



POST OFFICE BOX 110034 BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11211

Updates for April 30th

16 Apr - Certain Days: Freedom for Political Prisoners Calendar, 2014

Comrades in Canada are preparing for the 2014 Certain Days calendar and have released a call for artwork. The details are below.

MORE:

For: Certain Days: Freedom for Political Prisoners Calendar, 2014

Deadline: 31 May 2013

Theme: Visions of justice

The Certain Days: Freedom for Political Prisoners Calendar collective (www.certaindays.org) will be releasing its 13th calendar in the Fall of 2013. Over the years, we've turned our attention to various themes: grassroots organizing, the legacy of the Black Panther Party, and indigenous resistance. The theme for 2014 will be "visions of justice."

THEME GUIDELINES

The theme for 2014 is inspired by people's struggles to explore alternative visions of justice and work towards transformative ways of dealing with harm and violence in our communities. We reject policing, surveillance and incarceration as modes of justice, calling them out as modes of repression, means used by the state to maintain white supremacy, capitalism and patriarchy, and to strip oppressed communities of power and self-determination. But what do we offer in their stead? What models, principles and examples lead the way in cultivating authentic communities of justice and liberation?

You are welcome to explore what this topic means to you. To give you an idea, topics may include

- Alternatives to prisons, policing and other repressive forms of 'justice'
- Histories of transformative justice practices in different social movements
- Current examples of organizing around transformative justice
- Intergenerational work, including work with the many aging political prisoners
- Efforts by different movements to address violence without involving the police/the state
- Examples of organizing for justice in prison
- Critiques of oppressive models of enacting 'justice'
- Efforts to counter injustices enacted by the state (through police, courts, etc)
- Transformative justice and decolonization; Indigenous perspectives on justice
- Healing justice, particularly within prison/in communities impacted by the prison industrial complex
- Healing from individual/collective trauma as revolutionary work
- Addressing gender violence in social movements
- Visions of justice as they relate to prison abolition
- How we support people in the system, including political prisoners

ABOUT THE CALENDAR

The *Certain Days: Freedom for Political Prisoners Calendar* is a joint fundraising and educational project between outside organizers in Montreal and Toronto and three political prisoners being held in maximum-security prisons in New York State: David Gilbert, Robert Seth Hayes and Herman Bell. We are committed to doing work grounded in an anti-imperialist and anti-racist perspective. We work in solidarity with anti-colonial

struggles, Political Prisoners and the rights of undocumented citizens and migrants. We are queer and trans liberationist. We raise awareness of Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War in the United States and abroad, many of whom are now in their third decade of imprisonment. People on the streets should understand the history of today's social justice movements and how that history is linked to solidarity for PPs/POWs. In addition to building that historical awareness, we emphasize the ongoing involvement and continued commitment of PPs/POWs in these same movements.

Proceeds from the calendar will be used for direct support work for Political Prisoners and anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist struggles in the U.S. and Canada.

17 Apr - New Writings by Mumia Abu-Jamal

Below, we've pasted the transcripts of Mumia's latest audio commentaries, covering topics including immigration, his birthday, and the pervasive apartheid in Israel.

MORE:

FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT FOR FREE PEOPLE!

The issue of immigration is boiling hot in America.

Every potential presidential candidate has an opinion; and, if necessary, will find another one if s/he thinks it can get him/her a few more Latino votes.

But, ultimately, too many politicians are locked into US fear and hatred of Mexicans – so the issue is in a stalemate.

It is ironic that most Americans are the children or the grandchildren of immigrants (except, of course, Native-Americans and African-Americans), so why the opposition?

In a way, that's not a fair question; for Americans aren't opposed to all immigration. If people are from, say, England, Ireland, Germany – or Canada – their comings and goings raises little dust.

But Mexico – not Mexico!

Why? Because Mexico is seen as a non-white nation. Because their primary language is Spanish, and because they threaten America's mad Aryan dream of whiteness.

Period.

For this to quiet these uneasy demons, the US government has raided and removed more Mexicans than almost any modern-day administration.

The late, great writer James Baldwin wrote years ago, "This world is white no longer and it will never be white again." He might have said the same thing about America.

Whenever any American politician speaks today, they speak of "free trade." It matters little which corporate party he/she belongs to.

The people here in Mexico – and in the US – should raise anew demand – "free travel!"

We should demand an end to this great deportation machine, that cruel action which splits families asunder; "free travel is a human right!"

Indeed, our brothers and sisters in Mexico have made precisely this demand by saying:

Libre transito a personas migrantes, sus familias y comunidades, a traves de la eliminacion de visas o la implementacion de una visa transmigrante latino americana.

Or:

Free transit for migrants, their families, and communities, by eliminating visa requirements or implementing a transit visa system for Latin American migrants in Mexican territory.

That's one of the demands of Red Accion Migrante. For more information, contact Accionmigrante.org.

Another April 24th

Anyone who knows me knows that I'm not big on my birthday.

Many years, I forget it entirely.

So, don't expect a big birthday speech.

But, every so often, I think of a birthday that is hard to forget.

It's April 24th, 1996, when the President of the United States signed into law an act known as the AEDPA (or Anti-terrorism Effective Death Penalty Act), which transformed habeas corpus from its previous 700 years of Anglo-American history.

The law severely limited, restricted and denied federal habeas corpus to people who would've been entitled to it before the act.

I remember my lawyers mentioning it, but frankly, I couldn't believe it.

Wait a minute. The government's changing a law? Habeas corpus? For me?

"Y'all trippin' ", I said.

But they weren't. In a way, I was.

Is that just coincidence?

At a press conference, my name came up, and (former) PA Governor Edward G. Rendell said as much.

On tape.

But why should I be surprised? Hadn't every court ignored its own precedents in my case?

The law, it seems, is only politics by other means.

We must build a movement that frees us all from such a system.

I won't say, 'Happy Birthday'--.

I'll only say, Ona Move!

Freedom for All!

Good for the Goose?

The North Korean military announce a series of missile tests, implicitly suggesting some will (may) be nuclear.

The U.S. press dusts of its red banner headlines and reporters pose as armchair psychiatrists who dutifully diagnose North Korea's new leader, Kim Jong-Un, as crazy.

Sound familiar?

Over a decade ago, the same forces deemed Iraq's president, Saddam Hussein, a clever and able politician, as nuts. One well-known reporter asked former Libyan leader, Muammar el-Qaddafi, "Are you insane?"

The media-promoted notion that any leader who opposes American Imperial designs must be mad to even think so, is, well – propaganda.

As for North Korea, is it logical for their military to sit idly by while the U.S. leads co-called war games right off their shores?

Should they just shrug it off?

Or would *that* be crazy?

What if another country staged 'war games' off the coast of Atlantic City, or near Miami?

What would the U.S. do?

You surely know the answer.

Palestine Prison

It is one of the ironies of history that the descendants of the beleaguered Warsaw Ghetto in Poland, subjected to the bitter hatreds and repression of the Nazis, have established an entire sea of the oppressed and impoverished on their periphery: the open-air prison ghettos of Palestine: Gaza and the West Bank.

There, in full view of the world, is the latest apartheid state, where Arabs are excluded from certain roads, where their very land is carved up from beneath them, and placed behind barbed wire, cyclone fences and concrete walls.

Welcome to the Israeli occupation, blessed by the US government as its Imperial outpost, where the lives of Palestinians are broken into thousands of pieces daily, where everything, from olive trees to water sources, everything but the Sun itself, is locked up, barred, caged from the people of Palestine.

And so, those who were subjected to the bitter hatreds and repression of Christian Europe – for centuries – are now subjecting another people to bitter hatreds and repression, on behalf of Europe and America –because of Western lust for Middle Eastern oil.

The gift of one empire (the British), and now the tool of another empire (the US), Israel has become the rabid attack dog of the West, ready, willing, armed and able to strike any target its master so commands –especially Arab targets.

Meanwhile, the Palestinians suffer ever tragedy an oppressed people can suffer, dislocation, occupation, imprisonment of its militants, subversion of its political leaders, seizure of its lands, and the embitterment of its spirits by the apartheid regime of Israel.

Apartheid? Yes. For the only tangible difference between the racist repression of the South Africans and the Palestinians is that the Nationalist government exploited African labor; the Zionists neither want nor need Palestinian labor –they want only their lands. And in that sense, it may be even worse, for there, in Israeli

apartheid, Arab Palestinians are truly expendable.

And if you read comments in the Israeli press, or listen to Israeli politicians, you find the naked racism and hatreds expressed against Arabs, that 60+ years ago, was expressed against German Jews, and 60+ years before that, expressed against Indian tribes, and newly freed Africans in America.

Israel is today apartheid country. We need to acknowledge this in order to mobilize against it.

Down with Apartheid: Anywhere in the World!

17 Apr - Dane Rossman to be Extradicted to Canada

On the morning of April 17th, Federal Magistrate D. Thomas Ferraro ruled that Dane Rossman is to be extradited to Canada to face two charges stemming from the G20 protest in Toronto in 2010.

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The court ruled that there was probable cause to extradite based on several photos. As soon as the State Department certifies his extradition, Dane will be taken to Toronto in the custody of Canadian authorities.

Because of recent suicide attempts at the CCA facility where Dane is being held, his entire section has been on lockdown and he has not been allowed out of his cell for several days. He and his fellow inmates have been unable to call their friends and family, exercise outside, shower, or use the microwave. This absurd response by prison authorities is indicative of the collective punishment policies that define prison life. The fact that prison authorities have decided to respond to suicide attempts inside their facility by making life inside even more intolerable, ostensibly in order to help those incarcerated, is demonstrative of the evident truth that these institutions cannot ultimately be reformed but only dismantled.

Dane will remain incarcerated until his extradition and then will likely remain in jail in Canada. Please continue to support Dane as he continues his legal process by donating to his defense fund, and check back for more updates including how to write to him in Canada.

18 Apr - Back To The Primitive by Walter Bond

Below, we've included the latest by Animal Liberation Front prisoner Walter Bond

MORE:

Civilization is complex. It invades our social interactions, biases our desires and separates us from the natural world. Industrial civilization and high technology exacerbate the divisions and deep separations still further. Industry, consumption, and production are the bane of the environment, the destroyer of forests, the reason for untold neurosis and fosters the same mind frame of disassociation that allowed Nazis to run death camps by day and be family men at night (or allows animal researchers to vivisect animals to death and then go home and pet their cat).

Of course, the irony of contradiction is not wasted on me. For, as I assert that civilization is the destroyer of lives, polluter of the Earth and divider of labor. I am typing these words on a computer, in a building, with glasses on my face, noting the time on my wrist watch and speaking in an advanced dialect of a civilized language. Does this make such critiques invalid? I don't think so.

All too often we are taught to internalize all that is destructive in this world. It is not my fault that I must use the tools of civilization to dismantle civilization. And this is no more contradictory than the abolitionists of yesteryear that utilized roads built by slavery to pipeline those same liberated blacks to freedom. Or the fact that many animal rights 'activists' and environmentalists will fly across the country or planet, not to save an animal or tree but to network with other humans at conventions and talk about animals and trees in the abstract.

When it comes to anti-civilization theory the first line of offense is always something to do with the fact that we

all partake in civilization therefore to stand against it is hypocritical. This is true but overly simplistic. More to the point, most everything that we do in our separated, segregated and compartmentalized societies has an air of hypocrisy to it because civilization is schizophrenic. Again this is not the individuals fault.

The second line of offense is usually that it is completely impractical if not impossible to collapse technological society in the present, so it is absurd and a waste of time to try. This of course is apathy in the extreme and can be applied to anything that appears insurmountable or may take a lot of self sacrifice and hard work. For instance, since millions and millions of people are going to drive, you can't stop big oil, so it's just dumb to protest it, right? Or since billions of people eat animals and they're not going to stop it's futile to promote or adhere to veganism?

Apathy at its best leads to compromised welfarism and band aid solutions which in the final analysis will always end up consumer modified, repackaged and sold back to us. And at worst it leads to an infectious inaction that poisons radicalism.

The last line of offense goes something like: Only a pathologically deranged maniac would want to raze the cities and all technology to the ground! I must admit that because of its dramatic appeal this one is my favorite. Since we are concerned with the source of all oppressions and not only their various manifestations we must be lunatics. Or more accurately, because we don't worship and value production and property over life and earth we must be violent maniacs! A leap of logic that industrial producers and technocratic scumbags have duped the people, both capitalist and communist (and sometimes vegan or anarchist) into believing.

I emphatically and unequivocally state for the record that brick and steel, mortar and foam, concrete and wires do not equal the inherent worth of flesh and bone, mountain and stream or air and earth! Violence is what technology does to sentient life like an animal in a trap or an atomic bomb to civilians. Violence happens to the living, destruction happens to buildings and machinery. not vice versa.

Thus, many of us are beginning to see that in order to truly liberate animals, the earth, or each other we need to start combating the source of oppression. Which in the immediate is technologically advanced civilization. Fighting single issue oppressions is like stomping out brush fires, for every one that we stomp out, water down or put out. Several more are being set. Many times the same fire we thought we put out rekindles. We fight the fur industry in one country and it pops up in another. The moment we stop fighting an environmental issue all the lobbying and work gets rescinded with the changing of the political guard on election day. Take your pick: imperialism, LGBTQ issues, racism, feminism, vivisection or veganism.

The more we focus and fight the more we drain our energies while the apparatus of oppression and the machines hum on. That's not to say that the single issue cause is invalid. We all must place our energies and activity where our heart is. And for many of us the single issue is of personal and emotional significance. As an example, after building slaughterhouses for a living as a young man I was forever horrified and shaken out of apathy and inactivity. For me helping animals and fighting on their behalf is definitional to who I am. And fighting the oppressions we and others face in the here and now is hugely important to those on whose behalf we struggle. However, for all the single issue causes that are fighting for liberation and a leaderless society to truly coalesce under the umbrella of total liberation it only makes sense to recognize our common oppressor. The inferno that is the source of every brush fire, the totality, civilization.

It's very easy to forget or be completely blind to the heinous devastation and domination that occurs to create and maintain civilizations. Unfortunately the abuses, subjugation and profound violence is hydra headed and all too real. In the Americas, millions upon millions of native lives were decimated, murdered in the most brutal ways and later addicted to alcohol and shoved on to reservations. This occurred to make way for the plunder of the earth, the destruction of forests, the murder of the buffalo the rise of animal byproduct industries and the domestic slavery of the land for mass farming know as agriculture. The first modern cities were built from the forced labor of slavery and out of the blood and bones of the earth and animal nations. Layers and layers of overt domination are the foundation of the society we see all around us. White over black, men over women,

humans over animals, industry over earth, rich over poor, and the educated over the ignorant.

Today it's worse than it ever was before. Mechanization has quickened the pace of industry and the rape of the planet to fuel its raw products. Animals die faster and in greater numbers than ever before because of factory disassembly and heavy machinery, not to mention genetic modification and unnatural breeding. Pedophiles are able to proliferate and produce child pornography anonymously and distribute it to millions of sick freaks with the click of a button. No ecosystem, mountain, ocean or species is truly off limits when it comes to the machinations of big business. Alienation and depression are pandemic and we grow decrepit and diseased well before we should. The medical industry has become master at fixing ailments that were once unheard of in primitive societies and our twisted and neurotic lives drag on.

All the while we have become collectively brilliant at keeping the oppressions we support hidden and out of site. As is the case with child labor in third world countries to make cheap shoes and clothes. Slaughterhouses in the middle of nowhere, millions of people locked away in prisons. All unseen, unheard of, and of no concern to today's mass consumers. Bread and circus prevail in high definition in ways that make ancient Rome look like a vaudeville play in comparison. Out of sight, truly does equal out of mind, for most of us.

The push in ethics, activist and anarchist circles is to use technology and all these products of oppression to uplift us out of the quagmire of hierarchy and domination. There is some irrational belief that things are getting better, when in reality only the appearances and cover ups are getting better. This linear notion that on the other side of all the environmental devastation and social inadequacy which technology is responsible for, we are on the verge of a techno-utopian breakthrough is not only an unfounded mirage it is also pure bullshit!

Functionality exists, as does cause and effect and there is no escaping this. An equitable and fair society will not come out of white supremacy, imperialism, and religious fascism which largely accounts for the foundations of contemporary history, no matter how many people are pathologically patriotic. The minions can bandy creed words like 'freedom' and 'liberty' as much as they want but it will not change the functionality of oppression. To put the same premise in a more down to earth way. It's ridiculous to think that a person in a physically abusive relationship is going to change their partner into a compassionate and considerate confidant. No, the dysfunction is not going to turn into function. On the contrary it is bound to get worse despite the wishes or fantasies of the abused. In such a situation the abused is often (or should be) counseled to get out of the abusive relationship and then take a look at their habits, ideas and beliefs about relationships.

Politics, including classical and red anarchist politics, seem stuck on the idea that it is the organizing of society that is the fly in the ointment. Taking this neutral stance toward industry and technology or in many instances showering the two with praise is more a Marxist and capitalist trick, so as to reap the rewards of production and labor. Green anarchy should not be reeled into this politicized and industrial green washing. Anarchy is about dissolving authority and hierarchy and opposing them in all hands. Not rearranging the wording of a situation while leaving all the components for oppression intact (another Marxian tactic). It's time for an anarchy that is more than radical leftism or simply busy scrutinizing each others' lifestyles and single issue causes. It's time for a return to the living anarchy that existed for thousands and thousands of human generations. An anarchy that exists in animals and ecosystems to this day. An anarchy where millions of free communities live and interact with an astonishing amount of civility, chivalry and adaptability. It's time to go back to the primitive.

Far from being a utopianist ideal, anarcho-primitivism worked for humans and our relationships with the earth since the dawn of our species. It is an easily observable fact that before technology, society, the work week, or the alienation of our current day malaise we knew how to live, we knew how to play, we knew how to eat and we knew how to thrive. Without police stations, churches, interstate commerce or monetary greed. Just like all other creatures we knew what to do and not to do because we were connected to the earth, instead of at war with her.

The before mentioned illusion of 'advancement' one day bringing us into a era of enlightenment and plenty, if believed, only takes us further away from the reality that as biological entities, (that is to say as part and parcel of

the earth under our feet.) our only way to personal enrichment, peace and prosperity (as much as we will ever realistically be able to attain) is to live once again as 'part of' instead of 'apart from' the biosphere.

If we want to see the end of billions and billions of animals murdered, then we should want to see the end of the slaughterhouses that kill them, the gross technologies that breed them, and the science of genetic modification that degrades them for mass consumption. You cannot stop their murders and also leave the means of their murders perfectly intact. If we are truly against war than we should opposes the science, chemistry and mechanization that make wars machines and bombs possible and evermore heinous and widespread with each new innovation. If we are against any form of oppression we should also be against the technologies that amplify them. Because none of these issues is happening in a vacuum or without incredible mechanical aid.

We are heading back to the primitive in either direction we go on our imaginary line of progress. The only question will be will we arrive there through earth-centeredness and a radical destruction of the entire edifice of civilization? Or will it be because of technological mishap, environmental destruction and the over population of a consumer society gone mad?

18 Apr - Joel Bitar Waives Extradition and Returns to Canada

On Friday, April 12th, Joel once again appeared in Federal Court, but this time to waive extradition, which would allow him to voluntarily—the customary way that the courts reference threats of arrest, imprisonment, house arrest, prosecution, and of course, extradition—return to Canada for arraignment.

MORE:

At the time of our last update, Joel Bitar, had been arrested in New York City on a provisional arrest warrant on February 14, 2013, by US federal marshals acting on a foreign extradition request from Canadian authorities. Joel was charged with 26 counts, almost all relating to property damage that occurred during the G20 summit protests in Toronto, Ontario, Canada in June 2010. At his hearing on February 19th, Joel was granted bail and placed under house arrest pending his extradition hearing. Since that time, Canadian authorities—cheered on and abetted by the United States government—embroiled four more Americans in the seemingly never-ending Toronto G20 repression, requesting their extradition to Canada for property damage and mask-wearing. Three of these four have already been arraigned in Canada, been granted bail, and have returned to the United States to await further legal proceedings.

The Assistant U.S. Attorney voiced no objections and the magistrate judge approved the waiver. Joel's bail was modified to allow him to travel to Canada—his passport was returned and arrangements were made to remove his ankle monitor on the day of his flight. The voluntary nature of the situation was affirmed at the end of the proceedings, with a stern reminder by the magistrate judge that Joel has one option—surrender to Canadian authorities at the given time or face prosecution in the United States, as well as the forfeiture of the \$500,000 bond to the ruination of his family.

On Tuesday, April 16th, Joel traveled to Canada along with his father and was immediately arrested by Canadian authorities upon his arrival at Pearson International Airport in Toronto. By the time Joel was transferred into the hands of the Toronto Police Department it was too late for arraignment, which was scheduled for the next day, Wednesday, April 17th. Following the precedent of the prior three Americans who had been arraigned for charges from the Toronto G20, Joel was granted bail—in the amount of \$100,000—with certain stipulations such as non-association with certain Canadian activists as well as a prohibition on attending any protests in Canada. Joel traveled back to his home in New York City later that same day and is free to go about his life as long as he returns to Canada—voluntarily—as needed.

In preparation for Joel's return to Canada, the Toronto Police Department's smear campaign went to work—leaking alleged photos of Joel to the media, and Det.-Sgt. Gary Giroux spinning straw into a man by dubbing Joel "the number two guy" on the basis of grainy surveillance photos and innocuous Facebook posts. Joel was one of 1100 people arrested at the Toronto G20 protests, the largest mass arrest in Canada's history. These arrests have led to numerous charges of brutality and misconduct by the police during the G20 protests, as well

as lawsuits and even an official public inquiry that have substantiated these claims. The charges against Joel, which are simply that—charges—almost exclusively relating to property damage, led to him being pursued across international borders, meanwhile those responsible for endangering the lives of thousands of Canadian citizens during the G20, those who beat and gassed and terrified people—the police—continue on undaunted.

We remain in solidarity with Joel, and all those who face state repression.

More updates as necessary.

18 Apr - Florida State Attorney Drops Felony FAEPA Charge Against Chris Lagergren

On the eve of Chris' hearing to argue a Motion to Dismiss, the Florida State Attorney drops the Florida Animal Enterprise Protection Act – Animal Enterprise Disruption charge against Chris.

MORE:

In an 18 page Motion to Dismiss that was submitted to the court, Chris's defense team was prepared to argue that the Marine Mammal Conservancy, a not-for-profit organization, did not qualify as an Animal Enterprise by definition of the law. That was great news for Chris, his defense team, and everyone that supports Chris!

The Florida State Attorney immediately filed an amended Information Sheet, charging Chris with two counts of Trespassing and one count of Criminal Mischief/Vandalism. The case was transferred from Circuit Court back to County Court. While these charges carry fines up to \$3,000, and up to 3 years in jail, we have every confidence that justice will prevail and Chris will be found Not Guilty of any wrong doing.

In Solidarity, for the Animals and with Chris! We will never back down!

18 Apr - A Sad Anniversary for Native Americans

Native American activist Leonard Peltier, who has been imprisoned for 37 years, still awaits justice. Below is an article by Jason Coppola for Al Jazeera.

MORE:

"I think I can explain beyond serious doubt, that Leonard Peltier has committed no crime whatsoever," said former US Attorney General Ramsey Clark. "But that if he had been guilty of firing a gun that killed an FBI Agent, it was in defense of not just his people but the integrity of humanity from domination and exploitation."

A new effort is underway on the anniversary of Native American activist Leonard Peltier's conviction to urge President Barack Obama to grant clemency to a man Amnesty International considers to be a "political prisoner" in the United States.

This effort is spearheaded by the Leonard Peltier Defense Offense Committee and joined by his supporters worldwide.

"We no longer have to convince the world of his innocence," Peltier attorney John Privitera told Al Jazeera at a press conference in New York City this past December. "All anyone has to do is read the judicial history of his conviction and incarceration and it is clear that there was a miscarriage of justice."

The judicial history of the Peltier case is fraught with racism, false evidence, coerced testimonies, controversy, and perjury. It is a stain on the judicial system of the United States and has attracted support for Peltier's freedom by such notable figures as Nelson Mandela, Mother Teresa, and the Dalai Lama.

Reign of Terror

It was the mid 1970s on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota during a period which saw the highest per capita murder rate in the country. Most murders went unsolved. Few were ever investigated.

Tribal Council Chairman Richard "Dick" Wilson was elected in 1972. Wilson, viewed as a corrupt administrator who channelled tribal funds to himself while jobs went to his allies, cracked down on the "traditional" people of Pine Ridge, those who valued their indigenous culture, language, and beliefs over more Americanized, western based value systems.

An enthusiastic supporter of signing over native land rights to mining companies, Wilson organized a private militia called 'Guardians of the Oglala Nation' or 'GOONs' to intimidate his political opponents.

At the time, the American Indian Movement (AIM) had been a growing force across the United States standing up for Native American rights, including the upholding of treaties signed by the US Government with the Lakota Nation.

On February 27, 1973, protesting the injustice and conditions on the reservation and bringing attention to the broken treaties, some 200 members of the American Indian Movement and their Oglala Lakota supporters occupied the town of Wounded Knee on Pine Ridge, the site of the 1890 massacre by the US 7th Cavalry which killed at least three hundred unarmed Indians - mostly women and children.

The occupation of Wounded Knee was met by a massive show of force by the FBI, US Marshals, and Tribal Police. Military armoured personnel carriers rumbled down the reservation's roads, and the occupation ended after a 71 day standoff which saw two Indians, Frank Clearwater and Buddy LaMont, killed by gunfire.

What followed was a period on the reservation referred to by those who lived through it as the "reign of terror."

Dick Wilson's tribal government funded GOON squads began a campaign of violence against anyone thought to be an AIM supporter or traditional Oglala Lakota. Entire neighborhoods were shot up, houses were burned, and at least sixty members of AIM or their supporters on the reservation had been found murdered.

The traditional people on the reservation invited AIM to play a more active role in helping protect them from Wilson's gangs. Leonard Peltier was one of those who came to Pine Ridge to help safeguard the community from the violence which engulfed them.

"It was a time of terror for our people, the FBI came to the land of the Oglalas and gave guns and bullets to Indian people, to kill other Indian people," Oglala Tribal Vice President Tom Poor Bear told Al Jazeera.

Poor Bear, who has been in AIM since 1972, was in New York City recently speaking up in support of Peltier's release.

"During the reign of terror, a lot of us, like Leonard, set up camps to protect our elders, to protect our children, to protect our spiritual people," Poor Bear added. "The only thing Leonard is guilty of is carrying the responsibility of our ancestors."

It was in this atmosphere that on June 26, 1975, two under cover agents of the FBI drove onto the private property of the Jumping Bull residence where members of AIM had a nearby camp.

Soon after a shootout erupted, with women and children fleeing in the crossfire, FBI Special Agents Jack Coler and Ronald Williams were killed.

The camp was soon surrounded and came under a hail of gunfire while people continued to flee.

A third death, that of Native American Joe Stuntz, shot through the head by a sniper's bullet, has yet to be investigated.

After one of the largest manhunts in FBI history, Peltier, who was at the AIM camp on that day, was arrested in February 1976 in Canada and accused of killing the agents.

Dino Butler and Robert Robideau, arrested in the United States, were also charged with the killings. However, both of them were acquitted of these charges by a federal jury in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, on the grounds of self-defense.

The jury decided that had they been among what was reported to be up to thirty or so involved in the shoot out, and had they been the ones who fired on and killed the agents, due to the fear and violence in the community at that time, those acts would have been justified.

Nevertheless, the FBI was determined to hold someone accountable for the deaths of their agents and turned their focus to Peltier.

Peltier was extradited to the United States for trial based on an affidavit signed by a young Native American woman named Myrtle Poor Bear who stated that she was Peltier's girlfriend at the time and had been a witness to the killings.

Myrtle Poor Bear, known to have been mentally unstable, later recanted, admitting that she had never met Peltier but was threatened into making the incriminating statements by the FBI.

The court in Peltier's case barred her from testifying about FBI misconduct on the grounds of her "incompetence."

The court also prohibited Peltier from using "self-defense," as Butler and Robideau did successfully in Cedar Rapids, as his own defense.

Scare Tactics

During the Peltier trial, the airwaves were filled by media reports of imminent terrorist attacks and kidnappings that were supposedly to be carried out by AIM groups. Jury members were escorted to and from the court house by SWAT teams in busses with blacked out windows.

The fear this generated paid off for the prosecution. Despite failing to produce a single eyewitness to the killings, the prosecution prevailed and on April 19, 1977, the all white jury in Fargo, North Dakota, convicted Leonard Peltier, sentencing him to two consecutive life terms.

A Freedom of Information Act lawsuit years later turned up a ballistics report which revealed that the gun which the prosecution tied to Peltier during the trial did not produce the shell casings found at the scene. The report had been concealed during the trial.

Regardless, the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the ruling even though US prosecutor Lynn Crooks had admitted, "no one knows who fired the fatal shots" that killed the agents.

In fact, during the appeal, according to Peltier defense committee member Dorothy Ninham of the Oneida Nation, when confronted with the lack of evidence the court informed Peltier that he wasn't being held for the 'first degree murder' charge but for 'aiding and abetting'; a crime for which Peltier had not been extradited for, charged with, or convicted of.

The Spirit of Crazy Horse

The details of the Peltier case and the importance of its historical context were carefully presented in the best selling book, "In the Spirit of Crazy Horse, the Leonard Peltier Story" by Peter Matthiessen, as well as in Robert

Redford's documentary, "Incident at Oglala".

This context could not be more clear to Ninham, who told to Al Jazeera, "This is not about one day on Pine Ridge and this is not about two FBI agents being murdered. This is about a whole lot more and goes back over a hundred years since we've been fighting with the government."

"They are holding Leonard for two people," Ninham, who posed numerous unanswered questions, added. "What about the 60 murders that happened on that reservation during the "reign of terror?" Who did any time for them? Who even accounted for those murders? Why wasn't a ballistics test done to see who killed Joe Stuntz? What about at Wounded Knee when they [government agents] shot into the church and killed Frank Clearwater?"

"It is just incredible the amount of injustice that has happened to him [Peltier] in his lifetime," Ninham adds. "I know Leonard. I know the kind of person he is. I've worked with him. I know that he is not capable of murder."

"We want people of all races to get involved with this", says Ninham. "We want to remind people that as long as Leonard is not free, none of us are free. I don't know how the United States can sit with this black eye and then talk about human rights in other countries when we are failing to take care of our own issues here."

From Turtle Mountain Indian Reservation in North Dakota, then put into an Indian boarding school as a child, Peltier, who is Anishinabe and Lakota, is thought of by most who know him as just a regular guy with a strong desire to help his people, whether it be defending treaty rights or fixing people's cars.

Peltier, the symbol, has grown since his conviction, and he is now regularly compared to great leaders like Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull, two legendary Lakota leaders whose lives continue to inspire.

Representing an Idea

The idea Peltier now represents, according to his spiritual advisor Lenny Foster, is that of Indigenous Peoples' struggle and resistance around the world.

"He's locked up and in essence we are all locked up doing time with him", Foster told Al Jazeera.

"As long as he's treated like a political prisoner, we indigenous people are also treated this way. Not having our treaty rights and our sovereignty rights and our freedom of worship being recognised, I think Leonard is a symbol of all of that," added Foster. "For what he represents and what he symbolizes, they want to punish him."

A Dine/Navajo, Foster is a volunteer spiritual advisor for Native American inmates in state prisons and federal penitentiaries. He has been a strong advocate for traditional ceremonies for Native American prisoners, more than 2,000 of whom he has come in contact with while visiting 96 correctional facilities over 30 years in order to conduct sweat lodge ceremonies, pipe ceremonies, and cell side visits.

"I started visiting Leonard Peltier in the Leavenworth US Penitentiary, and eventually moved on to the US Penitentiary in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania," said Foster. "I know Leonard Peltier to be a Revered Elder, and he is a very reverent and spiritual person. He's not some gangster or some gang banger. That's what the federal bureau of prisons wants you to believe."

In seeming disregard for the American Indian Freedom of Religion Act signed by President Jimmy Carter in 1978, an Act which safeguarded the right of Native Americans in the US to practice their religion, even if incarcerated, Peltier has been denied visits from Foster since being transferred to Coleman Federal Correctional Complex, a maximum security prison in Coleman, Florida in 2011.

The reason?

Because Foster is a "friend" of Peltier.

"I raised the issue with the chaplain," said Foster. "That if I were a priest, minister, or rabbi, and had known an inmate for thirty years wouldn't I be somehow friends and have a relationship? But he wouldn't budge on it. The US prison system, when you think about it, is designed to break your spirit, to break your will, to break you down and make you give up. They've tried for thirty seven years to break Leonard's spirit and they haven't done it."

With the incarceration of Leonard Peltier, the US government's battle against him has not ended. As a prisoner in the US penal system, Peltier has endured beatings and solitary confinement.

He also has diabetes, high blood pressure, has suffered a stroke and, according to his lawyers, been denied sufficient medical treatment.

Exemplar of Justice?

As the United States fashions itself as a global leader in human rights advancement, Leonard Peltier's freedom cannot be overlooked.

"I want you to realize there are millions of people throughout the world who are aware of Leonard's case of injustice", Attorney Peter Grant, who is Peltier's lawyer, told Al Jazeera. "They have to be reminded of this. Every diplomat, every world leader knows it is a ball and chain on the President's ability to speak about human rights. It affects his credibility."

Peltier has been Grant's client for decades now.

"We have to reignite the fact of the injustice done to Leonard", Grant added. "We have to keep not only local pressure on the President from people here in the United States, from people on this continent, from people throughout Indian country, we have to keep human rights pressure throughout the world on this president because he has no credibility on those issues until he breaks this ball and chain on his own ankle."

At the New York press conference, Privitera read an appeal to President Barack Obama.

"Mr President, we appeal directly to you. As a legal scholar, you know that article two, section two of our constitution is one of the strong threads in the fabric of our justice system. It is a responsibility born by the executive. It embraces the power to deliver justice, to exercise mercy, and to be wise in that law given power."

"This is an historic opportunity, Mr. President, to infuse your legacy with soulfulness and wisdom", he read. "We ask only that you commute the sentence of Leonard Peltier. No further findings have to be made. Commute him after thirty seven years of imprisonment. You have clemency power to say, and we ask that you do it now, that justice has been served by time, sir. And it's time to return Leonard home to his community to work and die on Turtle Mountain."

Having been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize multiple times himself while incarcerated, Peltier must hope Nobel Peace Prize winner Barack Obama is listening.

Emphasizing the urgency, Privitera continued, "Mr President, this case cries out for mercy. It is time to reveal and exercise your power and wisdom judiciously and we plead today that you commute Leonard Peltier's sentence. Be merciful. Be wise. Use your power. Bring Leonard Peltier home."

Until that happens, Leonard Peltier and his supporters around the world continue to wait.

20 Apr - Lynne Stewart Update

We recently reported about the spread of cancer in Lynne Stewart's body, the fast undertaken by Dick Gregory to draw attention to Lynne's situation, and the international petition that has been signed by folks such as Desmond Tutu. Below we're compiling the latest updates.

MORE:

On April 26, the warden at Carswell Federal Medical Center told Lynne Stewart that he had passed her compassionate release papers up the bureaucratic ladder to his bosses at the Bureau of Prisons of the U.S. Justice Department, an indication that he had not rejected the application. But this step, while very positive, is just the first stage of the struggle with the Obama Administration and Judge Koeltl for her release.

The latest update on Lynne Stewart's health is that her white blood cell count is so low, she has been removed to an isolated ward and can no longer have access to email, while awaiting further test results.

April 21st - The Persecution of Lynne Stewart by Chris Hedges (for Truth Out)

Lynne Stewart, in the vindictive and hysterical world of the war on terror, is one of its martyrs. A 73-year-old lawyer who spent her life defending the poor, the marginalized and the despised, including blind cleric Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman, she fell afoul of the state apparatus because she dared to demand justice rather than acquiesce to state sponsored witch hunts. And now, with stage 4 cancer that has metastasized, spreading to her lymph nodes, shoulder, bones and lungs, creating a grave threat to her life, she sits in a prison cell at the Federal Medical Center Carswell in Fort Worth, Texas, where she is serving a 10-year sentence. Stewart's family is pleading with the state for "compassionate release" and numerous international human rights campaigners, including Archbishop Desmond Tutu, have signed a petition calling for her to be freed on medical grounds. It is not only a crime in the U.S. to be poor, to be a Muslim, to openly condemn the crimes committed in our name in the Muslim world, but to defend those who do. And the near total collapse of our judicial system, wrecked in the name of national security and "the war on terror," is encapsulated in the saga of this courageous attorney—now disbarred because of her conviction.

"I hope that my imprisonment sends the wake up call that the government is prepared to imprison lawyers who do not conduct legal representation in a manner the government has ordained," she told me when I reached her through email in prison. "My career of 30 plus years has always been client centered. My clients and I decided on the best legal course, without the interference of the government. Ethics require that the defense lawyer DEFEND, get the client off. We have no obligation to obey [the] 'rules' government lays down.

"I believe that since 9/11 the government has pursued Muslims with an ever heavier hand," she wrote, all messages to her and from her being vetted by prison authorities. "However, cases such as the Sheikh's in 1995 amply demonstrate that Muslims had been targeted even earlier as the new ENEMY—always suspect, always guilty. After 9/11, we discovered that the government prosecutors were ordered to try and get Osama Bin Laden into EVERY Muslim prosecution inducing in American Juries a Pavlovian response. Is it as bad as lynching and the Scottsboro Boys and the Pursuit of Black Panthers? Not as of yet, but getting close and of course the incipient racism that that colors—pun?—every action in the U.S. is ever present in these prosecutions."

Stewart, as a young librarian in Harlem, got an early taste of the insidious forms of overt and covert racism that work to keep most people of color impoverished and trapped in their internal colonies or our prison complex. She went on to get her law degree and begin battling in the courts on behalf of those around her for whom justice was usually denied. By 1995, along with former Attorney General Ramsey Clark and Abdeen Jabara, she was the lead trial counsel for the sheik, who was convicted in September of that year. He received life in prison plus 65 years, a sentence Stewart called "outlandish." The cleric, in poor health, is serving a life sentence in the medical wing of the Butner Federal Correctional Complex in North Carolina. Stewart continued to see the sheik in jail after the sentence. Three years later the government severely curtailed his ability to communicate with the outside world, even through his lawyers, under special administrative measures or SAMs.

In 2000, during a visit with the sheik, he asked Stewart to release a statement from him to the press. The Clinton

administration did not prosecute her for the press release, but the Bush administration in April 2002, the mood of the country altered by the attacks of 9/11, decided to go after her. Attorney General John Ashcroft came to New York in April 2002 to announce that the Justice Department had indicted Stewart, a paralegal and the interpreter on grounds of materially aiding a terrorist organization. That night he went on “Late Show with David Letterman” to tell the nation of the indictment and the Bush administration’s vaunted “war on terror.”

“Rev up the military industrial complex,” Stewart wrote when I asked her what purpose the “war on terror” served. “Keep the populace terrorized so that they look to Big Brother Government for protection. Cannon Fodder for the ‘throwaways’ in our society—young, poor, uneducated, persons of color.”

Stewart’s 2005 trial was a Punch-and-Judy show. The state demanded an outrageous 30-year prison sentence. It showed the jurors lurid videos of Osama bin Laden and images of the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center towers, and spun a fantastic web of Islamic, terrorist intrigue. To those of us who covered groups such as al-Qaida and the armed Islamic groups in Egypt—I was based in Cairo at the time as the Middle East bureau chief for The New York Times—the government scenarios were utterly devoid of fact or credibility. The government prosecutors, for example, blamed numerous terrorist attacks, including the killing of 62 people in 1997 in Luxor, Egypt, on the sheik, although he publicly denounced the attack and had no connection with the radical Islamic group in Egypt that carried it out. And even Manhattan District Judge John Koeltl instructed the jury more than 750 times that the photos of Osama bin Laden and the 2001 World Trade Center attacks were not relevant to the case. Stewart was sentenced to 28 months. The Obama administration appealed the ruling. The appeals court ruled that the sentence was too light. Koeltl gave her 10 years. She has served three.

Her family’s appeal for a “compassionate release” must defy the odds. Human Rights Watch and Families Against Mandatory Minimums (FAMM) noted in a 2012 report, “The Answer is No: Too Little Compassionate Release in US Federal Prisons,” that the Federal Bureau of Prisons rarely even bothers to submit compassionate release requests to the courts. Since 1992, the bureau has averaged two dozen motions a year to the courts for compassionate release. The bureau does not provide figures for the number of prisoners who seek compassionate release.

“No messy side effects—vomiting, diarrhea—thank goodness,” Stewart wrote to me about her cancer care. “I have one more treatment and then they have used all the poison it’s safe to use. I am bald but the hardest for me to endure, who has always relied on her memory and quick wit, is the chemo brain that slows and sometimes stops me.

“I am up at 4:30 [a.m.] and wait till the ‘Count’ is over and have a shower etc.,” she noted of her daily routine. “I get dressed and take a short rest (feet up) until breakfast at 6 am. I am in a room with 6 other women—the unusual mix of inmates and I rely on them to help me with just about everything—getting to the clinics, picking up meds, filling my ice bucket, helping with my laundry, etc. At 9:00 every day, they laughingly say, I go to the ‘office.’ That means email or the law library where I correspond and meet with women who need my help. I go back up by 10:30 and take a short nap till lunch. Meals here are meager and not well prepared. Of course, I have favorites—the hamburgers (beef THIN patty) served every Wednesday in every federal prison for lunch. Some of the women count their time in terms of how many hamburger days they have left! We are served cut up iceberg lettuce with a little red cabbage and carrots with meals and I have used my commissary purchases to concoct some more exotic dressings than those offered here.

“After lunch I go back to bed for a longer nap and then up for mail call—lots of letters, newspapers, magazines etc.” she wrote, “a time of the day I sometimes shed a few tears at the love and intensity of those who have written to state their support. Then supper and back to bed and reading—pure pleasure—much fiction (mysteries, Scottish etc. and authors I love Morrison, Sarmargo). [There is] some conversing with my roommates and then after the 9:00 pm count I am off to sleep. I have a hospital bed that is next to large windows—no bars. I can see the Trinity River, barely. Trees. This view of nature is responsible for keeping me alive in the real sense.

“I hoped that there would be common cause among the women here because we are all confronted by totally arbitrary authority every minute of every day,” she went on. “Prison is a perverse place of selfishness and sometimes generosity but not much unity. There are a few and we recognize each other but by and large the harsh realities of people’s origins and the system have ruined most of us. It is particularly horrendous to realize the number of children that the prison system rips from their mothers’ arms, thus creating yet another generation to feed the beast of prison industrial complex.

“I fear we are headed into a period of ever increasing cruelty to those who can least stand it,” she wrote. “As corporate agendas become national agendas there is a profound disrespect for all those who are not able to even get to the starting line. We do not love the children except when they are massacred—the daily mental, emotional deaths in the public schools are ignored. We are now a nation of Us and Them. I would HOPE that the people would recognize what is happening and make a move. After all, who in the fifties could have predicted the uprisings of the sixties? There must be a distaste and willful opposition to what is happening and a push to take it back—local movements scaring the HELL out of the Haves.”

In a 2003 speech at a National Lawyers Guild convention in Minneapolis, Stewart eloquently laid out her mission as an advocate, and more important as a mother and a member of the human race.

“For we have formidable enemies not unlike those in the tales of ancient days,” she told the gathering. “There is a consummate evil that unleashes its dogs of war on the helpless; an enemy motivated only by insatiable greed - The Miller’s daughter made to spin gold - the fisherman’s wife: Midas, all with no thought of consequences. In this enemy there is no love of the land or the creatures that live there, no compassion for the people. This enemy will destroy the air we breathe and the water we drink as long as the dollars keep filling up their money boxes.

“We now resume our everyday lives but we have been charged once again, with, and for, our quests, and like Hippolyta and her Amazons; like David going forth to meet Goliath, like Beowulf the dragon slayer, like Queen Zenobia, who made war on the Romans, like Sir Galahad seeking the holy grail,” she said. “And modern heroes, dare I mention? Ho and Mao and Lenin, Fidel and Nelson Mandela and John Brown, Che Guevara who reminds us ‘At the risk of seeming ridiculous, let me say that the true revolutionary is guided by a great feeling of love.’? Our quests like theirs are to shake the very foundations of the continents.

“We go out to stop police brutality -?To rescue the imprisoned -?To change the rules for those who have never ever been able to get to the starting line much less run the race, because of color, physical condition, gender, mental impairment,” she said. “We go forth to preserve the air and land and water and sky and all the beasts that crawl and fly. We go forth to safeguard the right to speak and write, to join; to learn, to rest safe at home, to be secure, fed, healthy, sheltered, loved and loving, to be at peace with ones identity.”

From prison Stewart wrote to me in closing, “I have been fortunate to live a charmed life—parents who loved me without qualification (yes, we fought about Vietnam and my African American husband but I never doubted that they would always be there for me). I had children when I was young enough to grow with them. Today they are the backbone of my support and love. I came to politics in the early sixties and was part of a vibrant movement that tried to empower local control of public schools to make the ultimate changes for children and break the back of racism in minority communities. My partner/husband Ralph Poynter was always—60 years and counting—in my corner and when at a less than opportune moment I announced my desire to go to law school, he made sure it happened. I had a fabulous legal career in a fabulous city—championing the political rights of the comrades of the 60’s and 70’s and also representing many who had no hope of a lawyer who would fight for them against the system. I have enjoyed good friends, loved cooking, had poetry and theater for a joy. I could go on and on BUT all of this good fortune has always meant only one thing to me—that I have to fight, struggle to make sure EVERYONE can have a life like mine. That belief is what will always sustain me.”

RALLY TO SUPPORT COMPASSIONATE RELEASE FOR LYNNE

THURSDAY, MAY 9, 2013-7 - 10 pm

80 St. Marks Theatre- St. Marks Pl. btw 1st & 2nd Av., NYC

Featured Performers: S.O.T., Higher Soul Power, Sun Gad Thunder, Lorcan Otway, Vinnie Burrows, (& many

more)

22 Apr - Why Russell 'Maroon' Shoatz Must Be Released From Solitary Confinement

Angola 3 News interviewed Matt Meyer and Teresa Shoatz about the latter's father and the campaign to get him free.

MORE:

This month, a 30-day action campaign was launched demanding the release of Russell 'Maroon' Shoatz from solitary confinement, where he has been held for over 23 consecutive years, and 28 of the last 30 years, in Pennsylvania prisons. On April 8, when the campaign began, Maroon's legal team sent a letter to the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (PA DOC), demanding his release from solitary confinement and promising litigation against the PA DOC if he is not transferred to general population by May 8.

The action campaign describes Maroon as "a former leader of the Black Panthers and the Black freedom movement, born in Philadelphia in 1943 and originally imprisoned in January 1972 for actions relating to his political involvement. With an extraordinary thirty-plus years spent in solitary confinement...Maroon's case is one of the most shocking examples of U.S. torture of political prisoners, and one of the most egregious examples of human rights violations regarding prison conditions anywhere in the world. His 'Maroon' nickname is, in part, due to his continued resistance—which twice led him to escape confinement; it is also based on his continued clear analysis, including recent writings on ecology and patriarchy."

Writing that Maroon "has not had a serious rule violation for more than two decades," the campaign argues that he has actually been "targeted because of his work as an educator and because of his political ideas; his time in solitary began just after he was elected president of an officially-sanctioned prison-based support group. This targeting is in violation of his basic human and constitutional rights."

On March 28, just before the campaign was launched, Maroon was transferred from SCI-Greene to SCI-Mahanoy. An update released by the campaign on April 15 reported that Maroon had been told by officials at SCI-Mahanoy that he had been transferred there with intent to move him into general population. Responding to the news, campaign co-coordinator Matt Meyer (also interviewed below) said: "We are encouraged by the words of the officials at Mahanoy, but we cannot rest until those words are followed by deeds: by the ultimate action which will end the current torture of Maroon." Bret Grote, from the Pittsburgh Human Rights Coalition, who is himself a longtime legal and political supporter of Shoatz, added that, "while we are pleased that some of the concerns raised by the demand letter have been met," including Maroon's "access to his anti-embolism stockings and to a typewriter, we remain concerned that the timeline for release from solitary has been left vague."

The April 15 update also reports that "the assistants at the office of PA DOC Secretary John Wetzel have confirmed that the Secretary personally ordered Maroon's recent transfer from SCI Greene to SCI Mahanoy for the purpose of placing him in the general prison population. In conversations with some of the many people who have called in to the DOC central office on the first week of the 30-day pressure campaign, DOC personnel have suggested that Maroon supporters be patient as the process to get him into general population work its course. But Maroon and his family have been misled in the past about these issues." While the campaign began by asking supporters to contact both Secretary Wetzel and SCI Mahanoy Supt. John Kerestes, it is now asking supporters to just focus on Secretary Wetzel, since he is the "ultimate decision-maker."

This month also marked the release of the new book, entitled *Maroon the Implacable: The Collected Writings of Russell Maroon Shoatz* (PM Press), co-edited by Fred Ho and Quincy Saul, with a foreword by Chuck D. The collected essays examine a wide range of topics that are perhaps most striking for their honest self-criticism and for his commitment to confronting male supremacy and misogyny in all its forms. For example, in one essay entitled, "The Question of Violence," after Maroon criticizes "the worldwide misogynist 'gangsta' genre of the hip hop culture" for being "a male, macho parody of exhibitionist violence," Maroon writes:

"More troubling is the fact that this male exhibitionist violence has also permeated the minds, practices, and

circles of otherwise brilliant and well-meaning revolutionary thinkers. Such theorists as the renowned Frantz Fanon, icons like Malcolm X and Kwane Ture (formerly Stokely Carmichael) and others have unconsciously conflated the necessary utilization of defensive revolutionary violence, in seeking meaningful revolutionary socioeconomic and cultural change, with what they believed was a need for males to use ‘revolutionary violence’ to also ‘liberate their minds and spirits’ from the subservience imposed on them by the vestiges of slavery and the colonialism /neocolonialism of their times. These individuals failed to recognize that their ‘revolutionary’ worldview would still leave in place the entire male-supremacist /patriarchal framework, an edifice that we can term the ‘father of oppression.’ The destruction of this edifice will signal the true liberation they sought. Otherwise, the ‘revolutionary violence’ they formulated must also be recognized for what it is: exhibitionist, ego-based male violence.”

Featured below is our interview with Theresa Shoatz and Matt Meyer. Theresa Shoatz is the daughter of Russell ‘Maroon’ Shoatz. Theresa has worked for decades as a public advocate for her father and through the Human Rights Coalition, she fights for all prisoners in Pennsylvania and beyond. This month, Theresa has been traveling around the US as part of a book tour promoting Maroon the Implacable, and this week she is in the SF Bay Area.

Matt Meyer, a native New York City-based educator, activist, and author, is the War Resisters International Africa Support Network Coordinator, and a United Nations/ECOSOC representative of the International Peace Research Association. Now the co-coordinator of the Campaign to Free Russell Maroon Shoatz, Meyer also has a long history in solidarity with the people of Puerto Rico. In 2009, Meyer edited Let Freedom Ring: A Collection of Documents from the Movements to Free U.S. Political Prisoners (PM Press), and in 2012, co-edited another book entitled, We Have Not Been Moved: Resisting Racism and Militarism in 21st Century America (PM Press).

Please keep an eye out for part two our report on the 30-day action campaign, which will further examine the legality of Maroon’s placement in solitary confinement and take a closer look at his recently published book, Maroon the Implacable. In the meantime, you can stay updated on the campaign for his release from solitary here. Below is a video interview with Theresa Shoatz, released by Solitary Watch in 2011.

Angola 3 News: Political prisoners are often seen as symbolic of what is wrong with the US government, but we don’t usually hear about the actual person and how their imprisonment has affected their families. As fellow Pennsylvania political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal has commented, “I am a man, not a symbol.” To begin our interview, can you please describe your father, Maroon, for us, so we can better understand who he is as a person?

Theresa Shoatz: Honestly, I can only define part of the man that Maroon is because I only know the man from which I engage with from behind the bullet proof glass. He is the man who pleads with me to save his life when he is not getting proper medical attention, and to fight for him when his living conditions are unbearable and his grievances aren’t addressed.

However, there’s so much more to Maroon. He loves his people. It’s what’s keeps him going. His wisdom protects our family. Even while in solitary confinement today, he is still putting others first by denying any support for his freedom until his comrades are freed throughout the United States.

Maroon is extremely concerned with issues affecting single mothers and their children. He is drafting ways to not only put food on the table, but also to grow and prepare meals for the community. He’s the man. Even when he’s in no position to help, he connects to the outside with his attempts to heal the Black communities.

A3N: How old were you when he was first forced underground?

TS: I was about nine years of age when my dad was forced underground.

A3N: What do you remember about Maroon from your early childhood?

TS: My sister and I lived with him until I was five years old. I remember that back when my sister and I were only three and four years old, there was a black board hanging in the living room. Every morning, Daddy used that black board to teach us political education alongside physical education classes. Man, I love and miss those classes.

Daddy was cultivating young minds. With anything he did, I was right behind him. He was preparing us to be future leaders, but this preparation was halted when at the age five we were separated, and I stopped living with him.

A3N: What has your relationship with Maroon has been like as you've grown older?

Ever since the age of nine, I have honored and admired my Dad. Today, he is still my hero. Maroon is a leader, educator, and father to many young black males behind bars. At his core, he is about peace and love for his people.

As Maroon approaches 70 years of age, he's a grandfather of ten. Since I can remember, he has tried to educate his biological children from behind bars. I can remember a prison contact visit from some thirty years ago, when I sat on my dad's lap, comparing our physical similarities, and him using the opportunity to update me on present-day issues.

After those few years of contact visits, I grew into womanhood and was forced to visit him from behind a thick bullet-proof glass. During one of our visits, I pointed this out, and through the thick glass while chained at the wrist and ankles, he said: "I had to step away from my family to protect my family and my community. I stepped away to secure a better future for you and the youth coming behind me. I couldn't allow you to be brutalized like those who came before and will come after you. I stepped away from my family for the love of my people."

A3N: How did that visit influence you?

TS: Wow! That was so powerful. It hit me like a ton of bricks. Ever since that visit with Maroon, I've been motivated by the love of my people to do everything in my power to help us move forward, including my work with the Human Rights Coalition (HRC) in Philadelphia, and the HRC FedUp! chapter in Pittsburgh, which Maroon started from behind bars.

I am also the Director of a free after-school program for youth with a loved one in prison. Last year, I became a foster parent and I have since fostered eight kids in my home, caring for two seventeen-year-old teenagers, a thirteen-year-old, a three-month-old, a two-year-old, a six-year-old, a four-day-old, and a pregnant teen. This is all for the love of my people.

Some think I'm crazy, but they're crazier than I am when they pretend not to see how so many youth in our community are lost and headed towards the prison system. If they pretend not to see what the system is doing to our youth, shame on them. I love my people. I'm just like my daddy Maroon--it's in my blood.

A3N: A key feature of your father's being held in solitary confinement at, until recently, SCI Greene, a supermax prison, is to not allow contact visits with family and friends. If Maroon is transferred to general population, he will then be able to have contact visits once again. How long has it been since you had a contact visit with him?

TS: It's been almost thirty years since I've been able to touch my father.

A3N: How has this aspect of his imprisonment affected you personally?

TS: It is extremely painful and mentally challenging. I am still that little girl who craves hugs, and reassurance from her daddy.

A3N: How has the policy of no contacted visits affected the rest of your family?

TS: The no-contact visits cause stress, leading to emotional and physical breakdowns. The fear this creates often paralyzes family members, and is so debilitating that it prevents some from visiting him.

A3N: What is a no-contact visit with him like?

To reach the solitary no-contact visiting room, there's a tunnel spanning two city blocks, and a barbed-wired fence surrounds this 'prison inside of a prison.' The visiting room is cold and 99 percent of the time there are no other family members visiting prisoners.

It is mind blowing to think of this 69-year-old man with both ankles shackled, both wrists shackled, all attached by a chained waist belt. This contraption forces him to walk hunched over, and appear older than his real age.

A3N: To underscore the importance of the new campaign to have Maroon transferred to general population, how significant will it be, if he's transferred, to have contact visits with him after all these years?

TS: After so many years of no-contact visits, I could really use some contact with my daddy. It's well overdue. Contact visits would be nourishing. My soul is constantly in an uproar and the pain runs deep, yet I continue straight ahead, keeping my eye on freedom.

Outside of my daddy, there's no man on this earth who could turn this pain around. The remedy is an end to all control units, the present day prison system, and freedom for Maroon and all my extended family: the political prisoners who stood on the front lines for our freedom.

A3N: Thank you, Theresa, for sharing such a personal story with us.

The second part of this article now begins by interviewing longtime activist Matt Meyer. Matt, the afterword for Maroon the Implacable that you co-wrote with Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge asserts: "We believe that all people who believe in peace and nonviolence must work for justice, especially in these most grievous cases of injustice and especially at times when oppressive forces would have us distanced from colleagues and comrades such as Maroon, who are cast as 'violent criminals' unworthy of our support...Russell Maroon Shoatz must be freed now. His release must become a priority for all human rights activists, peace activists, pro-democracy advocates, environmentalists, anti-imperialists, students, churchgoers, and even progressive Parliamentarians."

Building on the quote above, why is it that you are going beyond the immediate call for Maroon's transfer to general population, and also calling for his release from prison?

Matt Meyer: For me, the position for peace activists working in the context of restorative justice is clear: there can be no reconciliation without release.

Nozizwe and I also say in our afterword that "we must face the truth about the uprisings of forty years ago." As you know, Nozizwe herself was a chief negotiator in the process which ended legal apartheid in South Africa, and the two of us respect the work of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, whose commitment to truth and reconciliation has always been coupled with a commitment to 'heal' by working for people's power and the rights of the most oppressed.

Here in the US, we must face the truth that the legacy of the 1960s and 1970s remain an open wound so long as key leaders such as Maroon are invisible to the majority of us, tortured in dungeons for decades upon decades.

Even one day of the type of treatment Maroon has faced would be wrong in any human rights framework that is not centered on simplistic revenge, hatred, and a cycle of murder and violence. The US criminal justice system, filled with the injustices of centuries passed--based as it is on land theft, slavery, and greed--cannot be understood as 'democratic' in any sense of that word so long as Maroon remains behind bars.

Aside from many questions which could be raised about the political context of the initial charges and court case against him, the length and nature of his sentence and the way it has been carried out signal grave injustices which make a mockery of any attempt to characterize US jurisprudence as fair or color-blind.

A3N: What is the significance of Maroon's identification of himself as a 'prisoner of war' (POW)? How is this different than simply identifying as a political prisoner?

MM: The United Nations outlines the specific legal definition of the prisoner of war position, definitions which are generally accepted by most participating nation-states, including the US. This definition is rooted in history which goes back as far as 1660, when international military protocol accepted that anyone who is held in custody by an enemy power during or immediately after an armed conflict, whether combatant or non-combatant, should be classified as a POW. After World War Two, with the Geneva Convention of 1949 to which the US is a signatory, conditions were clearly outlined which require that POWs be treated humanely.

For those who lived through the tremendous upsurge of the Black liberation movement of the late 1960s, the position underscores a clear analysis of the relationship between "the Black nation" and the US empire. That relationship, simply put, is one AT WAR. Though the battles may appear to many as covert, and the military powers deeply imbalanced, the position of extreme conflict is nonetheless expressed. This includes the position taken by some people of African descent (i.e., "Black folk, New Afrikans, African-Americans, etc.) that the political status of US citizenship was never chosen by them, but rather, was imposed.

In any case, by using the international legal term 'prisoner of war,' the question of humane treatment and appropriate jurisdiction in a case of extreme conflict must be squarely faced.

A3N: You edited the book *Let Freedom Ring: A Collection of Documents from the Movements to Free U.S. Political Prisoners* and co-edited *We Have Not Been Moved: Resisting Racism and Militarism in 21st Century America*. In your opinion how do popular movements resisting US military aggression abroad relate to movements at home seeking the release of COINTELPRO-era political prisoners & opposing the rise of the police state and mass imprisonment since COINTELPRO's official end in the 1970s?

MM: We must connect the dots between the military-industrial-complex and the prison- industrial-complex. We must begin with the fact that, on the one hand, the military has for too many become the job of choice in an era of vast economic depression and crisis. On the other hand, the ever-increasing rates of incarceration--where now there are more men of African descent behind bars than there were enslaved in the years leading up to the Civil War--suggest that cheap labor is being replaced by forced free labor as authorized by the 13th Amendment, which abolished slavery, except for prisoners.

We must do more than understand that an empire in decline requires ever-cheaper means of producing whatever it can still produce and an ever-stretched military to police its dwindling holdings.

We must act, in ways faithful to the vision of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who called for a "true revolution" in the American practices of racism, militarism, and materialism. We must be moved to go beyond the false dichotomies of race, and the false splits of tactical difference which seek to make Martin and Malcolm into irreconcilable opposites.

We must build coalitions and united fronts against empire, ones which understand that the many US political prisoners represent not only acts of repression from past generations but reminders to current and future movements that we must never stray beyond the confines of polite protest, OR ELSE.

Freeing all US political prisoners is both a just and basic human rights demand, but it is also a necessary step in building future movements which can act with militancy, creativity, soul, and a free spirit which we need to envision the 'beloved communities' which will build just and peaceful tomorrows.

A3N: How does Maroon's case fit into this? What is the broader political significance of Maroon's imprisonment and his contributions to radical political movements since?

MM: One should not be reading this interview for the answer to that question. Maroon's broader political significance, and his contributions to current movements, is well revealed through a careful reading of the essential new essay collection Maroon the Implacable.

His writings on his own reflections on the Black Panthers, on the nature of sexism and patriarchy, on the environment and the need for eco-socialism, on the Occupy movement and how to build effective new movements, go far beyond the current discourse which we find in blogs and what passes for the left press. It is a challenging course in building for lasting social change.

25 Apr - RAMPS Campaigner Glen Collins Sentenced to 60 Days for KXL Action

Glen Collins is in Smith County Jail in Texas tonight after pleading guilty to charges of trespassing and illegal dumping stemming from his blockade of the Keystone XL pipeline last December.

MORE:

In one of the most striking actions in the Tar Sands Blockade campaign, Glen locked himself with Matt Almonte to a concrete barrel inside the KXL pipeline. He was sentenced to 60 days in jail – the longest sentence of the three activists arrested that day. We are currently waiting to find out how the 3 weeks Glen spent in jail following his action will be counted against his sentence. Due to the overwhelming weirdness of the Texas legal system, it's uncertain how much time he has left to serve.

Glen has checked in from jail and is doing fine as far as jail goes. We are supporting him in every way we can from up here in WV. To help support Glen, please donate to the RAMPS general fund which we are using to pay for collect calls from jail, commissary and sending him books to help pass the time.

Glen took action in Texas as a part of our deep commitment to true solidarity, made of action, not words across all struggles against extraction. As he said at the time, "I'm barricading this pipe with Tar Sands Blockade today to say loud and clear to the extraction industry that our communities and the resources we depend on for survival are not collateral damage. This fight in East Texas against tar sands exploitation is one and the same as our fight in the hollers of West Virginia. Dirty energy extraction doesn't just threaten my home; it threatens the collective future of the planet."

25 Apr - Multiple houses in Olympia and Seattle visited by the FBI

While the last of the PNW Grand Jury resisters was recently released, the feds are still trying to bully and intimidate folks in that part of the country.

MORE:

At least 2 houses in Olympia and 2 in Seattle were visited this morning by the FBI, looking for a few different people. At least one of the people is being sought because the FBI wants to interview them about May Day/black bloc. At this point it is unclear whether there are subpoenas for either of the people the FBI is looking for, or whether they're trying a more informal approach.

If the FBI comes to your house or stops you on the street you don't have to talk to them. If they give you a subpoena, don't talk to them – call your lawyer or the NLG. Shut the door in their faces or walk away. It is never a good idea to talk to the FBI. Instead, call the National Lawyers' Guild immediately at (888) 654-3265.

April 26th

They followed and contacted a person in Seattle today. In addition, the US Marshals visited another person's house. So, it's more than a day of walking the streets for the feds.

Here is a list of confirmed visits by the FBI yesterday:

- At least seven houses in Seattle and Olympia
- At least two colleges
- At least one anarchist bookstore
- The neighbors of at least one house
- Someone's grandparents

According to comments on anarchistnews.org, they feds also visited a house on Vashon Island and some number of houses in Vancouver, BC.

26 Apr - Update on NYC Grand Jury Resister Jerry Koch

In the past few weeks, a couple of decent articles have been written about our comrade Gerald Koch, a grand jury resister in NYC. Jerry has also released a statement. His court date was moved until May 16th. If you are in the area and able to make it, please come show your support.

MORE:

Gerald Koch Statement

My name is Gerald Koch and I have been subpoenaed to a federal grand jury based in the Southern District of New York regarding the 2008 Times Square Military Recruitment Center bombing. This is my second subpoena concerning this matter; I was also subpoenaed in June of 2009. I refused to testify at that time based on the assertion of my First, Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Amendment rights, as I will be doing again for the duration of this grand jury. During the first grand jury, the government informed my lawyers that it was believed that I was at a bar in 2008 or 2009 where a patron indicated knowledge of who had committed the bombing. When I was first subpoenaed to the grand jury in 2009 I had no recollection of any such incident—a fact that I expressed publicly. Now, almost 4 years later, I still do not recall the alleged situation.

Given that I publicly made clear that I had no knowledge of this alleged event in 2009, the fact that I am being subpoenaed once again suggests that the FBI does not actually believe that I possess any information about the 2008 bombing, but rather that they are engaged in a 'fishing expedition' to gain information concerning my personal beliefs and political associations.

Over the past few decades, the FBI has demonstrated a consistent pattern of harassment and illegal surveillance of anarchists and other radicals not only here in New York, but also across the country. Throughout this time, federal grand juries (incredibly secretive proceedings that do not permit one's lawyers to be present) have played a significant role; a federal grand jury is authorized to ask questions about anything and anyone, and often the declared intention is simply a mask to disguise the actual goal of acquiring information for use in other politically motivated cases. It is my belief that these two federal grand juries—despite the pretense of investigation into the 2008 bombing—are actually being used to gain information about my friends, loved ones, and activists for whom I have done legal support. By declining to testify, I refuse to be coerced into participating in a political witch-hunt that eerily recalls those of the McCarthy era Red Scare.

I again assert that I have no knowledge of who is responsible for the 2008 Times Square Military Recruitment Center bombing, and I will once again refuse to testify to the federal grand jury in ethical resistance to participation in a fruitless exercise of fear-mongering and government intimidation. My decision to stay silent in defense of individual agency will most likely result in incarceration for a period up to 18 months. I accept this recompense, understanding that in doing so I will reinforce a tradition of defending individual rights in the face of state repression.

April 28th - Man Refusing to Testify Before Grand Jury in Times Square Bombing Case - Colin Moynihan (New York Times)

A Brooklyn man has said that he will refuse to testify before a federal grand jury that is believed to be looking into the explosion of a homemade bomb in Times Square in 2008, setting the stage for a confrontation that could send him to jail for contempt of court.

A lawyer for the man, Gerald Koch, said that he had been subpoenaed as a witness and granted immunity, but that he was not a suspect in the bombing, which took place outside an armed forces recruitment center in the middle of the night and caused no injuries. Mr. Koch said in a written statement late last week that in 2009 he had been called before a previous grand jury investigating the case, but did not testify because he knew nothing about what happened.

“I will once again refuse to testify to the federal grand jury in ethical resistance to participation in a fruitless exercise of fear-mongering and government intimidation,” Mr. Koch wrote.

He noted that he could be jailed for up to 18 months, and added: “I accept this recompense, understanding that in doing so I will reinforce a tradition of defending individual rights in the face of state repression.”

Mr. Koch wrote that when he refused to testify in 2009 — citing the First, Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Amendments — the government told his lawyers that it believed he had been in a bar in 2008 or 2009 when someone mentioned knowing who was involved in the bombing. Mr. Koch, a former philosophy student at the New School who grew up in Florida, said he did not remember such a conversation.

The bombing took place at 3:43 a.m., when a low-grade explosive detonated, shattering a window and bending a metal door. Surveillance video showed a bicyclist dismounting, approaching the recruitment center, then riding away before the explosion. Police officials said the device used was similar to ones that exploded outside the British Consulate on East 42nd Street in 2005, and outside the Mexican Consulate on East 37th Street in 2007. No one was hurt in those blasts either.

The police recovered a blue Ross 10-speed bike that the bomber in Times Square was believed to have ridden; they have not commented publicly on any further progress.

Mr. Koch, 24, who identifies himself as an anarchist, is one of a group of activists who assist people arrested at political demonstrations, including some connected to the Occupy Wall Street movement.

Now, some of his friends have formed a group called the Support Jerry Committee; their Web site calls for people to “pack the court” on May 2 when Mr. Koch is due to appear in Federal District Court in Lower Manhattan.

“Jerry was the person everyone could count on to be waiting for them outside of jail, to support them in the courtroom, and to help with their legal defense,” the site says, adding: “It is now our turn to stand by Jerry.”

A member of the group, David Silverberg, said he believed Mr. Koch was being called because federal investigators wanted him to provide information about other anarchists and their activities, and called the grand jury “a fishing expedition.”

A spokeswoman for the United States attorney’s office in Manhattan did not respond to an e-mail seeking comment on that assertion.

Over the past few years, political activists have mounted anti-grand jury campaigns in several cities — including San Diego, Chicago and Seattle — complaining that the proceedings have been used as a coercive tool to collect information from people who are not accused of any crime. Prosecutors, however, have often seen refusals to testify as attempts to hinder investigations.

Defense lawyers are not present during grand jury proceedings, which operate secretly and are controlled by prosecutors. After hearing testimony, jurors are asked to determine whether there is enough evidence to return an indictment. Witnesses who are held in contempt after refusing to testify may be jailed until the completion of a grand jury term, often months.

Alan Vinegrad, the interim United States attorney in Brooklyn from 2001 to 2002, said prosecutors sometimes used grand juries to gather evidence that would not be available through other means.

“Relatives, friends, associates or people otherwise loyal to the target will often refuse to be interviewed and therefore have to be compelled to give testimony in the grand jury,” said Mr. Vinegrad, now a partner at the law firm Covington & Burling.

The results of grand jury resistance efforts have been mixed. The most recent example was in Seattle, where a grand jury was believed to be examining the vandalism of a federal courthouse last year. Some of those who were subpoenaed posed for photographs holding their fingers to their lips or made videotaped statements vowing not to testify.

Supporters of those called to testify before the grand jury said those people were not present when the vandalism occurred and suggested that they were subpoenaed because of connections to anarchists. In a written statement, prosecutors in Seattle said, “No one is investigated for what they believe; investigations focus on actions that constitute a crime.”

Two who refused to testify, Matthew Duran and Katherine Olejnik, were held in a federal detention center in Seattle for five months, spending part of that period in solitary confinement. Judge Richard A. Jones, of Federal District Court in Seattle, ordered their release in February after concluding that keeping them in custody would not elicit cooperation.

27 Apr - Denver Police nearly storm 27 Social Centre

27 Social Center is where Denver ABC, as well as other anarchist groups, is based.

MORE:

On the night of Thursday, April 25th, as several dozen people were present inside the 27 Social Centre, heavily armed members of the Denver Police Department took up tactical positions outside of the Centre in preparations to raid the building.

People had gathered at 27 for a variety of activities, including a presentation on Tar Sands Resistance in Utah and several small group meetings being hosted at the space. Around 8pm, as the presentations and meetings were well underway, police were spotted congregating outside the rear of the building.

A worker-owner of P&L Printing and a named tenant on the building’s lease opened the main door of the space to observe what the officers were doing. As he opened the door and stuck his head out, a group of heavily armed officers who had taken up a tactical position behind a group of dumpsters behind the building ordered him to put his hands up and approach the officers. When he was within 10 feet of the officers, they ordered him to turn around, put his hands behind his back and walk backwards toward the officers. He was then searched, identified, and questioned.

DPD officers stated that they had received an emergency call that claimed that there were armed people inside the 27 Social Centre who were holding people hostage. After some explanation that this was indeed not the case, the officers lowered their shotgun and M4 rifle. The mood shifted, and the officers radioed their supervisor to give an all clear. They also radioed other officers to stand down. Apparently many more officers were positioned in areas around the Centre and had just been moments away from forcibly entering the space.

After 15 or so minutes of questioning, the supervising officer soon approached, and gave the worker-owner a clear choice: Either let the police into the building to prove to them there was no hostage situation, or watch as the police forcibly entered the building anyway. The choice, unfortunately, seemed clear, and the worker-owner brought 5 police officers into the building. They did not identify anyone else present, nor did they search any part of the building. After walking around for fewer than five minutes, the officers left, seemingly satisfied that there was indeed, no hostage situation.

It would be easy for us to claim this as a simple act of police generated repression. The unfortunate fact of the matter, however, is that this situation is more of an example of what can happen when snitch culture takes hold over communities. We know, for a fact, that there indeed was a call to the police. We do not know the exact details of the call, or even the specific person who made the call, but we do know that this happened. And it is this fact that makes the actions of Thursday night even more troubling.

The events set into motion by an obviously fictitious claim by whomever called the police could have ended much differently than they did. In the end, the actions of the person who called the police could have brought harm to many people. Instead, we were extremely fortunate that the situation was quickly de-escalated and that no one was injured, arrested, or detained, and that the officers left the building without much further incident. As many of us know, the officers of the Denver Police Department have never needed much of an excuse to violently attack, shoot, or murder people in our communities.

Thanks to all the many comrades from across the country (and the world!) who responded to various reports on social media about what was happening. The outpouring of support was amazing and intense, especially as most of it came even as the situation was unfolding.

27 Apr - SF Pride President Capitulates to Military Groups

A group of former San Francisco Pride parade grand marshals that SF Pride calls its electoral college announced on April 26 that Pfc. Bradley Manning, the gay private who the United States military is currently prosecuting for disclosing information to WikiLeaks, had been selected as honorary grand marshal for this year's LGBT Pride Celebration.

MORE:

[From *The Dissenter*]

The decision greatly offended some of the most militaristic LGBT organizations and activists, who condemned SF Pride. That ultimately led to capitulation by SF Pride president, Lisa Williams, who announced in a letter that Manning would not be honored this year.

She cast the reversal as a product of dysfunction in the organization:

"Bradley Manning will not be a grand marshal in this year's San Francisco Pride celebration. His nomination was a mistake and should never have been allowed to happen. A staff person at SF Pride, acting under his own initiative, prematurely contacted Bradley Manning based on internal conversations within the SF Pride organization. That was an error and that person has been disciplined. He does not now, nor did he at that time, speak for SF Pride."

She briefly noted the process for voting by the electoral college and then stated, "The Board of Directors for SF Pride never voted to support this nomination."

SF Pride certainly has the right to, through whatever process, decide who to celebrate and who not to celebrate. The full story on what happened in the past twenty-four hours is not known yet so, in the meantime, the focus should be on the stated reasons by LGBT leaders, organizers and others against celebrating him.

Williams did not simply go through the motions and make a statement clarifying he would not be honored like military factions of the LGBT community wanted. She herself put forth a robust condemnation of Manning

fueled by her own perceptions:

"Bradley Manning is facing the military justice system of this country. We all await the decision of that system. However, until that time, even the hint of support for actions which placed in harms way the lives of our men and women in uniform — and countless others, military and civilian alike — will not be tolerated by the leadership of San Francisco Pride. It is, and would be, an insult to every one, gay and straight, who has ever served in the military of this country. There are many, gay and straight, military and non-military, who believe Bradley Manning to be innocent. There are many who feel differently. Under the US Constitution, they have a first amendment right to show up, participate and voice their opinions at Pride this year. [emphasis added]"

The bio for Williams on SF Pride shows she works for a “political consulting and community advocacy” that serves Democratic Party politics. She “organized satellite offices for the Obama campaign.” She also is the PAC chair of the Bayard Rustin LGBT Coalition.

Scott Long at his blog on sex, rights and the world called “Paper Bird” highlights the irony that a person who chairs a coalition that is supposed to celebrate Rustin is fueling the vilification of Manning.

"Rustin, if you remember, was one of the great figures of 20th-century America: a pacifist, a war resister, an icon of civil disobedience, and the key organizer of the 1963 March on Washington. (Also a gay man). Rustin spent three years in Lewisburg Penitentiary as a conscientious objector during the Second World War. The quote (slightly tweaked) came from a citizen of West Chester, PA, back in 2002, who objected to naming a school after Bayard Rustin. After all, the traitor broke US law, encouraged others to do likewise, and opposed the military and domestic policies of the United States."

The quote: “I am against naming it after Bayard Rustin, as he was a traitor to the good old United States of America. If we all had felt this way, Hitler would have ruled the world.”

Long quotes Rustin, who said the Vietnam War was “a useless, destructive, disgusting war ... We must be on the side of revolutionary democracy. And, in addition to all the other arguments for a negotiated peace in Vietnam, there is this one: that it is immoral, impractical, un-political, and unrealistic for this nation to identify itself with a regime which does not have the confidence of its people ... I say to the President: America cannot be the policeman of this globe!”

It is more than irony. It is indicative of what writer Chris Hedges would describe as a “preference for comfort or privilege over truth and confrontation.”

To apply Hedges’ wisdom to this moment, Williams is part of a liberal class, which derives its ideological stances from “what is most expedient to the careers of its members.” The liberal class “refuses to challenge, in a meaningful way, the decaying structures of democracy or the ascendancy of the corporate state. It glosses over the relentless assault on working men and women and the imperial wars that are bankrupting the nation. It proclaims its adherence to traditional liberal values while defending and promoting systems of power that mock these values.” And, Williams is wed to “pillars of the liberal establishment,” particularly the Democratic Party, which “honor an unwritten quid pro quo with corporations and the power elite, as well as our masters of war, on whom they depend for money, access and positions of influence.”

By capitulating, this is what the SF Pride Board of Directors led by Williams enables.

—A Navy veteran and gay military activist named Sean Sala, who immediately launched a campaign to boycott the SF Pride parade this year if Manning was honored and wrote in a press statement:

"...As the organizer of the 2011 Active Duty Military March in San Diego Pride and working with the Pentagon to approve the first ever Uniformed Military march in a Pride parade, I am appalled, infuriated and sad. San Francisco has spit in the face of LGBT Military by using a traitor to our country as a poster

child. They are not using Manning for anything they truly admire, only to boost their attendance and garnish more currency for their parade..."

He said, "Manning makes Gay military, the Armed Forces and cause of equality look like a sham," and he also added, "We have spent fifty years trying to garnish equality and Manning cannot and will not represent Gay Military patriots."

—Stephen Peters, president of the American Military Partners Association, who demanded SF Pride rescind honoring Manning and told AP:

"Manning's blatant disregard for the safety of our service members and the security of our nation should not be praised...No community of such a strong and resilient people should be represented by the treacherous acts that define Bradley Manning."

—Josh Seefried, co-chairman of OutServe-SLDN, which is a network of active-duty LGBT military personnel:

"Bradley Manning's actions were a disgrace. We just won the repeal of DADT, by the LGBT community 'honoring' him it sends a signal to the broader community, including the whole military community, that we think he is some sort of hero."

—Zoe Dunning, a retired Navy commander, lesbian and San Francisco activist, who told The San Francisco Chronicle she considered Manning's designation an "error":

"He has done nothing for the LGBT Community, which is the criteria for a grand marshal...He just happens to be gay, which is not sufficient."

—Neil Kovrig, a member of the LGBT community:

"What I suppose bothers me the most about the whole thing – irrespective of the treason he clearly committed, which is reason enough for him to be a terrifyingly-bad choice – is WHY certain people in the LGBT community hold him up as some sort of gay activist hero. He does not represent me, my friends, my community, or the best and brightest among us. THAT is what Pride is about; Bradley Manning is the least prideful thing we as a community have to "celebrate.""

Manning did engage in LGBT activism even as he was enlisted in the military when "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" was still policy and could have been used against him if superior officers discovered he was going to protests. For example, from Denver Nicks' book, *Private: Bradley Manning, WikiLeaks and the Biggest Exposure of Officials Secrets in American History*.

"...Brad had long been interested in politics, but living under Don't Ask, Don't Tell inspired a new level of passion in him. In November, he made the hour-and-a-half drive from Fort Drum to the Syracuse city hall for a rally against Proposition 8, the California ballot initiative that overturned a state supreme court decision allowing same-sex marriage. At the protest, Brad was interviewed anonymously by a student reporter. "I was kicked out of my home, and I once lost my job," he told her. "The world is not moving fast enough for us at home, work or the battlefield." He went on, "I've been living a double life....I can't make a statement. I can't be caught in the act. I hope the public support changes. I hope to do that before ETS [Expiration of Term of Service, when an enlisted soldier finishes his commitment in the army]."

In his statement read in military court on February 28, where Manning confessed to disclosing most of the information he is alleged to have provided to WikiLeaks, he shared how, on January 23, 2010, he was on "mid-tour leave" and visited his boyfriend Tyler Watkins in the Boston area. Watkins "did not seem very excited" about his "return from Iraq." He tried to talk to him about their relationship, but he "refused to make any plans."

Manning asked what he would do if he saw Iraq and Afghanistan military incident reports of which he had access and thought the public deserved access. Watkins had no "specific answer." He tried to follow what

Manning was saying but was confused. Manning tried to be more specific yet he was asking “too many questions.”

The conversation was dropped because he could not explain his dilemma. And, after a few days, he felt he’d overstayed his welcome and left to spend the rest of his time on leave in the Washington, DC, area with his aunt.

This is a story that reflects the humanity of Manning, who wondered what the effect of blowing the whistle on information might be on his boyfriend whom he loved.

Finally, there may be no clearer articulation of why members of the LGBT community may want to support Manning than this excerpt from a reactionary piece written by James Kirchick, a fellow with the right-wing defense think tank, Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, and contributing editor for The New Republic. His article was republished by OUT.com in May 2012:

"For centuries, gay people have served with distinction and honor in the armed forces, and it is the service of these countless veterans whom today's gays can thank for the freedom to serve openly. Bradley Manning's actions are fodder to those who have long argued that homosexuality naturally leads to treason; some on the far right have argued that his actions were intended as "revenge" over the military's then-enforced anti-gay policy. It is unconscionable that gay activists, of all people, would play into these slanders."

It would seem not honoring him plays into “these slanders.” One would think that people arguing “homosexuality naturally leads to treason” are only enabled by casting Manning as a villain. It would seem to reinforce what people like Ann Coulter on the far-right have said, which is Manning committed this act to lash out against the military for anti-gay policies. However, it is clear from Manning’s lucid and profound statement in court that he was deliberate and reasoned in his decisions about what specific information to disclose to WikiLeaks for release to the world.

Manning is classic whistleblower like Pentagon Papers whistleblower Daniel Ellsberg is a classic whistleblower, one revered and considered honorable today. It is very possible that parts of the military chain of command, in the aftermath of Manning’s acts, harbor this preconception that they should keep an eye on homosexual soldiers because they may present more of an “insider threat” to the military. It would be unfair to all in the military if people were considered more likely to expose secrets because they were gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender.

29 Apr - First “Ag-Gag” Prosecution: Utah Woman Filmed a Slaughterhouse

We're including a couple of articles by Will Potter (Green is the New Red), who has been covering pending legislation in several states that makes covertly documenting illegal animal abuse a crime. With organizations like the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) drafting model legislation, it's important to see how dissent on one front can result in criminalization on others.

MORE:

Amy Meyer wanted to see the slaughterhouse for herself. She had heard that anyone passing by could view the animals, so she drove to Dale Smith Meatpacking Company in Draper City, Utah, and from the side of the road she could see through the barbed-wire fence. Piles of horns littered the property. Cows struggled with workers who tried to lead them into a building. And one scene in particular made her stop.

“A live cow who appeared to be sick or injured being carried away from the building in a tractor,” Meyer told me, “as though she were nothing more than rubble.”

As she witnessed this, Meyer did what most of us would in the age of smart phones and YouTube: she recorded.

When the slaughterhouse manager came outside and told her to stop, she replied that she was on the public easement and had the right to film. When police arrived, she said told them the same thing. According to the

police report, the manager said she was trespassing and crossed over the barbed-wire fence, but the officer noted “there was no damage to the fence in my observation.”

Meyer was allowed to leave. She later found out she was being prosecuted under the state’s new “ag-gag” law. This is the first prosecution in the country under one of these laws, which are designed to silence undercover investigators who expose animal welfare abuses on factory farms. The legislation is a direct response to a series of shocking investigations by groups like the Humane Society, Mercy for Animals, and Compassion Over Killing that have led to plant closures, public outrage, and criminal charges against workers.

Even the most sweeping ag-gag bills, such as the American Legislative Exchange Council model legislation, don’t explicitly target filming from a roadside. But Nebraska, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Vermont are all considering bills similar to the Utah law right now.

Pennsylvania’s bill criminalizes anyone who “records an image of, or sound from, the agricultural operation” or who “uploads, downloads, transfers or otherwise sends” the footage using the Internet.

North Carolina’s bill doesn’t specifically mention factory farms or slaughterhouses: it is called the “Commerce Protection Act,” and it includes investigations of any industry. It was introduced on the same day a fifth employee of Butterball pleaded guilty to animal cruelty after an undercover investigation showed workers beating turkeys.

Tennessee’s bill has already passed and is awaiting signature from the governor. In response to calls for a veto from the Humane Society and Carrie Underwood, one state representative compared undercover investigations to rape and sex-trafficking.

California’s ag-gag bill recently failed, after a massive public backlash. One newspaper editorial said “the cattlemen have committed the worst PR gaffe since New Coke.” The bill was a response to an undercover investigation by the Humane Society that showed “downer” cows, too sick to move, being pushed by tractors (much like what Amy Meyer recorded in Utah). It led to the largest meat recall in U.S. history.

The public backlash against these bills, including recent editorials by the New York Times and Washington Post, has relied on hypothetical examples of how they could be used. The AFL-CIO and Teamsters say they could put workers at risk. The ASPCA says they could shut down lawful investigations by animal protection groups. The National Press Photographers Association says they could wrap up journalists.

The first ag-gag prosecution should be a warning that these aren’t hypothetical concerns. These bills have one purpose: keep consumers in the dark. Rather than respond to video footage of animal cruelty with across-the-board reforms, the industry is trying to turn off the cameras.

It’s telling that the owner of the slaughterhouse Amy Meyer filmed happens to be Darrell H. Smith, the town mayor. (Mayor Smith, the meatpacking company, and the local prosecutor did not return phone calls for comment). If that’s shocking to you, it shouldn’t be. In Iowa, for example, the nation’s first ag-gag law was sponsored by Rep. Annette Sweeney, who is the former director of the Iowa Angus Association.

In Utah, the bill’s sponsor, Rep. John Mathis, called undercover investigators “animal rights terrorists” and said video recordings of animal abuse are “propaganda.” In his opening remarks at a legislative hearing on the ag-gag bill, Mathis said: “It’s fun to see my good ag friends in this committee... all my good friends are here.” Ag-gag supporters couldn’t be any more transparent in their financial motivations for censorship.

It was prescient that, as the Utah bill was being considered, the Utah Sentencing Commission warned that it could be used against anyone who merely takes a photograph of a farm or slaughterhouse. At the time, Rep. Greg Hughes of Draper replied: “Who would really pursue that in terms of prosecution?” Now, the first ag-gag prosecution is for precisely that, in his own district.

Most people won't ever find themselves in the position of Amy Meyer, of course. Few of us actively seek out information about how our food is produced. (Do you know the location of a factory farm, if you wanted to?) The animal products just arrive at the supermarket, without investigation or thought.

With ag-gag bills, the industry is trying to keep it that way. These bills are not just about animal activists from national organizations going undercover. They are about people like Amy Meyer, who have seen how animals are being treated, and who want you to see what they have seen.

Most importantly, ag-gag bills are about you — the millions of Americans who might see this footage, be sickened by it, and demand a change.

April 30th - Amy Meyer's Ag-Gag Charges Have Been Dropped!

GOOD NEWS! Just 24 hours after I broke the story about Amy Meyer's arrest under Utah's ag-gag bill, the Draper City prosecutor's office has dropped all charges!

The charges were dismissed without prejudice, which means there's a possibility of them being filed again, but her attorney says this is highly, highly unlikely — especially after the massive outpouring of outrage after yesterday's article. To give you an idea: the article made it on the front page of reddit.com today, and in a few hours hundreds of thousands of people visited this website (crashing it for about an hour as we scrambled to adjust the servers).

Meyer and her attorney have bombarded with media calls. The Salt Lake Tribune ran a story based on my article today, as did Democracy Now. Local reporters even came to her home, attempting to follow up on this story.

I'll post more later, but in short: thank you all for generating so much attention to this injustice. It's not often that we can celebrate "good news" on this website, but today is certainly one of them. The first use of any ag-gag law in the country, the very first prosecution, has been a resounding failure.

I really hope this serves as a warning. Not to activists, but to Big Ag: you are losing.

29 Apr - Citing 'environmental terrorism,' Oregon House passes bills targeting tree-sitters, environmental activists

Read this and prepare to get angry as people who "chain themselves to equipment" are referred to as "terrorists" by a politician who apparently forgets that not even a month has passed since people were blown apart by bombs. Will the families of those killed by real terrorists ever stand up and say how beyond-offensive it is to have civil disobedience mentioned in the same breath as terrorism?

MORE:

Yuxing Zheng, *The Oregonian*

With talk about "environmental terrorism," the Oregon House approved two bills Monday that target tree sitters and other environmental activists who interfere with logging in state forests.

House Bill 2595, which passed 43-12, would create the crime of interference with state forestland management. House Bill 2596, which passed 51-4, would allow private contractors with the Oregon Department of Forestry to sue environmental protestors for the cost of damaged equipment, employee wages, attorney fees and similar costs. Both bills head to the Senate.

The legislation comes amid divisive efforts to increase logging in Elliott State Forest near Reedsport and proposals to increase logging in federal forest lands. Environmental activists affiliated with Cascadia Forest Defenders and Cascadia Earth First! staged protests at Elliott State Forest in recent years and at the Oregon State Capitol in May and June 2012, which led to arrests.

"They are known to overturn their vehicles on roads, chain themselves to trees, chain themselves to equipment,

damage equipment, dig ditches in the roads, drive spikes in trees to cause injuries to workers, among other dangerous acts," said Rep. Wayne Krieger, R-Gold Beach, who carried both bills. "This type of conduct cannot and should not be tolerated."

House Bill 2595 would allow district attorneys "to charge these terrorists with a crime and make them accountable," he said.

Krieger also cited protests at a State Land Board meeting in 2011 and sit-ins in the offices of Secretary of State Kate Brown and Treasurer Ted Wheeler in June 2012, when protestors locked themselves together. One protestor also urinated on the carpet in the offices of the treasurer, and protestors howled and made animal noises, Wheeler's spokesman said. State police arrested six protestors.

The bills passed despite concerns from environmental activists and the American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon that they would infringe upon free speech rights of environmental protestors. Activists can already be prosecuted for disorderly conduct, trespass, property damage and criminal mischief, said Becky Straus, legislative director of ACLU of Oregon.

"House Bill 2595 is effectively criminalizing civil disobedience for one particular group, and we think it's really very dangerous to give this sort of discretion to law enforcement," Straus said. "It's taking conduct that can already be penalized under our criminal code and heightening the criminal penalties of the conduct, simply because of the content of the speech and the type of person who engages in the conduct."

Defendants convicted of interfering with forestland management for the first time would face up to a year in jail, a \$6,250 fine, or both. Subsequent convictions would net a minimum of 13 months in jail and a \$25,000 fine. The maximum penalty would be 18 months in jail and a \$125,000 fine.

If House Bill 2595 becomes law, environmental activists vow to challenge it in court.

"I can assure you that as soon as this bill becomes law, we'll have as many people arrested and prosecuted under it as possible," said Jason Gonzales, a spokesman with Cascadia Forest Defenders. "There's no law that can stop somebody from acting on something they passionately believe in. There's not some level of punishment that will make us not want to do that."

Cascadia Forest Defenders has staged road blockades, tree sits and protests in Elliott State Forest in recent years. The group is opposed to an October 2011 decision to increase logging in the forest. Three environmental groups in May 2012 filed a lawsuit that said logging would threaten the marbled murrelet, a threatened sea bird.

Jim Geisinger, executive vice president of Associated Oregon Loggers, welcomed the passage of the two bills Monday. Although contractors can already sue for damages, current law is "a little vague and nebulous," he said.

"When protestors or obstructionist activities in the forest cause a contractor to go home, and they're unable to perform their duties, that costs money," he said. "The value of these bills is to put people on notice that there are consequences to their illegal actions."

30 Apr - Drama from the DOC & Snoop Lion, quotes by CeCe McDonald

Having been transferred back and forth through the Minnesota prison system, CeCe hasn't been writing for the public much. We've included her latest below.

MORE:

Hi everyone! Sorry for the delay, for I have been through a whirlwind of b.s. at the hands of DOC. Of course they wouldn't care about the things I love to do like my blog posts because they are too busy being dumb-asses making decisions they feel are best for me I don't know WTF is on these peoples' noggins, but I can surely say that it has to be a lot of hollow space up there.

Anyways...it's spring! Unfortunately, it's off to a bad start here in Minnesota. We've been getting snow like

crazy, in some parts over a foot of snow. Poor Mother Nature... seems like she's not in a good mood. Not that it's her fault. When are people going to realize that global warming is an actual thing, and that if we don't change the way we care for our planet, it won't care for us.

I just think about all the energy that is wasted by prisons alone. At any jail or prison I've been to I've noticed that they leave lights on 24/7! Now think about all the other jails, prisons, juvenile centers, etc., etc. around the world that does exactly the same thing. Now think about how much energy could be saved without them, hmmm... see where I'm coming from? We could save a lot of resources, actually, with abolishing prisons. I can give you a million other things that the resources put into the PIC can be redirected to, that can both build the economy and prevent people from being victims of the PIC.

So other than the DOC and the PIC getting on my nerves, people in general have been really annoying. I've never seen people say such dumb shit in my life. A goldfish with a two-second memory is smarter than some of the people of this world, and I say that with all sincerity.

First off, let me start with a comment Mr. Snoop Lion said about gays and the rap industry. He said that gays would never be accepted in the rap industry because rap is such a "masculine arena." How remedial of a comment was that? Like, WTF Mr. Lion! I like your music, but it's only dumb-founded, ignorant b.s. like that that will withhold the progression of equality in the world, and frankly it was just a dumb-ass statement..

For one, it just goes to show that people still have a stereotypical idea of what "gay" is and that there is no possibility of masculine, or even hyper-masculine, gay and bisexual men in the world. Well, guess what?... THEY EXIST! For two, to say that "rap is a masculine arena" is a underhanded insult to both masculine gay and bisexual men and also to feminine men, trans, GNC (gender non-conforming) and cissexual women who are rappers. It's clear that women are just as much of a force in the rap industry just as any man is, so why is it so unfathomable that someone that is QLGBT-GNC can't be such a force in an "arena" that really have no gender "boundaries" or "guidelines"? How can one just say that a person can't do something because of their sexual identity and/or orientation. That's like saying we can't have a black president. Well, you see how that turned out. Twice!

I hate that as time progresses and we evolve, the ignorance and idiocracy of close-minded people keep us, or at least try to, in an unevolutaionary state. At some point others have to accept that diversity exists. And not only does diversity exist, it is what makes us thrive. It is what makes us all uniquely individual. So diversity should be allowed in all aspects of a society. In schools, in the work force, hell, even at home!

As you know, I said that for every month this year I was going to give a quote. But as I mentioned earlier, I was caught in a lot of drama, therefore I didn't have the opportunity to do so. So I'm still going to give March's quote along with April's. Here they are:

March

"What lies behind you and what lies in front of you, pales in comparison to what lies inside of you."
-Ralph Waldo Emerson

April

"love is the voice under all silences,
the hope which has no opposite in fear,
the strength so strong mere force is feebleness:
the truth more first than sun, more last than star"
-e.e. Cummings

3 May - Free Russell Maroon Shoatz NYC Event

As the book tour for Maroon: the Implacable continues, Fred Ho presents an evening of politics and culture to celebrate Maroon and the book release in NYC.

MORE:

Contact: Benjamin Barson: BenjaminBarson@gmail.com/973.896.7697

Scientific Soul Sessions presents

MAROON THE IMPLACABLE NYC BOOK LAUNCH

END TORTURE AND SOLITARY CONFINEMENT! FREE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS!

Saturday, May 3rd, 2013

7pm-9pm

The DiMenna Center for Classical Music

450 w. 37th st

New York, NY 10027

\$20 (includes a copy of Maroon the Implacable)

RSVP at <http://www.scientificsoulsessions.com>, or through the contact information above.

On May 3, 2013, from 7pm-9pm, an historic book collecting the writings of former Black Panther political prisoner Russell "Maroon" Shoatz, who has been held in solitary confinement in the state of Pennsylvania for the past 30 years, will be officially released at New York's DiMenna Center.

Shoatz, who was sent to solitary after being elected president of the prison-approved Lifers' Association, is an important symbol in the growing movement against the long-standing practice of solitary, which amounts to unconstitutional torture under international human rights law. His case, under review by various United Nations bodies, will come under local scrutiny on April 8, as his Pittsburgh-based legal team present the state of Pennsylvania with a Demand Letter. This legal document gives the Department of Corrections authorities thirty days to move Shoatz into general population, or face litigation to have Shoatz freed. The NYC launch, coming at the end of a national book launch and speaking tour by Shoatz' daughter and at the end of the 30-day period, will be a crucial time for supporters of Shoatz and opponents of the practice of tortuous solitary.

The New York evening features an all-star lineup of artists and thinkers, a unified national movement to end torture and solitary confinement is built! New York Corrections Association director Soffiyah Elijah, former law professor at Harvard Law School, will review the legal and political basis for the call for Maroon's immediate release; veteran civil rights activist Ben Chaney - brother of the martyred student activist James Chaney - will discuss the connections between the movements of the past with current efforts for judicial reform and justice. Attendees will also enjoy a special public performance by the distinguished Grammy-winning saxophonist Gary Bartz, alumnus of the bands of Miles Davis, Max Roach, and considered by Jazz critic Stanley Crouch as "one of the best who ever picked up the horn." Also performing will be acclaimed political hip-hop group and Bronx-based activists Rebel Diaz, who have shared the stage with the likes of Common, Mos Def, and Public Enemy. Judith Malina, theater and film actress, writer, and director, and a founder of The Living Theatre, will perform one of her politically-charged short pieces. This will be one of the final performances of this era of Living Theater companies, as the troupe which rose to prominence in New York City and Paris during the 1950s and 60s has recently closed its Lower East Side performance space. EmCee Majesty, who has graced the stage with Immortal Technique and has his own brand of political hip-hop, will be participating as well.

Speakers will also include author and educator Matt Meyer, whose human rights work with the War Resisters International and the International Peace Research Association has taken him to speaking engagements on five continents; Black Waxx radio personality Iyanna Jones, also known for her vocal talents as Nana Soul, will co-host the event with Meyer. Both are active in the national Campaign to Free Russell Maroon Shoatz. Maroon's daughter, Theresa Shoatz, will also be presenting at the event.

Iconic poet and Black liberation activist/scholar Amiri Baraka, who performed at another recent New York event for Shoatz, called the ground-breaking book "that very funky instruction manual on how to make revolution against imperialist America." The book, including essays written over the past two decades, covers topics as far-ranging as matriarchy, environmentalism, a critical review of the Panthers, the popular movie "The Matrix," Occupy Wall Street, and many other topics relating to how best to effectively organize for social change in the current era. Rap master Chuck D, in his written foreword to the book, noted that the collection was a "high document if true freedom for the masses."

The May 3 event, and the national book launch and speaking tour, is sponsored by Scientific Soul Sessions, a multi-generational group united by the drive to pre-figure a new society free of imperialism, colonization, racism, heteropatriarchy, and capitalist exploitation. An explicitly revolutionary political/cultural organization, Scientific Soul stands against all forms of social inequality, and stands for the dignity and self-determination of oppressed peoples. The leadership for this movement will first and foremost be women and oppressed nationalities, based on both excellence and experimentation. More information at <http://www.scientificsoulsessions.com>.

10 May - New Prisoner letter writing night at Bluestockings Books

This is a new regular prisoner letter writing group that is meeting at Bluestockings books every second Friday. Please check out the event if you have time.

MORE:

Friday, May 10th @ 5PM – Free

Bluestockings Prisoner Letter Writing Group

“The communication between two humans concerning their hopes, ideas and their plights is what allows them to bond in resistance against a system that affects everyone in many different ways,” says Colorado prisoner Rachel Galindo (in a letter published in Resistance Behind Bars). Join a new Bluestockings-based group committed to communication and resistance by writing to prisoners. We’ll be focusing on folks who tend to receive less attention and mail, including LGBTQI-identified prisoners, women, and youth. Pens, paper, writing guidelines and encouragement will all be provided!

172 Allen Street @ Stanton (in the Lower East Side)

F to 2nd avenue

We update our schedule regularly so visit bluestockings.com for our updated events listings.

12 May - Mother's Day Noise Demo

WHAT: Noise Demo

WHEN: 8:00pm, Saturday, May 12th

WHERE: Bayview Correctional Facility – West 20th Street & 11th Avenue New York, New York

COST: Free

MORE:

As the Global Class War continues to heat up, the state continues its ongoing use of force, surveillance, and threat of incarceration against anyone who defies its laws. From Cece McDonald who got sentenced to 3 years for fighting back against a fucking Nazi, to Patreese Johnson who is still locked up for defending herself and her friends from being gay-bashed, to Revered Joy Powell who is serving a life sentence for agitating against police violence, to the MOVE 9 women who had their house bombed and children killed because of their political beliefs, there is a clear pattern and history of the state using prisons to criminalize our resistance and self defense.

In solidarity with May Day calls for a world without borders and bosses, on the eve of Mother’s Day NYC Anarchist Black Cross calls for a world without cages for all. We call for it during this time, because 2/3 of all women in prison are mothers and we recognize the forced separation of a child from their caregiver by the state as an act of violence aimed at destroying families and social relationships. Furthermore, as an extension of that, when police continue killing people indiscriminately on the outside, they leave grieving families and loved ones with a loss that the “justice system” could never truly vindicate. For our communities, our loved ones, and liberation of all, burn the prisons!