



POST OFFICE BOX 110034 BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11211

Updates for May 14th

17 Apr - Shooting Himself In The Foot

There is a lot of backstory, so not bury the lede--a fascist was shot, the person who shot him went to prison and is getting out and the International Anti-Fascist Defence Fund is helping raise funds for their transition back into the free world: intlantifadefence.wordpress.com/donate

MORE:

Standing at 6'6" and weighing in just shy of 265lbs, it's hard not to notice Tusitala "Tiny" Toese - a goon from Vancouver, Washington that has devoted his life to assaulting anyone who opposed his far-right extremist beliefs. As possibly the most notorious of the Proud Boys Piss Boys (and also a sergeant-at-arms for the Clark County GOP), for years Toese could be expected at just about any confrontation between the far right and people opposed to the far right that went down in the Pacific Northwest. Usually armed, Toese wouldn't hesitate to launch unprovoked assaults against his opponents and has a lengthy criminal record filled with convictions for violent offenses to show for it.

Not that these convictions ever stopped him from continuing his campaign of political violence. With the help of his friends in the police, Toese was frequently seen at street confrontations, assaulting people, even with outstanding arrest warrants against him (which the police happily tipped him off about!). In fact, the police have done everything in their power to not charge Toese, provide evidence against him, or arrest him on outstanding warrants.

So with a well-armed, mountainous thug fully open about his intentions to hurt people opposed to fascism, with a long history of initiating violent assaults against people and with the police essentially aiding and abetting his attacks, what options did that leave people opposed to fascism but to defend themselves by any means necessary?

This all came to a predictable head in September 2021 when Toese and his Piss Boy buddies used an anti-COVID health measures protest in Olympia, WA. as a pretext to assault anyone they chose to in a series of cowardly mob attacks that day. That day, a mob of 50 Piss Boys chased down and beat a woman they recognized as a journalist, as well as three teenagers that happened to be downtown. Then Toese tried to lead an attack against a group of anti-fascists. That proved less successful to Toese, who soon found himself lying on the ground, bleeding from a gunshot wound to his foot. Toese, who had outstanding warrants at the time, was sent to hospital and not arrested.

Not the case for his alleged shooter, who was convicted of assault with a deadly weapon for what was clearly self-defense. Happily, our hero is getting out of prison shortly and the Defence Fund is doing what we can to make his transition back to the world as comfortable as possible.

As for Toese - the police and the courts couldn't ignore his violent crimes forever, it seems, and he is presently serving an eight-year sentence for several felonies he committed during an attack on anti-fascists earlier in 2021 that resulted in him being hosed with white paint and this amazing video: tiny.cc/TinyPaint

30 Apr - Alfredo Cospito and Anna Beniamino Sentenced

Italy: Alfredo and Anna have been sentenced to 23 and 17 years, respectively.

MORE:

via *La Zarzamora*, translated by *Dark Nights*

"The Court of Cassation confirms the sentence bis of the Court of Appeal of Turin. The requests of the defense and of the prosecution of Turin were rejected, and they insisted to the end on obtaining life imprisonment. Rage and love for our comrades! With the practices of which they are accused! Alfredo out since 41 bis!"

Thus communicated the comrades from Italy

The final sentences imposed on Alfredo Cospito and Anna Beniamino in what was the trial of the Scripta Manent case, which sought to blame both comrades for "political massacre", based on the action against the Carabinieri school of Fossano.

During the trial at the Court of Cassation in Rome, an appeal regarding the mitigating factors in the conviction for "political massacre" was reviewed, finally reconfirming the sentences already established in June 2023, after the long hunger strike of Alfredo Cospito against 41 bis, which lasted 182 days. In this way, both comrades remain in prison and under the same isolation measures.

It should be noted that during the early morning of April 22 the DIGOS of Turin "carried out 19 precautionary measures (3 house arrests, 1 prohibition of residence and 15 obligations of residence and daily signature) in the framework of the so-called Operation City related to the events of the march of March 4, 2023 in solidarity with Alfredo Cospito", this as part of a series of repressive intimidation against those who mobilized in support of the comrade.

Despite the persecution and the continued imprisonment of Anna and Alfredo, the signs of solidarity continue, strengthening them from the other side of the wall.

1 May - Police Overreaction to College Campus Gaza Protests Was Unhinged

When police attacked student protesters, a lone trash can was the only damaged property the author saw around City College of New York.

MORE:

by Natasha Lennard (*The Intercept*)

A lone Trash can lay on its side at the intersection of W. 139th St and Amsterdam Ave in Harlem, in front of the gates of the City College of New York.

At around 11 p.m. on Tuesday night, this was the extent of damaged property that I witnessed outside the college campus. At the same time, NYPD officers in riot regalia had amassed in their hundreds, including members of the Strategic Response Group — a unit dedicated to public unrest and "counterterrorism."

More police had stormed through the school's neo-Gothic gates less than an hour before, at the behest of the college's president, to arrest protesting students en masse.

Twenty blocks south, police had locked down and barricaded all streets in a two-block radius of Columbia University, brutally arresting students inside the inaccessible campus.

Between Columbia and City College, over 200 protesters — almost all students — were arrested.

It was a police response reminiscent of the repression that met protesters in the 2020 George Floyd uprisings. Nearly four years ago, police also responded with extraordinary violence to a mass protest. Then, the alleged provocation involved crucial acts of militant resistance, including low-level but widespread property damage, scattered looting, and the burning of several empty police vehicles.

Tuesday was different. In recent days on the campuses in Manhattan and across the country, massive police operations came in response to peaceful student encampments. Students gathered to share food, maintaining space to hold teach-ins and rallies, and demand their universities divest from Israel.

At Columbia, student protesters took over one university building: Hamilton Hall, the same building seized by students in 1968 in protest of the Vietnam War. At most, the latest building occupation saw a few broken windowpanes and some furniture moved around.

The negligible acts of property damage were not, of course, what was being policed. Nor was the holding of campus space; students have done this before in recent decades without their university administrators inviting the force of militarized police.

Instead, it was the protesters' message that was being handcuffed — the condemnation of Israel and the calls for a free Palestine — and young peoples' commitment to it.

I have been reporting on political dissent and violent policing for 15 years, particularly in New York City. Compared to Tuesday night, I have never witnessed, at the scene of a protest, the use of police power so disproportionate to the type of demonstration taking place. Make no mistake: This is an authoritarian escalation.

The “Outside Agitator” Myth

The crackdown on campuses offered a grim continuity: Police and other officials churned out all the same old excuses for quashing resistance. Most notably, their rhetoric relied on the predictable canard of the “outside agitator.”

New York Mayor Eric Adams trotted it out as grounds for sending in an army of baton-wielding cops against the city's students. And Deputy Police Commissioner Tarik Sheppard went even further on MSNBC Wednesday morning, brandishing an unremarkable chain lock — the sort of which I've seen on bikes everywhere — as proof that “professionals,” not students themselves, had carried out the takeover of the Columbia building.

The bike-lock business quickly came in for rightly deserved mockery, but the “outside agitator” myth is no joking matter.

In this current moment, the “outside agitators” conjured are both the perennial anarchist bogeymen or Islamist terror groups sending funds to keep student encampments flush with the cheapest tents available.

The “outside agitator” trope has a long, racist legacy, including use by the Ku Klux Klan. In the 1930s, the Klan issued flyers in Alabama claiming that “paid organizers for the communists are only trying” to get Black people “in trouble.” The allegation does double rhetorical harm by denying the agency and commitment of organizers themselves and suggesting that “outside” support from beyond a given locale or institution is somehow a bad thing.

More recently, the canard has been hauled out in defense of movement repression in Atlanta, against Stop Cop City protesters who had made a national call for backup. And it was a common refrain for politicians nationwide during the 2020 uprising, as well as discourse around the earlier Black Lives Matter protests in Ferguson after police killed Mike Brown.

Blaming outside agitators or interests always was a propaganda ploy and remains so now. The idea that Palestinian liberation struggle is a proxy for Iranian interests repeats the delegitimizing logic of the past.

In fact, the Gaza solidarity encampments on campuses are student-organized and led, with Palestinian students at front and center, and a disproportionately large presence of Jewish students too. It is students, over 1,000 of them, who have faced arrest.

It also happens that millions of people have called for an end to Israel's genocidal war, and support for Palestinian liberation is not and must not be limited to the mythic and maligned terrain of campus activism.

Authoritarian Americanism

Brutal policing and groundless excuses are nothing new, nor is bipartisan support for the crackdowns.

What is new, though, is a most pernicious constellation coming together: far-right attacks on education; white supremacist police repression, further escalated and enabled since 2020; a time of grasping U.S. hegemony abroad; Islamophobic and anti-Arab racism sanctioned in public since the war on terror; and, crucially, an enfeebled left, at least on the electoral level.

These conditions set the backdrop for the one unassailable excuse, a claim beyond challenge and ripe for manipulation and weaponization: the charge of antisemitism.

Conscientious observers have become all too aware of how this allegation is cynically deployed against anti-Zionist speech and twisted to permit every manner of authoritarian abuse — including a genocidal war.

It is no accident that this indefensible crackdown comes in service of an indefensible war. The very extremity of protest repression speaks to desperation on the part of institutions of the establishment.

Israel's decimation of Gaza has — at least for millions more people — given lie to the redemptive myths of the post-World War II political liberal order. Young people, even the children of the elite, even children of Zionists, are standing with Palestine. Their peaceful acts of protest count as disruptive because they count as un-American — which should be a badge of honor amid a U.S.-backed genocide.

City College President Vince Boudreau, in his letter inviting the NYPD to storm the campus, made specific note of the fact that protesters had refused to take down a Palestinian flag from a flagpole.

After the police had cleared the campus of the students who belong there and filled the space with cops instead, NYPD Deputy Commissioner Kaz Daughtry pulled down the Palestinian flag and raised the American one to full mast in its place.

Riot cops cheered below.

2 May - In Contempt #40

We are including excerpts from In Contempt, the monthly column about state repression that appears on It's Going Down.

MORE:

Interview with Tom Nomad on the Exploding Student Anti-War Movement, Counter-Insurgency, and Police Repression

In Contempt: We've seen a massive mobilization by the State against the protests. What do you make of this and what does it say about the moment we're in?

Tom Nomad: I have been thinking a lot about this over the last couple of weeks, as we have watched occupations start and grow. On the surface this approach seems to make little sense. For years at this point we have watched police departments around the country learn how to decelerate conflict through containment tactics; not necessarily "kettling," but surrounding actions and controlling the area, allowing them to fizzle out and preventing them from being able to expand. It was an incredibly effective tactic set, so why have they moved away from it?

I think the roots of that shift are in the way that police were run off the streets in 2020. During the rebellion, cops were on the back foot and started lashing out. We have always seen mass police violence, even with the use of these control tactics, but in 2020 there was a clear shift. The veneer of police “neutrality” fell away, and it became clear to a whole new group of people what side the cops are on. Unlike in the past, where police complicity was implicit, now the police have started taking on an overtly combative tone in their internal discourse. The “thin blue line” mythology has morphed into a political statement, with the cops being there to protect “good Americans” from “the Left.”

When this is combined with the broader dynamics of social conflict, I think what we are seeing is, not so much cops siding with Israel, but a sort of implied combativeness that is not associated with any confrontation with police. After people ran them off the streets in 2020, and have done so a number of times since, specifically in Atlanta, every confrontation with the State now has the baggage of carrying implications for the legitimacy of the State as a whole. The concept that police are necessary is collapsing, and along with it their role in relation to the cities they occupy has shifted; their position is under acute threat, and they are responding to anything that undermines that position. We are seeing a similar mentality play out with the militancy of police and liberals around sweeping encampments of people forced to sleep outside and rolling back reforms to policing in order to “take the gloves off” so they can address a largely fictional, but perceived, rise in “crime.”

When viewed from this perspective, the tactics that have been used by the police, which have been incredibly heavy handed, make sense. For them, this is not about Gaza or the genocide of Palestinians. Rather, this is about asserting police authority. We have watched this assertion occur in two different ways. The first has been this brute-force approach of crushing dissent, and we are seeing that at places like Columbia University. The other approach, which we are starting to see emerge increasingly is a far more subtle, counter-insurgency inspired, approach. In this approach the administration of the school negotiates with faculty and students, not around divestment, but around the right to camp outside. This has, in all cases in which I am aware, been coupled with police being positioned around the camp to check IDs, prevent non-students from being in camps, and generally policing the movement of people. Functionally, the deal is that students avoid arrest, as long as they are OK with having a protest, with no immediate effect, in a cage surrounded by police.

This approach serves a number of important roles for the State. Firstly, it allows for the classic counter-insurgency calculation, where redeemable elements are separated from “irredeemable” elements, to occur, providing a basis for future activity by the State. In this move they identify the often small minority of students that are willing to negotiate and give them concessions, like being able to keep an encampment under strict terms.

The impact of this is to create a dividing line between participants, where, now, if an eviction happens it can be blamed on the “bad” students, and not the “good” ones that were already allowed to have their protest. Secondly, this approach rearranges the power dynamics of the action entirely, stripping us of any possibility in action, and confining action to speech. By focusing on keeping encampments alive, rather than focusing on the actions the camps are meant to facilitate, the whole purpose of the action is now largely reduced to being an outdoor open-mic which is, again, surrounded by police who ID everyone entering the protest cage. It reduces all political action to discursive expression, speeches, policies, but the whole protest is now premised on the continued existence of the university administration, its police, and the terms they have imposed. This was a major shortcoming in Occupy, where, after the first few weeks, most of the focus was on keeping camps open, preventing camp evictions, and the logistics of running camps; most of the actual impactful actions got crushed under the weight of this shift in the terms of the fight. Finally, on a political level, this approach allows university administrations to wash their hands of the actual questions, investments in Israeli companies, and shift the discussion into one that they have no accountability within. When universities take this position they are able to say that they “worked with students” and “preserved free speech” while also saying to conservative donors to those schools that they are not acting against Israeli interests. Similar approaches were used when people tried to force divestment

from South Africa in the 1990s as well; though ultimately successful, that campaign had to deal with a lot of diversion attempts by university administrations.

All of this indicates that the terms of what is happening are higher than they may seem on the surface. For students this is about divestment from Israel, and for more radical students it is about far more than that. But, for the police, the considerations are very immediate; they were shown to be unable to control the streets in 2020, and are now acting against people they view as enemies. We have moved from a softer counter-insurgency approach that we have seen for years, and that is documented well in *Our Enemies In Blue*, where moderate factions were used to de-legitimize more radical factions, and have moved into a more combative mode, where they still work with moderates, but with the consequence for the radicals being far more severe. Shifts like this in approaches of state forces tends to indicate an anxiety around the ability to maintain police power in an area, and that seems to be where their primary concerns are now.

I have talked about this in the past, but the world that I came into when I got involved, like 25 years ago, was one in which we were a fringe minority of dirty traveler kids and students, often fighting against forces far more numerous, and far more powerful than ourselves. We were creating mosquito bites, which eventually grew to major actions. But, even on the streets of Pittsburgh in 2009, during the G20, even right after the financial collapse, it still had this aura. In the times since then the stability of the state has begun to crumble, legitimacy had largely dried up, the American social fabric is shredded, and US global hegemony is collapsing. It is a different world, a far more precarious one, and I think a lot of the increase in police violence as of late is part of an internal police culture that is responding to this loss of unchallenged hegemony over the streets, combined with the overt encouragement of liberal politicians and university administrators giving them cover.

IC: Beyond just naked state violence we're also seeing a counter-insurgency strategy play out – from disinformation to attempts to pacify some encampments. What are your thoughts?

TN: As I mentioned before, we have started to see more moves in this direction over the last couple of days. These moves are starting to be seen at universities that are negotiating terms of continued protest with students. In watching this develop, I have been trying to identify a pattern in places where this counter-insurgency inspired co-optation approach is being taken, and it feels very uneven right now. During the Occupy evictions there were calls organized by police think-tanks to coordinate responses and eviction tempos for camps, to allow different departments to support one another in case of a riot. That led to a response that felt highly coordinated and, in places outside of Oakland, largely relatively similar, with some variations between geographic areas. This time there seems to be an almost total absence of this sort of coordinated approach. It is not just in major cities that we are seeing extreme police violence, we are also seeing it in places like Cal Poly, which is up in Humboldt County. So, from what I can tell, the response has been largely ad-hoc. That is unlikely to continue though.

As these encampments develop, one of two things will happen, and that will shape a lot of the follow-up response by the state. It could be that students change tactics, leave static soft locations where they are easy targets and exposed, and start to use tactics that do not allow them to be concentrated in small areas and easily controlled. We are already seeing that in some locations, like at Columbia, where there has been more dynamic street fighting and the occupation of hard targets, like buildings, which are harder, and far more risky, to raid.

If that happens, this approach that is developing, where moderates negotiate terms of protest, will be functionally rendered moot due to the camps themselves falling out of the center of the action. Occupy never made this turn, and it got crushed as a result. The other possibility is that people are going to try to stay at and defend outdoor, soft encampments as long as they can. If that approach is taken, I think we are going to see a lot more negotiated settlement. As time goes on the stress, tension, level of activity, the fact you are sleeping outside, eating insufficient meals, probably not drinking enough water, all starts to add up. The cops get to go home and sleep in a warm bed at night, and only work in shifts. Occupations require full time activity, at a heightened level of awareness, often in uncomfortable circumstances. As happened with

Occupy, for those that are trying only to have a protest, and are not trying to fight the State, negotiated settlement starts to look really good. This becomes especially the case when most of the people on the front-lines end up arrested and with charges in the first couple of weeks, limiting their future activity in the action.

This anxiety effect is being added to through disinformation, the manipulation of the narrative of anti-Semitism to excuse genocidal state actions, the constant arguments, and now the literal police sanctioned, physical attacks by Zionists and the right-wing on camps. All of that is aimed at creating conditions that make sustaining an encampment impossible. Students are going to need to decide whether they want to fight to maintain a camp, where all of our advantages of speed, mobility, and flexibility are severely limited, and in which we are at an extreme disadvantage on the level of force, or whether the mode of action is going to shift, yet again, into something far more dynamic. One of the things about this wave of activity that is giving me some hope is that the tactical discussion is moving quickly. We have already passed from groups like the Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL) forcing almost everything into controlled opposition and pointless marches, into a mode of small scale direct action, and are now into a mode of occupations and discussing shield tactics and things.

Personally, I am a serious critic of shield tactics, (they eliminate ALL of our advantages and amplify ALL of our disadvantages, and should be used only when there is absolutely no other choice), and I think we are starting to see people hit the limits of those tactics pretty quickly. I think the real question, and the thing that will determine how different forces act, is going to center around how the coming days develop, and whether this expands outside of being a campus protest about Palestine, and into something bigger than universities, and far more expansive politically.

IC: For those of us off campus, what can we do?

TN: A lot of the answers to this question is going to be extremely specific to a person's specific situation, but I think there are some general things we can look to do:

- Anarchists have developed incredible logistical capacity, and can provide a backbone to something like an encampment. That requires us to be present, spreading ideas, and helping to facilitate the actions we want to facilitate. Start getting Food not Bombs (FNB) groups down to camps, have the local distro set up a table, put up a big tent and hang massive black flags from it and give out free food. It makes a lot of sense for people to go to the encampment in their area first to find out what the needs are, but often we can provide those as a community with relatively little effort (at least a lot less than it takes to build that stuff from scratch).
- We are also really, really good at doing direct action, or have gotten very good at it over the years. For those of us that have spent time in the thick of it, many of us can see or feel a distinction between protests and actual fighting. It is that moment when the immediate struggle shifts to being one about driving the police from the streets. Right now these encampments are caught in between being a protest and being something more serious, and many of the participants are not necessarily ready for that shift to happen. There has been an increasing number of direct action trainings and things that I have seen happening at camps. We need to continue that, and expand it if we can, both to help provide tools to be more effective, and also helping people make conscious decisions about risk.
- We have to get rid of the damn tankies and liberals. All over the country, just as in the beginning, moderate groups, like PSL and others, are trying to turn a combative and chaotic moment into a discursive and controlled protest. We all know that this is about recruitment for them, and they are perfectly OK abandoning this struggle when it no longer serves their Party. When people do things like negotiate with administrations or police, try to force agreements onto others within camps, or try to control the actions of people (we literally had the local PSL post pictures of someone that threw a water bottle at cops, denouncing the action and trying to identify them...), we have to call this out. During the anti-war movement we had to deal with a lot of shit like this, and eventually we said enough was enough. By leaving political circles populated by people that are not fighting the same fight as us (liberals and state socialists) we were able to gain the space to experiment with direct action, develop this incredible logistical capacity, and build the foundations of the contemporary anarchist milieu in the US. That happened not through "left unity," working with our enemies, but through political differentiation and refusing to compromise with these enemies.

- As much as we can, or as much as there is capacity for, we need to help expand this outside of universities. The protests began as a broad based series of actions out in city streets. During the past couple of weeks the combativeness has increased notably, but the action is largely confined to the limitations of university environments and their surrounding areas, with police serving to reinforce this separation and isolate campus areas. This allows state forces to cut off and concentrate force against the student encampments, leaving them incredibly vulnerable. The only way to take some heat off the students is to create other points of response by having actions in other parts of the city, or even other campus areas if the primary forces are university police. Having solidarity actions, launching marches coordinated with activities at an encampment, poster campaigns, etc. All of these help to create a sense of an environment in resistance, and provide at least some minor logistical cover for the camps.

Most importantly, we have to bring this outside of the campuses, or at least connect it to the world outside of campuses. Isolating campuses and camps is one of the most effective means the State has for crushing this thing. To the degree that we do not have actual relationships on these campuses, we need to develop them and have them play the role of coordinating across what is often a physical line of police. Only when we can start to act in concert with activities on campuses, can this start to spread further.

Massive Police Crackdown on Anti-War Protests in the US

As we go to print, the State in the US has launched a massive crackdown on anti-war protests, occupations, and encampments spreading across the country. According to *The Appeal*:

American college students and staff are being arrested and brutalized by law enforcement across the U.S. for protesting Israel's ongoing assault on the Gaza Strip. In moves that echo the repression of Vietnam War protesters more than 50 years ago, politicians and school administrators have sent police and state troopers on college campuses from New York to Texas to violently remove people camping on university grounds.

Based on The Appeal's survey of local news reports and student newspapers, police have so far arrested more than 2,200 people.

According to a nationwide review by The Appeal, students and their allies have built protest encampments or staged sit-ins on at least 95 college campuses across 40 states during the past month. Protesters are demanding an end to U.S. military aid to Israel, that their schools divest from Israeli companies, and that Israel cease its attacks on Gaza, which have killed tens of thousands of Palestinians in what many human rights experts and international organizations have called a genocide.

In many cases, the state has responded to those concerns with threats or outright violence—putting snipers on the roof of Indiana University, tear gassing students in Virginia, and physically assaulting people in Austin. The NYPD reportedly fired a gun inside a Columbia University campus building.

In Los Angeles, a crowd of Israel supporters violently attacked students at the University of California, Los Angeles encampment shows while police and campus security stood by, according to video footage captured by journalists present on Apr. 30. The Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) confirmed there were no arrests that evening.

The next night, LAPD, California Highway Patrol, and other law-enforcement agencies fired rubber bullets at protesters, destroyed tents and other belongings, and arrested at least 209 pro-Palestinian demonstrators.

...students across the country still face severe consequences, including potential suspensions, evictions, expulsions, and criminal prosecutions. The latter depends on local prosecutors (or, in some cases, municipal city attorneys) who often have broad leeway to file—or drop—charges after someone is arrested.

New York Police Department officers have arrested over 530 protesters in Manhattan alone—almost a third of the national total. Yet Manhattan's top prosecutor, Alvin Bragg, has not responded to multiple requests for comment regarding how he will handle the deluge of cases.

In the face of this repression, many labor unions have issued statements in solidarity with the students and faculty who have been brutalized, and some are planning strike and protest actions, while others have already started to carry out wildcat strikes and demonstrations.

In Humboldt, one professor who was arrested along with protesters on campus launched a hunger strike until the last person was arrested:

Professor Aghasaleh declared a hunger strike in protest of the arrest and criticized being labeled as a “criminal” protester...Professor Aghasaleh says he started the hunger strike and continued until the last student was relieved.

“I started a hunger strike because I refused a bond because I wanted to refuse the label of the criminal and I continued that until the last students, and the last person relieved was a community member last night and then we ended our strike last night together,” said Aghasaleh.

Solidarity and support is needed in multiple cities to support those arrested and to build anti-repression networks in the face of ongoing repression. Check out Palestine Action US and the Escalate Network for info on how to support various cities anti-repression initiatives.

5 May - 6 activists of the anarchist group “Black Nightingales” arrested

Belarus: As it became known from a propaganda video on youtube published by the state media, anarchists from the group “Black Nightingales” were detained in Belarus several months ago.

MORE:

via *Pramen*

According to the regime’s version, they were planning to attack the state infrastructure and sabotage the support of the Russian military in Belarus. The list of the group members includes Maria Misyuk, Trofim Barysau, Sergey Zhigalyou, Dmitry Zahoroshko, Anastasia Klimenka, and Aleksandra Pulinovich. Based on the attitude of the Belarusian regime towards anarchists, we believe that any recorded testimony was obtained under torture until the contrary is known.

The Lukashenko regime often releases epics about its political opponents, in which it tells its own story of reality. And it doesn’t matter how much truth there is in these stories – it’s important to convey the mood of constant threat posed by Ukraine and the “West” in general. It is not for nothing that the movie itself places such a great emphasis on the fact that Maria Misyuk has Ukrainian citizenship. As in the last 30 years we hear the same record about “enemies, enemies everywhere”. On the one hand, one can say that nobody in Belarus believes in this nonsense anymore, but the reality is more complicated and a part of society continues to consume the propaganda of the Belarusian state mixed with madness broadcast from the “Russian world”.

On the other hand, we can safely say that despite all the attempts to crush the anarchist movement from 2020 GUBOP/KGB and other punitive structures, anarchists still exist in Belarus. The ideas of liberation from authoritarianism and creation of society on the basis of solidarity and cooperation continue to excite the minds of Belarusians who are ready to resist Lukashenko’s dictatorship. Attempts to make the activists of the group “Black Nightingales” just “children” who didn’t know what they were doing look ridiculous. In the country, where on April 30, 2024 at least 153 people aged 22 and younger are sitting in jail for political reasons, we see that young people are not just “recruits of the revolution,” but full-fledged participants in the struggle against the dictatorship. And the punitive bodies understand this perfectly well. Otherwise, the film about the need to combat the radicalization of young people would not have appeared in the state media at all.

Today it is difficult to judge about the full picture of what happened and repressions against the group, but already now we can say that for their courage to politically resist Lukashenko’s regime in a society constantly terrorized by the state, the activists deserve deep respect and solidarity not only from the anarchist movement, but also from the whole Belarusian diaspora. Through their struggle they are paving the way to a future free of dictators, fascism and war.

6 May - How to Support Leonard Peltier NOW

Leonard's supporters are calling for an immediate transfer and medical care.

MORE:

1) Call key senators to call for Leonard's medical care, transfer, and RELEASE

Senator Cory Booker: 202.224.3224 | 973.639.8700

Senator Dick Durbin: 202.224.2152 | 312.353.4952

Senator Alex Padilla: 202.224.3553 | 310.231.4494

United States Representative Maxwell Frost: 202.225.2176 | 321.388.9808

2) Send a letter: Tell Biden and Garland to Free Leonard Peltier Now: tiny.cc/BidenPeltier

2) Read the full newsletter from Leonard's support committee: tiny.cc/Peltier_News

May 9th - 'I hope I make it to June 10'

by Amelia Schafer and Kevin Abourezk (*Rapid City Journal*)

At 80 years old, Leonard Peltier is approaching what may be his last attempt at freedom.

On June 10, the Anishinaabe elder will participate in what may be his final parole hearing. Peltier is currently serving two consecutive life sentences after being convicted of killing two FBI agents in 1975 at the Jumping Bull Ranch in South Dakota.

Peltier is asking for the public to spread the word about his parole hearing, said Dawn Lawson, secretary of the Leonard Peltier Ad Hoc Committee.

"For a long time, people have been dying in that prison and the (Federal Bureau of Prisons) is out of control," Lawson said. "They're (U.S. Penitentiary Coleman 1) currently on indefinite lockdown, not because anybody has done anything, just because they can. They (prisoners) are living in their own filth. Leonard is making an appeal to his people to please get anybody's attention."

In the past few months, the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa citizen's health has taken a turn for the worse, so much so that his attorneys say they're concerned he won't make it to the June parole hearing.

"He didn't sound good when I spoke with him on the phone today (April 22), he doesn't even know if he's going to make it to next week," said Nick Tilsen, Oglala Lakota and CEO of the NDN Collective. "He told me, 'I hope I make it to June 10, and I hope I can make it 30 days after that.'"

Peltier has been struggling with health concerns for years. He's had trouble managing his diabetes while incarcerated, experienced the loss of vision in one eye, had open heart surgery, an aortic aneurysm, and is dealing with the lingering effects of contracting COVID-19.

On April 16, the Leonard Peltier Ad Hoc Committee issued a press release and organized a calling campaign to urge federal prison officials to address Peltier's health problems. Since then, Peltier's lead attorney, Jenipher Jones, was able to arrange for a doctor outside the prison to meet with Peltier twice.

The medical visit revealed Peltier was experiencing eye damage and would need to see a specialist, but prison officials said it would take 8 to 10 months to coordinate such a visit.

In February, Judith LeBlanc, executive director of the Native Organizers Alliance, requested the U.S. Department of Justice approve the compassionate release of Peltier based on his health problems. Compassionate release is available for prisoners who seek early release due to extraordinary or compelling circumstances, according to the American Bar Association.

"At a time when democratic values are being challenged, DOJ should take action as he nears the end of his life and allow him to return to his family on his ancestral homeland," LeBlanc said in a statement. "We implore the DOJ to grant Peltier's compassionate release."

Tilsen called on the Biden administration to take action. "This administration, the Biden Administration, has said that Native American rights are a priority to them, and yet they've got the longest sitting Indigenous political prisoner locked up and we've seen no action from the federal government," Tilsen said. "If he dies in prison this will forever be a part of that administration's legacy as it relates to Native people."

Tilsen said he's been fighting for Peltier's freedom since he was a small child. Now, his organization is on the front lines of Peltier's fight.

"It's all hands on deck," Tilsen said. "With the right medical treatment Leonard could live for a while, but without it he's almost guaranteed to not make it."

With the announcement of Peltier's parole date, NDN Collective is switching gears from putting its energy toward compassionate release for Peltier and instead educating the public on his push for parole.

A chance to tell his story

Within 30 days after the June 10 parole hearing, the parole commission will issue its decision. A recommendation will be delivered to the commission for a final decision to be made.

Since Peltier is a federal prisoner serving a sentence of 30 years or more, he is eligible for a parole hearing within 9 months of his eligibility date as determined by the Bureau of Prisons. This hearing may be his only shot.

"The parole hearing on June 10 is the most important parole hearing of Leonard's life," Tilsen said. "He won't live long enough for another parole hearing to come around."

The parole hearing will give Peltier and his defense committee a chance to tell his side of the story and express his thoughts as to why he should be paroled.

Details of the offense, prior criminal history and other details will influence the commission's decision. Peltier's accomplishments in the correctional facility, details of a release plan, and any problems he's had to meet in the past will all be presented.

"We want to make sure that the commissioners and the parole officer do feel the weight of this," Tilsen said. "He's dying in federal prison right now. They will be liable for his death. They're perpetuating civil rights and human rights violations."

If paroled, Peltier would plan to return to the Turtle Mountain Reservation, Lawson said. Peltier owns property in his community and if paroled would serve the remaining portion of his sentence there.

"This is going to be the deciding factor on whether he gets to go back to his homelands, to see his child, grandchildren, and his people," Tilsen said.

Peltier's prison sentence is part of a larger issue, Tilsen said, it's a reflection of how Indigenous activists were punished for the AIM Movement of the 1970s.

One day in June

In the summer of 1973, the American Indian Movement attracted hundreds of Native people to Wounded Knee on the Pine Ridge Reservation. Oglala Lakota elders had called the AIM headquarters in Minneapolis to request help in dealing with their tribal council.

On June 26, 1975, two FBI Agents Ronald Arthur Williams and Jack Ross Coler, traveled to the Pine Ridge reservation in search of Jimmy Eagle, an Indigenous man who was wanted in connection with the theft of a pair of cowboy boots and the assault of two ranch hands.

Sometime after 11 a.m. the two agents, traveling in two different unmarked vehicles, began following a vehicle they believed was transporting Eagle. The agents trailed it to the Jumping Bull Ranch in Oglala, South Dakota, where a shootout between AIM members and the two FBI agents erupted.

By the time the shootout ended, Williams and Coler and 23-year-old Joseph Bedell Schultz, a citizen of the Couer d'Alene Tribe, lay dead.

After a five-week trial before an all-white jury in Fargo in March 1977, Peltier was convicted of murdering both agents. Two other AIM members, Darrelle "Dino" Butler and Bob Robideau, had previously been acquitted of charges of aiding and abetting in the death of the two FBI agents during a trial in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

On April 18, 1977, Peltier was given two life sentences, which he's been carrying out at USP Coleman 1, a maximum-security prison in central Florida, for over a decade.

"The FBI waged an illegal war on the American Indian Movement and against the Indigenous peoples movement using taxpayer dollars," Tilsen said. "There was a reign of terror on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation."

Former North Dakota state representative Ruth Buffalo has visited with Peltier several times and remained in contact with him, last speaking to him by phone earlier in April. She said she's concerned about his health, though he remains in good spirits and even made her laugh during their phone conversation. "He doesn't want any of us to feel sad for him," she said. "He hasn't given up and he doesn't want any of us to give up" But Peltier also doesn't want to die in prison, Buffalo said.

"It's just time for him to be out to be a free man in his country and to live the last days of his life with his family," she said.

May 10th - Time for Justice: Leonard Peltier's June Parole Hearing

by Natali Segovia (*Water Protector Legal Collective*)

The first time I met Leonard Peltier, as he walked out towards the attorney visitation room shackled while taking steps with a walker, I was struck that despite his aging frame, he still showed youthful charisma. He greeted us with a warm smile. Nearly fifty years of imprisonment under inhumane conditions have not broken his spirit, I mused; his life, as he has said, is a Sun Dance. Accompanied on the visit by WPLC staff attorneys Sandra Freeman and Summer Blaze Aubrey, we smudged in the parking lot of USP Coleman I, saying a prayer under the watchful eye of cameras and snipers, before walking into that soulless place surrounded by barbed wire. We know well that what keeps Leonard alive is his indomitable spirit and his hope that justice is yet to come. On June 10, 2024, Leonard will once more face the Parole Commission, a defunct body that exists only for "old law" prisoners sentenced prior to the Sentencing Reform Act of 1984, which abolished the Commission in favor of fixed prison terms at sentencing. Mr. Peltier has never been given a release date and has been eligible for parole since 1986. The Commission now has an opportunity to right a historical wrong.

The average time served by individuals sentenced by federal courts to life imprisonment for murder before they were released on parole was 8.8 years in 1985 and 27.4 years in 2015.¹⁵ Instead, Mr. Peltier has been incarcerated nearly half a century—5 times the length of a prison sentence normally served by those given a life sentence.

The efforts for Mr. Peltier's upcoming parole have garnered vast support including expert letters, letters of assurance, and letters of support. Our good friend, colleague and former WPLC staff attorney, lead parole counsel Moira Meltzer-Cohen wrote in the parole submission: "it is the sincere hope and belief of undersigned counsel [and] all those who have contributed to these materials, including Mr. Peltier's friends, family, and community; experts including historians, members of the bar and the judiciary, public figures, clergy, and even law enforcement; and Mr. Peltier himself, that you will release him into the arms of his

loving community, that he may spend what time he has left on earth with his loved ones, supporting youth through connection to their traditional lifeways, free to live out his remaining days on his ancestral lands." Former federal judge Kevin Sharp and attorney Jenipher Jones are also parole counsel for Mr. Peltier.

In support of parole, Water Protector Legal Collective, counsel for Mr. Peltier on other issues, submitted an expert letter on arbitrary detention and violation of constitutional due process and religious freedoms throughout the nearly five decades since Mr. Peltier's incarceration. The letter states: "Legal experts, attorneys, and human rights organizations have highlighted the legal irregularities and lack of fundamental due process evident in Mr. Peltier's case, including extradition in violation of international treaties, fabricated evidence, witness manipulation, denial of the right to invoke affirmative defenses, FBI interference, and violation of the obligation to disclose exculpatory evidence. Although the right to fundamental due process applies during parole proceedings, the cumulative effect of procedural deficiencies in parole proceedings are overwhelming and documented extensively in the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention decision of 2022."

The letter asks the parole board to review the long history of procedural irregularities in parole proceedings as well as the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention decision of 2022 (A/HRC/WGAD/2022/7) which narrates the historical context and rampant anti-Indigenous sentiment surrounding Mr. Peltier's detention. A pivotal figure in the American Indian Movement (AIM), which championed Indigenous civil rights starting in 1968, Mr. Peltier's involvement in AIM's efforts to address issues such as land rights, cultural preservation, and social justice underscores his historical significance. The 1973 AIM occupation of Pine Ridge shed light on systemic injustices, including the murders and disappearances of over 60 Indigenous individuals at the hands of FBI authorities, largely overlooked by mainstream discourse.

Other actions in support of parole include efforts by Mr. Peltier's relatives including NDN Collective and others have provided assurance letters detailing a release plan to help Mr. Peltier return home. Support letters have also been submitted by prominent human rights and civil rights organizations, Tribal leaders, and members of Congress.

Leonard Peltier's continued incarceration remains heavy in the hearts and minds of Indigenous Peoples of the world, who too often fail to find justice in the law. Our relative has spent nearly five decades behind bars. In marches for justice across Abya Yala ("land in its full maturity" in the Kuna language referring to what is widely known as Latin America), we often hear the phrase: "quisieron enterrarnos, pero no sabían que éramos semillas." They wanted to bury us, but didn't know we were seeds. The seeds for justice sown by our elders have grown and we are here, continuing the fight for the next seven generations,

As we move into the days ahead, we ask that you hold Leonard and his legal team in your hearts, thoughts, and prayers.

6 May - Call for #June11 2024: No Separate Worlds

We once again approach June 11th, a day of remembrance and active solidarity, in a world of multiple crises and struggles for liberation.

MORE:

All of these are interconnected; there are no separate worlds. Across borders, languages, contexts, and identities, both catastrophes and victories of spirit and defiance reverberate around the globe. One environment is not untouched by another. The personal is not separate from the political. The positive project is not separate from that of destruction. Prison is not separate from the "free world." Means are not separate from ends. Bridging these divides is a shared curiosity and commitment; bridging these divides is solidarity. This is not to flatten or oversimplify diversity and differences in circumstance, intensity, and consequence. Rather, that these different pieces are held together like organs of the body held by connective tissue. So we consider: how do we strengthen this connective tissue? How do we remain strong, yet supple and flexible? Bridges, connection, must also be built through time, especially in a world that

moves too fast, from one crisis to the next. June 11th aspires to be one of these bridges: to build solidarity across borders, between movements, and among generations. Remembering and supporting long-term prisoners, as well as carrying on shared struggles, are two ways to strengthen this connective tissue. A stronger connective tissue will, in turn, bolster us against further repression.

Each year, as part of our effort to be a bridge between movements, time, and borders, we assess the terrain. We consider what threats from the state look like at this time, how imprisoned comrades can be connected to activity on the outside, how have the struggles they are a part of continued despite repression, and how remembering those locked up can become a natural part of anarchist activity. Often repression and criminalization feel new; but frequently, this is a failure of memory. There are innovations to pay attention to, while seeing their lineage in tactics and ideologies used against our forebears. What can we learn from how people have responded in the past? What can we learn from people in times and places where innovative repressive tactics were developed, and how can we act in complicity alongside them?

As the day of solidarity nears, we are struck by the unfolding of the current terrain; the horrors abound, and confront us in new ways, but these are also patterns and histories in repetition. Power is scrambling to maintain itself amidst the uncertainty of our fragilely constructed society, and individuals and groups continue on with our refusal of their world. We see continued colonial violence, through prisons, guns, bombs, and nationalist ideologies in places such as Palestine, Ukraine, and West Papua. Too, extremely harsh treatments of people in Russia acting against militarism and colonialism, as well as the criminalization of pro-Palestinian activity all over the world.

Palestinians, fighting for their freedom and against policing, surveillance and detention for decades, have faced an all-out culmination of violence and genocide at the hands of the Israeli state — crisis and colonial violence continue to rapidly unfold. So too, does an intense current of Palestinian resistance: solidarity actions have taken place across the globe in attempts to refuse complicity and the feelings of powerlessness fueled by the geographical distance, the 24-hour news cycle, the abounding propaganda and war machines.

As people continue to flee their regions due to capitalist and imperialist-made violence, and the catastrophic consequences of climate collapse, we are witnessing a renewed fear-mongering at U.S and European borders, as white supremacist militias murmur about confronting ‘migrant caravans’, and individual states implement a greater level of violence to keep people out of artificial borders. This crisis extends throughout the globe, as people worldwide move to seek out any stability, and others rush to enforce the promised order of borders and citizenship.

Colonial violence springs up daily, in guns drawn and territory stolen, in extraction projects and the expansion of policed land, and in the loss of the last wild spaces. But resistance to a homogeneous and hollow future being sold to us by tech-giants, green capitalists and the State still continues across the world. Pipelines, cell-towers, and extraction infrastructure is being targeted, both in individual sabotage, as well as ongoing land defense world-wide. The dependence of this noxious future on policing, surveillance, and control couldn’t be clearer, and struggles are confronting the ways these practices interact. Rebellions break out against police, prisons, and the indignity and macabre realities of daily life. For every crisis, and moment of resistance we could list, there are countless others simmering, exploding, or simply being disappeared from the public, global view. Freedom and resistance always find their way through the cracks of this horrifying society.

Public food serves being harassed, heightened criminalization of houseless populations, RICO charges for bail funds and the “conspiracy” of anarchist ideas and practices, as well as proximity, associations and social networks. Intense and courageous acts of sabotage continue. Everything is new, and nothing is. The question is not ‘what are the solutions?’, but ‘how do we expand, deepen and intensify what we already know works?’. How do we see ourselves in one another, how do we understand our plights as intertwined, as inseparable, and how can we continue to expand these relationships of solidarity. How do we embrace the reality that there are no separate worlds, and explore the ways that we can break through the limiting effects of prison walls, border walls, time, place and context.

There are moments worth celebrating, when we feel the opening of possibilities and capacity, of cohesion and strength; there are certainly also many moments to mourn, when it feels like we're losing it all and our bodies or spirits are taking a beating. We can savor a touch of solace when we notice the deep desperation apparent in the moves of the state. They're scrambling, finding new ways to criminalize even the most basic of acts. This can serve to motivate us. If anything even vaguely anarchist is enough to throw us to the helm of repression, we must choose to live our lives as we decide, regardless of the consequences. As more and more of us interact with repression, jails, courts, prisons, let this possibility be a never-ending invitation towards continuing to remember and include those locked away as an ongoing part of our moves toward getting free. Time, geography, the barriers of the prison wall—none of these are strong enough to obliterate the vast network of bridges that keep us interdependent, connected, fighting the same enemies of freedom, worldwide.

This year saw the passing of many who carried the vivacious anarchist spirit. Some may be known to us, while many remain unknown. They sowed rebelliousness in every path they walked. Perhaps their impact is incalculable, though never nonexistent. We can carry the same spirit, traverse similar paths, and remain steadfast and diligent, just as those who have come before us have. Rest in power: Alfredo Bonanno, Klee Benally, Ed Mead, Sekuo Odinga, Tortuguita, Aaron Bushnell.

Rest in power to all of those whose names we've never uttered, not known, but who walked these lengths, nonetheless. Time is merely constructed; those that have come before us, and passed onto death, still impact the lives of the living, still contribute to the history of anarchists and anti-authoritarians, and our shared struggle. Let us make them a part of our active memory, and continue forward, in a fight for lives against domination. May these words spark a fire in you—encourage you to get up, forge ahead and seek what it might feel like, to live like you're trying to get free.

7 May - Veronza Bowers is free

Former political prisoner Veronza Bowers is free after 50 years!

MORE:

He requests that folks allow him quiet time for now with his family. We are glad you made it out alive! Donate to his release fund at gofundme.com/f/welcome-home-veronza-bowers

10 May - Tell Lawmakers to Pass Parole Justice TODAY!

There's less than one month of New York's legislative session left!

MORE:

Tell lawmakers to pass parole justice— Elder Parole and Fair & Timely Parole—TODAY! And tell others to do the same! Use our quick-and-easy Phone 2 Action tool: p2a.co/a4fQfu8

With a few clicks send a strong message to lawmakers. Use our sample email and social media posts below: tiny.cc/RAPP_Tools

Please encourage at least ten (10) people you know anywhere in New York State to use the Phone 2 Action tool! Family, friends, colleagues, neighbors, members of your house of worship, and more -- we must all be heard to win parole justice!

12 May - Illustrated Guide Version 17.4 Uploaded!

nycabc.wordpress.com/2024/05/12/guide_17_4

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. We are excited to say we are removing Veronza Bowers (PAROLE! Welcome home.).

15 May - Summer Liberation School

WHAT: Political Education

WHEN: 7:00pm, Wednesday, May 15th

WHERE: TBA. RSVP For Address: tockify.com/mlsupport/detail/394/171581400000

COST: FREE

MORE:

Come study anarchism at the intersections with us this summer, as we sharpen our ideas and tools for the moment and the long haul. Together we will collaboratively build our knowledge and practices of anti-capitalist, anti-state, intersectional liberation that is focused on strategies towards freedom and building the worlds we want and need. We will meet every week for 12 weeks, with each week focused on a different topic and having different discussion leads. Each session will be conducted less as a run-of-the-mill reading group, and more as a practice of the kind of multi-directional and horizontal education, including opportunities for relationship-building, music, food, and fun, to the extent people want to participate!

Course topics include: Black anarchism and autonomism, Indigenous anarchism and autonomism, Black feminisms, women of color feminisms, decolonial feminism, anarcho-feminism, queer anarchism, disability justice, and anarchisms and autonomisms in Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia, SWANA, and Africa, as well as other potential topics to be decided collectively. Multiple ways of learning/processing/sharing information will be included, incorporating art, drawing, small group discussions and zine-building. Will build a collective zine to share our learnings with each other, other MACC members, and beyond, and have a final project that focuses on strengthening our material commitments to and praxis of the topics.

19 May - MACC Care Assembly

WHAT: Assembly

WHEN: 3:00pm, Sunday, May 19th

WHERE: PIT Records & Books, 411 South 5th Street, Brooklyn

COST: FREE

MORE:

SCHEDULE:

- o Self-defense class Muay Thai Martial arts training - no experience necessary, show up at 3 pm
- o Political education session
- o Care exchange & a community meal

What is the care exchange? As we sit down to share a meal we check in and exchange our requests and offers, in the spirit of mutual aid. Requests – do you need help with anything? Offers – do you have any skills, time, or resources to offer? This is a conversation to help facilitate building and maintaining relationships among us by identifying needs and sharing what we can in solidarity.

For COVID safety: Show a negative rapid test; free tests will be provided at the door.