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Updates for December 12th

26 Nov - 'Cop City' Defendant Victor Puertas Has Been Held For Months Without Trial, but His Community Hasn't Forgotten Him

November 12 marked Victor Puertas' 46th birthday. But while family and friends throughout the region gathered in his hometown of Salt Lake City, Victor spent the day behind bars.

MORE:

by Sean Summers (*Unicorn Riot*)

For more than seven months, Puertas has been in pretrial detention after he was arrested and charged as a “domestic terrorist” for allegedly protesting against the sprawling police training campus known as “Cop City.”

He's one of dozens of protesters swept up in the past 11 months in what lawyers and activists have called a political effort to repress a movement against the facility. While other protesters were denied bond in the weeks following their arrests, none have been detained as long as Puertas, who's been held for the better part of a year with no trial.

In September, while being held in an ICE detention center, Puertas was named as one of 61 defendants in a sprawling RICO case brought against the movement to stop “Cop City.”

Victor's case serves as a particularly harsh example of the repression brought against people in the movement to stop “Cop City,” according to supporters who have organized around his case.

“In Victor's case, and in so many others, we can clearly see the heightened targeting of people in Georgia and throughout the US for their alleged involvement in political activism,” a press release marking the November 12 event reads.

In response, a growing support network has formed around Puertas to counter what supporters say is a clear-cut example of a political imprisonment. And for months, friends, family and activists have been calling for his release.

Victor was violently arrested in March at the South River Music Festival during a “week of action” against “Cop City” – a sprawling police training compound under construction near Atlanta. After being charged under Georgia's domestic terrorism statute, Victor was repeatedly denied bond and held in DeKalb County jail for 90 days with no indictment.

He was released, as required by Georgia law, after 3 months with no indictment. But less than 48 hours after DeKalb County released him, due to his immigration status, he was taken into ICE custody. Since June, Puertas has been held in Stewart Detention Center outside Lumpkin, Georgia. For over seven months Puertas has been denied pretrial release as his case makes its way through court. There are fears that even if the domestic terrorism charge is dropped, Puertas may still be deported back to his native Peru.

Originally charged under Georgia's domestic terrorism statute, Puertas was detained for 6 months before he was indicted on any charges. In September he was named as one of 61 defendants in a broad racketeering case brought against opponents of Cop City.

The case alleges that those named, including Victor, are part of an organized criminal “enterprise” that has conspired to terrorize the state into halting “Cop City.” The case is being brought by Georgia Attorney

General Chris Carr, who pushed for the indictment after DeKalb and Fulton County Attorneys General refused to prosecute cases against “Cop City” protesters.

While Victor remains in custody, friends and family on the outside have rallied to support him by demanding his release and providing encouragement in the form of letters, calls and visits. Earlier this month, friends and family gathered at the First Unitarian Church in Salt Lake City to wish Victor a happy birthday and amplify their calls for his release.

Between prayers and songs, friends shared memories of time spent with Victor, recounting his warm spirit and dedication to his beliefs. Victor’s mother, Maria Puertas, addressed the crowd, sharing both how difficult her son’s detention has been on her family and her gratitude for those supporting him through the process.

The November 12 event marks another in a series of shows of support for Puertas. In July, a group of clergy members and supporters rallied outside of Stewart Detention Center to call for his release while faith leaders visited him inside.

27 Nov - ‘It’s alarming’: diary of killed Cop City activist to play role in Georgia lawsuit

State makes unusual move in submitting journal of Manuel ‘Tortuguita’ Paez Terán, killed by state troopers in January

MORE:

by Timothy Pratt (*The Guardian*)

The diary of an environmental activist police shot and killed earlier this year is playing a crucial role in Georgia’s conspiracy case against 61 people tied to a police and fire department training center known as “Cop City”, offering an early window into the state’s approach to the prosecution.

The Georgia deputy attorney general, John Fowler, has put forward a legal motion to enter the diary of Manuel Paez Terán, known as Tortuguita, as evidence in the Rico – or racketeering – case, sidestepping standard legal procedure while employing smear tactics and falsehoods, said observers of the case and based on the *Guardian*’s reporting.

“Tortuguita is dead – they’re not prosecuting Tortuguita,” said Dan Berger, a historian on social movements. “They’re trying to use the diary of somebody police killed to criminalize a whole movement. ... The legal system obviously has no respect for privacy when the government seeks to criminalize thoughts and feelings. It’s very alarming.”

The state’s motion says the diary is needed to prove that dozens of defendants tied to opposition against the training center near Atlanta were involved in a criminal conspiracy in part because the document contains “to-do lists and notes from meetings” – suggesting evidence of criminal acts against Cop City. The case is the first time a racketeering law has been used against so many defendants in a political prosecution; these laws were developed to combat the mafia.

However, only about a dozen of the diary’s 150 or so pages were written while the activist was camped in protest against the training center at a public park near the project’s planned site, and none of those pages contains such material.

The one example of “lists and notes” the prosecution cites in its motion was written in another state – Florida – about a year before Paez Terán even knew about Cop City, according to a friend who was at the meeting cited and who wished to remain anonymous. The diary does contain expressions of hatred for the police, and drawings depicting violence against police.

Georgia state troopers shot and killed Tortuguita, who used they/them pronouns, on 18 January. The Georgia bureau of investigations concluded police were justified in killing them because the activist fired a gun first – but has refused to release its investigative file to the public.

The state begins its motion with a falsehood about the activist’s killing by telling the court that police came upon the tent where Paez Terán was sleeping that January morning in the “woods that will be the site of the Atlanta Public Safety Training Center [and that the] ... purpose of the sweep was to clear the woods so that construction on the site could safely commence”.

This is untrue: Tortuguita, and other “forest defenders”, were not camped on the future construction site – they were in a public park about a mile away.

Nonetheless, Fowler filed the motion to include Paez Terán’s diary on 15 November – and made the unusual move of attaching the document.

“I’ve been trying cases 40 years”, said attorney Stanley Cohen, who is representing one of the 61 defendants. “The general policy is if you’re making an application for admission of evidence, you do it ... without it being released first to the public marketplace of ideas.”

But by attaching the diary, the state allowed media and the public to access the document, and a week passed before the Fulton county judge Kimberly M Esmond Adams could rule on a motion from attorneys for one of the 61 defendants to seal the document. The judge ruled in favor of the motion last Wednesday, but local media had already obtained the diary and several unquestioningly repeated the state’s characterization of the document as written by someone who hated police – and as offering a view onto the mindset of the 61 defendants.

The judge will rule at a later date on whether the diary should be admitted as evidence.

Historian Berger noted that state prosecutions have attempted to use the personal writings of political defendants before – including, famously, letters Angela Davis wrote to Black Panther George Jackson – in the attempt to provide evidence of specific criminal acts. In the Davis case, the letters contained no such proof.

Nonetheless, the state uses such material because it is “building a narrative – and the narrative gets entrenched through repetition”, said Berger. “Lies and distortions are part of that.”

Paez Terán’s diary, mostly written during 2021, when they lived in Florida, does list reports from meetings – on subjects such as community gardening, a book club, food distribution, getting public transportation cards to people living on the streets and helping queer people of color pay rent and medical bills, according to their friend. There are notes from meetings of Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), the 118-year-old labor union to which Paez Terán belonged.

The diary also contains numerous essays reflecting on society and the 26-year-old’s place in it, with ideas such as “build[ing] a better society for our descendants”, concerns about climate change and capitalism’s impact on people of color – as well as poems such as one titled “Poem under a tree” that includes the line: “I love bees, they remind me of all that is possible”.

Some of the diary’s pages include drawings depicting burning police cars or shooting at police, or essays on the same subjects. The two types of entries – working toward a better world and hatred for police – show how the activist “was a person who ... had anger and spite toward the police state, because they loved people who were victimized by it – and how they channeled that towards helping oppressed people, in solidarity”, said their friend.

Tortuguita wrote their last entry on 15 December, two days after police raided the forest. “They call us terrorists for trying to defend the forest,” they wrote. “Our resistance cannot be stopped.

“Momma didn’t raise a coward – fear will not stop me.”

Jeff Filipovits, one of the attorneys representing Paez Terán’s family, saw the state’s move regarding the diary as “political ... It’s obviously an attempt to make the diary public ... [and] further demonize the defendants and Manuel.”.

Filipovits has been pushing for 10 months to get evidence on the activist’s death released; he also saw the state’s motion as linked to the continuing justification for not doing so. “They tie Manuel to all the Rico defendants, so they can continue to withhold evidence from the shooting,” he said.

As for the diary’s content, the attorney said: “They were a kid in their early 20s. What the hell are we supposed to draw from all that? Except, maybe, don’t keep a journal.”

30 Nov - Toronto police pursue criminal charges of “hate-motivated” mischief against 11 anti-genocide, pro-Palestinian protesters

Eleven anti-genocide, pro-Palestinian protesters in Toronto, Ontario, face charges of “hate-motivated” mischief in relation to a protest in early November against Indigo Books and Music founder Heather Reisman over her financial support for the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) amid Israel’s genocidal onslaught in Gaza.

MORE:

by Niles Niemuth

Reisman and her husband, billionaire investment fund founder Gerry Schwartz, who are both Jewish, established the HESEG Foundation in 2005 to provide financial support and free tuition for “lone soldiers” in the IDF—those who serve without being Israeli citizens or having family in Israel—who want to remain in the country after their service. The foundation provided approximately \$12 million in financial support between 2021 and 2022.

Due to Reisman’s support for the IDF through HESEG, Indigo has been a target of protest for more than 15 years by supporters of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, which aims to pressure the Israeli government through boycotts and other protests to end its decades-long repression and dispossession of the Palestinian people. The posters which were placed on the Indigo bookstore included Reisman’s headshot and text which accused her of funding genocide.

Reisman’s funding of the IDF has gained renewed attention amid the genocidal onslaught by the Netanyahu government in the Gaza strip, which has seen nearly 15,000 civilians killed, including 6,000 children. More than 1.7 million people have been displaced out of a total population in Gaza of 2.3 million, and most homes have been damaged or destroyed.

While fully backed by the US, Canada and the other imperialist powers, the attack has sparked mass global outrage, with millions protesting around the globe. In Canada, more than 50,000 people participated in a protest outside parliament in Ottawa last Saturday, demanding the New Democratic Party-backed Liberal Trudeau government support a permanent ceasefire, something which Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has steadfastly refused.

According to the Toronto Police Service (TPS) Hate Crime Unit, the protest in the early hours of November 10 involved the placing of posters on the windows and doors of an Indigo bookstore in downtown Toronto and the pouring of washable red paint on the store and sidewalk.

One person was arrested on November 14 in connection with the protest, while the remaining 10 were arrested in early morning police raids on seven homes across the city on November 22. According to The Breach, police broke down front doors, ransacked the protesters' homes and handcuffed everyone present. The police also seized phones and computers.

All 11 face charges of mischief over \$5,500, while 10 face an additional charge of conspiracy to commit an indictable offense. If convicted, the protesters face up to 10 years in prison. While a police press release declared the protest was "treated as a suspected hate-motivated offence," no official hate crimes charges have been brought.

Among those charged and arrested are three York University employees, including associate professor Lesley Wood, post-doctoral researcher Nisha Toomey and staff member Sharmeen Khan. All three have been suspended by the university administration.

Wood, a sociologist whose work has focused on police repression of protests and social movements, told the *Globe and Mail* the charges targeted "those who work for a peaceful, freer and more just future for both the Palestinians and the Israelis." She accused the Toronto police of "dragging our names through the mud," adding that "hate crime charges used to stop those speaking out against hate" are "grotesque" and "Orwellian."

A walkout by several dozen York students, faculty and staff on Tuesday called for the reinstatement of Wood, Toomey and Khan.

"Many faculty members are outraged that the administration has suspended these individuals rather than defending them publicly," York University associate professor Anna Zalik told the *Canadian Press*. "We feel that the administration should be standing up for rights to free expression and should be ensuring that there is proper due process followed in all cases."

The right-wing gutter press, including the *Toronto Sun*, has seized on the charges and police raids to vilify the protesters as "antisemitic vandals." Around the world, governments and police forces are equating opposition to the genocide in Gaza and the Zionist foundations of the state of Israel to antisemitism, banning demonstrations and arresting peaceful protesters, including in the UK and Germany. This slander has been extended to Jewish groups and individuals protesting the attack on Gaza and demanding an end to the occupation.

The Jewish Faculty Network, a group representing Jewish faculty from universities and colleges across Canada, released a letter Monday denouncing the effort to smear the Indigo protesters as "hate motivated" or antisemitic.

They wrote: "The TPS' labeling of the offences as 'hate motivated' and the brutality with which they carried out the arrests are an attempt to suppress and criminalize dissent. These actions serve a political agenda: to maintain public support for a genocidal war. It also dangerously narrows the possibilities for civic engagement and freedom of expression, which restricts the rights of all Canadians.

"We insist that real antisemitism must be confronted. But to label the protests against Indigo 'hateful' or 'antisemitic' is to misunderstand the politics of peaceful civil disobedience and right to dissent. It distracts and confuses efforts to challenge genuine antisemitic actions, which overwhelmingly arise from far-right movements in Canada and internationally."

3 Dec - CHICANO REVOLUTIONARY INTERNATIONALIST SOLIDARITY WITH OPPRESSED PALESTINIANS

Check out the latest writing by Xinachtli below.

MORE:

The Chicano masses in our own occupied, invaded lands, stolen by yankee war criminal colonizers, know the unspeakable pain and horrors of war crimes committed against the illegal occupation of our Texas, U.S. Southwest homeland, as suffering this very moment by the Palestinian masses in their own occupied homeland, by an illegitimate Israeli government that invaded Palestinian lands and imposed its war criminal government and maintained its illegal rule by state violence and terrorism, while it accuses Palestinians of being "terrorists" to justify the massacres it is engaged in, this very minute, of over 10,000 civilian people murdered, half being children!!!

What a horrific situation, a situation Chicanos, and peoples within the belly of the beast of U.S. imperialism should never accept, which requires a sustained militant actions in the streets of Amerikkka as occurred all across the nation, in support of the Palestinian masses, as intensified, as our taxpayer dollars are being used to finance imperialist wars against the Palestinian masses and against all other colonized people around the globe, demanding return of their land, independence, they're in a lie right to self-determination living freed of the criminal system of colonialism, neocolonialism, as outlawing such crimes against humanity by the same United Nations. NOT IN OUR NAME, YOU WON'T!!!

U. S. national security Adviser Jake Sullivan showed his imperialist hand, when in an April, 2023 gave a speech at the Brookings institution tipping his hand on the new "Sullivan doctrine" of the fears of the U.S. imperialist ruling class, of its global imperialist system "waning" and the economic stagnation, deindustrialization, climate crisis, growing inequality, (Monthly Review Sept. 2023) and global wars rage on, as well as its domesticated imperialism over people's lives in crisis as people take to the streets, worldwide to denounce the police murder of George Floyd, and in opposing capitalist policies and the right wing extremism that has taken root across Amerikkka and the capitalist ruling class fearful of losing its control as a white privileged class, as it exercises its brute police terrorism against people of color, enforces its fascist rule with use of "law" as their favorite weapon of tyranny used in history against people of color, as courts legalize social and racial oppression and injustice, used to subjugate workers, the voiceless, the poor and the oppressed, as they march us in chains to their slavery plantation prison concentration camps.

All of these issues are linked and the rulers believe that wars will cure the weakened U.S. imperialist rule as they fear losing and maintaining their influence and position in the Middle East by supporting the Israeli Zionist war machinery against the Palestinian masses.

Chicanos stand in solidarity with Palestinian people against Israeli Zionism, and the war crimes of U.S. imperialism, and call on massive sustained militant, revolutionary resistance in the U.S. denouncing the systemic war crimes committed against the Palestinian masses, until the occupation ends and Palestinian lands are returned to their legitimate owners, and Zionism is exterminated, and the Palestinian masses enjoy peace, land, independence, self-determination, free of Zionist chains of bondage!

3 Dec - Update: Operation Scripta Scelera

In recent weeks, the four Italian comrades under restrictive house arrest since August 8th for Operation Scripta Scelera were notified of the decree setting the immediate trial and consequently the start of the trial at the Massa court, before the monocratic judge, January 9th, 2024.

MORE:

via Dark Nights

A total of ten anarchists are involved in the investigation: in addition to the four under house arrest, there are five comrades under the obligation to stay overnight (one among them currently also under the obligation to sign) and one comrade under investigation at large. For all of them, Federico Manotti, prosecutor of the Genoa Public Prosecutor's Office, had requested arrest in prison for subversive association for the purpose of terrorism, incitement to commit a crime with the aggravating factor of the purpose of terrorism, clandestine printing, as well as only for some also offending the honor and prestige of the president of the republic — offenses allegedly consumed with the editing and distribution of the

internationalist anarchist fortnightly “Bezmotivny.” The request for immediate trial concerns only the charges of aggravated incitement to commit a crime and insulting the honor and prestige of the president of the republic.

Recall that the immediate trial is a special procedure characterized by the absence of the preliminary hearing: in fact, it goes from the preliminary investigation to the trial hearing. This procedure is actionable only in the event that the prosecutor and the investigating judge, who must validate the request, believe they have overwhelming evidence of the suspect’s guilt and that he or she is in a state of detention (in prison or under house arrest).

In the recent past, the Rome prosecutor’s office had the truculence to proceed with this formula in the context of Operation Bialystok, but this did not bring great luck to the inquisitors. Lately, the trial of comrade Marco Marino, known as Zac, has also been taking place under immediate trial.

However, this is the first time, as far as we can remember, that in the context of an anti-anarchist investigation the immediate trial is being triggered for only part of the suspects, breaking the investigation into several strands. This is an obvious attempt to sap solidarity and, above all, to quickly dismiss a part of the proceedings with a precedent that can be used in the future to plug the anarchist press.

Overall, the operation seems rather bungled. The hearing for the immediate trial has been set while the cassation hearing on precautionary measures (which will also concern the associative charge) has not yet taken place, with an unusual destination (the monocratic judge of a peripheral court) that could be declared incompatible during the course of the trial. On the other hand, some of those indicted for editing the anarchist fortnightly will presumably be tried only later, as they will not be able to intervene at the time when issues that undoubtedly concern them (above all, the theoretical profile of the newspaper) will be discussed, ending up on trial with a previous sentence already handed down on the subject. Therefore, on this occasion too, the Genoa Investigative Judge chose to align himself with the prosecutor’s demands.

The story of “Bezmotivny” is a story of solidarity, of internationalism, of class struggle. The story of a newspaper that has never shied away from supporting imprisoned anarchists around the world and publishing claims. It spent itself in the solidarity movement with Alfredo Cospito, who, moreover, ended up in 41 bis regime also following a proceeding for incitement to commit crimes with the aggravating factor of the purpose of terrorism, the Sibilla operation (mainly inherent to “Vetriolo”). Three comrades investigated in Scripta Scelera were also involved in Sibilla, and the Genoese prosecutor’s operation partially unfolded along the lines of the previous proceeding, so Scripta Scelera is aimed at consolidating as a repressive practice the precautionary measures with reference to the charges of aggravated incitement to commit crimes concerning revolutionary publications.

“Bezmotivny” has taken an uncompromising internationalist position against the war in Ukraine: against every state, starting with our own, for revolutionary defeatism, for the defeat of NATO. This repressive operation is an expression of the war policies of the Italian state.

That history is also our history. The technical acrobatics of an author-seeking magistrate will not be enough to make a course like this be judged and dismissed out of hand.

5 Dec - Some Things Change, Some Stay The Same

Please read this recent letter by imprisoned anarchist Toby Shone.

MORE:

As expected, I was taken hostage again by the armed mercenaries of the British Crown. I spent nine months on probation subjected to extensive "anti-terrorist" restrictions and curfew at an open unit in Gloucester. Even now I remain under surveillance and profiling by a high-level MAPPAs [Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements - arrangement for managing the risks posed by sexual and violent offenders post-

release], which aims at my political and psychological annihilation. This process continues with my transfer to the long-term high security prison estate in revenge for an unrepentant practical anarchism.

Out in conditional freedom with simply a bigger cage, the one we are all in, the United Kingdom is a surveillance state, and open prison society enforced by a culture of fear, violence and apathy. It's time to tear down the walls.

Anti-Prison Meeting in Brighton, March 2024

At the end of March 29th-31st ABC Brighton will host an anti-prison public meeting which presents an opportunity for international discussion on prison and solidarity. Contributions are welcome from comrades in jail. These letters can be read out and circulated. Again, the point is to create another dialogue between sections of dynamic anarchy and blur the boundaries between "inside and outside". All groups and individuals active on the issues of repression and imprisonment are invited as well as general attendees who want to know more and participate in the discussions. Everyone is welcome, everything continues, nothing is over.

The British prison system is in an extreme state of crisis, much like the society that it is a reflection of. Britain locks up more people than any other country in Europe. Prison lockdown strategies imposed during the COVID 19 are little changed due to widespread lack of screws and recruitment. There is a lack of basic resources, administration, activities, time out of cells, library and education. This manufactured decay is not an accident. The prison estate is overcrowded, brutal and beyond reform.

I want to send a warm embrace to all those who met to shatter the silence with fireworks and resistance in response to my re-arrest. This action fueled my energy and my heart. It made the enemies furious, hastening my transfer from the cesspit of misery that is Bristol prison. You have my deepest gratitude.

Blazing splendour to all the comrades who are imprisoned, under repression or wanted. A hug to those in the streets. Take care of each other and don't take one step back.

7 Dec - Activists are voicing concerns over Atlanta's proposed ski-mask ban

Report from the Atlanta Community Press Collective on recent proposal by a member of the Atlanta City Council to prohibit the wearing of ski masks "or other items that conceal the identity of the wearer."

MORE:

by Matt Scott (*It's Going Down*)

During Monday's regular council meeting, Atlanta City Council Member Antonio Lewis (District 12) introduced an ordinance to prohibit the wearing of ski masks or any other items that conceal the identity of the wearer.

The proposed city ordinance notes the rise of "casually wearing ski masks, bandanas or other devices" that conceal identities since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, claiming this trend coincides with an increase in the number of people "wanted by the Atlanta Police Department who wore ski masks in the commission of a crime." The text of the ordinance states, "in most cases, perpetrators use of a ski mask to conceal their identity has impeded law enforcement's ability to identify and apprehend the individual." No sources or statistics backing this claim are disclosed.

While the stated purpose of the ordinance is to help the APD more easily solve crimes, opponents of the ban quickly took to the X platform Monday evening to question the true intent of the law.

"I think this has little to do with robberies and everything to do with surveillance at protests," wrote Tiffany Roberts, executive director for the Southern Center for Human Rights. "Remember, we are the US' most surveilled city."

Protest surveillance is of particular concern in Atlanta, which is home to a multi-year protest movement against a planned police training center opponents dubbed “Cop City”. It is common to see activists taking part in protests against the training center wearing face coverings, both for public health reasons and to combat surveillance of protest by police.

Surveillance by police is not the only concern activists now consider when deciding to hide their identities at protests. University of Georgia First Amendment Law Clinic Attorney Samantha Hamilton warns mask bans subject protesters to the risk of doxxing.

“The public record is rife with examples of pro-Palestine activists being doxxed and losing their jobs when their identities are disclosed,” said Hamilton. “We live in an age when identifying someone in a photo at a demonstration and contacting their employer about their political activity can take place in a matter of minutes. The proposed Atlanta ordinance forces people to subject themselves to an open season of doxxing, or else stop their public participation in political demonstrations altogether.”

Comparing Atlanta’s proposed anti-masking law

Anti-masking legislation is not a new phenomenon. 15 states including Georgia currently have some form of anti-masking laws on the books. Philadelphia recently passed its own ski-mask ban that, unlike Atlanta’s proposed ordinance, provides an exception for protests.

The language of the proposed city ordinance largely borrows from Georgia’s existing anti-masking statute and establishes exceptions for medical equipment like surgical masks, as well as facial coverings for religious, professional or holiday celebration purposes. The prohibition of facial coverings includes public property and private property without the written consent of the owner.

Georgia’s anti-masking law, which passed in 1951, was intended to protect the public against white supremacist violence from organizations like the Ku Klux Klan. The Georgia Supreme Court upheld the state statute in 1990 after Klan member Shade Miller was arrested for publicly wearing a Klan hood and challenged the constitutionality of the anti-masking law.

“In the case *State v. Miller*,” explained Hamilton, “the Georgia Supreme Court upheld the anti-mask law because it found that the law did not violate the First Amendment freedom to associate absent any proof of injury to or loss of employment by members of the Ku Klux Klan. It also found that the Klan members’ interest in maintaining their anonymity was outweighed by the state interest in protecting the public from intimidation by the Klan members’ threatening hoods.”

Laws intended to target white supremacist violence—like the Georgia anti-masking statute—have also been used against activists on the left. Georgia’s domestic terrorism statute was expanded in 2017 after Dylann Roof killed nine Black churchgoers and injured one in an act of white supremacist violence. Over the last year Georgia Attorney General Chris Carr has charged 42 individuals alleged to be associated with Cop City protests under the Georgia domestic terrorism statute.

The proposed city ordinance also targets commonly worn items barrier face coverings like bandanas and hoods “typically forming part of a coat or sweatshirt.” The state statute does not have this level of specificity, a key difference according to Hamilton.

“While both the state statute and Atlanta’s proposed ordinance prohibit wearing hoods in public, the historical context of the state law is important,” said Hamilton. “The state anti-mask law, passed in 1951, doesn’t define what it means by ‘hood,’ but it was enacted with the express purpose to curb intimidation by people wearing KKK clothing in public. The headpiece worn by the Klan is, of course, called a hood, and in light of the statute’s history, a reasonable reading of the 1951 law contemplates prohibiting wearing KKK hoods in public. On the other hand, ‘hood’ as defined in Atlanta’s proposed ordinance refers to the

fabric ‘forming part of a coat or sweatshirt.’ The proposed ordinance makes clear, in no uncertain terms, that it intends to criminalize the innocent act of wearing a hoodie in public.”

Another key difference is the lack of an intent requirement in the proposed city ordinance.

Without an intent requirement, Hamilton explained, “people can be found to violate the statute whether they intend to conceal their identity or not. Not only does the lack of an intent requirement give the police wide latitude of who they can arrest for violating the ordinance; it is especially problematic in light of the numerous ways someone can be subject to the law: wearing a gaiter to protect against cold weather or wearing a burqa or other head covering for religious expression, to name just two examples.”

Council Member Lewis did not respond to a request for comment.

The proposed ordinance will be discussed in the upcoming Public Safety and Legal Administration meeting on Monday, Dec. 11. Should the committee approve the ordinance, it will return to the next full City Council meeting on Jan. 9 for a final vote. Eight out of the 14 other City Council Members added their names to the proposed ordinance, indicating a likelihood the ordinance will pass it makes it through the Public Safety committee.

7 Dec - Lawsuit Filed Against Bradford County Deputy for Assaulting Protester Outside of Prison; Same Deputy Also Facing Sexual Assault Charge

A civil rights lawsuit has been filed against a Bradford County Sheriff’s deputy resulting from an incident of excessive force that sent a protester in front of Florida State Prison in Raiford to the hospital on December 6, 2020.

MORE:

The same deputy, Dalton Sumner, is also facing charges of “sexual battery on a victim 18 years or older” stemming from an incident reported earlier this year.

Videos of Deputy Dalton Sumner show him targeting Panagioti Tsoikas, an organizer with Florida Prisoner Solidarity, based on a verbal exchange in which Sumner expressed anger over Tsoikas’ opinion. After handcuffing Tsoikas, Sumner then slammed him into the ground with such force that Tsoikas required stitches in emergency care at the hospital in Starke.

Tsoikas is part of the group that was protesting human rights violations and unconstitutional conditions in the prison. After he was told to leave the area near the prison’s gates, law enforcement began arresting people on FDOT’s right-of-way instead of allowing them to leave, despite having no legal authority to do so.

Two other activists, Danielle Chanzas and Dami Feral, were also arrested while following the order to leave the site. All three were given exorbitant bonds totaling \$110,000 for trumped up felony charges, none of which were ultimately filed against them.

Following the hospital visit, Tsoikas was dumped in a jail cell, suffering without pain medication. The injury caused permanent scarring and trauma for his family.

As the civil rights lawsuit filed by attorney James Slater explains, Florida law protects a person from unlawful assault and battery, and Sumner acted with “callous or reckless indifference to [Tsoikas’] right to be free from excessive force.”

Slater, who represents Tsoikas, writes, “as a result of Plaintiff’s speech, Defendant violently threw Plaintiff to the ground while he was handcuffed behind his back.”

The lawsuit is asking Dalton Sumner for compensatory and punitive damages.

BACKGROUND AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Prior to tackling and arresting Tsolkas, Deputy Sumner is seen in videos pushing an individual to the ground and pointing a weapon at multiple people, including Danielle Chanzas prior to her arrest. Chanzas was found not guilty at a trial by jury in July 2021.

Dami Feral was senselessly tackled and arrested by Bradford County Sheriff's deputy Jacob Desue. Desue has since been forced to resign, resulting from a pattern of inappropriate conduct which has been featured in multiple news stories.

About Desue's conduct, Bradford County Sheriff Gordon Smith said, "I am disturbed and disheartened how Jacob Desue handled the traffic stop... Desue should have deescalated the situation but disappointingly was unable to respond in the appropriate manner."

8 Dec - Ed Poindexter dies in prison after 53 years wrongfully behind bars

Rest easy, Ed.

MORE:

Edward Poindexter, 79, died on December 7, 2023 at the Nebraska State Penitentiary serving a life sentence for the murder of Omaha police officer Larry Minard. Poindexter was incarcerated for fifty-three years for the crime which he denied any role.

Co-defendant David Rice, later Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa, died at the prison in March 2016. Both men were targets of J. Edgar Hoover, infamous director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Mondo explained before his death that the two men were paying a debt they did not owe.

Ed Poindexter was the chairman of Omaha's chapter of the National Committee to Combat Fascism, a Black Panther spin-off organization. Mondo was the minister of information for the group and the two men were targeted under the clandestine COINTELPRO operation of the FBI.

The pair were arrested and convicted after a controversial two-week trial that featured conflicting police testimony, perjured testimony by the state's chief witness, and withheld exculpatory evidence. Patrolman Minard was killed by a bomb placed by fifteen year-old Duane Peak in a vacant house. Police were called to the ambush with an anonymous 911 call. Special Agent in charge Paul Young quickly realized the value of the 911 tape and had it sent to the FBI Crime Laboratory where Hoover ordered no report on the identity of the 911 caller. The jury that convicted Ed and Mondo never got to hear the voice of the killer as the tape was withheld. Peak, who cut a deal and testified the two leaders put him up to the crime, was sentenced as a juvenile delinquent and never served a day in prison.

After the FBI tampering with the case was revealed the Nebraska Supreme Court denied the the two men a new trial and they spent the rest of their life in maximum security confinement. Neither man backed down from their plea of innocence despite offers of a pardon if they confessed.

Poindexter was defended by former Governor Farnk Morrison who later called the case his biggest regret. "Racial feelings in North Omaha were rampant...It was impossible for them to get a fair trial."

"I had no idea the extent to which J. Edgar Hoover would go to secure a conviction. Back in those days the pressure was on the FBI to secure convictions. These federal agents were so convinced Rice and Poindexter were behind this murder and put this kid up to it, they were out to get them regardless of the lengths they went."

“They jumped to the conclusion without any evidence.”

“Ed Poindexter said he wasn’t guilty of murder and had nothing to do with that, but he was guilty of rhetoric....The FBI and Bureau of Alcohol and Firearms naturally didn’t like this language, so I’m convinced they just set out to get some evidence on Rice and Poindexter because of the way they felt.”

“Part of it is my fault. If I had known what I know now, what I discovered after trial—I should have investigated the circumstances of what intelligence agencies interrogated Duane Peak.”

Following his retirement as Public Defender in Omaha, Morrison apologized to Ed for his failure to secure justice in the case. “As a citizen, a former prosecutor and Governor of this state, I abhor, detest and condemn the cowardly, cruel and unjustified murder of officer Minard. My heart aches for his family. The guilty parties should pay the penalty. The self-confessed murderer was turned loose after a slap on the wrist.”

“In my opinion, it is just as important for the state to protect the innocent as to prosecute the guilty. As Public Defender of Douglas County, it was my official duty to represent Ed Poindexter. He told me then that he was innocent of this crime, and I still believe him. We did not have the resources in the Public Defender’s office to get all of the facts in this case.”

“I now believe and always have believed that the true role of law enforcement is a search for truth. Real justice can only be built on truth....I feel both I and the system failed Ed Poindexter.”

8 Dec - Anarchist Comrades Mónica Caballero & Francisco Solar Convicted to 12 & 86 Years in Chile

During the hearing that took place in room 703 of the “justice” center in Santiago, the multifunctional and unlimited deployment that the state carried out together with the business community, to convict both comrades, came to an end.

MORE:

via *Abolition Media*

Francisco was convicted of: two shipments of explosive devices to the 54th Police Station and Rodrigo Hinzpeter [right wing politician and former Interior Minister and Defense Minister of Chile] (12 years + 12 years), one attempted homicide of the Carabineros (15 years), one crime of serious injury to the Carabineros (6 years), one crime of less serious injuries (600 days), five crimes of minor injuries (100 days each = 500 days), one crime of aggravated damage to the police station (818 days), one crime of frustrated homicide of Hinzpeter (12 years), two crimes of planting an explosive device, Tánica building (12 years + 12 years), adding up to a total of 86 years. He was also fined 8 utm per month.

As for Mónica Caballero, the comrade was finally sentenced to 12 years in prison as an accomplice of two crimes of placing artisanal explosive artifact in Tánica.

It should be remembered that both comrades have been in prison since June 24, 2020, serving a total of 3 years that must be deducted from the total sentence. In the same way, new appeals by the defense of the comrades are not ruled out.

As expected, the sentences were strong in this trial that was characterized by the show of Hinzpeter, his associates and subjects, who spared no resources to obtain all kinds of legal tricks, including the “study” of anarchist ideas that on more than one occasion were mentioned by the persecutors.

Likewise, after the radical declarations of Francisco Solar, who assumes and openly argues his responsibility in the actions against the repressor Hinzpeter, the business community and the 54th police station, this trial has marked a before and after in the recent history of anarchism in Abya Yala, leaving the

role of innocence behind, to give rise to a conscious and necessary vindication of the use of violence against the powerful and their tools of oppression and social control.

9 Dec - Illustrated Guide Version 16.10.1 Available!

nycabc.wordpress.com/2023/12/09/guide_16_10_2

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. Unfortunately, we are removing Ed Poindexter (deceased, REST IN POWER!).

13 Dec - Gakuryū Ishii's Isn't Anyone Alive?

WHAT: Film Screening

WHEN: 7:00pm, Wednesday December 13th

WHERE: Woodbine - 585 Woodward Avenue, Queens

COST: FREE

MORE:

Isn't Anyone Alive? is a 2012 Japanese film directed by Gakuryū Ishii (credited in his previous films as Sōgo Ishii). It features an ensemble cast including Shota Sometani and is based on the play of the same name by Shiro Maeda. Playwright Shoji Kokami has referred to the story as an outstanding example of the study of dying in the Theatre of the Absurd.

16 Dec - "Who Is Mumia Abu-Jamal?"

WHAT: Film Screening

WHEN: 7:00pm, Saturday, December 16th

WHERE: Maysles Documentary Center - 343 Malcolm X Boulevard, Manhattan

COST: FREE

MORE:

Join the People's Senate, About the People, and the Spirit of Mandela coalition for a private screening of the documentary "Who Is Mumia Abu-Jamal?"

16 Dec - subMedia Presents: Riot Porn Jamboree

WHAT: Film Screening

WHEN: 7:00pm, Saturday, December 16th

WHERE: P.I.T. - 411 South 5th Street, Brooklyn

COST: FREE

MORE:

Join the subMedia crew this December as we celebrate two decades cranking out anarchist propaganda. That's right, subMedia has finally made it through its angsty teenager years. Before you know it, we'll be setting riot porn to soft jazz! So before that happens and to mark this auspicious milestone, we're throwing a series of screening events in select cities. A riot porn jamboree, if you will – culminating in a livestream screening party, where current and former crew members will be on hand to introduce some of our favourite videos, shoot the shit, and answer all your most burning questions.

So grab some popcorn, a crowbar and a gasmask to celebrate the way only subMedia can... with a two hour cavalcade of riot porn, direct from our projector to your eyeballs.

We're so stoked to take our videos on the road to celebrate 20 years of subMedia!

17 Dec - Rattling the Cages: Oral Histories of North American Political Prisoners

WHAT: Book Launch

WHEN: 7:00pm, Sunday, December 17th

WHERE: Word Is Change - 368 Tompkins Avenue, Brooklyn

COST: FREE

MORE:

Please join us as we celebrate the publication of *Rattling the Cages* with editor Josh Davidson in conversation with Matt Meyer and dequi kioni-sadiki.

We will also be writing greeting cards to those unable to join us.

The official story is that the United States has no political prisoners. The reality is that there are hundreds of people rounded up, placed behind bars, and kept there for inordinately long sentences because of their political beliefs and activities.

A project of abolitionist Josh Davidson and political prisoner Eric King, this book is filled with the experience and wisdom of over thirty current and former North American political prisoners. It provides first-hand details of prison life and the political commitments that continue to lead prisoners into direct confrontation with state authorities and institutions. The people Josh Davidson has interviewed include former radicals and Black liberation militants from the sixties and seventies, current antifascists, nonviolent Catholic peace activists, Animal and Earth Liberation Front saboteurs, and more. Their stories are moving, often tragic, yet deeply inspiring.

Collectively, these people have spent hundreds of years behind bars, and their experiences speak directly to the cruelty and immorality of our prison and so-called criminal justice systems. Although their sentences and the conditions they have endured vary dramatically, this wide range of voices come together to embody what bell hooks called “a legacy of defiance.” It is this legacy—of tirelessly struggling to right today’s wrongs and create a better tomorrow—that the prison system tries, yet fails, to extinguish.

Royalties from book sales are split between the Anarchist Black Cross Federation’s Warchest, which provides financial support to currently imprisoned political prisoners, and the family of political prisoner Eric King.