



POST OFFICE BOX 110034 BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11211

Updates for August 8th

24 Jul - Support Leonard Peltier!

Leonard Peltier is an activist for Native American rights, almost eighty years old (78 years), who has spent more than four and a half decades in prison (46 years), in the so-called USA.

MORE:

via *UNOFFENSIVE ANIMAL*

Some of his incarceration Leonard has been forced to spend in solitary confinement, Over the years, Leonard's support crew has worked tirelessly for his release. According to them, there is now hope that Leonard can be released from prison in the future.

In 1977, Leonard was convicted in highly questionable ways for a crime he did not commit, the murder of two FBI agents. Since then, Leonard has been held captive by the state, with neither the possibility of reparation for the wrongs that occurred during his trial, nor the possibility of parole.

Remember! The state is never on the same side as those who are fighting for liberation, be that human or animal liberation. How Leonard has been treated is a disgusting example of the state's oppression of minorities, repression and revenge against activists.

There are several ways to help Leonard, so that he hopefully can spend the last years of his life outside the prison walls, and getting the help that he needs (Leonard is unfortunately not in good health). For example, drawing attention to Leonard's case, writing him a letter, or contributing financially to the campaign for Leonard's release. Read more about Leonard's case, how to donate, write letters: whoisleonardpeltier.info

August 9th - Webinar on Political Prisoner AIM Activist Leonard Peltier

WHAT: Webinar

WHEN: 7:30pm, Wednesday, August 9th

WHERE: ZOOM (link Below)

COST: FREE

The Bronx Greens are hosting a Zoom Webinar with the Leonard Peltier Ad Hoc Committee and the Jericho Movement on US Political Prisoner, American Indian Movement activist Leonard Peltier's case, and the surrounding issues involved with the 1975 shootout on Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. Announced guests are Michael Kuzma Esq., Leonard Peltier's long time Freedom of Information Act Lawyer; Anne Lamb, Jericho Movement; Tarik Haskins, Black Panther and former Political Prisoner who did time with Leonard Peltier; and A member of the Leonard Peltier Ad Hoc Committee to be announced. Register at tiny.cc/LeonardWebinar

24 Jul - Freedom as a Bargaining Chip used by the Government

On Friday, July 14, 2023, our compañero Fidencio Aldama was released from prison by the authorities of the government of Sonora, after having been held hostage for almost seven years – accused of a murder he did not commit – for opposing, along with his community of Loma de BÁCum, the construction of the Sonora Gas Pipeline (Gasoducto Sonora).

MORE:

When Fidencio called us in the early morning hours of July 15 to inform us that he was now free, we were pleased to hear the news, but we were also filled with a deep uncertainty not knowing how and under what

conditions he had been released. We say that because we were preparing a direct appeal to be presented to the Supreme Court due to the repeated refusals of the state courts to recognize Fidencio's innocence.

When Fidencio was notified that he was free, the warden of the prison in Ciudad Obregón held on to his release papers, without explaining why, thus increasing our doubts, which by that time were already numerous. Therefore, we decided to be prudent and not speculate on the conditions of his release in the absence of reliable information.

But the news was not long in coming out, and the next day, local and national media outlets reported his release according to the information they had at the time. Instead of doing their own journalistic and investigative work, they merely recycled the same false information. Some said that the changing of the head of State Prosecutor's Office opened the door for his release. Others indicated that because the Prosecutor's Office could not substantiate the allegation, a federal judge ordered his release due to lack of evidence. This was the script the media were given to be constantly recirculated, creating the lie that days later would be disproven.

One factor that was present, months before Fidencio's release, was the pressure exerted by municipal, state, and federal authorities who visited him in prison. They tried to get him to sign a document authorizing the prison warden to request his release, on the condition that he accept responsibility for the fabricated crime of homicide. However, Fidencio refused, as since the day of his arrest he has maintained his innocence, denying the accusation against him.

Consequently, the authorities did not give up. The visits continued and with them pressure from officials from the National Institute of Indigenous Peoples (INPI), the delegate of the federal Ministry of the Interior in Sonora, Máximo Moscoso, as well as state and municipal officials. They even had the nerve to bring his family before him to increase the pressure, so that he would change lawyers and sign a document that supposedly would give him his freedom and recognize his innocence. In short, on Tuesday, July 11, these officials visited Fidencio again in prison with a new document supposedly addressed to the President of the Supreme Court. They even allowed Fidencio to make some changes to the document recognizing his innocence. They stated that once it was presented to the court, he would be granted absolute freedom. It was this document that Fidencio signed.

And so, we arrive at Friday, July 14. Fidencio was released after 9pm, believing that his freedom was absolute and that he was considered innocent. This joy was short lived, because on Thursday, July 20, Fidencio was notified of a ruling issued by the sentencing court that instead of prison he had been given the status of semi-freedom. He was instructed that he had to report to the authorities who will be in charge of supervising the conditions he has to comply with during the remainder of the sentence. It should be clarified that Fidencio did not request this change of status, which was arranged without his consent and without the consequences thereof being explained to him.

What does all this mean? It means that Fidencio was deceived, that the supposed freedom he was granted is not absolute, that it is controlled, that he was not recognized as innocent of the fabricated crime of homicide. Semi-freedom means that Fidencio must report to prison every night at 8pm, where he will be held until 8am the next morning. That he must go to work, then to school, and then return to prison, for the next seven years and three months, the time he has left in his 14-year sentence. In other words, everything is designed so that, in the case of non-compliance, the judge can revoke Fidencio's freedom, issue a new arrest warrant, and imprison him again. Instead of semi-freedom, we consider this to be a continuation of his imprisonment. So long as Fidencio has to set foot in a prison, he is not free and remains a political prisoner and a hostage of the state.

Why so much eagerness to free Fidencio? The urgency to free our compañero on Friday, July 14, arose from the need of those in charge of implementing the Yaqui Justice Plan in Sonora for his freedom to coincide with the visit of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador on July 15 and 16 to supervise works related to the Seri Justice Plan, Irrigation District 1, and the Yaqui Justice Plan, where one of the central

demands of the traditional authorities of Loma de BÁCum was the freedom of Fidencio Aldama. Everything is clear, they never had the intention of recognizing Fidencio's innocence. Both the government of Claudia Pavlovich, who fabricated the accusation, and the MORENA government of Alfonso Durazo, have used and continue to use political imprisonment as punishment for those who oppose their political and economic interests, and use freedom as a bargaining chip to continue advancing the megaprojects of foreign companies, the exploitation of natural resources, and the plundering of the water and lands of the Yaqui Tribe.

Finally, we believe that the semi-freedom granted to Fidencio is the safest way for the government of the Fourth Transformation to control dissent and ensure that its works and projects of death are completed. Today, as yesterday, Fidencio continues to be held hostage by the three levels of government.

We hold President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, Sonora governor Alfonso Durazo, INPI head Adelfo Regino, Sempra Energy CEO Jeffrey W. Martin, and Sempra Infraestructura's Presidenta de Grupo, Energías Limpias e Infraestructura Energética, Tania Ortiz Mena responsible for Fidencio's continued imprisonment and for any threats, harassment, or damage committed against Fidencio or his family.

Fidencio stands firm and we stand firmly beside him. The struggle continues for his immediate release. We ask that you join us in demanding and fighting for it.

26 Jul - Words by Mónica Caballero and Francisco Solar Before Trial

Via Act for freedom now!

MORE:

In the next few days will begin the culminating phase of this long judicial process that has kept us in prison for the last 3 years. This oral trial should not take very long insofar as Francisco assumed responsibility for the actions, politically vindicating each one of the attacks. However, everything indicates that the prosecution will spare no effort and resources to achieve all possible aggravations, making this instance the precise moment in which Power will come down with all its brutality.

These 3 years have meant the strengthening of ties of affinity and solidarity with various anarchist spaces of this territory and other distant ones, as well as being part of the coordination of anarchist and subversive prisoners raising multiple initiatives of struggle together with a clear anti-prison perspective. In short, these years have meant facing life in prison with dignity, never ceasing for a moment to be an active part of the informal anarchist galaxy, constantly trying to break with the exclusive role of "prisoner" to which Power tries to delimit us.

The actions that will be judged are undoubtedly part of the long anarchist tradition of responding to, of avenging, the permanent blows of repressors and the powerful. They constitute a clear attempt to put an end to the impunity of those in authority, demonstrating that it is possible, through informality, to provoke upheavals to the established order and to make vengeance present.

These actions also represent a contribution to the anarchist urban guerrilla that refuses to disappear despite the constant repressive blows.

In this sense, we think that it is essential to emphasize the actions for which we are locked up when carrying out solidarity initiatives, encouraging that such actions be strengthened, multiplied and extended.

We want to send a complicit embrace to all the spaces, environments and individualities that make solidarity a permanent practice that allows us to, among other things, continue to participate actively in the broad anarchist undertaking, and through this to give life to the concrete development of a solidarity with revolutionary character.

A fraternal embrace to our anarchist and subversive brothers imprisoned in the Rancagua Prison with whom we have undoubtedly strengthened ourselves on this path of struggle inside the prison and for whom it is essential to redouble our efforts to achieve their release to the streets.

A special greeting also to our fellow anarchist prisoners of the gendarmerie case, to the anti-speciesist prisoners and to Tomás González.

Solidarity and complicity with those who attack repressors and the powerful! To grow and multiply the attacks against every expression of domination! Freedom for anarchist and subversive prisoners! Long live anarchy!

26 Jul - New Writings by Eric King

As part of a step-down program at ADX, Eric has been writing poems and essays. We are publishing them as we received them.

MORE:

My mom is spectacular

My mom made me an anarchist. She would cringe reading that, but to me it's the highest compliment. She truly lets people be who they are and radiates mutual aid and love. Without meaning to, she taught me to resist patriarchy, class solidarity, love, and hard work. For a long hard period, my mom had to raise My brother and me by herself often fleeing violently abusive biological dad. She didn't shrink from life; she didn't take her out on me and my brother. She took a shitty job at a cold storage company and worked every hour they would allow. Should be given projects with unreachable deadlines and have to meet them. There were countless nights she'd have to pack me and my brother up in the car with box of toys and pillows we'd have slumber parties at the office...she wanted a house so we wouldn't have to live and my grandpa's front room, she wanted economic autonomy. If my brother and I hadn't been such spoiled shit-heads this autonomy would have surely come sooner. She put needs before wants, she built a real family.

My mom didn't have a degree, the idea would have been ridiculous... she got a high school diploma and got to work. Over the years she would move up and rank and always overworked and underpaid...like mini poor single parents, she didn't develop passions or indulge youthful dreams, I doubt she ever knew she could have dreams... family and financial security always came first. Well, my mom didn't chase her dreams, she put me in the position to chase every one of mine. Whether due to being busy, being happily remarried (then tragically widowed RIP Jim) or just relief I wasn't acting like mike, she developed a real laissez-faire (sic) attitude to my upbringing... she would support me thoroughly, but as long as I was out of trouble, going to school and checking in with her we were good. When I develop a new passion, she'd ask questions or show worry, but then it'd be full support. Imagine having a high school son who got up at 4:00 a.m. to say the rosary, went to the gym at 4:30 to 6:30 a.m. then school, back to the gym, or racing home to watch English football, who existed on a diet of fish, lean meats and veggies. The only hard "NO" I can remember is when I tried to go to Palestine with some Franciscans my senior year...weird ass kid.

She never preached or forced her values on me. How to treat people going through hard times, how to let people be with who they are, how to love people without judgment... how to stand by those you love, how to survive. She's been through and outlandish amount of hard times but is still the best example of Christianity I've ever seen. She always helps, she always cares. She taught me how to be a good husband (and my wife taught me how to be a good son, full circle) I am blessed to have her as a mum

July 26th - Patterns

I went to college for a few years and got buckets worth of credit... but it isn't facts or stats that I took from my "higher education" .. the number one thing I learned in college is 'HOW' to read, 'how' to read the news, how to think critically and how to look for patterns.

When I watch the news today, all the fear and hatred and blame being placed on trans people... what I see is a remix of the same tired tropes and tactics of years past.

It wasn't so long ago when every story on the news was about rap ruining America. This was a play on the "all blacks are thugs" trope... Rap was villainized. Stores try pulling the albums, Christian group boycotted their sponsors and literally bulldozed rappers' albums in protest. Lies of precious white children being forced to learn ebonics in school we're never challenged by reporters happy to exchange fear for ratings.

Of course we can't forget those pesky Muslims... what started pre 9/11 spiraled into full-blown hysteria post 9/11 and culminated in the early Trump days. The shit said about Muslims openly, on daily news, didn't even try to avail its bigotry... all Muslim men were pedophiles and rapists, they beat and tortured "their women" (misogyny and racism all in one) the Muslim woman were all essentially sex slaves with no brains or thoughts of their own... every mosque being built was a terrorist recruitment center, trying to brainwash "our" children... Muslims were plotting to take over local city councils to force Sharia law on good Americans... after all "they" hate us for 'our' freedom... local governments past meaningless ordinances banning Sharia law and teaching the Quran in schools. Separation of church and state... Muslims would not be allowed to indoctrinate our children

Of course, gays and lesbians are a long-time fear target. Same bullshit as above. They were all child rapists, all wanting to sneak up on you... they use religion to shield the bigotry... "it's a sin" it's against God's will, etc. Politicians became theologians and prayed they wouldn't be caught up in a Minnesota airport bathroom. The gays were ruining "our way of life" ... they would "corrupt our society" ... same ol' fear same ol' tactics same ol' bullshit.

Immigrants would naturally come under fire... they are everything bad, nothing good, let's hate them!

Now it's transgender people. Continuing the trend of the country's most powerful people accusing a group with literally zero political power of "taking over" or "attacking" the powerful... same lies, same over exaggerations, seem deliberate misconstruing... you can't blame them though, considering trans folks built billion dollar conglomerates that poison our air and water and refuse to clean it up, they got billions gambling on JUNK loans...profiting beyond belief while thousands lost their homes and pensions...they fought it all costs to prevent affordable health care and then did everything possible to steal that healthcare during the worst pandemic of Our lives...they accept lobbyist money to create laws that benefit corporations, crush workers' rights and literally poison and endangered citizens...they have all that power, and it must be stopped.

This is the pattern and it works a marginalized group gets attacked-they speak up against this treatment they get accused of attacking those in power, anyone that stands with the marginalized group gets accused of "forcing their agenda on 'regular' Americans. While the fear mongers are distracted with lies, politicians are doing real damage. Banning books is serious, denying people to talk about their existence is dangerous, preventing access to trans healthcare is deadly...and people buy into this, forgetting we just heard the same bullshit about a different group... further, when all you hear is how shitty a group is most are not interested in seeking out the truth, of speaking to trans youth or the parents, understanding their lives, of understanding that "trans healthcare" is healthcare... they see another victim trying to force themselves on "us" by not letting "us" erase them. Well conservatives pretend to be worried their precious child may have to breathe trans air, parents of trans children worry they may go to prison for supporting their children or their child may have to go without mental or physical care.

Trans people are people, not scapegoats. My life has been saved by trans people, Calvin, my lawyers etc.. my life has been enriched and enhanced by trans people.... Too many otherwise good people don't see this pattern, or simply don't care. same old lies, same old pattern...same old brutality. #ProtectTransKids #HonorTransLives dignity isn't a grace bestowed by conservatives.

July 28th - Poem

In response to centuries of religious repression,
In response to government hatred and repression,
In response to flagrant and bigotry masked as faith,
A culture of radical flamboyance blossomed
A decision not to hide
A decision to reject the shame
He decision that there is safety with invisibility
The choice to live however they feel
Expressing their love of Life on their own terms
A rebellious choice to be happy, loud, vibrant and proud
OUT
A decision to share their stories, ideas, hopes, loves
To proclaim that the dark ages are over
Progress only moves forward
Love and life shine brightly
And I honor them
Anarchist
Anti-fascist
Ally

28 Jul - Uprising Defendant In Pennsylvania Sentenced

As always, when reading a corporate news article like the one below, please do so with a critical eye.

MORE:

by Drew Miller (*Your Erie*)

An Erie man has been sentenced in federal court for setting fire to a downtown business back in May of 2020, according to United States Department of Justice. Melquan Barnett, 31, has been sentenced to five years in jail and ordered to pay \$3,295 in restitution after being convicted of malicious destruction of property by fire by United States District Judge Susan Paradise Baxter.

Barnett set fire to the Ember + Forge building on State Street in Erie on May 30, 2020 during a protest-turned riot in downtown Erie.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and the Erie Police Department led the investigation which led to Barnett's conviction.

28 Jul - Judge orders release of 3 'Newburgh Four', says FBI 'invented conspiracy'

Judge McMahon lambastes FBI, saying it used informant to 'troll for terrorists' among the poor and weak

MORE:

by Umar A Farooq (*Middle East Eye*)

A US federal judge has ordered the release on compassionate grounds of three men convicted in a case that became known as the "Newburgh Four", in a severe rebuke of the FBI's use of an informant in an "unscrupulous" operation to persuade the men into committing a violent plot to blow up synagogues and shoot down National Guard planes.

In a scathing rebuke against the FBI, US District Judge Colleen McMahon said that the men - Laguerre Payen, Onta Williams, and David Williams - were "in reality, hapless, easily manipulated and penurious petty criminals".

The fourth individual, James Cromitie, did not seek compassionate release and is expected to serve until 2030. However, his lawyer told the Associated Press she plans to speak with him about pursuing similar action on his behalf.

McMahon's 28-page ruling, released on Thursday, went on to say that all four men were caught up in a 2009 plot that was driven by Shahed Hussain, a confidential informant described by the judge as "unsavory", and overzealous FBI agents.

The judge granted compassionate release to the three men and reduced their sentences to the time they have already served plus an additional 90 days, down from the original 25-year sentence imposed on the men in 2011.

"The real lead conspirator was the United States," McMahon wrote.

"Nothing about the crimes of conviction was of defendants' doing. The FBI invented the conspiracy."

The US Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York and the FBI declined to comment on the ruling.

"While the FBI has consistently concocted 'terrorism' plots to entrap unsuspecting community members, this case was one of the most egregious and exploitative, for the reasons summarized by Judge McMahon," said Amith R Gupta, part of a group of lawyers representing Payen and the two Williamses, who are not related.

"The informant took advantage of extreme poverty and there was little to no evidence that our clients - rather than the informant - initiated any discussion about violent activity," Gupta told *Middle East Eye*.

He added that the case is an example of the US government's practice in which it "manufacture[s] terrorism threats at the expense of the most vulnerable members of our society in order to justify its still-ongoing war on terrorism".

'Trolling for terrorists'

Payen, Cromitie, and the Williamses were arrested in 2009 on charges including "conspiracy to use weapons of mass destruction". They were later convicted in 2011 and sentenced to 25 years in prison.

Their arrests came during a heightened period of cases in which the FBI and the US government arrested individuals alleged to be involved in committing "terrorist" plots within the United States.

The US government portrayed Cromitie as the ringleader of a "chilling plot", and a court complaint described him as a man seething with anti-American and antisemitic sentiment, eager to translate those feelings into bloody action.

They were arrested in Riverdale, a residential neighbourhood in the Bronx area of New York City, after allegedly planting bombs that were, in fact, packed with inert explosives supplied by the FBI.

The defendants' lawyers soon raised concerns about entrapment - a legal defence arguing that people were persuaded into committing an illegal act that they would not have committed without the involvement of law enforcement.

The defence lawyers said Hussain, the federal informant, tried to stir up the men with rhetoric and went on to choose the targets and provide the fake bombs and missiles for the defendants.

Judge McMahon lambasted the US government for sending "a villain" of an informant "to troll among the poorest and weakest of men for 'terrorists' who might prove susceptible to an offer of much-needed cash in exchange for committing a faux crime".

Kathy Manley, a lawyer representing Payen, said the ruling was "a great decision and I'm really happy that it finally happened".

Manley said that the judge's ruling may also help in other similar cases in which a confidential informant was used to convince individuals of committing violent plots on US soil.

"Maybe we can also use this decision - even though this case was unique - maybe we can use some aspects of this decision to hopefully help get other people out," said Manley.

29 Jul - Ruchell Cinque Magee Released From Prison After 67 Years

Ruchell Magee is 84 years old and has spent most of his life behind bars.

MORE:

by Claude Marks (*Freedom Archives*)

Throughout his sixty-seven years of unjust captivity, Ruchell has been one of the first and most consistent prisoners linking mass incarceration and the U.S. prison system to slavery. Ruchell Magee took the name Cinque from the enslaved African Sengbe Pieh who led an 1839 rebellion to commandeer the slave ship *La Amistad*, arguing that Africans have the right to resist "unlawful" slavery. Ruchell maintained that Black people in the US have the right to resist this new form of slavery which is part of the colonial control of Black people in this country:

"Slavery 400 years ago, slavery today. It's the same but with a new name."

"My fight is to expose the entire system, judicial and prison system, a system of slavery...This will cause benefit not just to myself but to all those who at this time are being criminally oppressed or enslaved by this system."

"You have to deal on your own tactics. You have a right to take up arms to oppose any usurped government, particularly the type of corruption that we have today." – Ruchell Magee

Ruchell's political stance and writings point out the need for a prison abolitionist movement to seriously address the historical legacy of slavery, and slave rebellions in order to truly be in solidarity with the millions of people incarcerated in the US.

Early Life

Ruchell Magee, was born in Louisiana in 1939. In 1956, he was sentenced to 12 years of forced labor for the alleged attempted rape of a white woman in August 1955. But all the circumstances indicate that this case was replete with racist and false identification – at first the alleged victim failed to identify Magee, but at a second opportunity, all of a sudden, she did. It is clear that this was a case of "southern justice" – the jury was all-white, the trial lasted just one day, and it took the jurors just a fraction of that time to send Magee away for twelve years. Also, Emmett Till was murdered in August 1955 for a similar unfounded accusation.

He spent almost seven years under a brutal labor regime in the infamous Louisiana State Penitentiary known as "Angola" and was released on parole in 1962. Ruchell moved to Los Angeles. He got involved in a quarrel about ten dollars' worth of marijuana ending in a kidnapping charge for which there is very little evidence and which he denies to this very day.

He was sentenced to a prison term of seven years to life for aggravated kidnapping which carried a penalty of up to five years. This trial lasted two days. He had spent only a few months in freedom after his release from Angola.

Ruchell's conviction appeal was denied in 1965. He spent the time after his conviction in San Quentin prison where he started "jailhouse lawyering" and he met prison activist George Jackson who also had a California-type sentence of one year to life. The parole boards regularly denied their releases. Ruchell became a major participant in the movement for prisoner rights and continued the fight for his release.

The Marin County Courthouse Rebellion

By August 7, 1970, Ruchell had spent almost 15 years in prison for charges that he continues to deny. That day, he was called along with another prisoner, William Christmas, as a witness in a prison murder case. Suddenly, George Jackson's younger brother Jonathan entered the courtroom with a number of weapons which he distributed among the defendants in the case, James McClain, as well as Magee and Christmas. They took the judge, an assistant attorney, and three jurors hostage, demanding liberty for George Jackson and the guarantee of safe conduct for themselves.

However, when the group went to a waiting van that Jonathan Jackson had brought with him, and tried to leave the Marin County courthouse premises, the Marin County Police and San Quentin guards opened fire. When the shooting stopped, Judge Harold Haley, Jonathan Jackson, William Christmas, and James McClain lay dead. Ruchell was unconscious and seriously wounded as was the prosecutor.

As the sole survivor of the group, Ruchell was charged with simple kidnapping, aggravated kidnapping, and murder, along with Angela Davis, who was alleged to have provided Jonathan Jackson with the guns. The trials against Angela and Ruchell were then separated; Davis was acquitted of all charges in 1972. According to an affidavit by the jury foreperson, Ruchell's own 1973 trial ended with a hung jury, and then voted unanimously to acquit him of the aggravated kidnapping charge, voted 11 to 1 to acquit him of the murder charge, and found him guilty of simple kidnapping.

During the trial, an autopsy of the judge who had been killed clearly showed that Ruchell had not been responsible for his death. Even so, parole commissions deciding on Ruchell's release and the media have regularly mentioned his responsibility for the murder.

Even though there isn't the slightest piece of evidence that Ruchell Magee knew anything about the planned liberation of prisoners in the court in San Rafael at any time before August 7th, on January 23, 1975, Magee was sentenced to life in prison. After his conviction he was moved from San Quentin prison to the high security Folsom prison. This is where his first of 16 parole hearings took place. Ruchell also spent nearly ten years of his sentence in the infamous Special Housing Unit at Pelican Bay. Given the way the facts of August 7, 1970 were presented and the way Ruchell himself was characterized, the results were hardly surprising, – it was taken for granted that Ruchell had in fact killed Judge Haley, even though the autopsy presented at the 1973 trial showed that he had not, and even though the prosecution itself had dropped the murder charge after that first trial.

These parole hearings also demonstrated the political character of Ruchell's continued incarceration. The parole process decided that the prisoner cannot be released for explicitly political reasons, namely because he rejects the legality of his conviction, and because he refuses to pronounce himself guilty. In fact, Ruchell has always insisted that the reason for his participation in the abortive 1970 rebellion was the very fact that he had been "unjustly put behind bars" and therefore had the right to liberate himself. This position is the basis for arguing that slavery for many has not ended – especially for Black prisoners facing a parole process that insists on the admission of guilt and responsibility as the basis for release consideration.

Ruchell Magee has over the decades been one of the most consistent and successful jailhouse lawyers and an advocate for other prisoners.

Ruchell Secures his Freedom

On July 15, 2021, Ruchell was denied parole for the 16th time. In 2023, Ruchell Magee signed a petition for compassionate release after incessant work to challenge the legitimacy of his imprisonment. It's important to note that the specific way Ruchell is being released is through the new California compassionate release law, Assembly Bill 960 which many prison justice organizations worked to put through. AB 960 (which went into effect on Jan 1, 2023) added Penal Code §1172.2 and changed the basis

for compassionate release from six months left to live to someone who has a serious and advanced illness with an end-of-life trajectory or who is found to be permanently medically incapacitated.

Also it created a presumption that the person is entitled to release unless there is an unreasonable risk that the incarcerated person will commit a new violent felony. The risk has to be based on the person's actual capacity and not just speculation. The new law takes the decision for release recommendations out of the hands of the punitive prison system hierarchy and gives them to the prisons' medical executives, who at least for now are more humane than the guards who've worked their way to the top of the system. Finally, the new law lets prisoners or their family ask the top doctor at each prison to review their case and set things in motion.

These small reforms proved to be the pathway for freedom for Ruchell, along with a lot of organizing work and a great lawyer. "But even with the new law, it was a pitched battle. We had to sue the prison bureaucracy to force them to ask the courts to release Ruchell, and then we had to fight the Attorney General, who lied about Ruchell and clearly wanted him to die in prison," said Mark Kleiman, Ruchell's lawyer. Significantly, there are many other people in California's prisons who should be also able to win release through this new law, according to Kleiman.

31 Jul - Health Call-In Campaign for Political Prisoner Ed Poindexter

Ed needs to be released to live the rest of his life outside of prison, with his family! (His niece Ericka is now 52 years old and was an infant when Ed was targeted, stolen from his home, jailed, framed, and railroaded.)

MORE:

We have learned from Ed's family that a date has been set for Ed to go to an outside doctor to be evaluated for a hearing device. (Thank you, callers!) We have also learned that Ed will not be fitted for a prosthesis within the foreseeable future. The reason for this is that Ed is unable to sit up for more than a few seconds on his own. He is unable to get himself out of bed by himself. Ed cannot go to the restroom without substantial help. There is a fear of him falling.

The prison's response has been to suggest that Ed try harder at physical therapy—so that he might be able to tie his own shoes again and perform basic self-care—but he cannot. Our position is that he is too weak because of the near daily kidney dialysis and multiple other health problems. As you know, he has lost sight in one eye, and is unable to hear. While he may have been weakened by being wheelchair bound for years, the fact that the institution amputated his left leg below the knee (without notice to the family) has made recovery of strength in his legs difficult. Add to this that Ed is extremely ill from kidney disease, and the near daily kidney dialysis artificially making his kidney's function causes him to vomit his food and makes him ill overall. All of these combined illnesses have resulted in Ed not being able to even hold his frame upright for more than a few seconds.

Therefore, in protection of Ed's basic rights as a human being to health care and human dignity, we demand that Ed be seen by an outside high ranking National Medical Association Certified geriatric physician or team of physicians who specialize in heart, kidney, and geriatric health. We demand the evaluation be by a physician connected to a reputable hospital so that Ed's entire condition: eyes, heart (recall that Ed underwent triple bypass heart surgery in 2016) kidneys, neuropathy, amputated leg, serious inability to balance his frame, and hearing can all be evaluated as a whole.

It is the family's belief that Ed is experiencing a diminishing quality of life that it is irreversible, and we demand an outside doctor also evaluate him for this obvious fact. If it is determined by a reputable doctor that Ed is experiencing a diminishing quality of life; we want his status changed at the prison to reflect this reality.

2 Aug - It's time to end solitary confinement behind bars

As a forensic psychiatrist, Terry A Kupers has studied and testified in court for over four decades about the harms of solitary confinement.

MORE:

by Terry A Kupers (*Al Jazeera*)

Research indicates it does not reduce violence behind bars, and in US states where the population in solitary confinement has been reduced, the result has actually been a reduction in the rate of prison violence.

The harm stems from social isolation and forced idleness. Human beings are social creatures who need human engagement and meaningful productive activities to sustain mental stability, healthy relationships and productive pro-social pursuits.

Forced isolation leads to a decimation of life skills, including the capacity to resolve differences peacefully, and that explains why there is less violence in the prisons when the use of solitary confinement declines.

The well-known psychological effects of being alone in a cell nearly 24 hours per day with no meaningful activities include severe anxiety, panic, paranoia, problems with memory and concentration that make reading and studying nearly impossible, despair, depression, self-mutilation, the exacerbation of mental illness and an extraordinarily high rate of suicide. Solitary confinement also worsens medical conditions such as heart disease, hypertension and diabetes.

It's no surprise that individuals who have spent significant time in solitary are at a much-heightened risk of substance abuse and crime, subsequent to their release from prison. They also have an increased mortality rate from all causes in the year following their release. Solitary confinement is disproportionately inflicted on Black, Latino, Native American and other people of colour.

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture declared solitary confinement for more than 15 days to be torture, and the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Mandela Rules) prohibit more than 15 days of solitary confinement.

Yet, in the US, more than 120,000 prisoners are consigned to solitary confinement, many for years and even decades.

Dennis Wayne Hope spent 27 years in solitary confinement in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. *The Box: 27 Years in Solitary Confinement*, a recent 30-minute documentary on *Al Jazeera Fault Lines* tells his story.

Hope speaks frankly on camera about the devastating effects of solitary confinement, including an impulse to self-harm, massive despair and frighteningly altered thoughts and perceptions. It is notable that he was convicted for non-violent robberies, so he is hardly "the worst of the worst," the label prison authorities use to stigmatise individuals they put in solitary confinement.

He escaped prison twice in the 1990s, resulting in his being sent to solitary confinement for 27 years. His journey is remarkable in the ways he figured out how to maintain his emotional stability as well as his quest for freedom under extraordinarily harsh conditions. This must-see documentary provides rich and inspiring lessons in resilience as well as ingenuity in devising ways to remain sane in a psychosis-inducing torture-chamber.

Hope exhibited remarkable emotional stability against all odds while in "The Box" for 27 years. But individuals who suffer from serious mental illness are condemned to experience even worse mental illness in solitary confinement.

Still, in many departments of correction, people with serious mental illness are selectively consigned to solitary confinement and left there for years, usually in the context of very substandard correctional mental health services. An explosive growth in the number of prisoners with serious mental illness occurred subsequent to de-institutionalisation and the incremental defunding of public mental health services.

The neoliberal agenda since the mid-1970s has been to dismantle social welfare safety net programmes, including public mental health, vocational support and affordable housing. As a result, the population in psychiatric hospitals has dramatically shrunk while the number of people with serious mental illness in jail and prison has grown geometrically. There are currently far more people with serious mental illness in jails and prisons than there are in psychiatric hospitals.

It is as if the people whose needs are ignored on account of cruel social priorities are disappeared into jails and prisons so more affluent people will not have to see them unhoused and floundering on the streets. Then, once behind bars, they are disappeared again, into solitary confinement where, out of public view, their mental illness is exacerbated or they die by suicide.

There is a growing momentum across the United States to restrict or eliminate solitary confinement in jails, prisons and immigration detention facilities. New York State, New Jersey, Colorado and Nevada have enacted laws to end long-term solitary confinement in their prisons.

Chicago, New York City, Pennsylvania's Allegheny County and the State of Colorado have announced an end to solitary confinement in their jails. In California, the Mandela Act, a bill that would restrict solitary confinement in prison and jail to 15 days in accordance with the UN's Mandela Rules and the standards of the US National Commission on Correctional Health Care, has been passed in both houses of the legislature only to be vetoed by Governor Gavin Newsom.

The argument the governor and many law enforcement officials give for supporting continuing solitary confinement is that it keeps the prisons safe. That is an incorrect assumption, since solitary confinement makes the problem of violence in prison worse and results in a higher recidivism rate for those who have spent time in solitary confinement.

The Mandela Act is about to be returned to Newsom's desk. With new research further evidencing the very destructive effects of solitary confinement as well as the lack of effect on public safety when solitary confinement is vastly reduced, it is time for the governor to sign this important legislation.

In a 2021 national survey, five out of six respondents — cutting across Democrats and Republicans — supported limits on the use of solitary confinement.

Yet as the movement to end solitary confinement grows, some states and localities are devising devious ways to continue the destructive practice while appearing to be complying with voter sentiments. Correctional authorities cynically get around the law by continuing to practise solitary confinement by another name.

In some facilities, prisoners are confined to their cells for 21.5 hours per day to defeat the legal prohibition against confinement in a cell for 22 or more hours per day.

Other facilities use alternatives to solitary confinement such as a cage-like structure a little larger than a cell with no furniture and no athletic equipment where reading and writing materials are not permitted. The "cages" are placed in the "day room" or common space between solitary cells,

Unsurprisingly, I've found that in facility after facility that offers this kind of "alternative," prisoners reject it, choosing to remain in their cells rather than spend hours in a separate cage with nothing to do and nowhere to sit, and these cage-like structures remain mostly empty.

The alternatives to solitary confinement must include meaningful programmes that educate and rehabilitate individuals who land in prison. We know how to run such rehabilitation programmes. We as a society simply lack the will to treat folks in prison with respect and compassion.

Given all the momentum and public support for restricting and eventually eliminating solitary confinement, we have a real opportunity to actually eliminate the practice and replace it with evidence-based alternatives that foster mental health and rehabilitation and make possible eventual successful reintegration into the community.

For the sake of public safety, as well as our humanity and morality, our local, state and federal governments need to embrace a true end to solitary confinement in all its forms and by all its names.

3 Aug - Environmental group sues Atlanta, hoping to pause Cop City

A federal lawsuit recently filed against the city of Atlanta and the Atlanta Police Foundation seeks to halt construction of the planned public safety training center, alleging violations of the Clean Water Act.

MORE:

by Jozsef Papp (*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*)

The South River Watershed Alliance alleges "stormwater discharges from the Atlanta Training Facility construction site were not in compliance with the general permit." The lawsuit says members of the group worry about sediment from the training center site impacting Intrenchment Creek and wildlife.

The suit claims the construction site was cleared before required sediment storage bins were completed, resulting in stormwater from the site discharging into the creek. It asks that construction halt until "Intrenchment Creek has capacity to assimilate the sediment without interfering with the stream's designated use" and for the court to determine the city and police foundation violated the Clean Water Act.

"We have not been served but we will review any potential lawsuit and vigorously defend our position," a statement from the office of Atlanta Mayor Andre Dickens said. "The City remains committed to complying with the applicable environmental standards as we complete the PSTC."

The Atlanta Police Foundation also released a statement:

"The issues raised in this suit have previously been litigated and decided in our favor. Our counsel sent this plaintiff a letter explaining in detail why all of the plaintiff's issues lack merit. The plaintiff chose to ignore the letter and file suit anyway, and we expect that the complaint will be dismissed by the federal court or result in a comparable decision in our favor."

The South River Watershed Alliance has filed prior legal action over the training facility. Last December, it and the South River Forest Coalition filed an emergency motion seeking to prevent Ryan Millsap and Blackhall Real Estate Phase II from "further destruction" of the property the movie studio founder obtained in a controversial property swap with DeKalb County.

That lawsuit argued the county lacked the authority to complete the swap with Millsap. The case is still open in DeKalb County Superior Court.

In February, a Fulton County judge denied an injunction that would have halted construction at the site. Superior Court Judge Thomas A Cox Jr. ruled against plaintiffs - DeKalb County resident Amy Taylor, DeKalb County Commissioner Ted Terry and the South River Watershed Alliance - who challenged the land development permits and had environmental concerns, calling "speculative" the argument that continued construction would result in high levels of sediment in Intrenchment Creek.

The judge noted that since the project was approved by both DeKalb County and the Georgia Environmental Protection Division, sediment deposited within legal limits is allowed.

In April, the DeKalb County Zoning Boards of Appeals rejected a challenge from Terry and two DeKalb County residents alleging the city and county overlooked restrictions on sediment discharges and unanimously decided the county's process to issue permits complied with all requirements.

Terry is appealing the challenge of the land disturbance permits issued for the training center in the Superior Court of DeKalb County.

The training center property, off Key Road in southwestern DeKalb County, is owned by Atlanta and leased to the Atlanta Police Foundation. Most pre-construction work has been completed ahead of more construction expected to start this month.

A soft opening of the facility is scheduled for the end of 2024.

Opponents are working to gather more than 70,000 signatures for a referendum petition to put the project on the ballot. As of last week, the group said it had gathered more than 30,000 signatures ahead of the Aug. 19 deadline.

7 Aug - Illustrated Guide Version 16.6 Uploaded!

https://nycabc.wordpress.com/2023/08/07/guide_16_6

MORE:

We've finished the latest version of the NYC ABC "Illustrated Guide to Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War" and it's available for viewing (and download) by visiting the link at the top of this post. This update includes updated mini-bios, photos, and address changes for several prisoners. This update also includes the release of Ruchell Magee. Welcome home, comrade! freeruchellmagee.org

6 Aug - Running Down the Walls

It's coming!!! Donate at [paypal.me/nycabc](https://www.paypal.com/donate/?url=https://nycabc.com) or via venmo using the app (@nycabc) or venmo.com/nycabc

MORE:

WHAT: Running Down the Walls – 5k Run/Walk/Jog/Bike/Hang

WHEN: 2:00-7:00pm, Sunday, September 17th, 2022

WHERE: Prospect Park– Lincoln Road/East Lake Drive, east of the Terrace Bridge (see the below map for exact location)

COST: \$10 registration, participants encouraged to get sponsors (includes vegan BBQ afterwards, with COVID precautions for serving!) Donate at [paypal.me/nycabc](https://www.paypal.com/donate/?url=https://nycabc.com) venmo.com/nycabc or with the Cash App: **\$NYCABC**

NYC Anarchist Black Cross (NYC ABC) is excited to announce Running Down the Walls 2023! After making the difficult decision to not host RDTW in person in 2020, we are looking very forward to gathering as a community, as we did again starting in 2021. For the last couple of years, we've had an amazing time and successful fundraisers. Please stay tuned to our website, sign up for our newsletter, and follow us on instagram (@nycabc) or bluesky (nycabc.bsky.social) for updates.

Every year, prisoners and supporters of political prisoners organize solidarity events with Running Down the Walls. In previous years, we've had runs in Albuquerque (NM), Arcata (CA), Ashland (OR), Bellefonte (PA), Boston (MA), Buffalo (NY), Chico (CA), Denver (CO), Elmore (AL), Inez (KY), Los Angeles (CA), Marion (IL), Minneapolis (MN) New York (NY), USP Navosta (TX), Pelican Bay (CA), Phoenix (AZ), Tucson (AZ), Seattle (WA), and Toronto, Ontario. This year we hope to expand the amount of runs in prisons and other cities, as well as increase the amount of funds raised for community projects. NYC ABC's goal with this year's run is \$4,500. You can donate online by going to venmo.com/nycabc: @nycabc

This year's run will take place on Sunday, September 17th, 2023 at 2:00 pm in solidarity and conjunction with runs that will take place in cities and prison yards across the country at the same time. Stay after to enjoy a vegan BBQ, served taking every COVID precaution!

REGISTER AS, OR SPONSOR, A PARTICIPANT

To raise our goal of \$4,500 we need your support:

* Promote – print and distribute flyers to friends and local businesses, your doctor's office, laundromat, food co-op, wealthy benefactor, et cetera: tiny.cc/RDTW2023_flyer

* Run/walk/bike/roll in the 5k – We need participants who can run/walk/bike/roll the 5k and are able to collect financial pledges to offer as donations to the run. Download the brochure, complete with registration and sponsor form right here: tiny.cc/RDTW23_Sponsor

* Volunteer for the run – We need folks who are willing to promote the run and bike the route as street medics.

* Donate online at venmo @nycabc

* Donate to the run/sponsor a participant – If you are not able to attend, but want to support this fundraising effort, please mail donations to:

NYC ABC

Post Office Box 110034

Brooklyn, New York 11211

Your donation of \$10 or more entitles you to the celebratory picnic after the event.

Each year, we split proceeds between the Anarchist Black Cross Federation's Warchest Program and a local organization. This year, local funds are going to NYC ABC/project FANG.

The Warchest Program:

The Anarchist Black Cross Federation (ABCF) has initiated a program designed to send monthly checks to those Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War who have been receiving insufficient, little, or no financial support during their imprisonment. The Warchest program was initiated in November 1994. Its purpose is to collect monthly funds from groups and individual supporters, and send that money to Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War (PP/POW) via monthly checks. From its inception, the ABCF warchest has dispensed over \$235,000 to political prisoners. Currently, there are 15 imprisoned comrades who receive a monthly stipend as part of the program; they are Abdul Azeez, Ed Poindexter, Eric King, Hanif Bey, Jamil Al-Amin, Jessica Reznicek, Joe-Joe Bowen, Kamau Sadiki, Leonard Peltier, Malik Smith, Marius Mason, Oso Blanco, Ronald Reed, Veronza Bowers, and Xinachtli (FKA Alvaro Luna Hernandez). abcf.net/warchest-program

NYC Anarchist Black Cross (NYC ABC)/project FANG:

NYC ABC is a collective that organizes support for US-held political prisoners and prisoners of war and opposition to state repression against revolutionary social justice movements. With project FANG, NYC ABC organizes support to Earth and animal liberation prisoners by providing stipends to offset visitation costs otherwise burdening their friends and loved ones.