



POST OFFICE BOX 110034 BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11211

Updates for September 11th

24 Aug - A Move to Free the Cuban Five

Danny Glover and Saul Landau recently visited Cuban Five prisoner Gerardo Hernandez. We've included the article they wrote about the visit and other news regarding the Five.

MORE:

People stop in Victorville California 85 miles northeast of Los Angeles because they have to see someone at one of its several prisons (federal, state, county and city) or have prison-related business, or because they're hot and tired coming back from Las Vegas to Los Angeles and the thought of a swimming pool and an air conditioned room seem irresistible.

We book rooms so we can get to the prison early and spend more time with Gerardo Hernandez. We know the way from Highway 15 west into rolling desert hills from whence one sees a massive gray concrete structure – the federal penitentiary complex.

We fill out the forms, pass through the X-ray machine, get patted down by a guard, get our wrists stamped with indelible ink that shows up under a scanner in the next room, and by 8:45 we are seated in the Visiting room, with black and Latino wives and kids who are seeing husbands and daddies.

Gerardo emerges; we hug and start talking. He told us that Martin Garbus, his lawyer, had filed a new writ (available at www.thecuban5.org) declaring Gerardo's trial violated basic law and the Constitution, and should be voided – freeing him and his comrades from their long sentences.

Documents show, according to the brief, that the U.S. government paid a host of Miami-based journalists to file negative stories on Gerardo and his fellow defendants (The Cuban 5). These U.S. government paid-for stories appeared in newspapers, magazines, radio and TV and influenced public opinion in the community, including jury members and their families, the writ argues, and therefore calls into deep question whether a fair trial in Miami was possible for the five accused men.

The brief states that the U.S. “government’s successful secret subversion of the Miami print, radio, and television media to pursue a conviction was unprecedented,” and “violated the integrity of the trial and the Due Process Clause of the Constitution.”

Garbus further argues that “The Government, through millions of dollars of illegal payments and at least a thousand articles published over a six-year period, interfered with the trial and persuaded the jury to convict. The Government’s Response to this motion is factually barren and legally incorrect. The conviction must now be vacated.”

In the lengthy brief, Garbus shows how journalists wrote and spoke for news outlets for the sole purpose of painting a distorted picture of what the defendants were doing, which was trying to prevent Miami-based terrorism in Cuba, and instead, as Garbus’ brief shows, to portray them as military spies trying to prepare south Florida for a military invasion from Cuba.

The *Miami Herald* fired the journalists on the grounds they had broken a basic code – taking money from the government to write stories. The brief states that “Thomas Fiedler, the Executive Editor and Vice President of *The Miami Herald*, when talking about the monies paid to his staff members and members of other media entities by the Government, said it was wrongful because it was “to carry out the mission of the U.S. Government, a propaganda mission. It was wrong even if it had not been secret.” It was secret because the government officials knew it wrong and illegal.

Gerardo and four companions have served almost 14 years in federal lock up for trying to stop right wing Miami

thugs from bombing Havana. In 1997, a series of bombs hit hotels, restaurants, bars and clubs. One tourist died and many Cuban workers in these establishments were wounded. The bombings were orchestrated by Luis Posada Carriles, resident of Miami today, and financed by right wing exile money.

As we sat in the visiting room surrounded by mostly people of color, with four guards watching us and the other visitors, we nibbled on salted snacks from the vending machine (“prison gourmet”).

Gerardo told us about his time in “the hole,” for no bad behavior on his part, but for his “protection”! He spoke of deprivation of the routine monotony. “Look around,” he said, “you don’t see a lot of middle class people here. There were none. Most of the prisoners were black or Latino, plus one who Gerardo thought was a descendent of poor Okies. All share a lack of money to hire good lawyers.

“I was transferred here from Lompoc in 2004 because Lompoc was not going to be a maximum security prison any more,” Gerardo told us. As if this cultured, disciplined man needed maximum security. We wondered how we would endure the punishment of imprisonment in a supposedly correctional and rehabilitative institution, where no correction or rehabilitation takes place.

We drove from the prison to the Ontario airport and asked ourselves: What, we asked ourselves, was a well-educated Cuban man doing in such a place? The U.S. government knew the Cuban agents had infiltrated Cuban exile groups that intended to cause damage to Cuba’s tourist economy. The five were fighting terrorism and sharing information with the FBI. They should never have been charged and now, almost 14 years of prison later, they should at last be freed.

President Obama could and should pardon them and send them home. Cuba has indicated it would respond by freeing Alan Gross, who worked for a company contracted to USAID with a design to destabilize the Cuban government and was convicted in Cuba. It’s time for President Obama to put this issue on his agenda.

Visa Campaign for the Cuban Five

Due to the U.S. government’s denial to approve visas, Gerardo Hernandez and Rene Gonzalez have not seen their wives since their incarceration! Others in the Cuban 5 have not seen their parents, wives and children with regularity. The U.S. government has taken prolonged periods of time to issue them visas.

The U.S. government’s denial of visitation rights is a cruel and horrible form of psychological torture. Their rationale for denial is ridiculous and baseless; none of these family members are a threat to national security.

We are asking people to fax or mail out this letter to Ms. Navanetham Pillay, The NEW High Commissioner of Human Rights of the Office for Human Rights-United Nations Office at Geneva. We are asking her to intercede on behalf of the Cuban 5’s mothers/wives to pressure the U.S. government to grant them VISAs to visit their husbands/sons!

Sign it and mail/fax to:

Ms. Navanetham Pillay, High Commissioner of Human Rights
Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights-United Nations Office at Geneva
8-14 Avenue de la Paix 1211
Geneva 10, Switzerland
Fax: + 41 22 917 9011

September 12th: Picket for the Cuban Five

September 12th, 2012 will mark the 14th year anniversary of the arrest of the Cuban 5; five US held Cuban political prisoners incarcerated for protecting Cuba from U.S. sponsored terrorist actions.

In 2006, President Ricardo Alarcon, of the Cuban Parliament, declared Sept. 12th through October 6th to be a period of time to raise awareness on the case of the Cuban 5. The Popular Education Project to Free the Cuban 5 is committed to building an international movement for the Cuban 5’s freedom by extending this period to be a full month (Sept. 12th-October 12th) and calling it "Free the Cuban 5 Month."

During this month we organize a calendar of events to raise awareness about the Cuban 5 and how people can support their release!

Please support the Free the Cuban 5 picket on Sept 12th, the Vicente Feliu concert on Saturday Sept. 15th at 1199, the special Film screening of "South of the Border" on Sept. 22nd and support the Cuban 5 call in day on Oct. 12th!

26 Aug - Violent clash had roots in shadowy movement

We're including a corporate news article that attempts to put the Tinley Park 5 case in context, namely in trying to provide information about Anti-Racist Action.

MORE:

Since dropping out of Bloomington High School South more than a decade ago, Jason Sutherlin has bounced from apartment to apartment across the Bloomington area, leaving unpaid rent bills and liens in his wake.

He has also jumped from one odd job to another: bartender, cook, factory worker, shop clerk. Along the way, he spent two years in prison for burglary.

With his beefy build and neck tattoo, Sutherlin appears to be a rough character. But some of his friends see another side: someone with a soft spot for the working man and passion for fighting racism, fueled in part by growing up in a diverse family.

Those two sides of Sutherlin are now playing out in one of the strangest law-and-order stories in the nation.

Since May, Sutherlin -- along with two younger brothers and two friends -- has been locked up in Cook County Jail, awaiting trial on charges that they stormed into a family restaurant in the Chicago suburb of Tinley Park with more than a dozen other people and ambushed an unsuspecting group of white nationalists.

Authorities say the Sutherlin group shouted anti-racist slogans and swung hammers and steel batons at the lunch group in a mob-style beating. Food and furniture went flying. Ten people were injured. Some of them were clobbered so hard they needed staples to close head wounds.

It was a beating that reverberated around the country. Hundreds of newspapers and websites carried stories, describing it as a bizarre, violent meet-up between white supremacists and militant anti-racists.

Sutherlin and his four co-defendants, all from Indiana, are charged with felony mob action, aggravated battery and criminal damage to property.

But the tale of the "Tinley Park Five" -- as they have come to be known by some -- is also part of a larger story about a resurging militant anti-racist movement and a little-known group called Anti-Racist Action.

Anti-Racist Action is a loose network of anarchists, anti-fascists and anti-racists that specializes in disrupting neo-Nazi and white supremacist groups. ARA has affiliated organizations in various locations, including the Hoosier Anti-Racist Movement (HARM), which counts the Tinley Park Five among its disciples.

On its website, ARA makes its mission clear.

"Whenever fascists are organizing or active in public, we're there," says the website, adorned with photos of hooded, masked demonstrators. "We don't believe in ignoring them or staying away from them. Never let the Nazis have the street!"

Neither the ARA nor HARM has claimed responsibility for the restaurant melee. However, the HARM website

contains a plea for money to defend and free the "Tinley Park Five." Supporters are trying to raise bail money, which was set at nearly \$1 million for the group.

Sutherlin was affiliated with HARM, acknowledged his lawyer, Chicago defense attorney Aaron Goldstein.

How Jason Sutherlin, 33, and his brothers -- Dylan, 20, and Cody, 23 -- wound up associated with an anarchist, militant organization remains something of a mystery. None of the Sutherlins' lawyers would permit an interview with their clients, and they said they weren't prepared to discuss the facts or their defense strategy in any detail.

But some of Jason Sutherlin's friends and former employers offered recollections and insights. What emerges is a story of a family marked by divorces, single parents, menial work and plenty of moving around. The family was racially diverse: Jason is white but has a half sister whose father is black.

The three boys grew up mostly with their mother, who did housecleaning. The family moved often, a trait that the brothers followed as young adults. Jason Sutherlin had at least six different addresses since 2001, all in the Bloomington area. Cody and Dylan had a handful of addresses to their names.

Jason Sutherlin didn't care for school and dropped out of Bloomington South in his junior year, said George Cummings of Bloomington, a longtime friend who was a year behind in school and later lived with him for three years.

Once out of school, Sutherlin supported himself with a series of low-paying jobs, including cook, bar bouncer and bartender. In his spare time, he enjoyed playing video games and hanging out with his friends.

"He enjoyed sitting around, making plans for the future," Cummings said.

By this time, his social philosophies already seemed to be taking root. As a teen, Jason enjoyed hanging out at Peoples Park, a popular hangout near the Indiana University campus that has gained local fame as a gathering place for demonstrators and activists. The park's history is well-known by social activists. In 1968, a black-owned store on the site known as the Black Market was firebombed by local members of the Ku Klux Klan.

The building was torn down, and the locals renamed the lot Peoples Park in honor of a park by the same name in Berkeley, Calif.

A friend of Jason's, Jacob Domke, said the park and its lore were part of their social influence.

"We knew the history, but because we were growing up in a different time, we thought we'd be shielded from that kind of hate," Domke told the Chicago Tribune.

But in the summer of 1999, that perception changed for many in the Bloomington area, when a white supremacist named Benjamin Smith drove through the city as part of a three-day, two-state shooting spree that killed two people and wounded nine others.

The shooting killed a 26-year-old IU graduate student, Won-Joon Yoon, as he was walking to services at the Korean United Methodist Church.

In the fall of 2011, Occupy Bloomington took over Peoples Park, pitching dozens of tents and establishing a community kitchen, a library and an assembly area.

Jason Sutherlin gravitated to the park in his free time, Cummings said, and became involved in the Occupy movement.

"He was part of the rallying group," Cummings said. "They'd go out, get information to people, hand out fliers, and lead chants during marches and protests."

He would leave in time to go to work as a bouncer at the Upstairs Pub on East Kirkwood Avenue. It was the latest of his many jobs over the years. Along the way, he impressed some bosses with hard work and a good attitude.

"He was a jovial guy, very friendly," said Mike Cassady, owner of Michael's Uptown Cafe, where Sutherlin worked as a cook for a few months about a decade ago. "I wouldn't call him refined, but I've seen rougher."

Another boss apparently didn't see that upbeat side. Keddy McClain, general manager of Amused Clothing, a skateboard and used clothing store in Bloomington, remembered Sutherlin as "lazy, slovenly and incompetent." He said Sutherlin rarely showed ambition or customer-service skills during his time as a clerk.

Jason was about a decade older than his two brothers, Cody and Dylan. Like Jason, Cody gravitated to blue-collar jobs. He delivered pizzas and spent his spare time refurbishing old cars.

It shocked some who knew them to learn the brothers were implicated in the Chicago brawl.

"We all participated in scuffles as friends," Cummings said. "But really, tracking people down in a restaurant and beating the tar out of them was not something we found socially acceptable."

On May 19, police and prosecutors say approximately 18 people dressed in black and wearing scarves drove to the Ashford House restaurant in Tinley Park in three cars and parked in a rear lot.

They burst into the family restaurant at 12:35 p.m., during the height of the lunch hour, waving steel batons and hammers. They attacked a group of people meeting in the restaurant.

Police said the attackers had reason to believe the lunch group had ties to a white supremacist organization. Some of the men at the meeting were members of the European Heritage Association, which had organized the meeting through posts on a white nationalist website called Stormfront. That website had listed information about the lunch meeting, which it called the 5th annual White Nationalist Economic Summit and Illinois White Nationalist Meet-and-Greet.

After the confrontation, the attackers fled in three cars, police said. The restaurant owner took down the vehicle descriptions and plates, and called police.

An off-duty sergeant saw one of the cars, a red Dodge Neon, heading toward Interstate 80, and pulled it over. Backup police arrived and arrested all five people in the car. All were from Southern Indiana.

Charged along with the Sutherlins were John Tucker, 26, Spencer, and Alex Stuck, 22, Bloomington.

Thirteen other members of the group escaped and still are being sought by police.

At the restaurant, police also arrested two other people who were part of the group attacked. They were Steven Speers, 33, Grand Forks, N.D., who was arrested on a warrant for possession of child pornography in Texas; and Francis Gilroy Jr., 65, West Palm Beach, Fla., who was charged with unlawful possession of weapons by a felon.

No trial date has been set. All of the Tinley Park Five have pleaded not guilty and are using defense lawyers who volunteered to take the cases without pay.

The police have issued two fairly short statements, putting the blame squarely on the Indiana group as the

attackers. But police are holding tight onto the incident report, witness statements and the restaurant's security videotape of the brawl. Under the circumstances, it could take months for the case to come to trial and for all the facts to emerge.

Jason Sutherlin's attorney, Goldstein, said it's unclear what really happened at the restaurant. It might have been a shouting match, he said, that escalated into a brawl.

In recent interviews, several lawyers for the five said they are still examining evidence. In the meantime, they describe their clients as humanitarians and hard workers, and said most of them without criminal records.

Sara Garber, a lawyer for Stuck, said her client did not have a criminal record and did volunteer work at homeless shelters in Bloomington and "raised money for social justice."

Stuart Smith, a lawyer for Tucker, said his read on the incident was far different than the police version. He said the accused only intended to start a verbal protest but were physically attacked by the white extremists eating lunch. "Several of the neo-Nazis ran out to get weapons from their vehicles," Smith said. The Indiana group, he said, merely acted in self-defense.

Brian Barrido, lawyer for Dylan Sutherlin, said his client drove one of the cars but never set foot in the restaurant. "He has no clue what happened inside the Ashford House," he said.

And then there's Jason Sutherlin -- the oldest of the group, and the one with the most serious criminal record, with a felony burglary and two years in prison. His lawyer, Goldstein, defended former Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich on federal corruption charges.

Goldstein pointed out that Sutherlin has asserted his innocence and has family members in Indiana to take care of, including his wheelchair-bound father and a 20-month-old toddler living with the child's mother.

As for a legal strategy, Goldstein is as secretive as the organization at the center of the case.

"Exactly what we're going to say at trial," he said, "I can't say yet."

Although HARM has not directly taken credit for the Tinley Park attack, three days after the confrontation, a headline appeared on its blog at indianaantifa.wordpress.com: "Support the Tinley Park 5." Underneath was a link to a WePay account.

The site is trying to raise \$250,000 to "secure adequate legal representation" and help support the defendants' families.

"The Support Fund for the Tinley Park Five neither condones nor encourages violence, nor any other illegal activity," the post said. "This fund is simply a method of gathering support for the defense of people who are innocent until proven otherwise in a court of law. The family and friends of the Tinley Park Five have collectively decided not to speak with the press at this time as they fear for their safety. The mothers, fathers, and partners of those involved are receiving hourly threats of violence."

As of Saturday, the website says \$7,101 has been raised, or about 3 percent of the group's goal.

Nine days after the attack, the HARM blog posted a lengthy item explaining and defending the Tinley Park confrontation. The posting appears to have been originally written and published by the Workers World Party, a small socialist party based in New York that describes itself as a supporter of "oppressed peoples of the world."

The long, rambling blog post compared the Ashford House attack to other "great militants" throughout history, such as abolitionists John Brown and Nat Turner. It defended the need for organized violence to overturn

oppression. It named HARM as the organizer of the attack.

The operators of the HARM blog did not return several emails requesting an interview.

Much about HARM and Anti-Racist Action remains shrouded in mystery. It operates with a very informal structure, without an organizational hierarchy or formal meetings. Like many clandestine groups, it seems to communicate mostly by word of mouth and over the Internet.

The group is known for not talking to the media. Its website warns supporters to steer clear of reporters. "They are desperate for any chance to portray the Tinley Park Five and their supporters as crazy fanatics."

The website and HARM's blog, which quietly launched in December, are the only sources of information attributed directly to the group.

HARM's first blog post was just four sentences long -- terse and cryptic. The message took pains to disavow illegal behavior.

"This blog will function as a means for antifascists throughout the state to communicate with each other and the antifascist community worldwide," the post read. "This is a site for informational and ideological resources only. This site will not be used for the planning or promotion of actions (duh!) nor do the operators of the site condone any illegal activity. If you are interested in writing for this site, sharing information, or would like to report racist organization or activity in your community please contact us."

The very next post, nearly a month later, showed the group's impatience with Occupy Indianapolis, for what it said were timid and ineffective tactics in demonstrating around the Statehouse in fairly small numbers.

"We find Occupy Indianapolis to consist primarily of armchair activists and internet warriors who will never have more than their non-involved sympathies to offer," the post said.

Over the next few months, the blog sharpened its language and goals ("Our fight is in the streets!") and attacked people it considered bigots and racists.

That mirrors the rhetoric of the Anti-Racist Movement, which formed more than 20 years ago in Minneapolis as a reaction to the white-extremist movement. It has chapters around the country, including HARM.

That such a chapter exists in Indiana is notable, given the state's well-documented history of racial friction and intolerance. A century ago, Indiana was a stronghold of the Ku Klux Klan, a secret society that terrorized blacks and minority ethnic and religious groups. In the 1920s, more than half the members of the Indiana General Assembly and the governor were members of the Klan.

Although the Klan's influence has diminished over the decades, Indiana is still home to numerous white nationalist, neo-Nazi and racist skinhead groups.

It's difficult to get a read on the size of the ARA, how it attracts new activists, or how many affiliates it has, because of the secretive nature of the organization.

What the group says about itself is pretty concise. It hates bigotry of all kinds and welcomes anyone who will join its cause.

"The Anti-Racist Action network consist of people from all different backgrounds, with lots of different viewpoints," the national website says. "With countless chapters out there, it's not surprising that no two are alike!"

Overall, the group's mission seems clear: to get in the face of white extremists -- using words, elbows, fists and feet.

"If you see Nazis, then beat them up," says a poster on the group's website (antiracistaction.org), showing a black man pushing a hooded, robed figure to the ground.

The website says its followers agree on four principles:

Meeting the opposition in the street. "Wherever fascists are organizing or active in public, we're there," the website says. "We don't believe in ignoring them or staying away from them. Never let the Nazis have the street!"

Not relying on police or courts to deliver justice. The group expresses little to no faith in the establishment. Like many anarchists, Anti-Racist Action seems to view police as a protector of the rich and powerful.

Coming to the aid of other anti-fascists.

Supporting abortion rights, reproductive freedom and opposing a wide raft of ills, from racism and sexism to discrimination against the disabled and oppressed. "We want a classless, free society."

Just who is behind this movement -- or the ARA or HARM specifically -- is hard to know. Many of the photos on the Anti-Racist Action's website -- as well as websites and blogs run by local chapters -- show people in hoods and scarves over their faces. Most appear to be young men.

"They don't want anyone to know who they are," said David Schneider, an investigative researcher at the Anti-Defamation League, an anti-bigotry group based in New York City. "They deliberately try to keep a low profile."

Not surprisingly, some who have been on the receiving end of the Anti-Racist Action violence have harsh words. They say the group's tactics amount to terrorism and trample on First Amendment rights of free speech, free press and free assembly.

Matt Parrott, Carmel, who founded and ran a small white-advocacy group called Hoosier Nation, said anti-fascists regularly try to shut down his events. In April 2008, Parrott's group hosted David Irving, a British author and Holocaust denier, during a cross-country speaking tour. The night before the speech at the MCL cafeteria in Carmel, someone threw three bricks through the restaurant's windows, with notes saying "Shut David Irving Down" and "No Nazis."

The South Side Chicago chapter of Anti-Racist Action took credit for the attack on its website. It said it would continue to seek out every Holocaust denier and every white nationalist. "We wish them to be a target of war every minute and every second of there (sic) lives," the website said.

Parrott called Anti-Racist Action "a bunch of thugs" who have no respect for law and order. He said his family has been harassed and received death threats, and friends of his have been spray-painted and threatened with baseball bats. He has recently shut down his organization and is moving to Michigan.

"I think it's bad when people like me aren't allowed to speak freely and are given death threats," Parrott said.

Anti-Racist Action's tactics of violence and intimidation have been condemned by numerous organizations that also fight bigotry and promote civil rights.

Schneider of the Anti-Defamation League said his group's tactics are to work with law enforcement and to expose racists, not to intimidate them with threats and violence.

But HARM and the larger militant anti-racist movement clearly sees justification. Echoing the early philosophy of Malcolm X, this post on the HARM blog perhaps best expresses their viewpoint generally, and as it relates to the Tinley Park Five:

"No matter one's view of the Five's choice of tactics, the main question is: Don't the workers and oppressed have the right to independently strike back, by any means necessary, when their rights are being threatened or denied by forces of political reaction?"

27 Aug - Charges Dropped Against May Day Protestor Maria Jannett Morales

After reviewing YouTube video of the May Day riot, King County prosecutors dismissed all charges against a protestor accused of punching a bike cop.

MORE:

Maria Jannett Morales, 30, was charged with assault in the fourth degree, a felony, for an incident that occurred near the intersection of First Avenue and Pike Street a few minutes before 6 p.m. on May 1, just as the day's rioting was starting to simmer down.

According to a probable cause statement submitted to prosecutors by Seattle police, bike cop Sonya Fry was ordering a crowd to move back when Morales walked up, said "okay bitch," and punched the female officer in the chest with a closed fist. Morales then allegedly kicked another cop in the leg.

SPD's version of events was called into question by amateur video from the scene uploaded to YouTube. The footage seems to show Morales walking past Fry, obeying orders. Then, after a brief verbal exchange, Fry grabs Morales by the shoulders and hair and pulls her down.

On August 17, the charge was abruptly dropped. Dan Donahoe, spokesman for the prosecutor's office, says the video was a factor.

"We reviewed video of the alleged incident and felt that we could no longer prove a case beyond a reasonable doubt so the charge was dismissed," Donahoe says.

Aaron Pelley, Morales' attorney, says prosecutors had no business filing charges in the first place.

"Maria didn't really hit that officer," Pelley says. "There's nothing in my mind that thinks somebody didn't yell at that officer, or she didn't feel somebody hit her. But as far as I can tell, it wasn't my client."

Morales has no criminal record aside from a few traffic tickets. Nevertheless, Pelley says she lost her job as an emergency room technician in Bellevue because of the arrest.

"I don't know that she comes out ahead on all of this," Pelley says. "But we're certainly glad the prosecutors looked at the evidence and decided to dismiss."

Morales is the second May Day protestor to have charges dismissed because of YouTube video. Joshua Garland was similarly cleared of wrongdoing on May 15.

Two others have pleaded guilty. Robert Ditrani pleaded guilty on June 22 to disorderly conduct. He was sentenced July 6 and received a 90-day suspended sentence and 12 months of probation. Paul Campiche pleaded guilty on August 22 to attempted assault in the third degree. He will be sentenced October 5.

27 Aug – Jalil Muntaqim denied parole

As parole boards embolden themselves with judicial power by deciding a prisoner's eligibility for parole based on their crime and not their behavior while imprisoned, we see the consequences for comrades like Jalil Muntaqim. Jalil was again recently denied parole. We've included a letter from him.

MORE:

First, I want to thank all of you who wrote letters and signed the petition in support of my release on parole. We did everything right!

However, the problem is that the New York State parole system is overwhelmingly comprised of law enforcement advocates and sympathizers prejudicial to community growth and development. Obviously, if the community's needs were supported by policy makers, crime would decrease, job security in the overall Prison Industrial Complex (PIC) would be threatened, and the profit-based prison system would be less profitable. Therefore any prisoner who advocates, as I do, community control of the institutions, is deemed a threat to the PIC's future, and we are continuously denied release on parole.

We presented an excellent parole plan, with over fifty support letters, 750 names on a signature petition, two independent psychological risk assessment reports favoring release on parole, the DOCCS own computer Risk Assessment analysis and report that indicated **low risk** to be a recidivist, two housing and work assurance letters, no prison disciplinary reports, every recognized certificate for rehabilitation programs, copies of High School diploma and two college degrees (BA in Sociology and BS in Psychology) and, just as importantly, two letters from the victim's family expressing forgiveness and urging my release on parole.

Nonetheless, as you can see, the parole board issued a "boilerplate" denial in abject disregard of the factual record of community support for my release and return to the community, disrespecting the victim's family and their own risk assessment analysis and report.

It has become ever more apparent that the New York State Division of Parole is a political institution with a right-wing agenda, which Governor Andrew Cuomo supports. He recently failed to appoint a single Black person as a commissioner to the parole board, despite the fact the 48% of all New York State prisoners are Black.

The parole denial will be appealed, so the fight for freedom continues. We need a community review board of the parole system, community direct involvement in the decision-making process on who will be returned to the community. Again, thank you for your support.

27 Aug - Latest news regarding Pacific Northwest grand jury

Two of the anarchists previously subpoenaed in the Pacific North West are set to appear before the secret grand jury in Seattle this Thursday, September 13. Previous hearings have been delayed through a combination of legal maneuvering and an outright refusal to testify. This time it looks as though US Attorney Jenny Durkan is preparing to jail those who refuse to testify. We're including several solidarity statements and the details for a fax campaign below .

MORE:

"Solidarity is what the state fears" by grand jury resister Leah-Lynn Plante

My name is Leah-Lynn Plante, and I am one of the people who has been subpoenaed to a secret grand jury, meeting in Seattle on August 30.

This will be the second time I have appeared before the grand jury, and the second time I have refused to testify. The first time was on August 2. I appeared, as ordered, and I identified myself. Then the US Attorney asked if I would be willing to answer her questions. I said, No, and was issued another subpoena, this time for the 30th.

A month later, my answer is still the same. No, I will not answer their questions. I believe that these hearings are politically motivated. The government wants to use them to collect information that it can use in a campaign of repression. I refuse to have any part of it.

It is likely that the government will put me in jail for that refusal.

I hate the very idea of prison. But I know, if I am sent there, I will not be alone. I can only speak for myself, but I have every faith that the others subpoenaed to these hearings will likewise refuse. And I know that hundreds of people have called the US Attorney demanding that they end this tribunal. Hundreds of organizations, representing thousands of people, signed onto a statement expressing solidarity with those of us under attack and

demanding an end to this sort of repression.

I know that those people will continue to support me, and the others subpoenaed, and the targets of the investigation. That spirit of solidarity is exactly what the state fears. It is the source of our strength, yours and mine. And that strength shows itself in every act of resistance.

Dean Spade: Dismantle All the Apparatuses that Police, Deport, Imprison, and Destroy Us

The recent FBI raids of activists' homes in the Pacific Northwest are part of a long tradition of political repression in the US. Law enforcement at the local, state, and federal levels exists to protect the interests of the rich, sustain white supremacy, and prevent the kinds of transformative change that people in the Pacific Northwest and all around the world are demanding loudly. The blatant violence and targeting of the recent raids, like the continual murderous brutality of police around the country and the outrageous destruction wrought by the US military every day around the world, reminds us of the urgent need for all of us to participate in resistance and stand in solidarity with each other in order to survive.

I am hoping for healing and wellness for the activists who have experienced these recent home invasions, for a consistent ongoing show of support for them as they continue their resistance, and for all of us to let this moment deepen our commitment to build the world we want and to see the connections between our many different experiences of state violence and repression so that we can work together to dismantle all the apparatuses that police, deport, imprison, and destroy us. Let us also be reminded of all the activists in prison today as a result of FBI efforts to destroy resistance movements and let us offer our support to them and to all people in prisons and jails in the US and around the world.

Luis Fernandez: "A Disturbing Trend"

In the last five years, we have witnessed a disturbing trend: the use of FBI "raids" and grand jury investigations to suppress political dissent. This trend is accompanied by the criminalization of basic civil liberties, as well as the vilification of anarchists and other radical activists. What is happening in Portland, Olympia, and Seattle seems like a continuation of this trend, as authorities drag activists in front of grand juries and deny them basic rights. Refusal to comply with these tactics seems like a reasonable stance as people fight against the criminalization of dissent.

David Price: "Extra-Constitutional Proceedings"

Because my academic research documents the historical use of the FBI, CIA, and other governmental agencies against domestic political groups, I can't help but view the FBI's recent attack on local anarchists in terms of this larger history. The use of the FBI to raid the homes of individuals associated with the Occupy Movement and other political challenges to our lopsided economic system, reminds me of what CIA agent, and CIA whistleblower Philip Agee argued forty years ago when he wrote that the CIA was "nothing more than the secret police of American capitalism, plugging up the leaks in the political dam night and day so that shareholders of U.S. companies operating in poor countries [could] continue enjoying the rip-off." I suppose when capitalism goes global and resistance heats up at home, it is to be expected that the FBI will intensify its monitoring and harassment of those who criticize these developments.

With increased domestic critique of the inherent failures of capitalism, increased domestic surveillance, broad reductions of civil rights and loss of protections from the police, we are seeing the FBI reprising its role from the days of J. Edgar Hoover, where it monitors, infiltrates, and harasses legal, domestic, democratic movements threatening the economic interests of American elites. None of this good for democracy or the Republic, but I suppose it is good for the corporate interests that the FBI has long primarily served.

The rules governing procedures of grand jury subpoenas essentially make them extra-constitutional proceedings, denying those appearing before them of basic constitutional protections, such as the exclusionary rule's protection against using illegally obtained evidence, or even the right to have an attorney present. Because of this, the FBI has historically used the corruptions of the grand jury process against a broad range of peoples' democratic movements, using such proceedings to spread fear, stigmatize groups, intimidate activists, and

breakup democratic movements. Historically, grand jury proceedings have been used to intimidate groups even when prosecutors and the FBI knew there was not sufficient evidence to gain a guilty verdict should a case actually to trial.

We need to resist the natural tendency to stigmatize or abandon individuals or groups appearing before these grand juries, and the FBI needs to be held publicly accountable for the political role it is taking opposing select domestic political movements. There is too much history documenting FBI wrongdoing in its investigations of domestic political groups to assume it is acting in a legal, forthright, and just manner.

Kristian Williams: “These are attacks against the very principle of solidarity.”

The FBI and US Attorney are behaving almost exactly as one might expect. The Justice Department’s goons have been in the business of hunting subversives since J. Edgar Hoover helped to orchestrate the 1919 Palmer Raids. And the grand jury system — though originally intended as a safeguard against prosecutorial power — has been completely converted into a mechanism of bureaucratic inquisition. The use of these tools against anarchists in the wake of the Occupy movement is almost too predictable.

Still, there is something unseemly, and even disturbing, about men with assault rifles kicking down doors in order to seize anarchist literature, the summoning of activists to secret hearings where they will be ordered to name names, and the threats to jail people who are accused of nothing more than refusing to become government informants.

Such acts on the part of the state are offensive even from the perspective of Constitutionality. But they are something more than violations against individual rights. These are attacks against the very principle of solidarity, the notion that people might stand together and defend each other. They are efforts to foreclose on even the possibility that social movements might arise and challenge those who hold power in our society.

Therefore, those who refuse to testify before the grand jury, and who risk imprisonment for doing so, are acting to support all of those resisting oppression and fighting the injustices of our society. We must defend them in return.

Josh Harper: “Abolish the Grand Jury System”

Since their origin more than 200 years ago, grand juries have been used to find escaped slaves, intimidate women fighting for the right to vote, and harass activists opposing the Vietnam war. This legacy of repression and abuse now continues in the Northwest, as young people face raids on their homes and subpoenas just for espousing a political philosophy critical of the state. All people of conscience should raise their voices and banners against this witch hunt, and fight with whatever tools available to abolish the grand jury system.

Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore: “State Oppression Presented as Legal Manipulation”

Imagine for a moment that a few windows of a federal building were smashed during a protest. Imagine that, months later, FBI and police officials start raiding homes in three cities and two states, throwing stun grenades to wake people up, and then confiscating black clothing, computers and “anarchist materials.” Imagine that some of these people are then subpoenaed for secret grand juries where legal representation is prohibited.

Oh, wait – you don’t have to imagine. This kind of persecution is directed at activists and radicals right now – in the Pacific Northwest, and across the country. Of course, this is all part of the same state apparatus that relentlessly criminalizes people of color, poor people, and anyone who gets in the way of corporate business as usual.

Grand juries have long been a tool in this country to force activists to testify against one another for fear of imprisonment. They are also used to justify police state tactics – fabricate some evidence, and you get another billion dollars for the “war on terror,” the “war on drugs,” or any other war on dissent.

Thankfully, most of the activists targeted in the recent grand juries are refusing to cooperate, and this brave gesture serves as a valuable example of how to respond to state oppression presented as “legal” manipulation.

Sarah Small: “Turn Moments of Repression into Moments of Resistance”

State repression is designed to make us believe that the price we pay for our political actions will be too high, that we should be willing to snitch on our friends and communities, and that we are better off not resisting in the first place. But the actions of the grand jury resisters in the Northwest, and the rich history of grand jury resisters and political prisoners that have come before them, demonstrates that we have the opportunity to turn moments of repression into moments of resistance. By showing our solidarity and unwavering support for those that refuse to cooperate with the state we can continue our work of building strong, resilient, and supportive communities that care for each other in moments of crisis. This solidarity helps lay the groundwork for strong movements that can continue the centuries of struggle against capitalism, white supremacy, and patriarchy. Support the grand jury resisters, and fight repression in all its forms!

National Fax in Day to Support Grand Jury Resisters

Below you will find a Fax Petition demanding that she end this witch-hunt. To join the petition effort, please follow these simple steps:

- 1) Go to <http://faxzero.com/> .
- 2) Fill out the form with your name and email address under Sender information.
- 3) Fill out Jenny A Durkan under Receiver Name and (206) 553-0882 for the Receiver Fax Line.
- 4) Copy the text at the bottom of this email into the box that says “Type text to appear on the cover page”. Personalize the text in the box to include your name and also anything else you would like to say.
- 5) Enter the confirmation code
- 6) Click the Send Free Fax Now button at the bottom of the box.
- 7) Check your email and click on the confirmation link. Clicking on this link will actually send your fax.
- 8) Wait for the email that confirms that your fax has been sent.
- 9) Once you have sent the fax, please CALL the U.S. Attorney’s office at (800) 797-6722 to confirm that they received it. We suggest something like the following script:

“Hello my name is Agnes Driver, and I just sent your office a fax to ask that Jenny Durkan call off tomorrow’s grand jury hearing and end the investigation. I’m calling now to confirm that you received it. Would you check for me please?”

The person answering the phone may offer some general assurance that they are receiving faxes. If they do, please be insistent: *“Please, it is very important to me that Ms. Durkin receive my message, and that my voice be added to the opposition to this grand jury. Would you please double-check to verify that you’ve received my message. My name, again, is Agnes Driver.”*

It may take a few minutes for them to find your fax. Please be patient while they do. Once they confirm that they have your message, remember to thank the staff for accommodating you.

- 10) Please send CAPR a message at nopoliticalrepression@gmail.com, to let us know that you sent the message, and what response you received when you called.

Fax message:

End the Grand Jury Investigation of the Anarchist Movement (Fax Petition)

To: Jenny Durkan
United States Attorney for Western Washington
Seattle, Washington

Fax Line : (206) 553-0882

Ms. Durkan:

I am writing to add my voice to the hundreds of organizations and thousands of individuals who have telephoned you, written and signed declarations, and demonstrated in cities around the country demanding an end to the grand jury witch-hunt of anarchists and aligned activists in the Pacific Northwest.

This case clearly shows that your office is persecuting political dissent. It is despicable that the US attorney and the FBI are harassing and intimidating this group of people for their political beliefs. I demand that the grand jury investigation be ended immediately, that the government's repression of social movements stop, and that any items seized in the raids be returned to their rightful owners.

signed,

Facing Grand Jury Intimidation: Fear, Silence and Solidarity by *Natasha Lennard*

We've seen some pretty bold anti-authoritarian actions across the country in the last month. Police vehicles were vandalized in San Francisco, Oakland, Illinois and Milwaukee. Anarchist redecorators visited courthouses, police substations, sports car dealerships and more. Banners dropped in New York, Atlanta, Vancouver, Seattle and elsewhere echoed their graffitied sentiments: "Fuck Grand Juries"; "Solidarity with Northwest Anarchists." Boldest of all, however (and the inspiration underpinning this spate), has been the action from a small group of anarchists in the Pacific Northwest: silence.

Two Portland-based activists, Leah-Lynn Plante and Dennison Williams, publicly announced late last month that they had been subpoenaed to appear in front of a federal grand jury in Seattle and that they would refuse to cooperate. During a grand jury hearing on August 2, Plante did just this - offering her name and birthdate only - and has been summoned to return for another hearing on August 30, where she again intends to say nothing. Meanwhile, it is believed a handful of other activists are fighting to quash subpoenas served to them with the shared intention of noncooperation.

Grand juries are among the blackest boxes in the federal judiciary system. Given their highly secretive nature, few people within - or outside - activist circles know what it means to be called to a grand jury and what it takes to resist.

"Our passion for freedom is stronger than their state prisons," Williams announced in a statement on behalf of himself and Plante about their intention to resist the grand jury, referencing the fact that by merely staying silent, the two could face considerable jail time, despite facing no criminal charges.

The Seattle grand jury subpoenas were served in late July, when the FBI and a Joint Terrorist Task Force conducted a series of raids on activist homes and squats in Portland, Olympia and Seattle with warrants seeking out computers, phones, black clothing and "anarchist literature." The FBI has stated only that the grand jury pertains to "violent crime," but it is believed to relate to property damage in Seattle during this year's May Day protests. The relatively small scale of the property destruction - a handful of spraypainted cars, slashed tires and smashed windows at a downtown Starbucks, Niketown, Wells Fargo and American Apparel store - in comparison to the cost of the police and FBI investigations points to the likelihood that the raids and grand juries have been widely dubbed a witch hunt, understood by commentators and activists alike as an attempt to intimidate, deter and undermine anarchists in the Northwest and beyond.

Will Potter, author of "Green is the New Red," who has long covered the state persecution of environmental activists and anarchists, noted in a recent interview with *The Dissenter*, "I think what's most indicative of what's going on though is that specific call for agents to seize 'anarchist literature' as some kind of evidence of potential illegal activity." He added that the convening of a grand jury is "especially troubling because grand juries have been used historically against social movements as tools of fishing expeditions, and they're used to seek out information about people's politics and their political associations."

Ironically, however, the purported purpose of a federal grand jury is to act as "a safeguard to the accused from the improper motivations of government"- to protect the accused from prosecutorial overreach. A jury of between 16 and 23 civilians hears evidence from a given investigation brought by a prosecutor (the US attorney) in the form of documents, recordings and witnesses, and decides whether there are grounds to move forward with an indictment. However, the grand jury process has been long and regularly used as a form of political repression. According to Heidi Boghosian, director of the National Lawyers Guild (the NLG is a group with a long history of advising grand jury resisters), "abuse of grand juries includes attempts to gather intelligence or information otherwise not easily obtained by the FBI." As such, the grand jury process has been used to probe and intimidate activist groups of various stripes, from the Puerto Rican Independence Movement last century, to

black liberationists, environmentalists and anarchists.

For the grand jury resisters themselves, the time during which a grand jury sits (typically 18 months) is a harrowing one. As the NLG's Boghosian explained: "If someone receives a grand jury subpoena and decides not to cooperate, that person may be held in civil contempt. There is a chance that the individual may be jailed or imprisoned for the length of the grand jury in an effort to coerce the person to cooperate."

"It's actually lawful for the prosecution to hold an individual in order to coerce cooperation, but unlawful to hold the person as a form of punishment," said Boghosian. "In addition to facing civil contempt, in some instances a non-cooperator may face criminal contempt charges."

For example, in 2009, Utah-based animal rights activist Jordan Halliday spent jail time for civil contempt and was sentenced to 10 months in prison for criminal contempt for his effusive noncooperation with a grand jury. And many resisters who were not jailed nonetheless recount traumatic experiences.

"I thought I was doomed. I had nightmares, night sweats, turned heavily to drinking and drugs," said a 23-year-old anarchist who refused to cooperate with a grand jury in 2009 in New York, which reportedly convened in regard to the placement of an incendiary device in a metropolitan area believed to be connected to anti-war activism. The young man, who requested to remain anonymous, remembers feeling "helpless," believing that at any point, he could be put in jail for his political silence.

However, he equally recalls the comfort he felt in learning that support committees - people he did not even know - were forming and organizing solidarity actions for him. "People having each other's back - it's one thing we do have," he said.

And indeed, statements and acts of solidarity with the Northwest resisters have been numerous and widespread. "Part of the purpose of grand juries seems to be to isolate people from a network of support, the support that puts them in a stronger place to resist," said Kristian Williams, a member of the Committee Against Political Repression, which formed in support of the grand jury resisters.

"Solidarity actions and support also communicate to the state that people are paying attention to how the situation is being handled. Knowing that there is public opposition - not just a small group of friends outside a courtroom, but people all around the country - hopefully raises the political cost for the US attorney to continue this repression," he added. Hundreds of people have already put in calls to the US attorney to express opposition to the treatment of Northwest anarchists, while over 350 organizations have signed on to a petition of opposition put out by the Committee Against Political Repression. Meanwhile, as mentioned above, banner drops, graffiti and other acts have been dedicated to the grand jury resisters in the past month. A national day of action has been called for August 30 to coincide with Plante's second hearing.

For the New York-based resister, his act of political silence not only affirmed certain ideas about solidarity, but served as striking proof of personal resolve: "In a strange way, you show yourself something important when you resist a grand jury. The things you say, the things you believe, you find yourself actually acting upon them, even though you know it could cost you a chunk of your life."

"It has a very powerful effect on yourself," he said.

It is a sentiment seemingly understood by the anarchists in the Northwest as they begin their grand jury resistance ordeals. While inviting solidarity and support in their public statement, Plante and Dennison added, "You can show your solidarity by refusing to co-operate with any police force and encouraging your friends and families to do the same."

28 Aug - Antifa Art Contest: Design a "Tinley Park Five" Shirt

It's looking as if the Tinley Park Five will be stuck in the Cook County Jail until their trial date. Just sitting inside Cook County is an expensive ordeal. The cost of calling cards, stamps, reading materials, and edible food mounts up quickly. So their support crew are going to raise funds by selling t-shirts and they need a design. That's where you come in...

MORE:

We've been brainstorming ideas on how to raise money for our friends and one of our ideas was to sell some tee shirts. Rather than just throw some old graphics on these shirts we thought we'd ask for help from the antifascist community. So here's the deal: Send us your idea for a "Support the Tinley Park Five" tee shirt and if you win we'll give you one for free. I know, I know.... not exactly the Publisher's Clearing House or anything but we thought this was a better way of valuing antifascist art than a gift certificate or trophy or whatever prize most art contests give their winners.

Some guidelines:

1. This design is for a tee shirt. Make sure that your design will translate well to a one or two color press (illustration > painting).
2. We will eventually need the illustration in a fairly high resolution computer format. We can figure out the details later, but if you draw something and send us a low-res scan/pic of it, make sure you hold onto the illustration so we can figure out a way to get an adequate file from you if you win.
3. As far as content goes, it's up to you. It should most likely say "Tinley Park Five" on it. You could redraw some antifascist logos and imagery and stylize the text, make a comic book style rendition of the media's portrayal of the Tinley Park Five (complete with nunchucks and throwing stars lulz), or you can of course do your own thing!
4. Feel free to sign your work, either with your name or your crew's, but keep in mind this will make your name eternally associated with antifascism.
5. We need to receive your submissions by October 1, 2012. Send us your artwork to TinleyPark5@yahoo.com
6. By sending us your artwork, you are placing it in the public domain. The finalist images will be put out on the internet and/or used to raise funds. By voluntarily sending it to us you are agreeing to give up any legal claim to ownership or copyright infringement. Also, don't send us anyone else's work, copyrighted or not, we want to see what you can do!

29 Aug - US asks judge to dismiss challenge to law that activists say chills protected protests

The federal government recently asked a judge to dismiss a lawsuit filed by a group of animal rights activists who are challenging the 2006 Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act. We've included a corporate news article about it.

MORE:

Five activists represented by the Center for Constitutional Rights sued the U.S. government last year, asking that the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act be struck down as unconstitutional.

A Justice Department attorney on Wednesday argued that the law is not aimed at constitutionally protected activities such as leafleting, writing letters to newspaper editors or peaceful protests.

"It is not aimed at speech. Rather, it is aimed at violent, destructive conduct," said Deanna Durrett, an attorney in the Justice Department's civil division.

But the activists say the law is vague and has left them afraid to participate in public protests.

The law can be used against a person who "intentionally damages or causes the loss of any real or personal property used by an animal enterprise." The activists say personal property can include a loss of profits for a business, meaning that a fur protester who persuades a consumer not to shop at a particular store could face a terrorism charge.

The law also can be used to prosecute anyone who "intentionally places a person in reasonable fear of death or serious bodily injury" through threats, vandalism, harassment or intimidation.

“The fear of prosecution is not hypothetical and the chill is not hypothetical,” said Alex Reinert, a lawyer for the activists.

U.S. District Judge Joseph Tauro did not immediately rule on the government’s motion to dismiss the lawsuit.

Sarahjane Blum, of Minneapolis, one of the plaintiffs in the lawsuit, said she has been an animal rights activist for more than two decades, but she has turned down public speaking offers and is afraid to show an undercover video she made at a foie gras farm because she is afraid she could be prosecuted under the law.

“Every single time I am asked to speak, I have to do a calculus in my head about whether it can be construed as illegal speech and illegal action,” she said after the hearing.

The law has been rarely used since it was enacted in 2006.

In 2009, two activists in Utah were indicted for releasing hundreds of animals from a mink farm. Both pleaded guilty to animal enterprise terrorism and were sentenced to 21 months and 24 months in prison.

The same year, four activists were charged for allegedly participating in threatening demonstrations at the homes of University of California scientists who did animal research. A judge eventually dismissed the charges.

30 Aug - Update on Mario “Tripa” Lopez by ABC Mexico

Comrades from Cruz Negra Anarquista México have sent an update on Tripa and we’ve included it below.

MORE:

This Wednesday, three of the four young men known as the "Cleveland 4," Brandon Baxter, Doug Wright and Connor Stevens, entered into a non-cooperating plea agreement for all counts of the charges brought against them, but not to the government’s terrorism enhancement. The Cleveland 4 Support Committee continues to support Brandon, Doug, Connor and Josh during this time.

The sentencing for these three will not occur until after a hearing scheduled for November 5th and 6th. at which point Brandon, Doug and Connor will still have the opportunity to present evidence in court regarding unlawful entrapment actions by the FBI. Their sentence could range from five years to three lifetimes, with the defense and prosecution differing over the how federal sentencing guidelines would apply.

“We are distraught to see them plead guilty to these charges,” said Joshua Ehrlich of the Cleveland 4 Support Committee. “It is disturbing to see this situation unfold knowing that the FBI manufactured and carried out this so-called plot by means of coercion and manipulation.” The FBI has a long history of using counterintelligence tactics like infiltration, disruption and entrapment to undermine movements for social change. The government is also known for using such tactics to prey on those who are young, vulnerable and economically marginalized in order to carry out their political agenda.

Although claims of terrorism have been made against the defendants, the Cleveland 4 Support Committee believes that the actual terrorism has been perpetuated by the U.S. government against the public and those working for social change through movements like Occupy Wall Street. "This is not a case about homegrown terrorism, like the government would have us believe," said Julia Boyd of the Cleveland 4 Support Committee. "This is a case that was manufactured and carried out by the FBI in order to undermine political resistance in the United States and to satisfy a quota in its so-called war on terror."

“These boys, who gave their lives to preserving affordable housing and fighting the epidemic of foreclosures, are facing the possibility of three life sentences, which is a terrifying prospect,” said Ehrlich. “The sentences they are threatened with are dramatically inflated due to post-9/11 sentencing guidelines designed to criminalize political dissent.”

According to the Cleveland 4 Support Committee, the defendants are facing a criminal justice system that

penalizes people for going to trial and rewards them for pleading guilty, even when those defendants know they are innocent.

31 Aug - No Justice When Women Fight Back

Vicky Law has written a great article tying together the cases of CeCe McDonald, the New Jersey 4, and Marissa Alexander. Check it out.

MORE:

What do a nineteen-year-old lesbian from New Jersey, a 23-year-old trans woman in Minneapolis and a 31-year-old mother in Florida have in common? All three were attacked, all three fought back and all three were arrested. All three are currently in prison while their attackers remain free. Oh, yes, and all three are black women.

Marissa Alexander is a 31-year-old mother of three. She is also a survivor of violence at the hands of her ex, Rico Gray. In 2009, Alexander obtained a restraining order against Gray. Learning that she was pregnant, she amended it to remove the ban on contact between her and Gray while maintaining the rest of the [restraining order](#).

On August 1, 2010, nine days after Alexander had given birth to their daughter, Gray attacked her in her own home. "He assaulted me, shoving, strangling and holding me against my will, preventing me from fleeing all while I begged for him to leave," Alexander recounted in an [open letter to supporters](#). Alexander escaped into the garage, but realized that she had forgotten the keys to her truck and that the garage's door opener was not working. She retrieved her gun, which was legally registered, and re-entered her home to either escape or grab her cell phone to call for help. "He came into the kitchen ... and realized I was unable to leave ... he yelled, 'Bitch I will kill you!' and charged toward me. In fear and a desperate attempt, I lifted my weapon up, turned away and discharged a single shot in the wall up in the ceiling." Gray called the police and reported that Alexander had shot at him and his sons. Alexander was arrested and charged with aggravated [assault with a deadly weapon](#).

Alexander attempted to invoke Stand Your Ground, but a pre-trial [judge ruled that she could have escaped](#) her attacker through the front or back doors of her home. During her trial, the jury was not allowed to see several letters, written by Gray's former wives, girlfriends and in-laws, that recounted his history of abuse, including pistol-whippings, beatings, stripping them of their clothing and super-gluing door locks on them. Several letters also recounted instances in which Gray called the police after he had attacked them, claiming that they had attacked him. (In one instance, Gray stabbed himself with a fork and asked his younger son to tell the police that his girlfriend had done it.) In a sixty-six page deposition, [Gray admitted to abusing](#) all five of the women with whom he had children, including Alexander.

Instead of taking these facts into consideration, prosecutor Angela Corey added Florida's 10-20-LIFE sentencing enhancement, mandating a [20-year minimum sentence](#) when a firearm is discharged.

Not an Anomaly: Race, Gender and the Justice System

Alexander's case is not an anomaly. Other women of color have defended themselves only to find the legal system more eager to prosecute and punish them than their assailants.

In August 2006, nineteen-year-old Patreese Johnson and six friends from Newark, New Jersey, took the train to New York's West Village, a neighborhood historically known for its LGBTQ friendliness. As the women walked down the street, they were sexually propositioned by a man named Wayne Buckle. Buckle followed them, threatening to rape them and then physically attacked, choking one, ripping hair from their scalps and spitting on them. The women defended themselves and, at some point, were assisted by two unknown men. During the altercation, Buckle was stabbed. [The women were arrested while the men left the scene](#).

All seven were black lesbians. In addition, three were masculine-appearing. "Their treatment [by the media and legal system] has been reflective of what they look like," noted one supporter who needed to remain anonymous

for fear of reprisals at work. Johnson agrees, writing recently, "Me being black and young, the jury, judge and DA's minds was already made up." (Letter, July 18, 2012.)

Police refused to credit the women's statements, those of other witnesses and, ultimately, that of Buckle himself, who stated that the two [men were responsible for stabbing him](#). Both the media and the prosecution framed them as a "lesbian wolf pack" and "killer lesbians." Both media and prosecution also played on racialized fears around gang violence: Although none of the women had ever been in conflict with the law, media and prosecutors described them as a "gang." In addition, neither the judge nor the prosecutor differentiated between the charge of "gang assault" (two or more people acting in concert to cause injury) and gang membership.

Three of the women accepted plea bargains and served six months; the remaining four - Venice Brown, Terrain Dandridge, Renata Hill and Patreese Johnson - became known as the New Jersey Four; they pled not guilty. They received sentences ranging from [three-and-a-half to eleven years](#) in prison.

Upon appeal, charges against Dandridge were dismissed while Brown and Hill were granted a retrial and subsequently accepted plea agreements. Johnson's sentence was reduced from eleven to eight years. She remains in prison today. Dwayne Buckle was [never arrested nor charged](#) for attacking the women.

As [reported last year in Truthout](#), 23-year-old CeCe McDonald, a young black transgender woman, and her friends were walking to the grocery store in Minneapolis when she was first verbally harassed, then physically attacked by the white patrons standing outside a bar. During the attack, a bar patron smashed a glass into McDonald's face, slicing her cheek. As more people joined in the attack, Dean Schmitz, who had instigated the verbal harassment, was stabbed and later died in the hospital. McDonald was arrested and charged with second-degree murder. The woman who smashed glass into McDonald's face was [never arrested or charged](#).

During pre-trial motions, the judge ruled against McDonald's ability to introduce evidence showing that the attack against her was motivated by her race and gender identity: Both Schmitz's swastika and his three previous convictions for violent assault were [ruled inadmissible](#). The judge also refused to allow an expert witness to testify about the pervasive and systemic violence faced by trans people on a daily basis. (Letter from CeCe McDonald, July 19, 2012.)

Faced with second-degree murder charges, a hostile court and the possibility of twenty to forty years, McDonald pled guilty to second-degree manslaughter due to negligence and was [sentenced to forty-one months in prison](#). "She [also] has to pay for her attacker's funeral," noted Billy Navarro of the Minnesota Transgender Health Coalition and a member of her support committee. (Interview, July 26, 2012.)

These cases - and their verdicts - reflect an all-too-common reality in the United States: When women, particularly women of color, defend themselves, they often find themselves assaulted twice - first by their attacker, then by the legal system. The zealous prosecution, as well as the lack of charges against their attackers, reflects the pervasive and socially sanctioned violence against women, particularly women of color and the prevailing notion that women should not fight back. "Me being female, I wasn't supposed to fight back," Johnson noted. (Letter, July 18, 2012.)

"People Were Outraged and Wanted to Get Involved"

Shortly after the New Jersey Four's arrest made headlines, FIERCE (Fabulous Independent Educated Radicals for Community Empowerment), an LGBT youth of color group in the West Village, [organized efforts](#) to secure lawyers, raise money for legal expenses, attend the trial, write letters and send care packages to the women while they were in prison. In California, queer people of color formed the Bay Area NJ4 Solidarity Committee, which created a web site to provide up-to-date information about the women's appeals, helped fundraise and [stayed in contact with the women](#) throughout their ordeal. Both groups continue to support Patreese Johnson during her incarceration.

In Minneapolis, those who worked with trans youth took note of McDonald's arrest. "It was clear immediately that she needed a lot of support," stated Navarro. Within the first weeks, supporters secured lawyers and formed

the CeCe McDonald Support Committee. They publicized the case, gathering over 15,000 signatures and dozens of letters from organizations and prominent individuals worldwide demanding that the charges against McDonald be dropped. They then [presented these to the prosecutor's office](#).

The Committee continues coordinating public support during McDonald's incarceration. Recently, despite McDonald's prescription and court order to receive twenty milligrams of hormones, prison staff were administering only six milligrams. Supporters from around the world flooded the prison with phone calls demanding that McDonald receive the full twenty milligrams, [forcing the prison to follow the prescription order](#).

"The support from everyone everywhere keeps me motivated," McDonald wrote in a recent letter. "It showed that people care not only about these issues that are so easily 'swept under the rug' by society, but about how I am doing and keeping me afloat." (Letter, July 19, 2012.)

Women of Color, Self-Defense and Public Support in the 1970s and Today

In 1974, two men took Inez Garcia from her California home into a nearby alley. There, one man raped her while the other blocked the exit. Garcia later shot and killed the man who had blocked her escape. She was arrested and charged with first-degree murder.

Her case attracted extensive support, especially from those in the women's movements. Many were outraged that Garcia had been arrested while her rapist remained free. Supporters publicized her case at concerts, political meetings, church services and any venues where they might find potential sympathizers. They packed the courtroom, where the judge instructed the jurors not to consider the rape. Garcia was convicted and sentenced to five years to life in prison.

Supporters continued to publicize her case, tying it to the larger issue of a woman's right to defend herself against assault. They approached feminist lawyer Susan Jordan to take over Garcia's defense. Jordan appealed the case and had the conviction reversed because of the judge's instructions not to consider the rape. At the retrial, Jordan made rape an integral part of the case; [Garcia was acquitted](#). "There was a change in consciousness going on in the country. We rode the wave of it," Jordan reflected in a 2007 interview. (Interview with Susan Jordan, June 18, 2007.)

The cases of Marissa Alexander, Patreese Johnson and CeCe McDonald, while more well-known than those of many other women of color trapped in the legal system for fighting back, have not achieved the same level of support that Inez Garcia received three decades earlier. Why not?

"The groups that came together [around the NJ4 case] were grassroots queer groups of color," recalled a supporter. "The larger LGBTQ organizations are fighting for gay marriage, not what youth are going through. And people are scared of women who stand up for themselves and fight back."

Katie Burgess, director of the Trans Youth Support Network and part of McDonald's support committee, has a similar opinion: "CeCe is at the intersection of multiple oppressions. On the local front, we saw people come together around the issue like never before - social workers, insurrectionary anarchists, lawyers, youth, GLBT people of color groups came together and built coalitions. But of course, racism still exists in LGBT communities. Homophobia and transphobia still exist in communities of color. Sometime people don't want to recognize the whole picture." (Interview, July 30, 2012.)

Navarro agrees that racism and transphobia kept many away: "CeCe doesn't get the same level of support because most people see someone that they've been taught to be afraid of, not someone's daughter."

However, both Burgess and Navarro acknowledge that the support McDonald received dramatically affected the outcome of her case. "CeCe being a young African-American trans woman living in poverty made them [the prosecution] think that she didn't have the resources to defend or advocate for herself," Navarro stated. "Not until

just before the trial did they realize how much support she had." Navarro also noted that McDonald was offered several plea bargains and, with each plea bargain, the amount of time diminished. (Interview, July 26, 2012.)

Both Johnson and McDonald recognize that support needs to extend beyond their individual cases to address the broader issues of race, class, gender and the justice system: "I would hate to think that the law is going to continue putting our women in prison for defending themselves," Johnson wrote recently. "Support me by making a change, starting with one's self. It's not really about me; it's about women overall." (Letter, July 18, 2012.)

McDonald has similar thoughts: "The real issues are the ones that affect all prisoners. People should get involved in changing policies that keep people in prisons, like exclusion from employment, housing, public assistance," she wrote. "These are just a few things that will keep people out of prisons and lead to the dismantling of these facilities." (Letter, July 19, 2012.)

While the legal process is over for both Johnson and McDonald, Alexander has not given up. Her first husband, Lincoln Alexander and her sister Helena Jenkins, have formed the Committee to Free Marissa Alexander. Groups and individuals have come together in Florida and across the country to continue the [campaign for her freedom](#).

As seen with CeCe McDonald and the New Jersey Four, support can make a difference. As McDonald stated, one month after her sentencing, "I didn't let this incident diminish me. Instead, it made me grow mentally, emotionally and spiritually. Not just for myself, but for my friends, families and supporters who tell me that my struggle against discrimination and me defending myself give them hope and motivation to be strong, to fight for their beliefs and to be the people they want to be instead of hiding or conforming. So this isn't just for me, it's for all of us!" (Letter, July 19, 2012.)

1 Sept – A Visit with Leonard Peltier

Below, we're including a report from Jack Magee, one of the Leonard Peltier Defense/Offense Committee (LPDOC) Board members about his recent visit with Leonard. Please read and support with what you are able to continue the current campaign for Leonard's Freedom.

MORE:

I went to Florida to visit Leonard last month and was supposed to see him on a Sunday but, as it is all too common at Coleman 1, the prison was in lock down and that means that all prisoners are confined to their cells and no visits are allowed. I decided to wait for the lock down to end and that meant a wait of almost a week. I was able to get in on the following Friday . Coleman is out in the middle of the Florida flatland's and is not an easy place to get to, but who am I to complain? Coleman Federal Prison is some 1800 miles from the Dakota's and the distance makes visits from Leonard's family members very rare.

Leonard was in a pensive mood and spent a lot of the time reminiscing on life as a child at Turtle Mountain and the schools he attended, including the residential schools. He seemed to want to talk about certain memorable times in his life. Traveling to California to work as migrant farm workers with his Uncle Billy and his cousins, and the hard times he experienced in Residential Schools. And he remembered key moments in his legal history and key mistakes made by some of his lawyers. He spoke of what those mistakes has cost him and more than that, he remembered times when things might have gone very differently for him.

I know he is strong and I know he is very resilient and that he has been able to endure all that they have done to him. Just last summer he spent more than sixty days in a sweat box of a hole at Lewisburg for something he did not do. That period in the hole has had a lasting effect on his health and he told me he has had a very hard time recovering from it. He did not speak of his other health issues. He did not have to.

I remember many years ago he told me how important it was that the people continue to participate in the ceremonies and to pray every day, but then he added something I have never forgotten. He said, "But someone

has to actually do the work. Someone has to stand up in the courtroom or in that arena and say the words that need to be said.

I know he has been a very large part of the efforts to ensure that Native prisoners have access to their sacred objects and ceremonies but even that has been a very hard fight, The long standing issue of the old falling down sweat lodge at Coleman was resolved just this week when the cedar poles needed to build a new one were brought in and a new sweat lodge was built by Leonard and the other 20 Native American inmates at Coleman 1. They still hope to have visits from Medicine Men of their choosing in the near future. Late in our visit he spoke lovingly of his children and grand-children and I could only try to imagine how much he misses them. When I was leaving he shook my hand, and said he hoped I would come back again soon and he asked me to ask his supporters to come back together again and to join the effort and help him now. He is a man who knows that his options are few and that time is no longer on his side. He has not received anything resembling justice to this day, and he can see that he has a very small window of opportunity that may allow him to make yet another plea for his life before a sitting President. This is the sixth President to live in the White house since he entered the Federal Prison System 37 years ago. None of this is new to him. All he has left is hope. And sadly he has little faith that the law will ever work for him, no matter how many times his rights have been violated. But mostly he hopes that we will come back together again to support him while this small window is open. Please contact your Congressmen and Women and ask them to join Congressman John Lewis of Georgia and others in seeking justice at last for Leonard Peltier. And please write to the President and call the White House Comment line every week. Please contact your local newspapers, magazines and radio stations and ask them to consider writing or speaking about this case. Millions around the world will agree with you. And please send contributions to the LPDOC as the work is costly and will require a lot of travel and expenses to coordinate the events that are going to take place in the next few months.

Please join us in our efforts to shed light on this innocent man who has now spent more than half his life in prison.

1 Sept - Leslie Feinberg re-charged for solidarity action for CeCe...

Leslie Feinberg has court at 8:30 this Thursday (the 13th) morning, having been re-charged for an action allegedly taken in solidarity with CeCe McDonald. The details are below.

MORE:

I have been re-charged by the Minneapolis City Attorney prosecutor with 3rd-degree Gross Misdemeanor which carries a maximum of 1-year prison & \$3,000 fine, for my June 4 demonstration of solidarity with CeCe McDonald.

I hope to see friends and other activists in court.

As defendant, I welcome parents and other caregivers bringing children of all ages, including infants and toddlers. I'll bring crayons and drawing paper.

Please wear purple/buttons/t-shirts in solidarity with CeCe McDonald! I'll be wearing the free CeCe t-shirt designed by artist/activist Ricardo Levins Morales.

I've made a sign in support of CeCe to take with me to court. If you make and post your own sign in support of CeCe McDonald and/or have already posted one online, send me a copy of the photo/credit/location via social media and I'll do my best to include your solidarity in the multi-media dedication to CeCe.

Please check that morning for the assigned courtroom.

My thanks to lawyer Bruce Nestor and the National Lawyers' Guild for helping me defend myself in the court of the 1%.

These words below are the only statement I can make at this time--the best I can do. I also include my June 4 statement below.

August 30, 2012 statement:

I will not be silent!

As a revolutionary activist, journalist/author, and proud member of the National Writers' Union/UAW Local 1981—I will not be silent!

STOP the WAR AGAINST TRANS WOMEN of COLOR!

FREE CECE McDONALD NOW! - <http://supportcece.wordpress.com>

TO NATIVE NATIONS: MY GREETING of RESPECT

I send my greeting of respect to Indigenous Nations on the land now claimed as “Minnesota.” I vow to continue to defend your land and treaty rights, rights to sovereignty and self-determination, and defense of this planet that sustains all life. I am a proud neighbor of the Onondaga Nation.

As violent weapons of rule by the 1%, the police, prosecutors, judges and prison officials invoke “law.” I recall that in 1862, this racist injustice system proclaimed it “legal” to lynch 38 Dakota men in a mass execution in Mankato, after convicting the defendants of “war crimes” after 15-minute trials.

The Dakota people were forced to march into concentration camps, and many were deported to reservations far from the land of their ancestors.

STOP DEPORTATIONS: NO WORKER IS ‘ILLEGAL’

I send my heartfelt solidarity to immigrants who are courageously defying apartheid passbook laws. Stop racist apartheid laws, ICE immigrant-bashing, detentions & deportations!

STOP BRUTAL POLICE OCCUPATIONS IN OPPRESSED COMMUNITIES!

End racist profiling, the school-to-prison pipeline, racist, mass incarceration, the Prison-Industrial Complex, and prisons for profit!

FBI: HANDS OFF ACTIVISTS! www.stopfbi.net

FREE MICHAEL WILLIAMS NOW!

Solidarity with Muslims & Sikhs in the U.S. and around the world!

STOP ENDLESS WARS for PROFIT!

Solidarity with Pakistani sex(es)/gender(s)/sexualities in Sukkur who protested Pentagon drone attacks. Those killer drones leave from the same small airport in Syracuse, N.Y., U.S. as the plane that will take me to Minneapolis, M.N.

Bring all the troops home!

Disband private corporate armies!

Free Pfc. B. Manning!

Hands off Assange & Wikileaks!

JOBS, HOMES, FOOD, HEALTH CARE, EDUCATION!

NOT PRISONS & PENTAGON WARS!

JAIL the real criminals: the 1%!

2 Sept – Running Down the Walls 2012 solidarity statements

We heard from several political prisoners, many who organized runs inside prison, offering their solidarity with us for this year's Running Down the Walls. We've included them below.

MORE:

The ABCF Warchest Program helps us. Thank you for attending to our basic financial needs. You don't talk about it, you be about it. Thus I take great pride in and am comforted by your steadfast support of our political prisoners and POWs.

Your consistency in this regard and your social practice in general – “telling no lies and claiming no easy victories,” is commendable. You teach by example.

Therefore, I strongly support you and the solidarity run. The race goes not to the swiftest but to those who endure.

Your Brother,
Herman Bell

Solidarity isn't an abstract idea haphazardly thrown around like craps. Solidarity is a way of consciously living that is explicitly interwoven into an anarchist's existence. Such a way of being transcends nation-state borders, prison walls, electric fences, and fascist barricades. Direct action infused in solidarity with us on the inside and you on the outside not only challenges systematic mass incarceration, but it shatters the social relations perpetuated by the prison industrial complex. Although I am behind prison walls in a scorching California desert, I am under the same sky, under the same sun, and am running down the same walls with you in solidarity towards freedom.

Phillip "Nomas" Ruiz
Ironwood State Prison

To the runners,

A short message just to send a greeting from Mexican land. We want this event to be a success and that soon we see all the walls fall down, not just those who are holding many of our comrades in prison, but also those that divide us by borders.

Here in Mexico we have two imprisoned anarchist comrades, but there are thousands of people in prison just because they are poor or indigenous. As ABC we are working for the destruction of these killing centers that prisons are and we are very happy to continue this fight with you.

Falling all the walls!
Solidarity forever!
ABC Cruz Negra Anarquista México

To All Runners,

My name is Oso Blanco. I am a powerful warrior; good things are going to come to me- big positive things- so I may be set free from fed prison and return to helping others. Before the universe I say, “Let it be so!” I say to the universe and all of you for RDTW – For we are all related and part of the universe, “Rise Up! Make it happen!” The government holds me hostage because of my inner power and I say reverse this with me. Set us all free.

Love Oso Blanco

EZLN supply line warrior.

my thanks to you all for choosing to participate in an active remembrance of those hidden by the state. in our simplest and smallest acts we can nourish healthy communities and by coming together through intention our reach expands to embrace even those in the belly of the beast who may feel as though they cannot contribute. here's to the removal of the walls which separate us, and those systems which slow their natural pattern in life = to crumble.

Eric McDavid, ELF PP

Thanks so much for you letter regarding the planned Running Down the Walls. I got it on July 19th. I was afraid, frankly to say, your notice also evaporated as some of my letters do, incoming as well as outgoing. Therefore, I felt happy to know.

Anyhow, we, in FCI Terre Haute population, have organized a solidarity run with Running Down the Walls on the same day, but time is of choosing, forgive us.

The summer is extremely hot in this area, as you might know. I myself am in good condition since I run a little over 5k daily. Thus, I'm ready for the planned run. I hope your planned run is successful.

In Solidarity,
T. Shiroaki

Hey everyone

Well, I hope most, if not all of, you did some nice running today (I know you folk out in west. mass already did your run and that helped inspire us and others). Yea, 35 of us -- multinational and young and old and mostly runners, but some non-runners too (who did struggle and puff a lot) kicked off rdtw this morning here. It was only around 85, so for us, that ain't bad. A handful of others, who weren't aware of rdtw happening, but who were on the yard joined in also. Someone will write up a better report on it all soon and send it to folk in LA, but in the meantime, I wanted to let you all know and hope everyone had a real good run today.

Venceremos! jaan laaman

today i'm Running Down the Walls at Vanier Centre for Women in Milton Ontario, where i've been imprisoned since january. during yard i'll do 48 laps of the small dirt track, and if we get called in before i am done i'll finish up in the hallway on our wing.

i'm running because i'ts not often that we have the opportunity to come together in this way. prisons are designed to keep inmates from organizing with each other and with folks on the outside. they want us isolated and disengaged.

for example, when i first arrived i was told it was unlikely i'd be classified as medium security for quite some time, because i'm a political organizer. because, and i quote, "we don't want people banding together up there." i was held on maximum security for seven and a half months. the jail has also gone to some pretty extreme lengths to keep me away from other G20 related prisoners.

discussion and solidarity between jails is also discouraged. the prison magazine Cell Count is routinely withheld from peoples mail, and most of the copies of the Peak Dispatches from Ontario Prisons didn't make it in either. the prison administration and the state are afraid of us coming together to talk, to organize, to resist.

events like running down the walls help to break the isolation the prison tries to impose and remind us of our collective power.

today i'm running because as someone who has benefited from legal defence and prisoner support funds, i know how important they are.

i'm running because while i've had a reasonably easy time in jail, a lot of people don't. i have a lot of support, i get mail and visits, i've never run out of canteen money and people take my collect calls. these things make all the difference and i want all prisoners to have them. prisoner support funds are essential - nobody should go without phone calls or envelopes or time with friends and family just because they can't afford them.

i'm running because i appreciate and want to support the amazing work done by the anarchist black cross to bridge the gulf between the inside and the outside, and to link our struggles.

finally, i'm running because i'm a settler here. as such i'm complicit in a colonial system that criminalizes Indigenous people who defend themselves and their land, and a legal system that is stacked against them from start to finish. i support Six Nations struggles and i'm excited to be able to raise money for the Six Nations defence fund.

Mandy Hiscocks

3 Sept - finally! by Mandy Hiscocks

G20 main conspiracy prisoner Mandy Hiscocks continues to write from prison and we've included her latest below.

**MORE:
finally!**

i'm sitting at my desk drinking water from a plastic mug with a handle. it's my own room - no cellie! - and the door doesn't lock. air is coming in from the open window, through which i can see grass and trees. tomorrow when i go outside i will walk on that grass and visit as many of those trees as i can. at the expense of cool, i just might hug them. on Labour Day we're having Sports Day - inmates are encouraged to register in teams of six by august 31.

that's right folks, i've entered a whole new world. goodbye maximum security, hello Unit 4!

i can't really describe how amazing it is to feel outside air on my face right now. . .

earlier today i was informed that i'd be moving to Unit 4. usually sentenced inmates go to 3 but i hear it's full. or maybe there are people there i'm deemed to be "incompatible with". i don't think there's much difference between 3 and 4 - they have access to a gymnasium and we don't, but they also have to work long hours for no pay and we don't. not having the opportunity to work is fine by me, because while i decided early on that i would work if necessary so that i could tell you all about prison labour, i would have felt pretty conflicted about it. donating my labour to keep a prison running smoothly when i believe prisons should be abolished, and when there are a whole lot of unemployed people who could use those jobs. . .it doesn't sit right.

so anyway, i said my goodbyes, gave out my contact info, wrapped up some loose ends and settled some outstanding food trades. then i packed up my stuff, said goodbye to cell 12, and here i am. i'll miss some of the folks on 2F but did i mention that I HAVE MY OWN ROOM!?! and i can go in and out of it at will, and stare out the window whenever and for as long as i want. these things might not sound like much but after seven and a half months on maximum security they're huge.

there's a lot to take in, and i have the next three months to tell you about life on medium security, for today i'll just share my general first impressions.

first of all, as was explained to us upon arrival, this is a "dorm" and we have rooms not cells. there's a rotating chore list. people don't yell at each other much which means that it is quieter and less tense. it's a whiter, younger crowd with no visible mental health issues and no trouble understanding and speaking english. there is

privilege here, and because of my own privilege i find it more familiar and easier to navigate. it really could be mistaken for a university residence in a lot of ways, whereas 2F often felt like as schoolyard minus the responsible adults who resolve disputes.

the guards are different here too. they are not behind glass, for one thing, so there is more interaction. i don't like to get too friendly - it's too weird - but a lot of the inmates chat and joke around with them. i've noticed a few guards do a double take upon seeing me: "Hiscocks? what are you doing up here?" or "so you finally made it" and so on. when i arrived i was almost immediately asked to "come here for a minute please" (it's all quite polite here) by one of the guards on duty:

-you come with some history, obviously.
-(laughing) my reputation precedes me?
-your blog precedes you.

heh. anyway, she just wanted to know if i was going to have a problem doing chores. . .it seems more than anything that it was Leah's refusal to work that proceeded me. but forced free labour and helping to keep our common spaces clean are different beasts entirely and i told her i had no problem whatsoever with chores.

it's almost bedtime. we stay up later here - we have to go to our rooms at 9pm and lights go out at 10. and they really go out! exciting.

august 25, 2012

6:30 am

the sun is rising and my room faces east. last night i could see a planet out my window. the lights did indeed go out all the way, as i'd been told, but the hallway light stays on and shines through the window in the door - so it wasn't pitch dark, but i slept with the window open to the sound of crickets, and now i'm watching the sun come up and listening to birds.

last night i passed out reading. i woke up around 2:45am and went out through the common room to the bathroom to brush my teeth (since we're not locked in, there's no need for sinks or toilets in the rooms). a guard came in with a flashlight:

-who's in here?
-Hiscocks.
-what's that you are doing?
-brushing my teeth.
-it's 2:45, you can't brush your teeth now. you can only use the bathroom and go right back to your room.

huh. i was warned that the guards are more in-your-face here and that even though there's more freedom there are also more rules and expectations. from now on i will brush my teeth at sanctioned times only :)

12:00 pm

it's after lunch quiet time and i'm in my room again. i've been in my room a lot since i got here. i'll describe it to you: as i come in there's a bed on the right and a window and a radiator on the far wall. between the end of the bed and the radiator are a shelf and a mirror and below them on the floor is my plastic box of projects, papers and mail. opposite the shelf, beside the window, are a desk and a stool. my books and bathrooms tuff are on the radiator, food is on the shelf, pencils are on the desk. clothes are at the end of the bed (the frame is longer than the mattress). there's a space the length of the bed and width of the door that is just big enough for workouts and yoga.

speaking of yoga, this morning two volunteers came in to run a yoga and meditation session in the basement. i told you Unit 4 was a whole new world! some things don't change though - earlier i heard someone yell "TV! yay! followed by people rushing down the hall to the common room.

5:00 pm

well hello there yard.

okay so i was wrong about the tree hugging. . there are no trees where we go to yard. but there is grass and a beach volleyball court inside a small dirt track (15 times is a mile). an instructor came out and went through a cardio and hand weights circuit with whoever wanted to do it. we're allowed to take water outside in a plastic bottle, which is good because we stay out longer and yard is in the afternoon here so it's hot.

it's after dinner quiet time now and there's a large flock of very loud and hungry birds feeding in the grass outside my window. i haven't seen this much life all in one place since january 13.

i'm going to like it here.

cops, courts, censorship: support Julian and Dan!

on november 14, 2011, Julian Ichim published a blog post about his experience as the target of an undercover cop in the lead up to the G20 Summit in Toronto in 2010. the following day the crown decided to press charges against him, and he was arrested by Waterloo Regional Police at his house one week later. the charges/ three counts of Disobey Court Order - one for each time he used the cop's alias Khalid Mohamed. the reason? at the preliminary inquiry into the case against the G20 Main Conspiracy Group the judge had ordered a publication ban on the real and fake names of both undercover cops. and for this alleged violation of that order, the crown would like to see Julian sentenced to at least two years in jail. all this despite the fact that the undercover cop in question testified in open court at the prelim for 14 days between september 13 and october 14 under his real name Bindo Showan, and that the publication ban was dropped on november 22, within days of Julian's arrest. the names and aliases of both undercovers were published that same day by the [CBC](#) and [the Globe and Mail](#).

so we'll file this one under Ridiculous and Vindictive Prosecutions, shall we? it can go right beside the similar "case" against Dan Keller.

Dan was a target of the same OPP undercover operation as Julian. on august 28, 2011, he published a blog post after heading that Showan had been seen in Toronto. three days later he was arrested by the Ontario Provincial Police and charged with Criminal Defamation, Counsel Assault, Criminal Harassment (since dropped) and Intimidation (added later). unfortunately as a condition of his release on bail Dan had to agree to take the post down so you can't judge the bullshitness of these charges for yourself, however it appears that the Counsel Assault charge related to the rather poetic suggestion that should Showan be seen again, people "spit in his footsteps and scoff at his existence." The crown alleges that the post made Showan and the other undercover (Brenda Carey, aka Brenda Doherty) unsafe, and has said he's looking for a jail sentence of six months to two years.

these ongoing persecutions - oh, sorry, i meant to say *prosecutions*- are nothing more than political harassment of activists by a crown attorney's office that has been unable to secure the long G20-related sentences they so badly wanted. it's blatant state censorship under the guise of security - after all if the cops were so concerned about the safety of their spies why would they have Showan, directly linked to his alias, testify in open court? why would his name, rank and unit have been given to all of the oh-so-scary alleged conspirators in our disclosure?

everyone's talking about Pussy Riot these days. let's also show our support for free speech a little closer to home. Julian's preliminary inquiry is on september 18 at Old City Hall in Toronto, courtroom A. for more information, updates, or if you'd like to offer your support (financial or otherwise) check out his blog at julianichim.wordpress.com. Dan's trial is the first two weeks of december, also at Old City Hall in Toronto.

5 Sept - Cleveland 4 Continue Fight for Justice in Entrapment Case After Guilty Pleas

Three of the Cleveland 4 have agreed to a non-cooperation plea deal. The fourth is undergoing a psychological evaluation. That doesn't mean the case is over and these comrades need your support. Please read about the letter to the editor campaign their supporters are organizing and get involved.

MORE:

This Wednesday, three of the four young men known as the "Cleveland 4," Brandon Baxter, Doug Wright and Connor Stevens, entered into a non-cooperating plea agreement for all counts of the charges brought against them, but not to the government's terrorism enhancement. The Cleveland 4 Support Committee continues to support Brandon, Doug, Connor and Josh during this time.

The sentencing for these three will not occur until after a hearing scheduled for November 5th and 6th. at which point Brandon, Doug and Connor will still have the opportunity to present evidence in court regarding unlawful entrapment actions by the FBI. Their sentence could range from five years to three lifetimes, with the defense and prosecution differing over the how federal sentencing guidelines would apply.

"We are distraught to see them plead guilty to these charges," said Joshua Ehrlich of the Cleveland 4 Support Committee. "It is disturbing to see this situation unfold knowing that the FBI manufactured and carried out this so-called plot by means of coercion and manipulation." The FBI has a long history of using counterintelligence tactics like infiltration, disruption and entrapment to undermine movements for social change. The government is also known for using such tactics to prey on those who are young, vulnerable and economically marginalized in order to carry out their political agenda.

Although claims of terrorism have been made against the defendants, the Cleveland 4 Support Committee believes that the actual terrorism has been perpetuated by the U.S. government against the public and those working for social change through movements like Occupy Wall Street. "This is not a case about homegrown terrorism, like the government would have us believe," said Julia Boyd of the Cleveland 4 Support Committee. "This is a case that was manufactured and carried out by the FBI in order to undermine political resistance in the United States and to satisfy a quota in its so-called war on terror."

"These boys, who gave their lives to preserving affordable housing and fighting the epidemic of foreclosures, are facing the possibility of three life sentences, which is a terrifying prospect," said Ehrlich. "The sentences they are threatened with are dramatically inflated due to post-9/11 sentencing guidelines designed to criminalize political dissent."

According to the Cleveland 4 Support Committee, the defendants are facing a criminal justice system that penalizes people for going to trial and rewards them for pleading guilty, even when those defendants know they are innocent.

Letter to the Editor Campaign

It's been a difficult week for the guys and for our support group. But the work continues to fight FBI entrapment tactics and help the guys spend the least time in prison possible. When the guys pled Wednesday, there was a flurry of press coverage. Predictably, this coverage did not cover the facts of the case beyond the story the FBI has crafted, occasionally including one line about the defense attorneys' stances. But this is an opportunity for us to get our story out, by submitting letters to the editors.

Our goal is to immediately get to work and send 50 letters to papers across the country by this Sunday, September 9th. We need your help. We've prepared a kit to help you write and submit a letter to your local paper. It can be as simple as filling in the blanks on the sample letter that follows and sending it by email to your local rag. Or use the template and talking points to craft your own letter.

When you've sent in your letter, please send us an email at cleveland4solidarity@riseup.net so we can see where

we're at with our goal. If you write something, we'd also love a copy of your letter.

As always, your support means everything to us and to Connor, Brandon, Doug and Josh.

Letter to the Editor

What is it?

A letter to the editor (sometimes abbreviated LTTE or LTE) is a letter sent to a publication about issues of concern from its readers. Usually, letters are intended for publication. In many publications, letters to the editor may be sent either through conventional mail or electronic mail.

What is the format?

<Name of Media Outlet or Publication>

Dear Editor:

<State your reason for writing here. If you are responding to articles or editorials by the media outlet, use the first sentence to reference the title of the article, name of the publication, and date it appeared.>

<State your case here. Include facts, references, or research here to establish credibility. [Keep length in mind though. Acceptable letter length will vary from periodical to periodical. Look at their letters section to get a feel for an appropriate length.]>

< Include a call to action, asking readers to follow up with some activity, such as joining in calling on policymakers to address the issue. >

<End with a strong, positive statement in support of your case. >

Sincerely,

<Name of Writer>

What are the points?

- The defendants are facing dramatically inflated sentences -- possible multiple life terms -- due to post-9/11 sentencing changes designed to criminalize political dissent.
- The system penalizes people for going to trial, as many innocent people know who take pleas in fear of extremely harsh sentences.
- Trials with terrorism charges have almost entirely resulted in convictions, though as insightful journalists have pointed out, many of these cases, like this one, were created through coaxing and coercion from FBI informants.
- The government has sensationalized this case from the beginning by referring to the defendants as "anarchists" and by connecting the alleged actions of the Cleveland 4 to the OWS movement.
- The government claims to have prevented a so-called "terrorist" attack, but the truth is this "plot" was manufactured and carried out by the FBI.
- The defendants have been brought to court in shackles to further sensationalize their predicament and make it appear as though they are hardened criminals when in reality they are social change activists who were coerced and manipulated by an FBI informant
- The FBI has a history of using illegal counterintelligence tactics to violate people's rights and undermine movements for social change
- The state has a pattern of making sensational arrests preemptively, in advance of planned political demonstrations in order to chill dissent and undermine movements for social change

- The FBI and other law enforcement agencies that engage in operations to entrap activists prey on those who are young, vulnerable and on the margins of political organizations
- It appears that the FBI and other law enforcement agencies carry out these kind of manufactured crimes in order to justify further so-called "counter-terrorism" tactics and more militarized policing, to gain additional funding for such efforts, and to undermine activists and movements for social change
- The FBI took activists who were creating positive change in their community, isolated them, then pressured and coerced them into participating in an FBI-manufactured plot
- The FBI informant Azir Shaquille has a long criminal history and was facing felony charges when he agreed to infiltrate Occupy Cleveland in October 2011. For his work to entrap the Cleveland 4, Shaquille was paid at least \$6,000 and had his charges reduced or eliminated.
- Shaquille made the defendants dependent on him by giving them paid work over months time and providing them with alcohol and drugs
- Shaquille isolated the defendants by urging them not to hang out with their other friends
- In almost all contemporary terrorism-related cases, law enforcement itself has supplied the materials to make the fake or real incendiary devices defendants are accused of conspiring to use.

How do I submit a LTE?

Check your local paper for instructions on submitting your LTE. Many papers allow you to submit by email or through an online form. You will usually need to include your name and address. Be careful to note the rules the paper provides about article length and content, and to cite the article or letter you are responding to.

Another option for online publications is to post your reply in the article comments that follow most online articles.

What is an example of a LTE?

Dear Editor:

I am writing in response to the Chicago Tribune's September 5th article, "Three anarchists plead guilty to Ohio bridge bomb plot." The article didn't do an adequate job of exploring or even representing the widespread controversy about this case. The defense attorney's concerns about the informant's conduct -- manipulating the defendants through drugs, alcohol and under-the-table employment, as well as playing a pivotal role in creating the plot and pressuring the defendants to participate -- are substantiated through the accounts of many who knew the guys, as well as through the FBI's own public records on the case. This raises question for me about where blame is being placed in this case. In light of articles written about other post-9/11 FBI terrorism cases, bigger questions about the way the FBI has been conducting it's so-called "war on terror." For example, in almost all contemporary terrorism-related cases, law enforcement itself has supplied the materials to make the fake or real incendiary devices defendants are accused of conspiring to use.

The FBI has a history of using illegal counterintelligence tactics to violate people's rights and undermine movements for social change. A number of cases currently in court against members of the Occupy movement involve undercover FBI or local police who seem to have played instrumental roles in the formation of the crimes that they were supposedly investigating. It's no wonder that questions are being raised about the FBI targeting or attacking Occupy.

I encourage all to remain critical of the motivations and tactics used by our government to bring charges of terrorism against it's own citizens. While the three young men have plead guilty, it is important to remember the system penalizes people for going to trial, as many innocent people know who take pleas in fear of extremely harsh sentences.

I hope, no matter the outcome, the full story of the true nature of the FBI's tactics is exposed.

Sincerely,
Leah Bean

6 Sept - Abusive Authority Means Little Hope by Alex Hundert

Another Toronto G20 main conspiracy prisoner, Alex Hundert, has been consistently writing from prison and we've enclosed his latest below.

MORE:

I have been in prison for 10 weeks, and I have still yet to see a library cart come around the unit. I have been led to believe that at the Central North Correction Centre (CNCC), due to the education program here, access to books was better than at the Toronto Detention Centres, but this does not seem to be the case. Neither this prison nor the provincial government seems to care whether or not prisoners have access to books. In fact, both the CNCC and the Ontario Ministry of Public Safety and Correctional Services seem to be actively preventing books from getting to prisoners.

There was a rumour here that there had been a large donation of new books to the CNCC library, and that the librarian was nearly ready to start getting these books into the hands of prisoners. However, one of the guys on my range who, through the education program, was able to get to the library last week – his first time in over six months in prison – reported that there is no sign of any truth to the rumour.

“The library is garbage,” he tells me. “There is nothing there [but] low level, low grade old, old books.” It seems that my hopes had been misplaced– a recurring theme in my endeavours to secure access to books inside the prison system.

In the second of two articles on the lack of library services at the Toronto East and West Detention Centres, the *Toronto Star* proclaimed hopefully on July 14th that “prisoners may soon access library books.”

Following up on the issues, a community-based agency contacted the Toronto West Detention Centre (TWDC), where the deputy superintendent in charge of programming confirmed that there had not been access to library services there “for a period of at least 2 years.”

On July 17th the Ministry responded to the agency, reiterating what their spokesperson Brent Ross had said to the *Star*, blaming a “lack of volunteers”. The Ministry added that “You will be pleased to know that the staff at the TWDC are currently in the process of exploring avenues to replace the volunteer librarian with a part-time librarian.”

The TWDC deputy superintendent then confirmed that a work order for a part-time paid librarian had been submitted to the Ministry. Unfortunately, they turned down the work order, and the Ministry has offered no alternative solution. At present, the jail is in the process of training a volunteer librarian in absence of a consistent, paid staff.

The *Star* quoted Ross as saying that “If the (John Howard) Society wishes to provide those services free, we would encourage them to contact the volunteer coordinators at those institutions.” The John Howard Society had in fact already made that very offer. But still the library carts lie dormant.

At the CNCC there is already a part-time librarian, though I have no explanation for why we have such impoverished access to books here. At the TWDC it appears to be an intentional decision on the part of the government to deny prisoners access to books. Here it seems to be the management.

As I have previously reported, I have had some success getting books sent into me from the outside. At the time I was writing the first draft of this piece I had managed to receive one novel while at the TWDC, and here one novel and a couple of comic books. Before I proceed I want to extend my most sincere appreciation to the friend who sent in those comics, and also especially to my mother who sent in those novels and who has spent hours on the phone with the administration at both institutions. She has been the crucial factor in my having any success in being able to get these places to follow their own rules regarding prisoners’ ability to receive books from people on the outside. Since first drafting this piece I’ve gotten them to give me two more of the books that have been sent in.

The policy is this: prisoners are supposed to be able to receive outside books provided that they arrive directly from the publisher or distributor, that the individual titles are approved by the superintendent, and provided that we supply the name, phone number and address of the person ordering the book for us, and also provided that the content is considered neither a security concern nor pornographic.

I have had it confirmed that this is in fact the policy by the security manager, as well as the superintendent's assistant, the intelligence officer, a classification officer and by multiple unit managers (also known as captains). And as far as I can tell this is the policy of all provincial correctional institutions, and it is supposed to be the same policy for newspapers and magazines subscriptions as it is for books. It is also the case, however, that each prison is granted a great deal of discretion as to how they implement this policy.

At this point I should mention that, almost without exception, nobody has ever seen other prisoners actually be able to get books sent in to them, and people are now regularly asking me for advice on how to get this done. Their requests for permission to receive books go unanswered and magazine subscriptions pile up in people's property bags in A and B (arrivals and departures), leaving prisoners unable to access reading materials until after they get released.

On August 28th, the morning after I wrote the first draft of this piece, a captain brought me two of the books I have been waiting for, over a month after they arrived at the prison. Like with the previous books I have received, they were not delivered until after my mother called the prison numerous times (to inquire as to why I was not getting the books). She left several messages with the security manager, and eventually got through to someone in the superintendent's office, and after several conversations someone actually had the books delivered to me.

It had also required multiple phone calls from the outside when I first received books here at the CNCC on July 18th, two days after my second blog post on the issue went online. That time they were brought to me personally by the security manager here, Martin Krawczyk. When I met with him he confirmed that my understanding of the policy is in fact correct, but informed me that the CNCC is "still trying to work out" how to implement it.

I told him that I expected to receive lots of books, and that requiring a written request-based pre-approval process for each one seemed like an absurdly bureaucratic waste of time. He agreed to forgo that process, but not the security screening of each book once they arrive. I told him that while I have no problem with this – it seems reasonable – in accordance with another policy (the one that says we are supposed to be informed about any piece of mail that for security reasons they choose not to deliver to us and why) I would be posting a list of the books that were deemed to be a security threat. Krawczyk said he had no problem with that. He also told me that I would only be allowed to keep a maximum of 6 books in my cell at any given time. We agreed that when the total exceeded that number I could share books with other prisoners by giving them away and/or donating them to the library.

Unfortunately, that was the last time I heard from security manager Krawczyk. I had sent him several requests to try and get the books most recently sent in, and my mother left several messages on his institutional voicemail, he replied to neither of us.

A few days before I finally received the two most recent novels – Octavia E. Butler's *Mind of My Mind* and Pasha Malla's *People Park* – a friend called the CNCC to look into the matter. She was told by a receptionist (who refused to give their name) that the CNCC does not accept books for prisoners.

One of the problems here is that individuals in various positions of power simply do whatever they want on any given day, regardless of policy. To me, that constitutes an arbitrary abuse of authority.

On July 21st I sent a request to the superintendent (as discussions with the security manager had confirmed is the proper procedure) asking for permission to receive subscriptions to 'The Economist' and to 'The Guardian Weekly'. Three days later I received a reply from the assistant to the deputy superintendent in charge of operations that stated "only approved magazines from Canteen list" [sic].

On July 28th I followed up by sending a request to the deputy superintendent's office asking "to discuss the decision to contravene policy regarding receiving appropriate reading material". Less than three hours later I received a reply from an operational manager (also known as a sergeant) that said "CNCC provides library books to the Unit. If you have a specific request for a book or magazine that the librarian can provide they will give it to you. You are allowed to order books, however, they are held in your property until you are released."

Subsequent requests to the operational manager, to the deputy superintendent, and to security manager Krawczyk have all gone unanswered. It would appear that they have decided to try to ignore me.

My mother did, however, get through to the superintendent's office and I did end up getting the two books that had been in the building the longest. There are still others that have yet to be delivered to me.

One day before those two books were delivered, when writing the first draft of this piece I wrote that

"regardless of whether I am able to continue getting books or not, it would seem that without the extreme privilege of having access to people on the outside who are willing and able to talk to the prison administration and even to exert some pressure, the policies that facilitate a prisoner's right to have access to books mean very little. And while there is no official 'no books for prisoners' policy here or at any other Ontario correctional facility, because of the decisions of the Ministry and the arbitrary abuse of authority by prison management there seems to be little hope for access to books for prisoners."

The next day, after receiving the books, I added:

"it would seem that with enough persistence from both the inside and the outside it is possible to get the prison to adhere to its own institutional rules about having books sent in. However, that does nothing about library access for prisoners not privileged enough to have family and friends outside who have credit cards (necessary to order books from online distributors) and who are able and willing to repeatedly call and talk to prison administration."

This week I will be helping a fellow prisoner start the process of trying to get a book he wants to read sent in. We'll see what happens.

With enough persistence from both the inside and the outside maybe the library cart will even start bringing some books for prisoners.

12 Sept - Occupy Tactics: A Debate Between Chris Hedges & the CrimethInc. Ex-Workers Collective

WHAT: Violence and Legitimacy in the Occupy Movement and Beyond: A Debate between Chris Hedges and the CrimethInc. Ex-Workers Collective on Tactics & Strategy, Reform & Revolution

WHEN: 7:00pm, Wednesday, September 12th

WHERE: Proshansky Auditorium – CUNY Graduate Center, Lower Level – 365 Fifth Avenue, Manhattan

COST: Free

MORE:

Why a debate?

Since Occupy Wall Street took Zuccotti Park in September 2011, there has been a resurgence of social movement activity in the United States. As momentum has increased, age-old questions over tactics, strategy, and goals have returned to the fore.

What is violence? Who gets to define it? Do illegal actions have a place in our movements? This discussion never takes place in a vacuum or on a level playing field; rather, it occurs within the context of a struggle that is already in progress, where every statement has immediate ramifications for the participants. Differing tactical approaches often reflect fundamental differences in strategy and goals.

At the core of these issues is the question:

What are we fighting for and how do we get there?

This moderated debate will feature:

Chris Hedges, Journalist

Chris Hedges is an American journalist, author, and war correspondent, specializing in American and Middle Eastern politics and societies. He will speak to the perspectives behind his controversial article “The Cancer in Occupy” regarding black bloc tactics and anarchist participation in the Occupy movement.

B. Traven, CrimethInc. Ex-Workers Collective

B. Traven will support the case for a diversity of tactics in the Occupy movement and in broader anti-capitalist struggles worldwide, illustrating an anarchist critique of the status quo and a vision of social transformation. CrimethInc. has produced many books and articles, including “The Illegitimacy of Violence, the Violence of Legitimacy,” composed in part as a response to Hedges’ “The Cancer in Occupy.”

Moderated by Sujatha Fernandes, CUNY Graduate Center

Sujatha Fernandes is an Associate Professor of Sociology at Queens College and the Graduate Center, City University of New York. She is the author of several books on urban politics and culture; the latest is “Close to the Edge: In Search of the Global Hip Hop Generation” (Verso). She has written about the Occupy movement and recent global uprisings for *The New York Times* and *The Huffington Post*.

Opening remarks by Sarah Leonard, Dissent Magazine

Sarah Leonard is Associate Editor at *Dissent* magazine, a quarterly of the Left covering culture and politics. She is also an editor at *The New Inquiry*, and a contributing editor to *Jacobin*. She co-edited the Occupy! Gazette with *n+1* as well as *Occupied!: Scenes from Occupied America*. She covered Occupy as a writer and journalist. She is currently editing a special issue on radical feminism for *Dissent*.

14 Sept - Stop Mass Incarceration, Free Mumia & All Political Prisoners

WHAT: Panel discussion and book signing with Angela Davis, Cornel West, Pam Africa, Jazz Hayden & more

WHEN: 5:00-7:00pm, Friday, September 14th

WHERE: The Nave at Riverside Church - 490 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10027

COST: \$10

MORE:

Featuring:

~Book signing by program participants

~Literature tables

~A petition signing for the closing of Attica

~Media interviews

~Keynote speakers

~Panel discussion on the anti-mass incarceration movement

The panel discussion will feature Angela Davis, Michelle Alexander, Marc Lamont Hill, Cornel West, Pam Africa, Asha Bandele, Suzanne Ross, Soffiyah Elijah, Juan E. Mendez and Jazz Hayden.

24 Sept – National Call-in for anti-war and international solidarity activists

Two years after the September 24, 2010 FBI raids and grand jury repression that targeted 23 Midwest anti-war, Palestinian and international solidarity activists, the Committee to Stop FBI Repression is urging activists around the country to take action.

MORE:

Call Assistant U.S. Attorney Barry Jonas at **312-353-5300 x 68027**
Tell him to "End the investigation of anti-war and international solidarity activists."

Two years is enough! It is time for the Chicago U.S. Attorney's office to say, once and for all, that this investigation is over.

After two long years, the activists who faced raids and subpoenaed are still being threatened. This needs to be taken seriously. In late July 2012, Northern Illinois Assistant U.S. Attorney Barry Jonas refused to return much of the material seized in the FBI raid on the home of Hatem Abudayyeh, citing the ongoing "material support for terrorism" investigation.

Barry Jonas is well known for participating in one of the worst violations of civil liberties in the past decade. He played a leading role in prosecuting the leaders of the Holy Land Foundation while he was trial attorney for the Department of Justice Counter-terrorism Section.

The Chicago U.S. Attorney's Office has told lawyers representing the anti-war and international solidarity activists that they are preparing "multiple indictments of multiple people." Barry Jonas' refusal to return Abudayyeh's papers is the latest confirmation that the investigation has not ended and that the Justice Department is continuing its vendetta against those who are working for peace with justice. In a number of "material support of terrorism" cases, there has been a gap of one to three or more years between the FBI raids and indictments.

Most of the activists targeted in this case, including Abudayyeh, helped organize the massive protest at the 2008 Republican National Convention in Saint Paul, Minnesota. At that time, an undercover law enforcement officer, going by the name of "Karen Sullivan," infiltrated the protest efforts and stuck around to spy and lie about many of the 23 activists.

That Barry Jonas is now the lead prosecutor for the international solidarity activists is troubling. Jonas is a pro-Israel ideologue whose work in prosecuting the Holy Land case exposed his politically motivated willingness to trample on the rights of accused Palestinians. As the lead prosecutor in the Holy Land case, Jonas used secret witnesses (the defense never got to find out who the witnesses were), hearsay evidence and the introduction of evidence that had nothing to do with the defendants in the case - such as showing a video from Palestine of protesters burning an American flag - as a means to prejudice the jury. The result was that five men, who did nothing wrong, are sitting in prison with sentences that range between 15 and 65 years.

The U.S. is becoming a more repressive place. Hundreds of Arabs and Muslims have and are facing unjust prosecutions, or have already been put behind bars. Also, a grand jury is threatening political activists in the Northwest; criminal proceedings are taking place against NATO protesters in Chicago; and the Occupy movement has faced a wave of police violence.

Through our collective action, we were able to win a victory against the FBI frame up of veteran Chicano activist Carlos Montes.

We need to continue the fight to against all political repression. Together we will win!