



POST OFFICE BOX 110034 BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11211

Updates for July 12<sup>th</sup>

## **28 Jun - US Supreme Court May Take Aim At Whistleblower Protection Law**

*The False Claims Act in the United States allows individuals with evidence of fraud against government agencies to bring lawsuits as qui tam whistleblowers.*

### **MORE:**

by Kevin Gosztola (*Shadowproof*)

They can bring a case even if the US Justice Department has no interest in fighting the alleged corruption.

But on June 21, Courthouse News reported that the US Supreme Court

will determine whether the government has the authority to dismiss a whistleblower lawsuit brought under the False Claims Act when the government has declined to intervene in the case. In other words, the Supreme Court could help corporations shut down independent whistleblower lawsuits that the Justice Department does not want to pursue.

Health care and pharmaceutical corporations, along with their lobbying networks, have ramped up pressure in recent years to stifle the effectiveness of the False Claims Act in holding their industry accountable and prevent the law's expansion.

Under President Donald Trump, the National Whistleblower Center reported in 2018 that US government recoveries under the law hit a "ten-year low." Nearly \$2.9 billion was recovered, but only \$767 million of that money was a result of lawsuits by the government. Whistleblower lawsuits, however, yielded over \$2.1 billion.

A network of dark money has transformed the Supreme Court into an illegitimate and partisan institution. The same court that overturned *Roe v. Wade*—ending nearly 50 years of abortion rights—could gut one of the few laws available to private citizens to challenge corporate corruption.

### **Pushing Complicit Government Agencies To Act**

President Abraham Lincoln signed the first False Claims Act in 1863 during the US Civil War. It became known as the "Lincoln law." According to Tom Mueller, author of *Crisis of Conscience: Whistleblowing In An Age of Fraud*, the law was intended to "stop army and navy contractors from stealing taxpayer dollars but also to push complacent or complicit government agencies to act."

The US did not have a Justice Department, Mueller noted. What the "Lincoln law" did was empower individuals to "prosecute fraud with or without the government's participation." Offending contractors could be fined \$2,000 for each misrepresentation or false claims they made when requesting payment from the government.

The law was gutted by Congress in 1943 because the Justice Department claimed it did not need the assistance of whistleblowers when prosecutors already knew about the fraud. As Republican Senator Chuck Grassley recalled, this led to "absurd results that only hurt the taxpayer." Grassley, an advocate for the law, said it "basically meant that all whistleblower cases were blocked, even cases where the government only knew about the fraud because of the whistleblower."

In 1986, Grassley helped to ensure that amendments to the False Claims Act were passed to restore power to private citizens to bring whistleblower lawsuits. It ensured that whistleblowers would receive a reward in return for risking their career or legal jeopardy. However, in order to convince President Ronald Reagan to sign the amendments into law, Grassley and other senators had to overcome institutional opposition within the Justice Department.

Jay Stephens and Stuart Schiffer, two senior DOJ officials, opposed restoring the False Claims Act. Stephens contended the Justice Department was doing a good enough job against defense contractor fraud and a stronger law would hamper their work, according to Mueller.

“The law,” Stephens said, “was an anachronism from a time when the United States had no central investigative force; now that the DOJ and the FBI existed, most qui tam whistleblowers were parasitic ‘bounty hunters’ who interfered with legitimate law enforcers and ultimately provided little useful evidence of wrongdoing.”

The counter to Justice Department officials was that the restoration of the False Claims Act was necessary to protect whistleblowers from retaliation. The amendments were needed to prevent a complacent and complicit Justice Department from entering into “sweetheart deals with powerful contractors.”

### **‘Devastating Threat To The Executive’s Constitutional Authority’**

Justice Department officials remained opposed, even though Reagan declined to veto the amendments. In 1989, they argued to the US Supreme Court that the law was unconstitutional.

Bill Barr, who later became attorney general under Trump, was the assistant attorney general. He contended the False Claims Act represented a “devastating threat to the executive’s constitutional authority and to the doctrine of separation of powers.” He objected to how Congress empowered citizens to help stimulate government action against fraud.

“There has been a massive upsurge in qui tam actions—over 150 suits have been filed,” Barr cried. “These actions have disrupted the civil and criminal enforcement activities of the Department.”

“They have also undermined the executive’s ability to administer complex procurement contracts and, in some cases, have caused serious national security concerns. The 1986 Amendments have also spawned the formation of full-time ‘bounty hunting’ groups—ersatz departments of justice—that go about prosecuting civil fraud actions in the name of the United States.”

Barr was worried about groups representing whistleblowers, who could collect up to thirty percent of any recovery, because their effectiveness put the Justice Department to shame. He was ultimately unsuccessful in persuading the Supreme Court to neuter the False Claims Act.

However, three decades later, Barr was at it again in his position as Trump’s attorney general. The Justice Department dismissed an increased number of false claims cases for reasons that Grassley believed had nothing to do with the merits of the cases. It seemed prosecutors were intent to discourage whistleblowers and undermine efforts to root out serious fraud.

Bloomberg Law reported that the Justice Department moved to dismiss “at least 14 cases involving pharmaceuticals.” Eleven of the cases were brought by the National HealthCare Analysis Group, which alleged “violations of anti-kickback laws that prohibit improper marketing of drugs to medical professionals.” They were viewed as a “bounty hunting” group.

The National Whistleblower Center called attention to the fact that the Justice Department was attempting to dismiss a case against the pharmaceutical corporation known as Gilead Sciences. A whistleblower

accused the corporation of “manufacturing drugs with contaminated ingredients from China” and unusually the Justice Department maintained it would be too costly to pursue the lawsuit.

Grassley and a bipartisan group of senators tried in 2021 to correct the issue of dismissals by the Justice Department by creating a test. Prosecutors would be required to “identify a valid government purpose and a rational relation between dismissal and accomplishment of that purpose.”

A whistleblower would then have the ability to challenge a dismissal by “demonstrating that the dismissal is fraudulent, arbitrary and capricious, or illegal.” But Big Pharma succeeded in blocking the amendments from inclusion in the 2021 infrastructure bill that passed. It was a major loss for whistleblowers.

“By raising false flags about these amendments and locking progress through complex and endless court cases,” the National Whistleblower Center warned, an “anti-whistleblower victory—which could open the floodgates for future attacks on these highly successful whistleblower protections”—was secured by lobbyists.

### **Record Settlements And Rewards Under The False Claims Act**

During the past five years, lawsuits against the False Claims Act that are backed by corporate interests have sought to amplify uncertainty around the Supreme Court and lower courts’ interpretation of provisions in the law. Each million spent on these efforts is intended to stall the progress of whistleblowers courageous enough to take a stand against corporate influence and power.

GlaxoSmithKline, a major pharmaceutical corporation, was hit with a record \$3 billion fine in 2012 after marketing their drugs for “unauthorized uses” and cheating the US government’s Medicaid program. The result was a whistleblower reward of \$250 million, which four individuals split.

Faced with “allegations it sold toxic mortgage-backed securities and other financial products” in the run-up to the 2008 economic crash, Bank of America agreed to a record settlement with the US government of \$16.65 billion in 2014. Three whistleblowers and one firm shared a \$170 million reward.

Pharmaceutical corporation Johnson & Johnson entered into a \$2.2 billion settlement with the US government in 2012 to end a lawsuit involving allegations related to fraud and kickback schemes perpetrated to sell three drugs: Risperdal, Natrecor, and Invega. A whistleblower received a \$167 million reward.

These are just three examples of how private individuals with evidence and knowledge of fraud can pursue a modest level of accountability against corporations, whether Justice Department officials have the political appetite for such action or not.

The Justice Department’s history of opposition to the False Claims Act does not exactly inspire confidence that the corporate-captured Supreme Court will leave the law alone. If the Supreme Court yet again prioritizes corporations and upends a settled law, their ruling may greatly diminish a tool that whistleblowers have wielded for decades.

### **29 Jun - The International Day of Solidarity with Antifascist Prisoners**

*If you’re wondering what you can do to help support antifa comrades in prison on July 25<sup>th</sup> – The International Day of Solidarity with Antifascist Prisoners, here are some ideas:*

**MORE:**

**Do a Banner Hang**

Wanna know how to make a kick-ass banner? Check [youtube.com/watch?v=rNcGxeQ8wDg](https://youtube.com/watch?v=rNcGxeQ8wDg)

### **Put up Posters and Stickers Around your Neighborhood or School**

Here's PDFs you can print: [supportantifaprisoners.wordpress.com/j25antifa-take-action](https://supportantifaprisoners.wordpress.com/j25antifa-take-action)  
[itsgoingdown.org/fascist-group-identity-evropa-begins-poster-campaign-antifa-respond](https://itsgoingdown.org/fascist-group-identity-evropa-begins-poster-campaign-antifa-respond)

### **Raise Money to Support Antifascist Prisoners and their Families**

Putting on a fundraising event for July 25<sup>th</sup> and donating the proceeds to support antifascist prisoners and their families is a very good way to show appreciation & solidarity. Every year for #j25antifa, Antifa International does an online sale of "Support Antifa Prisoners" t-shirts (designed by a former antifa prisoner!) <[bonfire.com/support-antifa-prisoners](https://bonfire.com/support-antifa-prisoners)>, and donates the proceeds to the antifascists currently locked up (you'll find a list of them and information about how to contact their support groups at the wordpress site!). We also run a standing fund that provides support to antifascist prisoners and their families throughout the year, which you can make a contribution to at [actionnetwork.org/fundraising/support-antifascist-prisoners](https://actionnetwork.org/fundraising/support-antifascist-prisoners).

### **Take a Solidarity Photo**

Be sure to send us any photos you take: [antifaintl@gmail.com](mailto:antifaintl@gmail.com)

### **Write to Antifascist Prisoners**

Nothing is better when you're locked up than receiving mail! You can send letters or postcards to the antifascist prisoners on our list or participate in Rose City Antifa's Postcards to Prisoners campaign or hold a letter-writing party with your friends! Here's some tips for writing to prisoners:  
[nycabc.wordpress.com/write-a-letter](https://nycabc.wordpress.com/write-a-letter)

### **Dedicate an Action to these Comrades**

The only limit to what you can pull off on July 25<sup>th</sup> is your imagination!

Remember that together, we can create a flow of solidarity that strengthens our ties to one another and creates a culture of resistance that can withstand the inevitable tides of repression. These comrades are in there for us, so we are out here for them!

## **29 Jun - NC Prisoners Organize Rolling Protests and Hunger Strikes for Juneteenth**

*Report from prisoners in North Carolina on various protest actions.*

### **MORE:**

Comrades in both North Carolina and Georgia have received word of a series of rolling protests and hunger strike actions at Granville CI in North Carolina, both to commemorate George Floyd Day as well as Juneteenth. A report-back and summary of those actions is below.

### **Brief Report on 'George Floyd Day'**

On "George Floyd Day" on May 25<sup>th</sup> at Granville Correctional Institution, on HCAV (high-risk security) over 30 prisoners protested over their harsh conditions of captivity.

There have been routine hunger strikes, staff sit-ins for SIB ("self-injury behavior") watch, fires, prisoners attempting to fight off a half dozen or more storm troopers single-handedly, and other means of protest, over issues like police brutality, not having access to tablets on HCAV, the new text behind mail service, extremely long long-term sentencing, and other random issues such as laundry and raw eggs served for breakfast.

We are planning on a state-wide petition campaign to the DPS to address the long-term sentencing structure. In the meantime, we'd like to demonstrate what happens to corrupt officials when we have the "power of the people."

We will be protesting throughout Juneteenth in small and major ways. On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, I will be on my fifth day of hunger strike.

We did not choose to have the phone zap on Juneteenth, because that falls on a Sunday and so the administration and the warden will not be here. Their warden is more likely to be here on Thursdays. (June 23<sup>rd</sup> is my birthday! And though I suffer from bone marrow cancer, the people will always come first).

Thank you for providing the 2019 phone zap to Scotland CI for “Shine White” and those hunger strikers...The admin went crazy and demands were met. May you be blessed many times.

On the inside we will handle everything else (paper work, other demands, et cetera). As you apply pressure and provide help from the outside. Thanks in advance.

In struggle we stand in solidarity, ‘til every cage is empty.

### **29 Jun - Atlanta, GA: More Tree-Sits Erected on Juneteenth as Construction Continues to be Blocked**

*Report on new wave of tree-sits erected in the fight to stop ‘Cop City’ in Atlanta, Georgia.*

#### **MORE:**

For more background on the fight to defend the Atlanta forest, read [itsgoingdown.org/no-cop-city-atl](https://itsgoingdown.org/no-cop-city-atl) and listen to [itsgoingdown.org/this-is-america-167](https://itsgoingdown.org/this-is-america-167). Report reads:

Over the last 2 weeks, actions both inside the forest and out have managed to stop construction and keep it at bay! On Juneteenth (June 19<sup>th</sup>), a very important day commemorating the freeing of slaves in the so-called U.S. from slavery, we erected a new tree-sit named Tower 7 in solidarity with youth prisoners currently being held in the juvenile detention center on Constitution Rd.

Gilligan’s Island is another new tree-sit that is connected to the infamously named and effective, “Haha Lol. Fuck You,” tree-sit (rightfully named because the kkkops destroyed the first platform and cut part of a tree that was tied together in hopes of injuring forest defenders). Gilligan’s Island, Tower Seven, and many other trees have been connected together with ropes which has successfully deterred cops and workers from chain-sawing down trees when they arrived in the forest with that intention. No more trees have been cut in this area since then! We plan to keep it that way and greatly appreciate your ongoing support!

The flood of support pouring into the forest has meant a lot to those who are here defending the woods with our lives, both materially and emotionally as we get the sense of how many people are cheering us on. Much love and thank you all!

We believe all the tools for defending the forest and stopping cop city are important and that a diversity of tactics is most valuable!

Occupy the trees! Stop the Machines!

Defend the Forest with your heart!

Fight back against the oppressive arm of the law & police!

### **30 Jun - Free Mutulu Shakur Now - SHOW UP this Summer for Baba Mutulu!!**

*An Important Message from the National Malcolm X Grassroots Movement*

#### **MORE:**

*The Intercept* reporter, Natasha Lennard, exposes the hypocrisy of the Federal Government and its punishment system as the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) continues to deny the release of Dr. Mutulu Shakur.

Every #MutuluMonday, share the article, demand the BOP #FreeMutuluNOW, and organize for his immediate release!

"Shakur's release has been blocked by layer upon layer of institutional intransigence and procedural arcana. Even while a number former Black Panthers and other liberation elders — all incarcerated for all too many decades in state prison systems — have finally been released on parole in recent years, the strange vagaries of outdated federal rules, abuses of discretion, and administrative failures have foreclosed such relief for Shakur.

Shakur's legal team has sought every avenue for his release, including the superannuated federal parole system, the Bureau of Prisons' compassionate release process, the calculation of Shakur's earned "good time" in prison, and even the unlikely route of presidential clemency — all to no avail."

Follow @mxgmnational and all the MXGM city chapters on IG, FB, and Twitter for more details on how to support bringing our movement elder home!

Please Share these flyers, Spread the Word and Support in Bringing Baba Mutulu Home ASAP!

### **July 8<sup>th</sup> - Dr. Mutulu Shakur Has Terminal Cancer, Under 6 Mos. To Live; Push For His Release**

by Anoa Chang (NewsOne)

Six years after first being eligible for parole, Dr. Mutulu Shakur waits for an intervening force to let him live out his remaining days at home with loved ones. Despite being diagnosed with incurable advanced cancer, he has been denied parole several times. His prior request for compassionate release has also been denied.

Jomo Muhammad of the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement told *NewsOne* that Shakur had been denied parole nine times despite having an essentially infraction-free time in prison. He also explained that Shakur petitioned for compassionate release earlier in the pandemic, given the various health issues and being diagnosed with an advanced stage of terminal cancer. But he was denied essentially because a judge did not think his condition was severe enough to justify release.

In late June, *The Intercept* reported that Shakur again tried for compassionate release. Shakur's health has severely deteriorated, and it is estimated the 71-year-old has less than six months to live.

Muhammad said Shakur contracted COVID-19 at least twice since the pandemic's start. Between good time credits and his rapidly deteriorating health, supporters, including the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, have been hoping Shakur could be released.

According to Muhammad, Shakur was denied parole based on the Federal Bureau of Prisons' assumption that he was likely to re-offend. New Jersey officials used this similar excuse in the repeated parole denials for Sundiata Acoli. Acoli was finally released last month.

But efforts on behalf of Shakur have an added layer of complexity given the additional challenges of navigating the federal system of parole and the limited use of compassionate release to support aging or severely ill people.

In some ways, by refusing to release the dying Black leader, federal authorities have effectively converted his "punishment" to a death sentence. Originally sentenced to 60 years in prison in connection with an armed bank robbery, Shakur became eligible for parole in 2016 after serving 30 years in the federal system.

### **Mutulu Shakur helped expose COINTELPRO and fought the war on drugs.**

While he may be best known as the stepfather of the late Tupac Shakur, that is one of the least exciting things about the aging healer. Scholar-activist Dr. Akinyele Umoja, a professor and co-founder of the New

African People's Organization and the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, shared Shakur had a deep commitment to Black liberation dating back to his youth.

"I interviewed one of his childhood friends, and he talks about when Mutulu and him were like 13 years old," began Umoja. "Somebody from the Nation of Islam would come into their neighborhood and pick them up. And they would go down to Harlem and hear Malcolm X speak. And I think that had a profound effect on his life."

While Shakur was not a Black Panther, he was very active in the Black Liberation Movement of the late 1960s and 1970s. Shakur was involved in exposing COINTELPRO.

"Mutulu, following that, along with Afeni Shakur set up something called the National Task Force for COINTELPRO Litigation and Research that was the Black think tank, and they connected with black legal workers across the United States to investigate and work on getting Black political prisoners out of prison and also just educating the community," explained Umoja.

After a car accident involving his children, Shakur learned about acupuncture as an alternative treatment. He later combined his knowledge of acupuncture and healing practices with his penchant for political education and organizing at Lincoln Detox in the South Bronx.

"The Young Lords, which was a Puerto Rican organization in New York, took over Lincoln Hospital in the Bronx," Umoja said. "Lincoln Hospital was known as a butcher shop."

According to Umoja, the Young Lords worked alongside several groups to transform Lincoln Hospital into a facility that genuinely addressed people's healthcare needs, including dealing with heroin addiction. He said Shakur received training abroad and later returned to co-lead an acupuncture clinic in Harlem, treating community members and training Black acupuncturists. Shakur's work at Lincoln Detox is covered in the film "Dope is Death."

### **From Black liberation leader to political prisoner**

In 1981, Shakur would go underground for five years after alleged his involvement in the "expropriation" of \$1.6 million from a Brinks armored truck. This incident gave rise to the conspiracy charges, bank robbery and other charges against him and his subsequent incarceration in 1986. Two officers were killed during the Brinks incident.

Information from the campaign supporting his release explains that the evidence does not show that Shakur had been involved in either officers killing. But he has acknowledged and taken responsibility for his role in the underlying events and expressed remorse for the family and loved ones of the officers.

Umoja stressed the political nature of Shakur's continued incarceration, given the reasons for denying his parole involved signing letters in correspondence with references to resistance claiming that made him dangerous.

"It clearly makes him a political prisoner that keeps him incarcerated due to his ideas," Umoja explained. "Even though he had a model record."

He said the one infraction in Shakur's file relates to his speaking by phone with a California university in a conversation that included actor Danny Glover. During the course of conversation, Shakur advocated for a Truth and Reconciliation process like what happened in South Africa, consistent with his advocacy for human rights in the U.S. and abroad.

Both Muhammad and Umoja urged people to sign the petition demanding the release of Mutulu Shakur. The Movement for Black Lives is also calling on people to take action. As of this article's publishing, the petition had over 60,000 signatures, with a goal of 75,000.

Shakur, who now uses a wheelchair according to Umoja and losing weight and strength according to Muhammad, wants to spend his remaining time in the care of his family. But Shakur's repeated denial of relief points to a broader issue within the U.S. so-called justice system.

"This man has done his sentence, he's done his time, he should be released," Umoja said.

## **2 Jul - In Contempt #18**

*We are including excerpts of the monthly column In Contempt below.*

### **MORE:**

#### **June 11<sup>th</sup> Roundup**

June 11<sup>th</sup>, the international day of solidarity with Marius Mason and all long-term anarchist prisoners, was marked by direct action against a fake clinic in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, incendiary actions in the Chilean state, and sabotage of ATMs in Java, Indonesia. Other events that were organized to mark the day included a party for Marius Mason in Cincinnati, Ohio, a BBQ in Philadelphia, and letter-writing events in New York City, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Seattle, Washington, Portland, Oregon, Minneapolis, Minnesota, along with other events in the Basque Country/Euskal Herria, Utrecht, Netherlands, Richmond, Australia, London, UK, and Chile.

Texts marking the occasion were produced by anarchist prisoners Toby Shone, Jennifer Rose, Dan Baker, and Sean Swain, along with a new edition of anarchist prisoner zine Fire Ant and a special episode of The Final Straw.

Coming up after June 11<sup>th</sup>, the next big day in the prisoner solidarity calendar is July 25<sup>th</sup>, the international day of solidarity with antifascist prisoners, so start planning ways to mark that date now.

#### **Political Prisoner News**

Supporters of anarchist prisoner Eric King have published a new update about his situation, with a list of suggested actions. Unicorn Riot also have a new video up where Eric speaks about his recent trial. Although Eric has faced a series of mail bans in recent years, he is currently receiving some letters.

Eric is currently at USP Lee awaiting a transfer to a supermax, and has asked that people email the North Central Regional Office and national BOP asking them to hurry his transfer up and not delay, due to the danger he still faces at Lee.

Water protector Jessica Reznicek has had a setback in the courts, as Trump-appointed judges rejected her legal challenge against the terrorism enhancement that was applied to her case. You can hear more about Jessica's case in this recent episode of The Final Straw.

Anarchist and antifascist prisoner Dan Baker continues to publish new writings regularly, and a few of his most recent writings are collected at [abcf.net/blog/dan-baker-updates-and-writings](http://abcf.net/blog/dan-baker-updates-and-writings). Speaking of Dan, he has a new book wishlist, which you can check out at [tiny.cc/psgpuz](http://tiny.cc/psgpuz). As well as publishing Dan's writings, Mongoose Distro also publishes new work from Chicano anarchist prisoner Xinachtli.

Long-term Black liberation prisoner, and Tupac's stepfather, Mutulu Shakur is currently facing serious health issues, which makes it all the more urgent that he be freed now. Natasha Lennard has written on the ongoing campaign for his compassionate release.

#### **Tech companies and Mail Digitization**

Following in the footsteps of other states such as Pennsylvania and North Carolina, as well as some parts of the Federal system, the Missouri prison system has now also ended physical mail. According to new Missouri DOC guidelines:

*Beginning July 1, 2022, personal postal mail will no longer be accepted at Missouri Department of Corrections Division of Adult Institutions (DAI) correctional facilities.*

The move appears to be accompanied by a switch from using JPay to a messaging service provided directly by JPay's parent company, Securus. In keeping with the trend for tech companies to monitor anyone in contact with prisoners, the new Securus sign-up page appears to ask for more intrusive information to be gathered before an account can be created on the new system, such as asking for a name to be given "as it appears on your ID".

For recent critical commentary on this trend and the prison tech industry, see "Why Prisons Are Banning Letters" in *The Nation*, "A Notorious Prison Tech Giant Is Poised to Cash In on Pell Grants for Incarcerated People" in *Mother Jones*, and "How Corporations Turned Prison Tablets Into A Predatory Scheme" in *The Appeal*.

## **2 Jul - Dan Baker's new article and updated wish list**

*On this horrible holiday weekend, please buy anarchist and political prisoner Daniel Baker a book or two.*

### **MORE:**

He is doing a 46 month sentence at FCI Memphis in the federal Bureau of Prisons for threatening white supremacists online. His wishlist is at [tiny.cc/psgpuz](http://tiny.cc/psgpuz)

### **Update on legal appeal**

The Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals will hear oral arguments in Daniel's appeal the week of September 12, 2022.

### **Anarchists Under Attack on a Global Scale**

I am writing today to raise awareness for friends all over the world who have been facing captivity due to human rights activism. At its core all anarchist activism is a struggle for human rights. Freedom of expression, bodily autonomy, freedom from captivity, freedom to live a life as one sees fit, with access to healthcare, housing, transportation education and community- all of these are anarchist struggles. Often our work intersects with other movements who have similar goals for specific groups of marginalized people, and even compassion for animals and environmental activism. People who profit from the exploitation of people, plant and animals find the existence of motivated anarchists and intersectional class struggle to be a threat to their social structure of hierarchy and domination. We are often striving to exist within the nation state systems, at peace, solving our own problems in autonomous zones, if only so we can claim the moral high ground of non-aggression and let the overbearing authorities cast the first stone. But many of us sincerely wish to have happy, healthy lives of peaceful coexistence, living close to nature and each other, living honestly in the face of institutionalized lies, dogmatic stone age mysticisms and hypocrisies, living in a way that is separate from the profit driven economy which is doomed to endless cycles of class division, exploitation, collapse and violent 'forever wars'.

Those who do act out in aggressive ways are often only struggling for survival against lionized police forces who outlaw their very existence- for example patriarchy religious structures like zealous adherents to Abrahamic mythologies; the Kurds struggling against genocide in many different nations; Black communities worldwide, but especially in Amerikkka, where police and federal government are putting white supremacist ideologies into practice; the Jewish Diaspora worldwide; Palestinian communities; Indigenous communities who managed to survive colonialism; and the Irish, victims of the United Kingdom's first colony.

Right now we are seeing anarchists under attack on a global scale, and it's important that we know the names of those who are facing imprisonment so they are not forgotten. By raising awareness, we protect

their bodies with accountability. Police who work as prison guards are made aware that they are being watched by the entire world, just like Derek Chauvin. Please look into the conditions faced by Belarus political prisoners and European political prisoners. We should also look into the state of Chinese and Russian political prisoners, and Ukrainian anarchists. Here are the names of friends I am aware of. Please look up these people and reach out to them and their friends and family. They can also receive money for their prison commissary account. If you send me any money, please send me less money so you can also send some to these friends. Instead of sending me twenty dollars I would rather get one dollar and know that nineteen other friends are getting one dollar also. The Belarus friends are in particular need of help in relation to their stance on the Ukraine and Russian war. They can be helped by contacting this fundraiser: [firefund.net/abcbelarus](http://firefund.net/abcbelarus)

Names of international anarchist friends who need help more than I do: Please add names to this list and forward this message or write your own statement to friends and family and activists on a global scale. We will show the forces that attempt to dominate our ungovernable spirit of love and freedom that our solidarity is greater than their violence and oppression!

Thank you for keeping me in your thoughts and for all of your actual aid. My own family loves white Jesus and trump more than they love me, so the only help I get is from the activist community. I receive letters, money and books on a regular basis and this cuts through the depression and keeps me going. I can imagine how much more difficult in other places where conditions are much harsher, like Erik King's situation. I would very much like to receive pictures of as many political prisoners as you can send me, either printed on paper or through a photo app like pelipost or freeprints. In prison one of the only tools available to me is my imagination, which I use in meditation to send all my love, strength and courage to other political prisoners, and I imagine them being happy, healthy and free, receiving resources like money, books and healthy food and nutrients. Please join me in this meditation. Another aspect of this meditation is to imagine all of the negative aspects of the political prisoner's existence coming off of them like a black cloud of smoke, which we then inhale and in doing so we share their burden by taking on the negative karma that is making their life difficult. I like to call it "smoking our own thoughts"! Then we imagine clean air and beams of light energy going from us back to the political prisoners. Please remember that this exercise is just our imagination, and it is worthless without physical action and actual support in reality. Its purpose is to motivate us to action and to help us through times when we cannot act, so that we remember to help when we can act.

## **2 Jul - NYC Activists Push Back Against Proposed "Feminist" Women's Jail**

*Prominent mainstream feminists have been increasingly advocating for a proposed women's jail in Harlem. Earlier this month, feminist activist Gloria Steinem urged New York Gov. Kathy Hochul and New York City Mayor Eric Adams to act on the proposal.*

### **MORE:**

by Abby Cunniff (*Truthout*)

Steinem claimed the proposed jail would dovetail with the political aims of the feminist movement, saying that, "Women and gender-expansive [people] at [the Rose M. Singer Center state prison at Rikers Island] deserve safety, dignity and justice, and New York City can deliver with a Women's Center for Justice at Lincoln." *New York Times* critic Ginia Bellafante echoed Steinem's sentiment earlier this month in a column, "What Would a Feminist Jail Look Like?" Bellafante suggested that victims of domestic and sexual abuse could find healing with the social setting of the proposed jail.

However, prison abolitionists resoundingly oppose this proposal and insist that true safety and healing requires the release of incarcerated people and investment in high-quality social services for people upon their release. These opponents of the Harlem women's facility affirm "there is no such thing as a feminist jail." As they see it, freedom from violence is a foundational part of feminist politics, and prisons are inherently violent institutions.

The trend of self-described feminists promoting new jail construction in New York in the name of protecting the women trapped within them is over a century old. Jarrod Shanahan's new book *Captives* details the history of jail reform and expansion in New York City and shows many instances of jail construction in which progressive reformers led the charge to build safer jails for women and queer people. One after another, plans to fix women's jails resulted in "reformed" facilities that devolved into crisis, signaling the rise of the next jail — with more funding and more beds.

### **Advocates for Women Built These Jails**

Throughout the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, New York City's most prominent avatar of women's caging was the House of Detention for Women, located on the corner of Sixth Avenue and Greenwich Avenue, in the heart of bohemian Greenwich Village.

This facility housed a disproportionately Black and working-class population of prisoners arrested for sex work, drug possession, and other so-called crimes. The Women's House was characterized, above all, by its proximity to city streets and the noise generated inside; women could shout to passersby, communicate with loved ones in plain sight and broadcast the dismal conditions inside to anyone who would listen. Thanks to this regular practice, the recurrence of prisoner revolt, and the high-profile captivity of political prisoners like abolitionist Angela Davis, the brutality of Women's House became widely known to the public. Increasingly, broad swaths of New York City activists, including much of the city's feminist movement, opposed the jail.

But, of course, the Women's House had not been built with the stated intention of reproducing racist, misogynist class violence. Its construction was advocated by Progressive Era women's activists, including the temperance movement and the Women's Prison Association, and it counted many suffragists among its supporters, including the Women's City Club of New York. The campaign for a new women's jail to replace squalid facilities for detained women began in 1910 and continued for several decades, during which time many of the same activists fought for and won the right to vote. These activists also pushed for the installation of progressive penologist Ruth Collins as the jail's first superintendent.

However, most of these reformers did not grapple with the question of whether it was safe or just for women to be locked up in the first place. The call was not to "free them all"; instead, the progressive demand was to build "better" cages.

Soon enough the Women's House had fallen into infamy, in part because it was used not just for women detained before trial, as had been planned, but also to absorb those who had already been sentenced from the smallpox-laden hovel that housed female prisoners on Blackwell's Island. Overcrowding, sexual assault of prisoners by doctors and guards, routine rebellions and press coverage of these issues meant that by the 1960s, the Women's House was a scandal. Department of Correction Commissioner Anna M. Kross, herself a product of the suffragist milieu that had campaigned for the jail, called it a "shocking penal anachronism."

In response, as part of a centuries-long process Shanahan describes in great detail throughout *Captives*, the Correctional Institution for Women (CIFW) on Rikers was opened in 1971 with colorful walls and a new architectural style, which planners promised would alleviate the social ills that had plagued the Women's House. But within a few months of opening, CIFW became the subject of numerous investigations for overcrowding and failing to provide basic medical care to incarcerated people. The charge of keeping up with the increased numbers of arrestees from law-and-order policing turned out to be more than the reformers could handle. As the CIFW fell into disrepair and capital for jail construction flowed into the Department of Correction, plans were made for a new women's jail with even larger capacity.

In 1988, 17 years after the opening of CIFW, the promise of a new, modern women's jail facility was part and parcel of larger jail expansions taking place on Rikers Island. This new jail, the Rose M. Singer Center, known colloquially as "Rosie's," had a total capacity of 1,150 including connected modules from the CIFW and the nursery for expectant mothers. It was named after the Board of Correction member Rose M. Singer,

who long advocated for the humane treatment of female prisoners. The jail was, according to Singer, intended to "be a place of hope and renewal for all the women who come here." However, it was no such place.

### **#CloseRosie's and No New Women's Jail**

In 2020, Singer's granddaughter Suzanne publicly criticized her grandmother's namesake, describing it in *The New York Times* as "a torture chamber, where women are routinely abused, housed in unsanitary conditions, and denied medical and mental health services." Suzanne Singer recently endorsed the proposal for the women's jail in Harlem, agreeing with Steinem, Bellafante, and other carceral feminists that the only solution to the horrendous conditions on Rikers for women is to create a separate and "safer" jailing facility for women and nonbinary people.

What motivates a feminist organization to hawk this jail as the only solution to the violence at Rosie's? The authors of the original proposal from the nonprofit Women's Community Justice Association show their hand when they explain how the facility will be run. They state that it would be "operated by a nonprofit 'reentry upon entry' model focused on trauma-informed care.... The Department of Corrections' presence limited to securing the perimeters."

While guards would still be involved in keeping the facility separate from the Harlem neighborhood beyond the walls of the jail, the Women's Community Justice Association imagines itself as the warden of the facility. This would put it in a better position to secure long-term city funding and foundation grants, as the first nongovernmental organization to operate a "gender responsive decarceration" human caging complex. That is, until headlines of abuse break, and a new jail plan must be devised once again.

To generate public support for the Harlem jail, the Women's Community Justice Association has created a campaign called #BeyondRosies to emphasize the horrors of the Rose M. Singer Center and attract pro-jail "progressives" to their cause. This campaign is akin to the #CloseRikers campaign, a to build four new jails in boroughs throughout the city. The group #CloseRosies has recently declared the proposed Harlem jail a "win".

Though #BeyondRosies and #CloseRosies rightfully condemn the abuse and neglect that people endure at Rosie's, they simultaneously support the construction of more cages and attempt to co-opt the power of New York City political movements that have rejected incarceration in all its forms. These grassroots, truly decarceration-oriented efforts include the Community in Unity campaign against a similar women's jail in the Bronx in the mid-2000s; the original grassroots #ShutDownRikers campaign in 2014; and the abolitionist organization No New Jails NYC, which opposed the borough-based jail plan in 2018-2020.

No matter how proponents frame their calls for a new women's jail, history shows us that the abuse endured by incarcerated people will not be solved by newer cages. The humanitarian crises that typify these jails are symptomatic of the racist and capitalist social order of American society. Only steps that work to undercut this social order will mitigate the social ills that are quarantined in American jails.

As Young Lords militant Denise Oliver explained about CIFW when it first opened, "The only thing that's nicer about it is that it's not as old, so there's probably not as much dirt collected in the place. It is still a prison. The conditions are still the same."

### **6 Jul - Line 3 cases dismissed: Press Conference & Multicultural Book Club!**

*A major victory for Indigenous Water Protectors at Line 3!*

**MORE:**

Anishinaabe Water Protectors were found not guilty for holding a ceremony at the Mississippi River during Line 3 pipeline construction, in exercise of their treaty-reserved rights to protect sacred waters and all life that flows from it. This is a huge win for Indigenous tribal sovereignty and treaty rights on sacred land!

Line 3 construction threatened sacred waters, including the Mississippi headwaters, as well as the concomitant ability to hunt, fish, gather, and engage in religious and cultural practices central to Anishinaabe people, and threatened the safety and wellbeing of Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit relatives as part of the epidemic of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Relatives. In the face of these threats, Indigenous Water Protectors and their invited guests lit a ceremonial fire, gathered in prayer, and camped on the matting that stretched over the Mississippi River so that Enbridge's pipeline could be built through it. Read full press release: [waterprotectorlegal.org/post/line3-cases-dismissed](http://waterprotectorlegal.org/post/line3-cases-dismissed).

"[N]ative people have relationships with nature and an inherent ancestral obligation to protect the land and water not only for ourselves, but for our children and grandchildren." Nancy Beaulieu (Anishinaabe Line 3 defendant who had their case dismissed)

This was a collective victory, one that required standing together in the face of an often-intimidating colonized legal system.

### **19 Jul - Our Streets! Our City! Exhibit Tour with the Planners network**

**WHAT:** Exhibit Tour

**WHEN:** 6:30pm, Tuesday, July 19<sup>th</sup>

**WHERE:** Interference Archive - 314 7<sup>th</sup> Street, Brooklyn

**COST:** FREE

**MORE:**

Join us for a tour of the exhibit Our Streets! Our City! Self-determination and Public Space in NYC.

Hosted by Planners Network and Interference Archive and led by one of the exhibit curators, this tour and meet up is an opportunity to check out the space, learn more about the exhibit and meet others interested in radical / grassroots urban planning history and action — all welcome!

\*Please note: you must be vaccinated and masked to attend; RSVP required

After the tour, those who are interested can continue the discussion informally at a local bar or nearby park.