

2011: Inspiring Outbreaks— Protests, Repression and Resistance



Occupy Wall Street: One of the various working groups that meet throughout the day to discuss plans.



Occupy Oakland marching on the day of the general strike.

The Occupy Movement: A Fresh Wind of Resistance

A fresh wind of resistance rose up in September when people occupied Zuccotti Park near Wall Street, the financial heart of the U.S. empire. The Occupy protests spread to cities across the U.S., bringing to the surface profound discontent with the inequality and injustice in this society, and this movement has raised the hopes of millions in this country and worldwide. The atmosphere and discourse in society is changing, and millions are thinking about and asking big questions about the ways things are—and whether and how a different future would be possible. This movement has been repressed by the powers-that-be in what appear to be coordinated attacks to savagely evict encampment after encampment across the country. As 2011 comes to a close, this movement stands at a crossroads.



December 12—Coordinated actions by West Coast Occupy movements disrupted, and in some cases shut down, ports up and down the West Coast. These actions by thousands and thousands, were a significant continuation of resistance to the heartless and oppressive domination and way of life under this society. The actions also represented a powerful response by the Occupy movement to a coordinated nationwide effort by authorities to attack and crush the movement with police raids and brutality, and to coerce the movement into acceptable channels.

Above, a general strike in Oakland had also shut down the port on November 2. Scott Olsen (center-front), an Iraq war vet, is on the front lines after being seriously injured in October by a police projectile canister at Occupy Oakland.



Protesters carry a replica of Keystone XL oil pipeline to protest increasing the amount of oil flow from tar sands in Alberta, Canada.

Standing Up Against the Killing of Earth's Ecosystems

Washington, D.C., August 20-September 3: More than 1,250 people were arrested in sit-ins at the White House to protest the Keystone XL oil pipeline, which would double the amount of oil flowing from the tar sands in Alberta, Canada to the U.S. Gulf of Mexico coast—at a time when the planet's environment has already been taken to the precipice of major disaster. Tar sands oil extraction and burning is extremely energy intensive, producing three times more greenhouse gas (the main cause of global warming) than conventional oil production. And the larger battle to save the planet from global climate change and the overall ecological emergency is ever-more urgent.



The System Executes Troy Davis in the Face of Widespread Protest

Troy Davis, a 42-year-old Black man, had been on death row for 22 years, despite compelling evidence that he was unjustly convicted and sentenced to death. A worldwide movement developed to demand his freedom. Despite this outcry, Troy Davis was executed—murdered—on September 21. The outrageous execution raised deep questions about the legitimacy of the U.S. system. In the spirit of Davis' final call to "continue the fight," many hundreds of youth and others took to the streets following his execution.

Crucial Challenges



Fighting the New Jim Crow of Mass Incarceration

The United States—the richest and most powerful nation—has 5% of the world's population, but 25% of its prisoners. More than 2.3 million people are behind bars in the country that brags it is the “leader of the free world”—because the system has criminalized large sections of the people, especially Black and Latino youth. Hundreds of thousands have been imprisoned for simple possession of banned drugs. In prison, people are subjected to horrible, inhumane conditions. After release from prison, millions of people are stamped with a badge of deprivation and shame—denied job

opportunities, access to public housing, food stamps, government loans for education, the right to vote, and more. All this is the result of conscious policies adopted by the ruling class. Author Michelle Alexander exposed these profound injustices in her book *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. There is a great and pressing need for determined mass struggle against this intolerable situation. This past year saw inspiring resistance against the New Jim Crow of mass incarceration—which must continue and spread in the next year.



Photo: Li Onesto/Revolution

STOP Stop-and-Frisk!

The NYPD is on pace to stop and frisk more than 700,000 people in 2011—more than 1,900 people each and every day. The blatantly discriminatory and unconstitutional stop and frisks have been going on for years, and more than 85% of the victims are Black and Latino. Over 90% of them were doing nothing illegal when they were stopped by the police and humiliated, brutalized, or worse. On October 21, an audacious new movement announced itself in Harlem, aimed at STOPPING stop and frisk. Hundreds marched to a police precinct. Then Cornel West, Carl Dix of the Revolutionary Communist Party, Reverend Stephen Phelps from Riverside Church, and about 30 others were arrested in a civil disobedience protest at the police station that broke through significantly in the mainstream media. Carl Dix said about this movement, “We’re going to continue something that’s been started, that has the potential to create a thing where people all across the country are looking at this and saying, ‘You know what those people in New York are doing? We could do that here.’ There is injustice going on all across the country. There are certainly attacks targeted at Blacks and Latinos all across the country. And similar to the way the Occupy Wall Street movement spread like wildfire, we want to create conditions where this can spread.”

Revolutionary Strategy

Some Principles for Building A Movement for Revolution

By Bob Avakian,
Chairman of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA

At every point, we must be searching out the key concentrations of social contradictions and the methods and forms which can strengthen the political consciousness of the masses, as well as their fighting capacity and organization in carrying out political resistance against the crimes of this system; which can increasingly bring the necessity, and the possibility, of a radically different world to life for growing numbers of people; and which can strengthen the understanding and determination of the advanced, revolutionary-minded masses in particular to take up our strategic objectives not merely as far-off and essentially abstract goals (or ideals) but as things to be actively striven for and built toward.

The objective and orientation must be to carry out work which, together with the development of the objective situation, can transform the political terrain, so that the legitimacy of the established order, and the right and ability of the ruling class to rule, is called into question, in an acute and active sense, throughout society; so that resistance to this system becomes increasingly broad, deep and determined; so that the “pole” and the organized vanguard force of revolutionary communism is greatly strengthened; and so that, at the decisive time, this advanced force is able to lead the struggle of millions, and tens of millions, to make revolution.

Fight the power, and transform the people, for revolution.

October 22 National Day of Protest to Stop Police Brutality

Thousands across the country, determined and fired up, marched and rallied on the 16th National Day of Protest to Stop Police Brutality, Repression, and the Criminalization of a Generation. There were large turnouts for the protest in cities like New York, Seattle, and Los Angeles where Occupy protesters joined forces with families of victims of police murder and brutality. The context for this year's O22 also included other upsurges of resistance—like the California prisoner hunger strike, outrage against the execution of Troy Davis, and an emerging movement to STOP “Stop and Frisk.” The O22 protests put a focus on the need for continued—and heightened—resistance against accelerating police murder and brutality, sharpening repression on many fronts, and the mass incarceration of 2.3+ million people in the U.S., targeted especially at Black and Latino people.

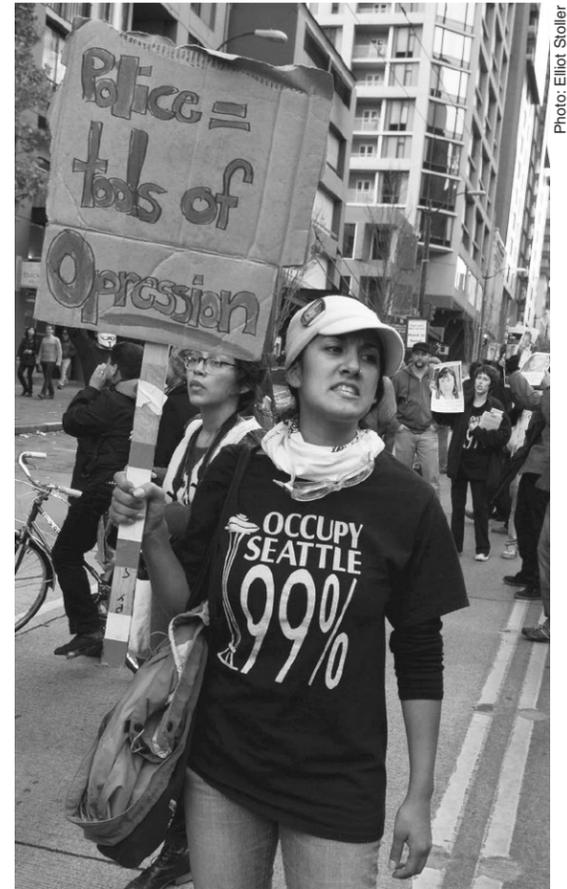
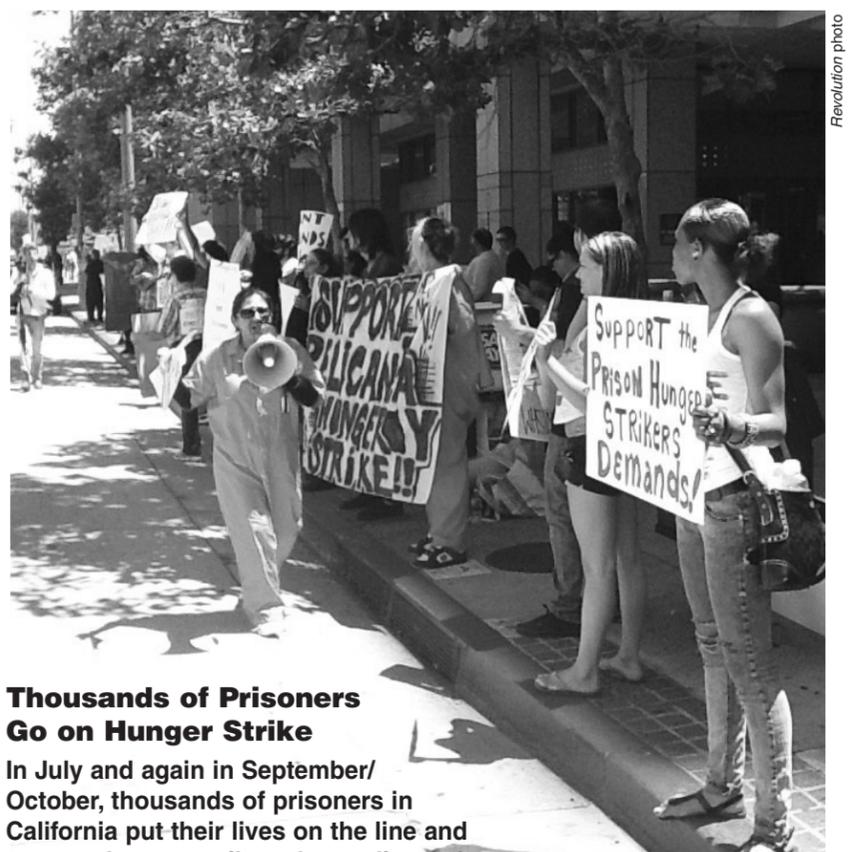


Photo: Elliot Stoller



Revolution photo

Thousands of Prisoners Go on Hunger Strike

In July and again in September/October, thousands of prisoners in California put their lives on the line and went on hunger strikes, demanding to be treated as human beings. Their protest targeted the barbaric, inhumane conditions throughout the California prisons, especially in the “Security Housing Units” (SHUs) where thousands are held in solitary confinement—conditions that amount to torture. The prisoners are struggling courageously to expose to the world the barbaric conditions in U.S. prisons. Support for these prisoners must not just continue but get stronger, broader, and more determined. There is a responsibility for those on the outside to fight to force the authorities to meet the demands of the prisoners and to stop the punishment and retaliation against the hunger strikers.