Shane Green, 628148, John H. Bosch, 253269: all at Box 520, Walla Walla, WA 99362. Carl Harp, C-7100 California State Prison, San Quentin, CA 94964, or send letters of protest to: Gov. Dixie Lee Ray, Office of the Governor, Olympia WA 98504.

Also, the Anarchist Black Dragon Collective publishes a regular journal. The latest issue, No. 5, can be obtained, along with current information on the case from: Solidarity Committee, Box 2, Stn. La Cite, Montreal, Que. Canada H2W M2N, or from the Fifth Estate.



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