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Updates for February 11th

27 Jan - January 2020 Message from Joshua Williams

Joshua Williams was arrested in the aftermath of the Ferguson uprisings. Please read his latest writing below.

MORE:

This is my speech to all my people in the fight, so sit back and listen.

I say to the people all around the world, fighting against slavery, fighting against racism, fighting against the system, I say to you, don't get tired. Keep fighting. Be strong, because one thing about us is we are stronger than racism. We are stronger than the police who's trying to kill us off. And the thing about that is when the police kill a black man or woman or a white man or woman: another one is born, stronger than the last one.

People of the nation: I speak to you in peace. I speak to you in love. People of the world, I speak to you and in struggle I say, I'm here with you. Fighting along side of you. Because there are many fights. You can be fighting against cancer, for suicide prevention, against bullying and voter suppression—whatever it is, I say to you: stay strong. Don't give up. I know you tired. I am, too. But the moment we give up on America is the moment we give up our lives, because we give up the fight.

I say to the police of every department there is: there is a storm brewing, and the longer y'all kill people and get away with it, the hotter the pot gone get.

Now, police: if y'all trying to talk peace, it's too late. I speak for the families that can't see their child anymore because your trigger-happy finger took them off the earth. I speak for Michael Brown's mom when she was crying her fucking soul out right next to me in Canfield, forced to see her fucking son dead on that ground, not for one minute or ten minutes but four fucking hours. This is the type of shit I'm talking about.

People of the world, this is the shit I'm fighting for. Trayvon Martin, Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Danyé Jones, Darren Seal, and so much more.

And to all of you who fight with me: let's go all the way. Let's overthrow this corrupt system and police our own self.

If you reading this, at this very moment, no matter where you at, this is our creed. Say it out loud and declare with me—you ready?—here we go:

IT IS OUR DUTY TO FIGHT FOR OUR FREEDOM

IT IS OUR DUTY TO WIN

WE MUST LOVE AND SUPPORT EACH OTHER

WE HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE BUT OUR CHAINS.

If you read that and meant it, you ready. I will tell you all, there is no finish line for me. I will fight for everybody till there is no blood left in my body, and till I breathe my last breath. I will be on the frontline, fighting against the police. Who's with me? Love you guys.

3 Feb - Art Without Walls

Review of Certain Days 2020 calendar featured in The Independent.

MORE:

by Renée Feltz (*The Independent*)

It was a full circle moment when Herman Bell attended the launch of the 2020 edition of the Certain Days calendar and shared how he conceived the project while he was incarcerated, urging friends to buy a copy by telling them: "Don't be a square!"

The former Black Panther's archaically hip cajoling denoted his 44 years behind bars. Given a 25 years to life sentence in 1971 for killing two policemen, Bell was granted parole and released in 2018, after decades of grassroots organizing and critical reforms, which the calendar continues to support by raising funds for projects like RAPP (Release Aging People from Prison).

Bell had the idea for a collaboration between political prisoners and their supporters in 2000, and started the calendar with two other men held in New York maximum security prisons and some Canadian students who visited them. Robert "Seth" Hayes was a former Panther who got 25 years to life in 1971 for the death of a transit officer, and attempted murder of police who stormed his apartment. He died in December 2019, at home, after being paroled just the year before. David Gilbert, sentenced to 75 years to life after a 1981 Brink's truck robbery with the Black Liberation Army, remains in prison and is still part of the project.

"The calendar arose from connections people made across prison walls and borders," Sara Falconer, a Canadian collective member since 2003, told *The Independent*. "It's amazing to see what we're able to accomplish across all of these different barriers."

Each new edition of the calendar features 12 original artworks and essays related to a theme — this year it is "Knitting Together the Struggles" — and marks key dates such as the Trans Prisoner Day of Action, radical history like the Attica Prison Rebellion, or the births and deaths of revolutionaries.

"The calendar, very particularly, is meant to be on your wall every day reminding you of things that you might not otherwise think about, and names and stories of political prisoners that you may not even know existed," said Falconer.

"I always look at it as a bit of a Trojan Horse," added Daniel McGowan, who first contributed to the calendar in 2008 while serving a seven-year sentence for charges for his role in a series of actions related to the Earth Liberation Front, and became a member of the collective after his release.

"It is really important to know one's history, especially for new people, who tend to feel by themselves," McGowan told *The Independent*.

When he hung the calendar in his cell he says the events he read about in it helped him understand, "you are part of something that extends deeper into the past and while your experience here feels very intense to you, it is part of a broader tapestry."

As he used the calendar to keep track of filing deadlines, the art improved his spirits. "People say it is important to send beautiful things to prison," McGowan said. "It does make a difference to wake up to that."

While there are other radical fundraising calendars packed with art and information, like the Slingshot Organizer, this project features lots of contributions from people who are incarcerated.

"We send out a call-out early in the year so prisoners have time to see what our theme is going to be and think about what inspires them," said Falconer. "We're getting pieces from amazing prison artists, despite the fact they have limited access to materials and that it's hard to get the actual pieces to us."

Other artists who have contributed include Molly Fair and Roger Peet, who are members of the Just Seeds Artists' Cooperative, and Brooklyn-based Sophia Dawson, whose vivid portraits aim "to convey the true stories and experiences of oppressed people from political movements in ways that more broadly form, shade and convey the individual and collective injustices they face."

Editors also compile information about people who have died in prison and updates on newer cases, such as that of whistle-blower Chelsea Manning and Xinachtli, formerly known as Alvaro Luna Hernandez, a Chicano community organizer who was sentenced to 50 years for disarming a sheriff who attempted to shoot him.

"Even as we see political prisoner populations shrink," McGowan noted, "as long as we have resistance movements the state will incarcerate people from those movements."

In the United States, the calendar is now distributed by Burning Books, based in Buffalo, New York, whose co-owner Leslie James Pickering is a former spokes person for the Earth Liberation Front who challenged the FBI's attempt to surveil and intimidate him. It costs \$15 and all proceeds benefit RAPP, Addameer (Arabic for "conscience") Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, and related campaigns. Groups can buy copies in bulk for \$10 each to raise funds and awareness, and prisoners can order them for \$8.

"We go to significant ends to make sure it gets in there," McGowan said. If a calendar is rejected by prison censors, he cuts out whatever they find offensive and sends it back. "We are involved right now in resending one to a political guy at Angola in Louisiana for the third time."

In March the Certain Days collective plans to announce a new theme and call for submissions as it prepares to celebrate a milestone 20th anniversary." To have something that is both symbolically inspiring and materially impacting makes me really proud," Falconer told *The Independent*, "and excited to see what's next."

3 Feb - The Turnstile Revolution: A Report from #FTP3

A report and analysis on the recent mass transit and anti-police #FTP actions across the New York area.

MORE:

via It's Going Down

I.

The global wave of revolutionary uprisings kicked off last year has finally reached the shores of the USA. This Friday, the third #FTP protest took the streets and trains of New York City, the latest demonstration in an emerging movement fighting to win four demands: 1. Free fare on the NYC transit system, 2. No cops on the trains or in the stations, 3. The end of police harassment of street vendors and performers, and 4. Full accessibility for all.

This protest was a clear escalation from #FTP2 on November 22nd, and points to the culmination of years of revolutionary intelligence being built in the city, from Occupy to Black Lives Matter. Young people formed an essential contingent of the demonstration, providing spirit, vitality, and determination unburdened by entrenched activist dogma.

What many suspected during #FTP2 became blatantly obvious during #FTP3: the New York Police Department is fundamentally unequipped to deal with these protests, which have a very real possibility of escalating into a combative popular movement in the center of the American Spectacle. The following reflections are meant to briefly identify successful tactics and strategies from the movement, and to provide concrete proposals for pushing the struggle forward.

II.

The bet of #FTP3's strategy was correct: the police cannot keep up with a diffuse crowd using the subways to flash mob different locations around the city. Diverse crowds of people stormed train stations, hopped turnstiles by the hundreds, chained open emergency doors and destroyed ticket readers. Train cars full of protesters branched off into multiple directions, creating "freedom trains" where people chanted slogans, dialogued with commuters, and graffitied the subways together.

NYPD's model of policing relies on them having close contact with marches, flooding the streets with police and to keep protesters on the sidewalk, and making violent arrests whenever protests don't move fast enough. They rely on following the marches through traffic in police vans, and are unable of predicting where marches will exit the subways. When the marches move through the trains, they can surface back up far from police control, and have ample ammount of time in the streets before the cops are able to catch up. The speed of these protests is an essential advantage over the police, who rely on bureaucratic chains of command and are thus incapable of making decisions on the fly. 'Freedom Trains' are both tactically effective and spiritually liberating, and reflect a core principle of the movement: the journey is the destination.

In comparison with past demonstrations in New York, this march felt much less determined by activist figureheads or non-profit organizations, and we see this as a sign of growing maturity. We've learned our lessons from Black Lives Matter and Occupy Wall Street. The few moments where authority figures were able to seize control – in Grand Central Station, in Restoration Plaza – were also the moments where most arrests occurred. The relative absence of leadership, however, comes with an important caveat, familiar to anarchists : it's on us to self-organize and to take initiative, and we must share the knowledge of how to do so with as many people as possible.

Compared to #FTP2, there were quantitatively more spontaneous acts of resistance, both during and in the lead up to #FTP3. We suspect that this increase in autonomous direct action is directly linked to the propaganda strategy pushed by various groups online, encouraging people to come prepared with things like lasers, paint, bicycle locks, and umbrellas. With a young crowd, we have to open source the unique skill-sets of sabotage and organization we've built up over the years. Spreading instructions manuals and infographics massively on social media resulted in diverse and leaderless affinity groups taking up various levels of subversive activity, from using umbrellas to shield protesters disabling ticket machines, to using laser pointers to keep the cops at a safer distance. This made the crowd's dynamic much less determined by either specialized activist groups or by isolated militants. Also effective was the social media strategy of posting of a continual and ongoing stream of autonomous actions throughout the day before the demonstration, documenting acts of resistance blossoming all across the city.

In concrete terms we see leaderless resistance that stays physically moving and outpacing the cops as a viable tactic. What is lacking most in the crowd is experience, but the momentum from the first #FTP march to #FTP3 is quickly building up the confidence of the protesters. Small subversive acts create trust between people who then feel safe doing even more subversive activities later. This lack of trust within the movement has been one of its biggest obstacles, but luckily #FTP3 proves that this trust can be built especially quickly when the justification and know-how behind these acts of subversion are clearly

communicated. This is the subtle art of pushing struggles towards their revolutionary horizons. The more people trust each other to face their fears together, the better chance we have at creating a rich and diverse movement.

III.

Coming out of this, we offer the following proposals for a two-pronged strategy for the future of the movement.

1. Diversity of tactics means diversity of content: we need to produce propaganda from many different angles reaching out to as many different kinds of people as possible. The goal is to create an open source database of anarchist knowledge that doesn't restrict this knowledge to a specialized group of self-proclaimed 'activists' or 'militants'. We need content that's humorous, angry, sad, informative, inspiring, all working together to create a wide ecosystem of affects and information. If you can't go to the march, you should meme it. Everyone has a place in the movement, and both our propaganda and our organizing should reflect this.

2. Find ways to digitally allow people in metropolitan areas to coordinate with each other on a large scale, both in daily life and especially during the protests. This helps people share their reflections and experiences and create an environment where a visible class consciousness can emerge. It also helps people coordinate in mass to be maximally effective in the constantly changing environment of a mass demonstration. While being leaderless is a clear advantage, the movement at this point lacks the architecture that could synchronize protest actions both in the moment, and over an extended period of time.

The end of the protests present the unique opportunity for uncontrollable action to spread. When the march ends, people should hop the train together in a crowd and flash mob unexpected locations spontaneously. The formula is simply: exit the train, graffiti the train station, take the streets, build barricades to prevent the cops from chasing, and march to the next station to do it all over again. The success of #FTP3 shows that the cops can be easily outpaced. Urban geography is a weapon, and we can use it against them just as effectively as they use it against us. We must set the tempo of our demonstrations and never let it be determined for us. Our biggest advantage is the capacity to disperse and regroup before the cops can mount an effective response. In the future, this coordination should be facilitated by digital platforms, which would allow crowds of thousands to people to quickly disseminate the locations of targets to flashmob, and the locations of meet-up points for protesters to re-convene.

The broken windows model of policing seeks to eliminate any visible signs of resistance in the city. We can use this logic against them. May a thousand acts of resistance be used methodically against the police and the world of capitalism they uphold. We've proven that this model of protest is effective, and we must continue to refine our speed, agility and coordination. One day we may not have to commute at all.

Water hollows out a stone not through force, but through persistence.

4 Feb - Federal Judge Reverses Conviction of Border Volunteers, Challenging Government's "Gruesome Logic"

On February 3rd, A federal judge in Tucson, Arizona, reversed the conviction of four humanitarian aid volunteers on religious freedom grounds, ruling that the government had embraced a "gruesome logic" that criminalizes "interfering with a border enforcement strategy of deterrence by death."

MORE:

by Ryan Devereaux (*The Intercept*)

The reversal, written by U.S. District Judge Rosemary Márquez, marked the latest rebuke of the Trump administration's crackdown on humanitarian aid providers in southern Arizona, and the second time in matter of months that a religious freedom defense has prevailed in a federal case involving the provision of aid to migrants in the borderlands.

The defendants in the case — Natalie Hoffman, Oona Holcomb, Madeline Huse, and Zaachila Orozco-McCormick — were fined and given probation in March of last year for entering the Cabeza Prieta Wildlife Refuge in the summer of 2017 without a permit, driving on a restricted access road and leaving food, water, and other humanitarian aid supplies for migrants passing through in the summer heat. They were the first among a group of volunteers with the faith-based humanitarian group, No More Deaths, to go to trial for their aid work in 2019.

The remains of roughly 3,000 migrants have been recovered in Pima County alone since 2000. Experts are confident that the true death toll is much higher. Situated at the heart of the Sonoran Desert, the Cabeza Prieta refuge is one of the deadliest spaces in the region. As Márquez made clear in her decision, the No More Deaths volunteers admitted to the factual claims in the case: that they left aid supplies in "an area of desert wilderness where people frequently die of dehydration and exposure." But in appealing their convictions, Márquez went on to write, the defendants had successfully argued that their actions — imbued "with the avowed goal of mitigating death and suffering" — were protected under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, or RFRA.

The defendants established that they were exercising their "sincere religious beliefs," Márquez wrote, while the government failed to demonstrate that its application of the refuge rules was carried out in the "least restrictive" manner available.

Katherine Franke, a law professor at Columbia, where she is faculty director of the Law, Rights, and Religion Project, called the reversal "fantastic." Last year, Franke and her colleagues published a report illustrating how the federal government has routinely sided with right-wing or conservative causes in religious freedom cases. The law professor has followed the No More Deaths cases closely, filing motions in support of RFRA defenses. "The lower court's opinion was so horrible just as a matter of legal reasoning, that it was really nice to see the judge apply a thorough and careful analysis of the religious liberty claim," Franke told *The Intercept*. While she anticipates a government appeal, Franke said Monday's reversal provides a solid foundation for applying RFRA in similar legal contexts.

"The government isn't going to roll over just because they lose a case or two," she explained. "But what we've got now is a developing record of careful analysis from federal courts on how RFRA ought to apply in contexts like this."

Márquez's decision comes just four months after U.S. District Judge Raner Collins reached a similar decision in the case of Scott Warren, another No More Deaths volunteer hit with federal misdemeanor charges for leaving humanitarian supplies on Cabeza Prieta, who also successfully deployed a RFRA defense against the government's charges. In addition to the federal misdemeanor case, the U.S. attorney's office in Arizona brought felony charges against Warren for providing food, water, and a place to sleep to two young migrants in 2018. He faced up to 20 years in prison. The first felony trial ended in hung jury. The second led to an acquittal in November. All told, Trump administration prosecutors, working alongside U.S. Border Patrol as well as Fish and Wildlife officials, have brought charges against nine No More Deaths volunteers in the past two and a half years.

Monday's reversal offers the latest evidence that the lengthy prosecutorial campaign has not only failed, it has now resulted in two novel cases in which RFRA has been used to successfully defend the provision of humanitarian aid on the border. Not only that, Márquez included in her decision a critique of the government's reasoning — one that Franke described as a "stinging defeat."

Federal prosecutors had argued that the government had a compelling interest in "enforcing the border and controlling immigration," Márquez wrote, and while the defendants were not charged with immigration offenses, the government "nonetheless" argued that their actions "furthered and encouraged illegal smuggling activity" on the wildlife refuge. "The government seems to rely on a deterrence theory, reasoning that preventing clean water and food from being placed on the refuge would increase the risk of death or extreme illness for those seeking to cross unlawfully, which in turn would discourage or deter people from attempting to enter without authorization," the judge wrote. "In other words, the government claims a compelling interest in preventing defendants from interfering with a border enforcement strategy of deterrence by death."

"This gruesome logic is profoundly disturbing," Márquez wrote. "It is also speculative and unsupported by evidence." In 2017, 32 sets of human remains were recovered on the Cabeza Prieta Wildlife Refuge, the judge noted. "The government produced no evidence that these fatalities had any effect in deterring unlawful entry," she wrote. "Nor has the government produced evidence that increasing the death toll would have such an effect."

Greg Kuykendall, the lead attorney in Scott Warren's misdemeanor and felony cases, said the reversal was correct on both legal and moral grounds. "It's an incredibly thoughtful and well-reasoned opinion," Kuykendall told *The Intercept*. In addition to offering a clear historical account of when and how RFRA should be applied, Kuykendall argued that Márquez's diagnosis of "strategy of deterrence by death" reflected a clear-eyed understanding of what's at stake in criminalizing humanitarian aid. "That's exactly what it is," Kuykendall said. "That's what the government refuses to actually openly state, but they need dead bodies in order for their deterrence strategies to work."

"It's been laid out for judges in the past," Kuykendall went on to say, "but she has connected the dots and very clearly explains that for the government's enforcement strategy to work, the more dead bodies the better, and in fact, if you don't have dead bodies, then it's not working."

6 Feb - Ramsey Orta Support Needed!

Ramsey Orta is paying a heavy price for filming the cold blooded murder of Eric Garner by an NYPD officer.

MORE:

He's a political prisoner, and as such we formed a small support group to provide material support while he's in prison. For those who can, please send \$5, \$10 or whatever amount you can afford for his commissary so he doesn't risk being poisoned by the COs who constantly write him up for the smallest infractions.

Our goal is to raise \$500 to meet his needs while incarcerated. He is due for release in early July.

Also send a letter to Ramsey so he knows and the guards know he has community support.

On July 17, 2014, Ramsey not only witnessed the murder of his friend, but also recorded it on his phone, as the NYPD murdered Eric with impunity. By turning over the footage to the *New York Daily News*, Ramsey

ignited a firestorm of national and international awareness about the extra-judicial lynchings being carried out by police forces all over this country. Ramsey Orta is the young hero most responsible for the grass-roots growth of the cop watch movement. Without Ramsey Orta, no one would know what happened to his friend Eric Garner. Even though there were two other NYPD chokehold executions on Staten Island prior to Eric Garner's, they are not generally known: Ernest Sayon in 1994, and Alfred Nelson in 2002. Al Sharpton knew about Nelson, but chose not to help his family, and ultimately abandoned Ramsey after promising to protect him by moving him and his family off Staten Island. Instead, he left him to be targeted and harassed by the NYPD, who have had it in for Ramsey ever since he released the video. They planted evidence, and indicted him on bogus charges of gun and drug possession. They attempted to kill him with rat poison when he was on Riker's Island. They targeted and arrested Ramsey and his family, so that in order to protect his mother from prosecution, he ended up agreeing to a plea deal of 4 years jail time.

Ever since he entered jail in October of 2016, Ramsey has been persecuted as the political prisoner he is. He was moved to a succession of jails, which put him far away from his loved ones, most especially his fiancée, and a large number of supporters. Probably because of numerous unfounded violations brought against him by corrections officers, he was denied parole in August, 2019, and thrown into solitary confinement yet again, immediately after testifying against Daniel Pantaleo (the NYPD officer who choked Eric Garner to death) in May. He must wait until July of 2020 for his release from jail.

WHAT CAN YOU DO

Ramsey is currently at Mohawk Correctional Facility. He needs our help:

- You can donate to his PayPal account. He uses his PayPal donations for commissary, phone calls, and packages. First you need to create your own account and go to <https://www.paypal.com/myaccount/summary>. Then click on "Send." Next, you fill in officialramseyorta@gmail.com in the box. And finally you fill in the amount.
- You can also donate to the "Welcome Home Ramsey Fund" here: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/ramsey-orta-welcome-home-fund>. These donations will be set aside for the time when Ramsey has been released.
- Another gofundme will be set up soon to cover the cost of visits by supporters to the jail. Check with the Ramsey Orta: Support Network on facebook @SupportRamseyOrta

6 Feb - Update to Supporters – Still Waiting for Sentencing Date

Please read the latest about the ongoing case of the Kings Bay Plowshares 7.

MORE:

We continue to wait for a sentencing date to be announced. There have been delays in getting all the necessary pre-sentencing reports done by the probation officers. The defendants were originally told that sentencing would be 60-90 days from the conviction date on October 24th. After the reports are received each defendant has two weeks to make any corrections of their record and challenge the probation office's findings. Then there is additional time for more responses from the government. Sentencing may take place in March.

Shortly after the trial an appeal was filed to drop one of two charges; one for destruction of government property or another for depredation of property on a naval base. The attorneys argued that the two charges are redundant, and one should be dropped (the 2 charges appear to be for the same thing). There has been no decision on this appeal so far.

7 Feb - Chuck Sims Africa freed: final jailed Move 9 member released from prison

A very satisfying victory, although WAY too delayed.

MORE:

by Ed Pilkington (*The Guardian*)

One of the great open wounds of the black liberation struggle of the 1970s has finally been healed with the release of the last member of the Move 9, the group of radicals rounded up in a Philadelphia police siege in 1978 and held behind bars for more than four decades.

Chuck Sims Africa, 59, walked free from the Fayette state correctional institution in La Belle, Pennsylvania, on Friday morning. The youngest of the incarcerated group, he has been in custody since shortly after he turned 18.

His freedom marked his reunion with his family for the first time in almost 42 years. It was also historic, as it closed a chapter that had remained unfinished since the black power movement erupted in the late 1960s.

Alongside the Black Panthers, Philadelphia's Move organisation was central to the volatile and at times violent struggle for black equality that lasted until the 1980s.

Members of the organisation regarded themselves – and still do to this day – as part of a family dedicated to race equality, with all members taking the last name "Africa". Part Panthers and part eco-hippies, they also had a commitment to environmental justice that was ahead of its time.

Mike Africa Jr, the son of two of the Move 9, said Chuck's release put an end to a long and gruelling campaign. "We will never have to shout 'Free the Move 9!' ever again. It's been 41 years, and now we'll never have to say it."

For Mike Africa, who is also Chuck's nephew, the release was especially poignant. He was born in a cell five weeks after his mother, Debbie Sims Africa, Chuck's sister, was rounded up in the 1978 siege and incarcerated – she gave birth to him unbeknown to the prison guards and kept him hidden with her in the cell for the first few days of his life.

The *Guardian* began investigating the prolonged imprisonment of the Move 9 in 2018 as part of an examination into black power behind bars. At that time all the surviving members of the group were still in custody in various Pennsylvania prisons.

Members of the group described in letters, emails and prison interviews how they had endured so many years inside while keeping their spirits high. Janine Phillips Africa said that she raised therapy dogs in her cell and grew vegetables in the prison yard, avoiding birthdays or holidays that reminded her of the passage of time.

"The years are not my focus," she wrote in a letter to the *Guardian*. "I keep my mind on my health and the things I need to do day by day."

Delbert Orr Africa said: "We've suffered the worst that this system can throw at us – decades of imprisonment, loss of loved ones. So we know we are strong."

Soon after the *Guardian* began its investigation, the seven surviving members of the group began to be released on parole. First up was Debbie Sims Africa, set free in June 2018. "We are peaceful people," she said as she stepped out of Cambridge Springs prison.

Then the other six began to emerge, one after the other like falling dominoes:

- Mike Africa Sr, October 2018
- Janine Phillips Africa and Janet Holloway Africa, May 2019
- Eddie Goodman Africa, June 2019
- Delbert Orr Africa, January 2020

Chuck Sims Africa completes the set.

The Move 9 were arrested following a massive police siege of their collective headquarters and home in Powelton Village, Philadelphia, on 8 August 1978. Hundreds of police officers in Swat teams armed with machine guns, teargas, bulldozers and water cannons surrounded the property following a long standoff with city authorities that saw the group as a threat to the community.

The siege culminated in a police shootout in which Move members allegedly returned fire though they denied doing so. A police officer, James Ramp, was killed in the crossfire.

Nine members were arrested and held jointly responsible for Ramp's death despite forensic evidence showing he was killed with a single bullet. In 1980 the nine were convicted of third-degree murder and lesser offenses and each sentenced to 30 years to life.

Two of the nine – Merle and Phil Africa – died in prison. The remaining seven fought for many years to convince parole authorities that they were safe to be let out, pointing to clean discipline sheets in prison.

Over the past two years there have been no security incidents relating to any of the paroled individuals.

Wilson Goode, former mayor of Philadelphia, wrote to the parole board to support Chuck Africa's bid for freedom. He said: "His release will reunite a family after 40 years and I am convinced he will be a positive contributing voice to the Philadelphia community."

Goode, the first black mayor of Philadelphia, was in that position on 13 May 1985 when the second disaster relating to Move occurred. Following another prolonged bout of acrimony between the organisation and its neighbors and city authorities, the decision was taken forcibly to evict the group from its latest headquarters, then in Osage Avenue.

Another shootout broke out, and when that failed to flush them out police dropped incendiary bombs from a helicopter on to the roof of the building. A fire ensued which was allowed to spread, eventually razing to the ground 61 homes in the overwhelmingly African American neighborhood.

Eleven people in the Move house, including five children, died in the inferno. Chuck Africa's cousin, Frank, was among the adults who were killed.

All the paroled members of the Move 9 are now preparing to mark the 35th anniversary of the tragedy. For the first time they will be able to commemorate the event and the relatives and peers they lost outside a prison cell.

8 Feb - Anti-prison Activist Arrested Following GEO Group Protest in December

Activist taken from her home on February 7th despite upcoming trial against private prison company GEO Group.

MORE:

Activist Alexis Butler was arrested without warning from her home in Dania Beach, Florida on Friday night when police showed up at her door.

Butler was originally arrested on December 3, 2019 for protesting at the Boca Raton headquarters of GEO Group, a private, for-profit prison corporation. GEO also owns and manages detention camps has contracted by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Butler was one of nine protesters arrested for blocking entry into GEO's corporate office. All nine protesters arrested on the December 3 were released on their own recognizance later that evening, and all but one were charged with "misdemeanor trespassing."

Six of the "GEO 9" will be appearing in court on Tuesday, February 11. A Rally is planned outside the Palm Beach County Courthouse as a show of community support.

Butler was shocked and frightened when the Broward Sheriff's Office showed up at her door Friday evening and informed her they were carrying out an arrest warrant citing new charges, previously not disclosed to Butler or any of the GEO 9.

"We had no idea there was even a warrant issued," says Butler's partner, shaken. "I kept asking them to show me the warrant, but they were already taking her away. They said it was a digital warrant so they refused to show it to me."

As of 9 AM Saturday morning Alexis Butler is still being held at Broward Main Jail, in downtown Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

10 Feb - Amid Crackdown on Activists, Support Groups Help Resistance Continue Behind Bars

Please read this great article, which gives an overview of project FANG (an NYC ABC project) among other things.

MORE:

by Shane Burley (*Truthout*)

"I have a confession to make: I'm an antifascist, and I'm going to jail for it," David Campbell wrote the night before he reported to Rikers Island in New York City.

January 20, 2018, the New York City Police Department (NYPD) broke Campbell's leg in two places while arresting him during an anti-fascist protest event that was held in response to a far right event happening in the city. Police alleged that Campbell had attacked a right-wing event attendee and tried to strangle the officer who arrested him. When surveillance footage failed to corroborate these claims, the initial charges were dropped. Instead, Campbell eventually had gang assault added to his list of charges, which activists say was politically motivated since the charges seem to stem from Campbell's participation in an anti-fascist protest. The gang assault charges would hold him responsible for all injuries that occurred in the conflict, even if he did not personally commit them.

Campbell now is serving an 18-month prison sentence from a non-cooperating plea bargain, a haunting result for an organizer whose goal had been to build a movement against racism in his community.

"It's totally mind-boggling to see him framed as a violent person, to see him imprisoned," says Carmichael Monaco, a member of Campbell's solidarity team who is organizing his prison support. "I think the NYPD

had an agenda to pin violence on anti-fascist organizing in general, and I think that when they broke David's leg during his arrest, they felt a need to justify their own violence."

Campbell is now separated from the community he had built doing his anti-fascist activism, which is why a team of his peers has formed to return a piece of that community to him. His solidarity team — a group of activists providing ongoing material support to Campbell — is hoping to continue this support system, first by ensuring that he gets a steady stream of visitors, letters and care packages, and also making sure that people donate funds to keep Campbell healthy. In response, Campbell is also encouraging that supporters offer funds to the No New Jails campaign, which is fighting plans to expand prisons in New York and elsewhere.

"If this is what they do to me, a nerdy, normal-ish young everyday antifascist in 2019, then you can be sure that much, much worse is coming, and possibly for you — unless you make it clear now that this is unacceptable behavior from any government agency in an ostensibly free and fair society," Campbell wrote. "Call bullshit on this. Even if you don't like me, agree with me, or approve of my tactics, call bullshit on this case, for all our sakes."

State Repression of Activism

The assumption that activists who end up in jail have "crossed the line" and have engaged in actions that should not be sanctioned by the rest of the activist community ignores the long history of state repression, aggressive policing and selective prosecution that is endemic to the system of mass incarceration.

Historically, aggressive sentencing is often applied to political protest actions, particularly nonviolent actions that disrupt government or corporate entities. For example, COINTELPRO, an FBI project in the 1960s and 1970s, sought to disrupt radical movements, particularly in the Black and Indigenous communities, and created mass criminal prosecutions that were either spurious, exaggerated, or, in some cases, based on faulty evidence. More recently, during the "Green Scare" of the early 2000s, many environmental and animal rights activists faced massive sentences for very minor forms of civil disobedience, all resulting from corporate lobbying efforts to make disruptive activism considered a form of terrorism.

Now, with protesters confronting racialized police killings, immigration jails and the threat of fascist violence in the streets, it is increasingly likely that activists will face prison terms for the organizing that was considered standard practice to the last generation. For marginalized communities, this threat is only amplified, and as social justice movements ramp up their ability to really confront and transform systemic injustice, this has led to even more retaliation by law enforcement.

Remembering Those Who Are Locked Up

For many who are organizing in the era of Donald Trump and militarized policing, criminal prosecution for what often amounts to civil disobedience or "normal" protest action is a very real concern. To respond to this threat, many organizers are engaging in "jail support" for activists who have been imprisoned while doing their organizing work, to ensure that people who are facing retaliation from the criminal legal system continue to have the commitment of their larger communities behind them.

Jail support is often a component of larger social justice mass movements, creating structures of solidarity and care for people who have ended up incarcerated. This can take on multiple forms of support, from arranging fundraising for basic financial needs in the jail, to arranging ongoing legal counsel, to moral support, such as writing letters and sending books. And because so many movements have faced significant

periods of state crackdown, there are some organizations around the U.S. whose sole purpose is to work on the support of imprisoned activists.

One of the most persistent of these organizations is the Anarchist Black Cross, a network that has existed for over a century providing support to revolutionary communities in need, and has defined itself by supporting incarcerated people. This is borne out of its abolitionist politic, the belief that prisons themselves are illegitimate institutions that do not perpetuate justice and instead replicate the larger structural violence of our society.

With assistance from jail support organizations, people who are incarcerated can continue their organizing work and stay a part of the movements they helped build. It can provide them with resources to stay safe and healthy and return to their communities afterward, avoiding many of the hurdles of re-entry. As people are released from prison, they often find that jobs are hard to come by and many of the relationships they counted on before their conviction have dissolved. Having an organization whose purpose is to help get them resources and support them through those critical months can help ease the transition.

A prison support project from the New York Anarchist Black Cross, project FANG operates a collectively managed pool of money for prison support. Organizers run broad fundraising campaigns and then disperse money to incarcerated activists.

“Prison solidarity means being in it for the long haul. It means supporting people even when it’s hard, which it inevitably will be. It means recognizing the impacts not only on the person inside, but also on their loved ones and community,” says Jenny Dosey, an organizer with project FANG. “It means continuing the work that prisoners were doing before they went in. It means fighting for their freedom. It means working to eradicate the systems that keep them in cages.”

Organizers from project FANG highlight the growing needs of prisoners inside, particularly because of the rising costs of commissary items like dental, hygiene and personal care products, as well as the biting rates of health care co-pays in prison. Since prison labor is excluded from regular workplace regulations, incarcerated people often work for just cents an hour, making it incredibly difficult to make enough money to cover these expenses. On top of that, it can be costly to have a loved one in prison because, particularly in the federal penitentiary system, people can be housed anywhere in the country, so traveling to visit can be cost-prohibitive.

“I credit the increase in need for something like project FANG to the state and capital doing what they do — protecting each other’s interests to the detriment of the natural world, nonhuman animals, and poor and working folks (especially those of color),” says Dosey. With new movements taking an oppositional stance, the likelihood of state repression has increased, and therefore the need for community support has only become more urgent.

An Outside Movement for Those Inside

Traditionally, many jail support campaigns have been built around individual activists, and have become decades-long political issues, such as the incarceration of Mumia Abu-Jamal or Leonard Peltier, who become central figures for the larger issues of mass incarceration.

“[I] think prisoner support is important and necessary to keep people connected to the outside world and communities they came from when they are inside,” says Daniel McGowan, an environmental organizer who served time in federal prison for a controversial conviction in relation to Earth Liberation Front (ELF) actions. When McGowan reported for his sentence, he relied on the support of many in the larger

environmental, animal rights and activist community for a financial base in the increasingly expensive prison system, since his two-week paychecks often amounted to \$12 when he was incarcerated.

Now, McGowan has taken on the prison support work himself, working in a solidarity network of groups lending aid to imprisoned organizers. McGowan works with a collective that is creating the Certain Days Calendar, an annual calendar that shares stories about the prison abolition movement, the sales of which go to support prisoners and social justice organizations. He is also working with Los Angeles Anarchist Black Cross to help promote the annual Running Down the Walls 5K race, a subsistence fundraising effort for 16 current political prisoners, with NYC Books Through Bars, and with anarchist political prisoner Eric King's legal fund.

"One tangible thing people can do to help organizers inside is sending them information they need for the campaigns they are working on. I recall needing tons of print outs, articles and books to help me write articles and research legal arguments. That may not sound like a big deal, but it's so hard inside to get the information you need inside," says McGowan. "I also think that with prison organizers, invariably, the prisons crack down on them. If you are working with prison organizers, you have to be there for them when shit hits the fan."

Prisoners who organize from behind bars can be subject to harsh retaliation, including being forced into substandard cells and solitary confinement. This means that prisoners need that outside support to be consistent when things get increasingly difficult in an already caustic situation. The Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee (IWOC) is a project originally stemming from the radical labor union, the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), to organize prisoners in a union model. Organizing inside prison against issues like low pay and dangerous working conditions requires the ongoing support of activists on the outside as well.

Organizers hope that supporters will make the connections between these particular individuals and the larger political climate. Increasing incidents of police violence and prosecutorial overreach leads many to believe that there will be even more intentional repression on activists who are trying to challenge the current administration, which would make jail support an essential part of maintaining social movement longevity. For David Campbell, this means ensuring he has material support, that people continue to treat him as a trusted collaborator, and to continue that help when he is released.

"If you're reading this, I'm already in a cage. Contact with the outside world is one of the biggest predictors for good recovery from incarceration. I don't care if we haven't talked in years. Write me, visit me," Campbell wrote in a public statement before he reported to jail to serve his sentence.

13 Feb - Cypurr Social: The Matrix- People's Power House Fundraiser!

WHAT: Fundraiser

WHEN: 7:00pm, Thursday, February 13th

WHERE: Babycastles—145 West 14th Street 10011

COST: FREE, but bring your wallet—this is a fundraiser!

MORE:

Join The CyPurr Collective for another one of our SUPER FUN SOCIALS (now you know it's fun, cause we just wrote that). Come by to hang out, meet other tech-minded folks, ask questions on cybersecurity issues, and generally snack out and enjoy our feature presentation!

This month, we'll be watching The Matrix while raising some funds for the new body+, queer+ martial arts gym project, The People's Power House!

A great event for red and blue pill-takers alike, come help us raise some funds, as we go through the looking glass of a robot-generated world as we search for truth, kung-fu, and some classic meme fodder.

Short discussion to follow! Can't wait to see ya there!

16 Feb - SecuriTEA Time: FeministCyberSelfDefense

WHAT: Skillshare

WHEN: 1:00pm, Sunday, February 16th

WHERE: Bluestockings—172 Allen Street, New York 10002

COST: FREE

MORE:

From the introduction to Holistic Security:

“Caring for myself is not an indulgence, it is self-preservation and that is an act of political warfare.” - Audre Lorde

The holistic approach [to security] integrates self-care, well-being, digital security, and information security into traditional security management practices."

Our digital lives may not be as separate from our analog lives as they used to be. And, just like in the analog world, abusive and toxic dynamics play a role in continually marginalizing historically marginalized identities. This social event from the CyPurr Collective hopes to build a system of support offline by creating a comfortable space to discuss issues, share experiences, ask questions, and build up our digital-agency. All while enjoying delicious tea and snacks, of course.

16 Feb - Anarchists Care About Books (ACAB): Telex from Cuba

WHAT: Book club

WHEN: 4:00pm, Sunday, February 16th

WHERE: Bluestockings—172 Allen Street, New York 10002

COST: FREE

MORE:

Join us to discuss Telex from Cuba by Rachel Kushner.

MACC events are open to all anarchists, antifascists, anti-authoritarians and those interested in anarchist ideas and organizing.

Bluestockings is wheelchair accessible, with no steps or platforms, and wide aisles between shelves. The bathroom is not wheelchair accessible. There is a Starbucks two short blocks down the street with an accessible bathroom (at Allen and Delancey). Metered street parking is available in the blocks surrounding Bluestockings. Bluestockings is not a scent-free space, but we encourage visitors to please refrain from wearing perfumes, colognes or other scented products (including essential oils) and smoke far away from the entrance to the space.