



POST OFFICE BOX 110034 BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11211

Updates for January 11th

16 Dec - Prosecutor's conspiracy case against 'antifa' appears based on same old antisemitic Soros smear

The antisemitism that animates so much of Republican politics seems to just keep popping out unbidden, particularly the right-wing devotion to the garbage conspiracy theory blaming George Soros as the source of everything they want to demonize as an existential threat.

MORE:

by David Neiwert (*Daily Kos*)

Just this week, *Fox News* had to hurriedly delete a post on Facebook and Twitter featuring a cartoon depicting Soros as a “puppet master,” a classic antisemitic trope that was popular in Nazi propaganda.

The same conspiracist impulse also appears to be at work even in law enforcement circles. In San Diego, it turns out that the Republican county prosecutor who earlier this month raised eyebrows by filing conspiracy charges against antifascists who counterprotested a post-Jan. 6 pro-Trump rally that turned violent appears to be at least partially basing the prosecution on her belief that “antifa” is being secretly funded by Soros.

The San Diego County prosecutor, Summer Stephan, is hardly alone in that regard. The fatuously false belief that Soros is secretly funding “antifa” has been an underlying component of that right-wing narrative since its early inception by extremist conspiracy theorists in late 2016 and through 2017. *Fox News* has similarly played a central role in spreading that conspiracy theory from the Infowars fringes into the mainstream.

It deliberately mimics early-20th-century antisemitic propaganda depicting Jews as the evil manipulators behind every ailment of modern society. As the ADL observes, “Soros’ Jewish identity is so well-known that in many cases it is hard not to infer that meaning. This is especially true when Soros-related conspiracy theories include other well-worn antisemitic tropes such as control of the media or banks.”

One of their favorite ways of doing this is spreading the image of Soros as a “puppet master” pulling the strings not just of politicians but also of black-clad antifascists—which was exactly how right-wing cartoonist A.F. Branco depicted the financier in the cartoon that *Fox News* posted. That same image was popular with German Nazi propagandists of the 1920s and ‘30s, and the eliminationist dehumanization it engendered led directly to the Holocaust.

Fox removed the posts from Facebook and Instagram shortly after the Anti-Defamation League protested on Twitter that “casting a Jewish individual as a puppet master who manipulates national events for malign purposes conjures up longstanding antisemitic tropes about Jewish power + contributes to the normalization of antisemitism. This needs to be removed.” When queried by journalists about the posts, *Fox* officials offered no response.

The smear campaign included online ads bought by conservative groups calling on authorities to “investigate George Soros for funding domestic terrorism and his decades-long corruption.”

Stephan, the San Diego prosecutor, offered up similar far-right propaganda as part of the 2018 election campaign in which she first won office, as Kelly Weill reports for *The Daily Beast*. Her campaign paid for a website attacking her Democratic opponent, Geneviève Jones-Wright, as a pawn of Soros, who “backs anti-law enforcement candidates over experienced prosecutors, trying to tip the balance to the criminals.”

The website (since removed, but archived) was essentially a scrolling ad warning: “San Diego Public Safety Under Attack,” and then claiming: “Billionaire Social Activist George Soros has brought his war against law enforcement to San Diego and he’s spending more than \$1 million to support anti-law enforcement candidate Genevieve Jones-Wright for District Attorney,” with a photo of Soros with his hands folded, superimposed over a backdrop of black-clad antifascists at a protest.

When Stephan was confronted in October 2018 about the website by a *Times of San Diego* reporter at a hate-crimes vigil organized by San Diego’s Congregation Beth Israel following the massacre at a Pittsburgh synagogue a few days before, she turned and walked away, and her security detail blocked any further queries.

“Do you regret putting up a website that labeled George Soros as a funder of your opponent?” the reporter asked her.

After Stephan walked away, her security detail blocked the reporter. But a few moments later, she was asked again: “Why did you take down that website?”

At that point, she was led to an outside porch by a bodyguard, who told the reporter: “We’re done here. This is a restricted area.”

A onetime spokesperson for Jones-Wright tweeted that the pictures of Stephan at the vigil “make me raging angry. You should not be able to campaign on anti-Semitic conspiracy theories & rhetoric and then stand in front of that crowd and act like you care at all about the rise of crimes against Jews.”

Stephan’s belief that nefarious forces were behind leftist protests never went away. In September 2020, the *Times of San Diego* reported that Stephan told a bench-bar media forum that “movements” were behind the protests that erupted throughout the summer around the nation in the wake of a Minneapolis cop’s murder of a Black man named George Floyd, which went viral after being caught on video.

“We’ve seen where there’s the peaceful protest and all of a sudden another group shows up without license plates, with generators and water, and there’s not good things that are happening,” Stephan said, adding that nefarious doings were being planned “behind the scenes.”

“Somebody talked about subverting the truthful nature of the protesters, and that is going on,” Stephan said. “There are movements that are not what you would think of.”

When the reporter tried to inquire further with her office, he was told by a spokesperson: “There’s nothing more we can share on this.”

Stephan’s case against the antifascist counterprotesters of the Jan. 9 “Patriot March” pro-Trump rally in the San Diego suburb of Pacific Beach—organized as a defiant gesture of support in the wake of the Jan. 6 Capitol insurrection, and featuring several people who were in the crowd in Washington, D.C., three days before—raised eyebrows among legal experts when she announced it. For starters, conspiracy cases typically don’t hinge on evidence that includes ordinary speech and behavior—such as simply agreeing to show up to an event in response to a social media post—as this case does.

The “Patriot March” violence broke out when several dozen black-clad antifascists showed up near Crystal Pier to counterprotest. As has been the case at nearly all such confrontations, it’s unclear where the violence originated. However, at least five people who’d been at the Capitol three days earlier were among the crowd, and as Weill notes, journalists that day described a typically complex confrontation clash involving both left- and right-wing activists and police. One reporter “was struck with a right-wing participant’s smoke grenade, and documented two Patriot March participants who wielded a knife or a BB gun.”

Two of that day's counterprotesters have sued the San Diego Police Department for permitting the pro-Trump faction to freely inflict violence on dissenters. Attorney Bryan Pease filed a suit against the city of San Diego, as well as at least 10 of its police officers, for two clients alleging the police unlawfully cracked down on counterprotesters while the Trump supporters were permitted to proceed undisturbed.

"The San Diego Police Department ... took a heavy-handed approach to only the anti-Trump side, spraying peaceful protesters with pepper spray, shooting them with pepperballs, and beating them with batons," Pease alleges in a civil suit filed in U.S. District Court. "Meanwhile, SDPD officers also high-fived and chatted it up with the violent pro-Trump side, including some who were later identified as being part of the assault on the U.S. Capitol."

The case presented by Stephan's office proceeds in precisely the opposite direction. "Video evidence analysis shows that overwhelmingly the violence in this incident was perpetrated by the Antifa affiliates and was not a mutual fray with both sides crossing out of lawful First Amendment expression into riot and violence," read a news release.

Stephan's criminal conspiracy complaint lists 68 overt acts by the antifascists, including seemingly innocuous actions like dressing in black clothing. Others include violent acts like kicking victims or spraying them with mace, as well as striking people with sticks and flag poles or pushing them to the ground.

It presents no evidence that any of those actions were agreed upon beforehand by the participants, however. Rather, prosecutors allege that the agreement to commit these acts was ratified by the defendants on social media or simply through their presence at the designated time and location of the counterprotest.

The defendants allegedly "pledged their support and participation by liking and sharing" a Jan. 2 social media post that called "for 'counterprotesting' and direct action," the complaint states. By liking and sharing the post, the defendants "in essence (agreed) to take part in the 'direct action'."

"The Defendants are alleged to be affiliated with ANTIFA and are organized into two groups, one originating from Los Angeles and the other from San Diego," reads the charging document. "ANTIFA is known to use force, fear, and violence to further their own interests and to suppress the interests of others. This tactic is referred to as 'Direct Action' and is known to mean acts of violence such as assault, battery, assault with deadly weapons, arson, and vandalism. The alleged object of this conspiracy was to incite and participate in a riot using direct action tactics."

As Weill observes, that's not actually what "direct action" means. Rather, the phrase describes a set of tactics intended to achieve goals outside of government involvement, including counter-protesting rallies as well as distributing free pandemic-era aid:

The argument that "direct action" means violence was recently laughed out of court, when neo-Nazi Chris Cantwell invoked it in trial last month. Cantwell attempted to argue that residents of Charlottesville, Virginia were threatening violence when they called for "direct action" against a deadly white supremacist rally in 2017. Cantwell lost his case and now owes his victims \$500,000 in damages.

"I'll be interested to see more documents that come from the [Stephan] court case," Catrina Doxsee of the Center for Strategic and International Studies told the *San Diego Union-Tribune*, adding that she believes prosecutors will have a "heavy burden of proof" to show the defendants went to Pacific Beach specifically intending to commit violence.

Seamus Hughes, deputy director of George Washington University's Program on Extremism, told the *Union-Tribune* that no federal conspiracy charges have ever been leveled against antifascists.

“It’s fair to say this (case) is both unique in its prosecution and its charges,” Hughes, wrote in an email. “(Department of Justice) has flirted with the charge in the past, meaning that they’ve used the possible investigation of that charge to secure federal search warrants against self-described antifa members, but ultimately did not bring criminal charges.”

The antifa smear narrative became deeply entrenched in the national discourse, as was demonstrated in several prominent court cases recently, including the Charlottesville trial.

Most people, after all, had not even heard of antifa prior to the violence at the 2017 “Unite the Right” riots around which that trial revolved. It was in the wake of those events that what had been primarily a fringe conspiracy theory about a communist plot to depose Donald Trump became a mainstream right-wing media standard. Multiple stories on *Fox* and in right-wing outlets began demonizing the antifascist movement, apparently with the intent of blunting the growing chorus of concern over the rise of white nationalist violence that Charlottesville represented.

This essentially created not just a “bothsiderist” narrative readily adopted by other mainstream outlets, but an eliminationist one in which antifa were depicted as so demonic in nature that they deserved no free speech or protest rights, and ultimately deserved only to be thrown out of helicopters (as the Proud Boys and other far-right thugs would have it). This narrative was used by Trump’s henchmen in the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to attempt to blame the summer 2020 violence in Portland on antifa, which turned into an incompetent shambles of an investigation—but still provided Trump with an excuse to deploy an army of DHS contractors on the streets of the city.

The same phony narrative, amplified incessantly by far-right actors on social media, also inspired a wave of “antifa bus” hoaxes that inspired hordes of heavily armed “patriots” to swarm the streets of various small towns across the nation last summer. When wildfires began burning up the West Coast, the same disinformation artists convinced their audiences that “antifa arsonists” were setting the fires, inducing clusters of right-wing goons to set up paramilitary checkpoints in rural areas.

25 Dec - New Writings From Dan Baker

Recently imprisoned anarchist political prisoner Dan Baker has a couple of new writings we'd like to share.

MORE:

December 25th - It's a “Wonderful” Prison Life

I’m writing today on Christmas because I was not able to call anyone. Here at FCI Memphis in each unit there are 4 phones for 100 people. In other prisons there were 6 to 8 phones for less people. In addition to this they have been practicing a policy in which they open all of the cells but refuse to let us leave the cells until the last cell is unlocked. They say “GO!” and laugh while they watch everyone scramble for the phones and computers. It creates the circumstances for a fight to break out. They are intentionally pitting us against each other by providing limited resources, emotional tension and then creating a stampede. They do this to turn us against each other and to instigate violent incidents so they can justify locking us down. People who become cops are lazy bullies. They don’t want to do their fair share of labor for the community, they want to get paid to sit around, sleep through the night shift and get paid overtime to do nothing. They are parasites.

Today I sat in line for several hours for one phone call and then we were locked down right before I got to the phone. After lockdown I got back in line, and when I got to the phone it did not work. Several others around me were also unable to complete calls. The call went forward as usually but right when it was supposed to ring there was a sound like someone hung up the phone repeatedly. This institute does not have the resources to provide everyone they are keeping here with the required constitutional rights and conditions. They are understaffed and undertrained. They have become complacent due to long covid lockdowns and they want to return to the indefinite lockdown. In order to do less work and get paid even

more to do less they are allowing people to get hurt by holding us hostage and extorting us for phone calls. Every day we have to remind each other that this is a conscious, malicious strategy forced on us by the enemy of the common people, the police class. We are organizing ourselves to avoid conflicts, to avoid playing into their lazy, sadistic hands.

On a less bitter note I watched “It’s A Wonderful Life’ today on TV and was reminded of all the amazing solidarity I have received for the last year, and the solidarity I have experienced in Tallahassee and worldwide since I hit the road to become a full time activist in 2012. I was once again moved by the scene of this movie where the main character confronts the richest man in town for treating the working people like cattle. He asks the decadent banker if he even knows how long it takes a worker to save up \$5000, and reminds him that these people wouldn’t even be able to live in a home if his abusive business practices continued. He then goes to work to undermine this rich banker and he builds a strong community through mutual aid, infrastructure, building homes and putting others before his own personal interests. The paradox here is that through building community by helping others with daily direct actions we too are taken care of. Despite the blind patriotism and mythology indulged in by this classic film, I found my Grinch heart softening.

The final scene where the community comes together to raise funds for the main character’s freedom moved me deeply. It glosses over the fact that he was about to go to jail at the hands of corrupt police, politicians and bankers. It reminds me of how my international community has come together for me, sending books, assigning me ACLU lawyers, putting money on my account and writing heartfelt letters to me and those involved in my case. It is through seemingly mundane work, often boring and time-consuming labor, paperwork, farming, construction, companionship, maintenance, healthcare and education that we build strong communities. Capitalist society wants us to romanticize and glamorize violence, authority, hierarchy and selfish ambition. But these kinds of activities do not build a healthy home, much less a community. They divide us and create the illusion of independent patriots fulfilling some mythological manifest destiny of colonization. In reality we are all INTERDEPENDENT. We rely on farmers, plumbers, construction workers, healthcare workers, educators, electricians and all the other ordinary people who are our neighbors. We rely on so called foreigners, friends and family. The health of so-called strangers directly affects our health.

So please continue to take good care of yourselves and each other. I send you all my heartfelt love, gratitude, strength, courage, rage and motivation! Please help your homeless neighbors and think of me while you do this. Please make daily direct actions of solidarity and courage. Stop when you see police have pulled over or arrested minorities and other neighbors. Hold them accountable and you will see your neighbors released – who otherwise would have been jailed for no reason other than there were no witnesses. Live stream these interactions from your phone and declare your presence to these cops betraying the working class. I have done this. I would not ask you to do anything unless I had already done it. Anything I can do; you can do better – you can do anything better than me! I only wish I had done more community building before I went to prison. I pledge to spend the rest of my life making up for this lost time by supporting other prisoners and reaching out to neighbors, both the housed and the unhoused. Together we will make a better world, because we have to in order to survive. We are responsible for every person who dies in prison and on the streets from exposure and preventable violence and diseases. Murray Bookchin says we must be practical by doing the impossible. We will create a world where everyone has food, shelter, healthcare and community. One day we will look back on this era as the age of corrupt police, illegal imprisonment, neo-slavery, wage slavery and we will shame the oppressors. Help me by taking responsibility for each other and the social problems you see in your daily life. Thank you for being there for me.

Happy Holidays and Happy New Year! Don’t let the bastards grind you down!

December 27th - Post Apocalyptic Present

I’m writing because I feel moved by readings, thoughts and memories. Often all of us can realize something extremely valuable, but we don’t write and share it because we underestimate ourselves and it is

our own thought. I want to improve as a person, a writer and a member of the world community, so I push myself to communicate the highest truths I know. I encourage all of you to do the same/ Please offer me criticisms and I will offer self-criticisms. For example, my writings are often disorganized, disjointed and confusing, so I offer this as a self-criticism and I will strive to improve my communication skills.

I have traveled around the United States and around the world. I have seen so much suffering that I feel deeply moved to action. In the United States a popular form of fiction is “post-apocalyptic society”. The irony is that this has already arrived. Amerikkans make a big show of standing on patriotic pride and referring to “third world” countries as less than themselves. But all over Amerikkka people are starving, homeless, unemployed, living in poverty, while sincerely believing that they are temporarily embarrassed millionaires. They have fully bought in to the idea that one day they will make it big and hoard enough resources, by hook or by crook, to live a stable life. The Amerikkkan dream involves a large house with a large yard, heteronormative family with several crotch gremlins, several vehicles, brand name clothes, soap, food and medical insurance for all emergencies. Only a tiny minority of people actually manage to live this way, and they get there by inheritance or by a life of crime.

I have travelled to The Dominican Republic/Haiti, The UK, Ireland, France, Germany, The United Arab Emirates, Iraq, Syria, Rojava and Germany. In all of these places I saw the same human conditions, and despite the superiority complex expressed by capitalist states there exists poverty, hunger, crime, war, violence and despotism in Europe, The Middle East and the Americas. So called developing countries are kept in a state of constant conflict, being used as the world’s military playground and testing site for new weapons and war technology. These places are still members of our community, no matter how much rich people bleach their hair and skin, whiten their teeth, consume vitamin rich, organic foods, we all bleed red.

We share a moral obligation to humanity to take responsibility for the suffering of the poor in all territories as a world community. It is delusional to think that the world is not already in a state of apocalyptic disarray. We have been surviving on the streets all around the globe, living on emergency foods, living nomadic lifestyles, not by choice but by necessity. Many who live that way like to portray themselves as lifestyle travelers, but the fact is that we do not have the resources to settle down in any place because of the concept of private property. This exclusive land principle keeps homeless people homeless. We have been adapting to emergency rations for so long that we no longer consider canned and powdered foods to be emergency food – it is what we buy from the grocery store for our daily meals, because we cannot grow our own food anymore – that would be illegal in Amerikkka. We have become accustomed to trauma and unhealthy relationships with our community which encourages isolation and selfish sense gratification at the expense of our neighbors.

So, I hope that we can all slow down and look around us. Here in prison they have us putting up Christmas decorations, as if this were a normal way to live. In keeping with the hollow spirit of capitalist modernity our decorations include a fake tree, synthetic wreaths and empty presents wrapped in shiny paper with bows and ribbons. Of course, there are Disney decorations. I was deeply amused when I saw that someone set the Christmas tree on fire in New York City. In prison many of the people here call their cells their “house”. This is not a home, and there is nothing that I can learn in prison which I could not have learned in a healthy, functional society, a wholesome community, which capitalist Amerikkka is not.

Every day we can identify these mental gymnastics which our fast-paced lives take for granted, and we can push ourselves to overcome unhealthy conditioning. That is our personal responsibility, no one else can do it for us. Once we each discover the ways that we have been fooled and ripped off we can then take direct actions to improve our community by helping our neighbors. This requires more than simply wishing them well – people need companionship, food, shelter, medicine, mental stimulation, education and transportation. They may also need protection and to be defended or trained to defend themselves. This involves putting ourselves at risk. So please consider looking closely at the world around and deciding whether you really want to do something about it, or if you have been appearing to want to do something about it. No amount of prayer, meditation or discussion can compare to one daily direct act of mutual aid.

30 Dec - “Current Political Prisoners of Black Liberation Movements” zine

A newly updated “Current Political Prisoners of Black Liberation Movements zine” is now up. This zine is the work of our pals at Page One collective.

MORE:

This edition is dedicated to the memory of former Black Panther and Black Liberation Army veteran Russell “Maroon” Shoatz (1943-2021). Rest in Power. Free Them All! Download at pageone.noblogs.org/files/2021/12/bpp-zine-1.2022.pdf

31 Dec - Philly March Demands Mumia Abu-Jamal Be Freed From Prison

After 40 years of incarceration, the movement to free Mumia Abu-Jamal continues.

MORE:

by *Unicorn Riot*

Hundreds gathered with a giant Mumia puppet outside Philadelphia’s City Hall near the statue of Octavius V. Catto before marching through streets south of Center City on December 11, 2021.

Unicorn Riot was live for the rally and march.

Mumia, a journalist and radio newscaster for National Public Radio in the 1970s, was sentenced to death after being convicted of killing Philadelphia Police Officer Daniel Faulkner. The movement that supports him has long seen him as a leading example of a political prisoner punished for supporting Black liberation in the United States, and a symbol of a racist system. He’s always claimed his innocence, and since his incarceration began, the mass movement has continued pushing for the government to release him from prison. Even though his death sentence was overturned in 2001, he was commuted to a life sentence without parole in 2011.

As speakers on the march explained, some supporters believe a new trial could clear him, but the review of his conviction has languished in higher courts. District Attorney Larry Krasner and his team found six boxes of documents that the defense never received. Although Krasner is known as more of a reformer than his corrupted predecessor Rufus Seth Williams, Krasner’s reluctance to push for review of this case drew an investigation from the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania.

A few of the speakers at the December 11 rally included Pam Africa, Gabriel Bryant, Rev. Keith Collins, Jacky Hortaut (from France), and Cindy Lou.

During the march, Pam Africa spoke to *Unicorn Riot* about organizing for Mumia’s freedom since day one. She said just because he’s not free doesn’t mean the movement is weak. “We’re not without, we are with. We’re not 40 years weaker, we’re 40 years strong.”

Mumia has had a myriad of health issues lately and has not received the greatest care while in prison. Besides contracting COVID-19 in prison, Mumia is struggling against hepatitis and trying to recover from recent open heart surgery.

Steve, one of the speakers and participants in the demonstration, came all the way from France with his friend to show solidarity to Mumia—he has been organizing demonstrations in France at locations like the U.S. Embassy for years. During the march, Steve shared with *Unicorn Riot* their recent experience visiting Mumia in prison. Steve said that Mumia was smiling behind his mask and in good spirits and also writing again.

Unicorn Riot also streamed a similar rally in Philadelphia in April 2021.

Supporters maintain websites about the effort to free Mumia, including FreeMumia.com, BringMumiaHome.com, and the French site, Libérons Mumia!

1 Jan - 2022 Greetings and Resolutions from National Jericho

As-salaamu 'alaykum and Revolutionary Greetings to all their families, friends and supporters from the National Jericho Movement and all its Chapters and members, wishing you the very best for 2022, and they pray that it will be a year of victories and liberation for our captive freedom fighters.

MORE:

We extend our solidarity and support for international Political Prisoners, including those in Turkey, the Basque Country, Occupied Palestine, and throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, and for all sisters and brothers, cadres and organizations fighting for their freedom! Let this be a year of building, stabilizing, shoring up our infrastructure, and solidifying networks and collaborations both national and international! Let's gather ourselves, reaffirm our commitments, care for ourselves and our families, and recognize our own self-worth! Let 2022 be a year of reconciling our differences, aligning yourself spiritually, and wanting to work together.

From one year to the next, the work never stops until we have:

- Freed all Political Prisoners
- Formed a solid viable working relationship with all organizations and formations that work toward the freedom of all Political Prisoners,
- Moved further in abolishing and eradicating all jails and prisons as we know them to be today,
- Empowered our communities,
- Secured the well-being and safety of our children, women and elders,
- Successfully charged the United States government with the genocide of Black, Brown and Indigenous people,
- Exacted reparations from the government for the crime of genocide,
- Contributed to the Spirit of Mandela Coalition's launch of a Peoples Senate,
- Introduced the subject of Freedom Fighters/Political Prisoners into High School, college and University curriculums,
- Gained the respect and recognition of the international community, and
- Stood firmly on the fact that we are our own liberators!

Help us get there--your generous contributions help us provide real support to our Political Prisoners!

1) Online Via Paypal **[thejerichomovement.com/donate](https://www.paypal.com/donate/?url=https://thejerichomovement.com/donate)**

2) Snail mail tax deductible donation checks to our fiscal sponsor IFCO (Checks must be made out to IFCO with "The Jericho Movement" in the memo):

IFCO

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Orange, New Jersey 07051-1368

In the past year we, along with other dedicated organizations and advocates have seen several of our people come home! These beloved Freedom Fighters who are now with their families on the outside, some for the first time in over 40-50 years, are home. They are: Jaan Laaman, David Gilbert, Jeremy Hammond, Russell Maroon Shoatz and Michael Markus "Rattler." Sadly, those who transitioned in 2021 include: Chip Romaine Fitzgerald, Russell Maroon Shoatz, Delbert Africa, Consuewella Africa, and Chuck Africa.

Moving forward, the Virgin Island 3 will be seeking parole hearings and will need funds for lawyers. Imam Jamil Al-Amin, Leonard Peltier, and Sundiata Acoli are also in need of support as are many of our Political Prisoners, most who are elderly, who keep seeking our help and freedom.

Some of our Political Prisoners such as Ed Poindexter, Mumia Abu Jamal, Maumin Khabir, Dr. Mutulu Shakur, and others are suffering with numerous life-threatening health conditions. When one is aging in prison, there is no compassion, no quality medical care, and in some cases no hope of seeing freedom; only darkness and eventual death.

January 22nd - Celebrate 2021 Victories, Remember Ancestors & Pick Up the Work!

WHAT: Celebration

WHEN: 6:30pm, Saturday, January 22nd

WHERE: The People's Forum, 320 West 37th Street, Manhattan

COST: FREE

MORE:

With: Recently Released Political Prisoner Jaan Laaman, spoken word by Sister Nzinga, and others to be announced.

Updates on: Mumia Abu-Jamal, Leonard Peltier, Dr. Mutulu Shakur, Sundiata Acoli, Kamau Sadiki, Maumin Khabir!

Due to the current Covid situation, this may end up being a virtual event. Check jerichony.org or email nycjericho@gmail.com for updates as we get closer to the date!

3 Jan - Video of Send Love Through the Walls 2021

For over 30 years, Resistance in Brooklyn (RnB) has held annual holiday card-writing parties to send greetings and solidarity to our comrades behind bars. and NYC ABC has co-organized it with them for over a decade.

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This video of the December 2021 party was extra-special in many ways. Because of our precautions given COVID-19, we held it virtually, thus the taping, and were able to feature friends from outside of the greater NYC area. And because late 2020-2021 saw the release of many US political prisoners, we were blessed to have many of them appear with us! This session includes music, poetry, updates, and inspirational messages: tiny.cc/SendLove2021Video

4 Jan - The Other Drone Casualties: The Whistleblowers Who Tried to Stop It

The United States continues to play prosecutor, judge, jury, and executioner of anyone on the planet. Despite a decade of air carnage, the only person in prison is the man who exposed it.

MORE:

by Jesselyn Radack and William Neuheisel (*Common Dreams*)

The *New York Times'* investigation into the Pentagon's civilian casualty files is some of the most important journalism in the War on Terror. It methodically and thoroughly picks apart the layers of lies around drone warfare and proves that the few examples of civilian casualties that have been investigated previously were not one-off mistakes. Unfortunately, this reporting comes too late for the civilians in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria who bore the brunt of the brutal air campaigns.

Over the years, a number of veterans have been sounding the alarm about precisely these issues, trying to blow the whistle while it could still save lives. We have represented more than a dozen such veterans who, despite being vindicated in their concerns, have suffered dire and ongoing consequences for their whistleblowing, on top of crippling moral injury from participating in a global assassination program.

They began to come forward in 2012 and 2013. Nothing. Some of them participated in the award-winning documentary 'National Bird' in 2014. Several more risked their freedom and came forward publicly in 2015. They all bore witness to what had become essentially common knowledge among drone pilots,

sensor operators, and imagery analysts: civilian casualties were not an aberration and the much-touted policy safeguards and precision technology were little more than a facade in terms of actually protecting innocents. Operators or their supervisors would minimize concerns of children spotted in a strike with dehumanizing terms such as "fun-sized terrorists" or "terrorists in training," or by simply insisting the child had been a dog. People fleeing a bombed building were referred to as "squirters."

These whistleblowers have had to navigate abnormally high rates of PTSD, anxiety, depression, alcoholism, drug abuse, and suicide. They have been berated by anti-war groups, denied veterans' benefits because they were not "boots on the ground," and subject to pretextual government investigations targeting them and their families. One former service member described to *NY Times Magazine* the lasting effects of moral injury, PTSD, and anxiety he suffered after leaving the drone program as well as the threats and harassment he endured after speaking out. When another client was in Germany to testify before the German Bundestag about drone warfare, Air Force officials showed up on his mother's doorstep in Missoula, Montana and told her she was being targeted by ISIS because her son was speaking out.

The most severe consequences have been borne by Afghanistan war veteran Daniel Hale, who was prosecuted under the draconian Espionage Act and is serving a nearly four-year prison sentence because he was the source for a ground-breaking reporting series and book on drone assassinations. Hale had started like other dissenters, speaking out in public forums about his experiences in the drone program after having left the military. But his conscience continued to plague him, and he had started to think of himself as a war criminal. He described his tipping point after he had unexpectedly regained access to classified drone documents at his next job as a military contractor, where his colleagues would watch "drone porn"—raw footage of drone strikes—as a form of entertainment. The documents he later gave to journalists were concrete evidence of what he and other whistleblowers had been saying (and what the *Times'* investigation would later confirm): the claims of accuracy touted by the military and political leaders were grossly untrue, and they knew it. The military's own studies showed that up to 90% of strike victims were not the intended target. Yet they almost never bothered to investigate the civilian deaths they claimed to work so hard to avoid. Instead, those deaths were deemed "enemies killed in action." And that inflated number of "enemy" casualties formed the basis for awards and promotions.

When Hale attempted to explain the motivation for his actions at sentencing, prosecutors protested that he had "helped ISIS," and compared him to a heroin dealer who insisted that his crimes were good for the community.

Hale spent the holidays isolated from friends and supporters by the contact restrictions and intense surveillance of a "Communications Management Unit", where he was placed by the Bureau of Prisons under the absurd rationale that he might commit another "communications-based crime" from prison, despite having had no access to classified material for almost a decade. He was unable to comment on recent news that yet again, the military absolved itself of any wrongdoing in the horrifically botched but not atypical August drone strike in Kabul—the parting shot of the American withdrawal from Afghanistan.

4 Jan - New legal filing in Mumia Abu Jamal's case

The following statement was issued January 4th regarding new legal filings by attorneys for Mumia Abu-Jamal.

MORE:

by Johanna Fernández (*Campaign to Bring Mumia Home*)

In her novel "Their Eyes Were Watching God," Zora Neale Hurston wrote, "There are years that ask questions, and years that answer."

With continued pressure from below, 2022 will be the year that forces the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office and the Philly Police Department to answer questions about why they framed imprisoned radio journalist and veteran Black Panther Mumia Abu-Jamal. Abu-Jamal's attorneys have filed a PCRA petition

focused entirely on the six boxes of case files that were found in a storage room of the DA's office in late December 2018, after the case being heard before Judge Leon Tucker in the Court of Common Pleas concluded. (tinyurl.com/zkyva464)

The new evidence contained in the boxes is damning, and we need to expose it. It reveals a pattern of misconduct and abuse of authority by the prosecution, including bribery of the state's two key witnesses, as well as racist exclusion in jury selection — a violation of the landmark Supreme Court decision *Batson v. Kentucky*. The remedy for each or any of the claims in the petition is a new trial. The court may order a hearing on factual issues raised in the claims. If so, we won't know for at least a month.

The new evidence includes a handwritten letter penned by Robert Chobert, the prosecution's star witness. In it, Chobert demands to be paid money promised him by then-Prosecutor Joseph McGill. Other evidence includes notes written by McGill, prominently tracking the race of potential jurors for the purposes of excluding Black people from the jury, and letters and memoranda which reveal that the DA's office sought to monitor, direct and intervene in the outstanding prostitution charges against its other key witness Cynthia White.

Mumia Abu-Jamal was framed and convicted 40 years ago in 1982, during one of the most corrupt and racist periods in Philadelphia's history — the era of cop-turned-mayor Frank Rizzo. It was a moment when the city's police department, which worked intimately with the DA's office, routinely engaged in homicidal violence against Black and Latinx detainees, corruption, bribery and tampering with evidence to obtain convictions.

In 1979, under pressure from civil rights activists, the Department of Justice filed an unprecedented lawsuit against the Philadelphia police department and detailed a culture of racist violence, widespread corruption and intimidation that targeted outspoken people like Mumia. Despite concurrent investigations by the FBI and Pennsylvania's Attorney General and dozens of police convictions, the power and influence of the country's largest police association, the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) prevailed.

Now, more than 40 years later, we're still living with the failure to uproot these abuses. Philadelphia continues to fear the powerful FOP, even though it endorses cruelty, racism and multiple injustices. A culture of fear permeates the "city of brotherly love."

The contents of these boxes shine light on decades of white supremacy and rampant lawlessness in U.S. courts and prisons. They also hold enormous promise for Mumia's freedom and challenge us to choose Love, Not PHEAR. (lovenotphear.com) Stay tuned.

6 Jan - What we know about FDC Philly's latest COVID outbreak

Philadelphia's federal detention center has been locked down since Monday, December 27th due to yet another outbreak of COVID-19 throughout the facility.

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Philadelphia's federal detention center has been locked down since Monday, December 27 due to yet another outbreak of COVID-19 throughout the facility. Here is what we know as of Wednesday, January 5:

- Incarcerated people were locked into their cells in the afternoon/evening of Monday, December 27. The FDC had routinely punished symptomatic women with confinement in the special housing unit (SHU), which quickly overflowed its capacity.
- Phones, showers, and other necessities remain off. Lore was allowed one brief proof-of-life call on Monday, January 3. She cannot otherwise reach her family, her lawyers, nor her wider support network.
- As of January 3, Lore felt well and had recently tested negative for COVID-19. We do not know the extent of the infections.

- Thanks to your timely help, Lore is relatively prepared to weather this makeshift solitary confinement period, but we do not know how long it will last. (It's never too late to contribute!)
- Mail in and out of the FDC has slowed to a crawl, but it should still be possible to reach Lore with letters and photos. They buoy her soul during these especially harsh storms, so please keep sharing.

FDC Philadelphia holds pre-trial detainees primarily, which means that people like Lore are suffering their second or third complete lockdown and information blackout in a federal prison without ever being tried for any alleged crimes.

You can read a summary of Lore's prior experience in lockdown with COVID-19 while we seek and share more information. The Bureau of Prisons and FDC Philadelphia in particular will not protect incarcerated people from COVID-19 infection nor treat their illnesses, so it's up to us to hold Lore in loving light amid all this hateful system's darkness.

6 Jan - New support website for Virgin Island 3 launched

After the 1972 shooting at Fountain Valley Golf Course, dozens of native Black youth in St Croix were rounded up and tortured, resulting in statements from five young men in their early twenties.

MORE:

After the trial, three jurors reported coercion that led to their guilty verdict. Three of the defendants—Abdul Azeez, Hanif Bey, and Malik Bey— are held in prison almost 50 years later. Due to their advanced age, they have a variety of chronic health conditions that are difficult to manage in prison. Their legal team believes they are being unjustly held in the private prison system in the mainland United States, far away from their home and families on the islands, and that they should be granted release after so many years and so many irregularities in their arrest and prosecution. Check out the new support site at **vi3.org**