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Updates for July 11th

21 Jun - Designing Cop City

What the evolution of the tactical village, from Riotsville to Atlanta, reveals about policing.

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by Diana Budds (*New York Magazine*)

At first glance, the renderings of the \$90 million Atlanta Public Safety Training Center look like Google's Mountain View headquarters or an idyllic college campus. Walkways are lined with flowering trees, and a pair of deep-blue lakes frame a leafy quad. In another image, children spill out of a school bus parked near a stately lecture hall, greeted by a police officer in dress uniform. The main point of departure from your average office park are images of the complex's planned replica of an Atlanta city block, its roads choked with armored vehicles and awkwardly parked police sedans. Here, police will run riot drills at a fake gas station and stage hostage interventions in apartments and motel rooms. (On another nearby lot, a high-rise tower is shown consumed in flames.) According to city leadership, these scenes of perpetual crisis are crucial to the work of police reform. As then-mayor Keisha Bottoms said in 2021, using language that has been echoed by the Atlanta Police Foundation and the project's architectural firm, the sprawling training complex, planned to open in December of 2024, offers a "physical space to ensure that our officers and firefighters are receiving 21st-century training rooted in respect and regard for the communities they serve."

But Atlanta residents who oppose the project — hundreds of people lined up to give 14 hours of testimony at a recent City Council meeting — see a hollow justification for funneling more money into law enforcement while the city itself languishes. This "reality-based training," a kind of exposure therapy meant to mimic high-stress situations law enforcement might encounter in the field, has been utilized by police departments since at least the 1930s. And while the optics around these tactical villages may have changed in the years since they first emerged as spaghetti western-style sets where law enforcement performed acts of brute strength for national media, the people fighting Atlanta's "Cop City" say very little else has.

Georgia's Fort Gordon and Fort Belvoir in Virginia are some of the earliest specially constructed tactical villages used by law enforcement. They resembled sets for old-west towns in cheap amusement parks, and they were more or less stages for police to rehearse effective riot control as cities across the country erupted into protests over police violence and racism during the 1960s. Archival footage of these facilities in Sierra Pettengill's 2022 documentary, *Riotsville, USA*, show the elaborately scripted mock riots that took place there: A group of mostly white young men stationed at the bases wear fake beards and carry signs that read "Arrest Santa Claus" and "Love Not War." They are quickly corralled by law enforcement, who confront them in tanks and Jeeps. Bleachers full of spectators erupted into applause after the "leader" of the riots, a Black serviceman, was eventually dragged into a paddy wagon. But these fake cities offered more than just field training; they were their own form of propaganda. Crude as the stagings may have been, much of the media was astonished by the spectacle. "Welcome to Riotsville," an ABC reporter deadpanned in 1968 as the crowd behind him shouted and shook their fists in the air. "This is a simulated riot in a simulated city, but as another summer approaches, it might be Anywhere, USA." A 1967 headline in the *Augusta Chronicle* about Fort Gordon reads, "Army Defeats Hippie Mobs." The sets were as much a law-enforcement comment on cities as the people who lived in them. "My initial reaction to seeing the footage was, what a rare thing to get a total fantasy film from the state's perspective of what they think America looks like," Pettengill tells me. "It was a flattening absurdity and a real open mockery."

As more federal money began to flow, training villages started to look less like high-school theater productions and more like actual cities. Hogan's Alley, built in 1987 in Quantico, Virginia, cost \$1.5

million and had Hollywood set designers consulting on the project. The results were aesthetically impressive: gabled brick Victorians and boxy cement storefronts. More buildings were added over the years, mimicking the organic growth of a real city. There's a post office, single-family homes, apartments, and a Subway franchise. Care was taken in the designer's choice of construction material: The buildings were made with extra-thick plywood that could withstand the wax bullets used in training. The realism (and expense) was considered a critical part of the training. As Jim Pledger, the special agent who directed the FBI Academy's Practical Applications Training Unit, told Time in 1990, "Crime doesn't unfold in a classroom. We realized we could no longer limit ourselves to a square brick building." And like Fort Gordon before it, Hogan's Alley seemed to function as a law-enforcement fever dream about the American city: The FBI home page describes it as "a hotbed of terrorist and criminal activity" where "mobsters, drug dealers, and international terrorists lurk around every corner." A Washington Post reporter who visited the mock city soon after it was constructed described it as a "violent Disneyland."

Demand for reality-based training only further exploded after the attacks of September 11. (A Washington, D.C., company that supplied professional actors for FBI, Secret Service, and Capitol Hill Police training scenarios said it saw a 450 percent increase in demand for its services.) A cottage industry of consultants and architects now exists to bring ever-more realistic and sophisticated design approaches to the builds, from foam furniture that eats bullets to fog machines that mimic the zero-visibility environments caused by smoke. Their sophistication grew accordingly, and so did the training benefits promised by law enforcement. The New York City Police Department's \$950 million College Point Academy, which opened in 2016, has an indoor mock village that includes a jail, a courthouse, and a fake subway station with real turnstiles and a train car, and trompe l'oeil photographs on the walls to give the space the depth of a real station. The village's other visual tricks include a bodega stocked with real (but empty) food packaging, a street scene with prop trees and hydrants, and actual squad cars set on casters. When the project was announced back in 2007, then-commissioner Raymond W. Kelly said the investment was crucial to the needs of a modern police force: "We've expanded both the size of the force and its mission to include new counterterrorism and intelligence programs, expanded community outreach and greater focus on quality of life. All these activities create new demands on the Police Academy that this facility will meet."

Michael Birzer, a criminal-justice professor at Wichita State University who researches police behavior, policy, and operations, believes this type of training becomes more critical as it is perfected. "Creating an environment that is almost perfectly matched to what an officer's going to be experiencing when he gets into the community better prepares that officer to go into the community. So you want to make that environment look as similar as possible." Judith Anderson, a psychology professor at the University of Toronto, argues that training in mock cities that includes emotional coaching will teach law enforcement to "control the cascade of stress chemicals" so that they fire their guns less often and more accurately.

But the impact of hyperrealistic bodegas, like all police reform, is difficult to quantify. There have been some positive changes to policing in the years since millions of people flooded the streets in protest of George Floyd's murder — like a recent neighborhood-policing initiative in Brownsville and more departments banning chokeholds — but police violence remains a crisis. A 2022 Washington Post investigation found that since 2020 the rate of police killings of Black people — which is significantly higher than other racial groups — has increased. A 2021 study by University of Washington researchers, which was published in The Lancet, found that police killings have been massively undercounted, by about half, over the past four decades. "Reform is sold to the American public as a way of saying, 'Policing is not working the way it's meant to be working; we can just train our way out of it,'" Pettengill says. "When in fact it is working the way it's designed to be working."

Cop City is a microcosm of this whiplash: After the brutal police response from Atlanta police to the 2020 uprisings — six officers were charged with excessive force, but those charges were later dropped — there was a promise made to the residents that the department would do better. And a new training facility, with its claims to "21st-century policing," was just the place to practice doing better. But in the nearly two years of protests against Cop City, domestic-terrorism charges have been levied against 42 people protesting the project, and one person has been killed. Police are now stationed around the construction site, like a crisis

scene out of the tactical village being built there. The City Council asked the department to reconsider the decision, saying that allocating officers to stand guard is hurting crime-fighting efforts elsewhere. Police Chief Darin Schierbaum said he couldn't make the change: "There are those who want to harm my officers."

June 29th - Domestic terrorism charges in Georgia are prompting concern over political repression

by Odette Yousef (*NPR*)

When Luke Harper went to Atlanta in early March, he thought he would just be staying the weekend. Harper, a 27-year-old copywriter from Florida, was going there to join demonstrators in opposition to the planned construction of a new police and fire training facility. But on his second night, after attending a music festival with other protesters, Harper was arrested and accused of being a "domestic terrorist." Despite having no prior criminal history, Harper was denied bond several times and finally left the DeKalb County jail in early June.

"I was released on day 90, which is the basically the last day that they could legally keep me incarcerated without an indictment," Harper said. "And I'm still unindicted as of now."

The controversy over the planned Atlanta Public Safety Training Center — which opponents have dubbed "Cop City" — has been growing for two years. Spearheaded by a private organization, the Atlanta Police Foundation, it would site a state-of-the-art facility on 85 acres of land that the city acquired a century ago to use as a prison farm. Proponents say the project is badly needed to replace the Atlanta Police Department's dilapidated training facilities. But what started as a local debate has ballooned into a flashpoint around several issues with national resonance.

"You have the fight against environmental defense. You have the fight for racial equality. You have the fight against capitalism. And of course, you have the fight against police militarization or the fight for [police] abolition," said Matt Scott, a journalist with the Atlanta Community Press Collective.

Scott said that the temperature rose even further when law enforcement agencies in Georgia began invoking a rarely-used statute against opponents of the project.

"Back in December, with the original batch of domestic terrorism charges, there was a sort of a higher level of interest nationally," he said. That accelerated in January, when a Georgia State Patrol officer shot and killed Manuel "Tortuguita" Terán, an activist who had been living with other opponents of the training facility in a forest near the proposed site. During that encounter, where an officer was also shot and injured, additional activists were arrested with the allegation of domestic terrorism. To date, 42 people have been accused of domestic terrorism in their arrest warrants.

"Our state affiliate in Georgia and we at the national office have been watching what's been happening very, very closely," said Hina Shamsi, director of the ACLU's National Security Project. "What's been happening with Cop City is a stark demonstration of how overbroad state domestic terrorism laws, like Georgia's, can be used to disproportionately punish people, including protesters who express political beliefs."

Georgia's law could become a national test case for state domestic terrorism statutes

According to the National Conference on State Legislatures, Georgia, New York and Vermont are the only states with laws about "domestic terrorism" or a "domestic act of terrorism." But many more states have terrorism statutes that further criminalize acts that are intended to "influence the policy of government" by "intimidation or coercion." To some, these statutes leave too much room for abuse.

"They really are a political instrument," said Lauren Regan, an attorney and executive director of the Civil Liberties Defense Center. "There are already numerous criminal statutes that would adequately prosecute

the alleged criminal act, [such as] murder, assault, battery, menacing. There's already a ton of crimes that could cover this."

But Regan and others who have handled terrorism cases in various jurisdictions say state anti-terrorism statutes have, to date, been largely untested. This may change with the allegations against defendants in Georgia. One defendant, Ariel Ebaugh, has filed a writ of habeas corpus directly challenging the constitutionality of Georgia's domestic terrorism statute. The attorney behind the writ, Stanley Cohen, said he believes the language of the law runs afoul of federal First Amendment rights, as well as Georgia's constitution.

"Speech is protected, assembly is protected, association is protected. Yes, there can be a line that is crossed. It wasn't crossed here," Cohen said. "And even if it was crossed, prosecution under this statute would be impermissible because it's vague, overly broad and ambiguous."

The domestic terrorism charge in Georgia must be tied to an underlying felony.

Law enforcement officials in Georgia say that demonstrators have been violent.

At a January press conference following Terán's killing, Georgia Bureau of Investigation Director Michael Register said that Terán had fired the shot that injured an officer. Five months later, however, the GBI still has not released results of its investigation. Register and the head of Atlanta's Police Department have also claimed that activists have committed crimes including arson, assault, intimidation, using explosives, throwing rocks at officers and setting booby traps. The GBI declined requests for an interview, and APD referred questions about the domestic terrorism charges to the GBI.

But so far, none of the 42 defendants have seen evidence or specific charges alleging that they engaged in those acts. While they were accused of domestic terrorism in their arrest warrants, indictments are still forthcoming. This is true even for individuals who were detained in December.

"I don't think they really had a lot of focus in getting a conviction under that [domestic terrorism] statute," said Regan. "I think they were using it to scare people into submission."

Some GOP leaders in Georgia have boosted the narrative that the opposition movement comes from other states

To Alex Papali, another defendant in this case, the way that law enforcement agencies have targeted mostly non-Georgia residents with the domestic terrorism label has felt clearly political. Papali was at the music festival in the forest in March. He said when word got around that police had arrived, panic set in. He said officers detained anyone they were able to catch.

"It was just totally arbitrary and random," Papali said. "But at one point they asked people where they're from and they separated all the Georgia residents from all the out-of-town folks... and then they let them leave."

Papali, a Massachusetts resident, was among those taken to DeKalb County Jail and labeled as a domestic terrorist.

"It couldn't have been more transparent that they were trying to create this narrative of 'outside agitators' coming in to disrupt the peaceful community," he said, "when the reality was there was a lot of local residents who also were supporting this event."

Some Republican elected leaders in Georgia are amplifying the narrative that the opposition movement is highly organized and from other states. In an interview on WANF-TV, Attorney General Christopher Carr stated without a trace of doubt: "If you come to this state, engage in acts of violence to destroy

infrastructure and property with the intended effect of changing public policy, it is a domestic terrorism charge." Carr's office did not respond to requests for interview.

But in Atlanta, a city that considers itself the cradle of the Civil Rights movement, this framing feels familiar.

"Dr. [Martin Luther] King [Jr.] was labeled an outside agitator at some point and he was born right here in the city of Atlanta, just like I am," said Rev. Keyanna Jones, an organizer with Community Movement Builders and the Faith Coalition to Stop Cop City.

Until recently, Jones lived right next to the proposed training facility site, but moved away because the Atlanta Police Department currently uses part of it for target practice. Jones said the sound of gunfire throughout the day was taking a toll on her young son. But even though she has left the city of Atlanta, she continues her activism on behalf of her neighbors and allies in the movement.

"I have never seen repression like this before. This is something that I did not think I would see in modern times," Jones said. "What the state of Georgia is trying to do is say that protest is not legal, that protesting is wrong. That if you go against me, then you're going to be punished."

Jones and others have increasingly felt this to be true in light of the recent arrests of three bail fund workers, under charges of charity fraud and money laundering. The arrest warrants in those cases allege that the fund was channeling money to Defend the Atlanta Forest, characterized in the document as "a group classified by the United States Department of Homeland Security as Domestic Violent Extremists."

However, DHS does not classify or label domestic extremism groups, and there is no federal law criminalizing domestic terrorism, because of first amendment concerns. These defendants, too, are awaiting formal charges in an indictment and so have not had an opportunity to respond to the allegations.

To many who believe the domestic terrorism charges are baseless, there are signs that prosecutors may, in fact, be struggling. First, there is the failure to indict the defendants. And on Friday, DeKalb County District Attorney Sherry Boston abruptly announced that her office was withdrawing from prosecuting the case, leaving the state AG as the sole prosecuting jurisdiction.

"It is clear to both myself and the attorney general that we have fundamentally different prosecution philosophies," Boston said in an interview on WABE-FM. Her office declined to be interviewed by *NPR*.

But even if the charges are dropped, or a grand jury fails to indict, some defendants worry that the toxic label of "domestic terrorist" may stick.

"The first weight of that came to me when... my mug shot was posted up on some fascist Twitter [account], and I had to have the conversation with my parents that they might start receiving death threats," said Vienna Forrest, who was arrested in December. "That's going to be something that'll follow me for a long time."

26 Jun - Leonard Peltier Statement to the 24th Annual Oglala Commemoration

This also marks the 48th Anniversary of the 1975 Oglala Fight that ultimately led to Leonard's capture and imprisonment.

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Greetings my relatives, friends, supporters, loved ones. I want you to understand that after all these years in prison, I may not think like you, I may not talk in a way you think I should talk, but times like these wear on you.

You get old. Your knees hurt. Your back hurts. Everything hurts.

You get to a point where you see things as they really are, past the flowery words that people use to make you feel good about things that are irrelevant.

In talking about my case, sometimes I think I talk too much about it, sometimes not enough. In thinking about freedom and thinking about justice, it is very hard to not think about it. When you are imprisoned, when you are in a box, a large coffin, day in and day out, year in and year out, it never ends. It's like you are buried alive. At this particular time of my imprisonment, not just me, but other prisoners in this maximum-security facility are constantly put on unjustifiable lockdown, where we are confined to our cells, day after day.

It's like a prison within a prison. We are confined to a 6 by 10-foot space, with barely any room to move and we can't exercise, shower, or get medical attention. This has been happening constantly and it is a form of torture and is basically illegal.

Somewhere in the constitution, there is a law against cruel and unusual punishment. This is happening so often it's cruel as hell, and it's becoming to where it's not even unusual.

There needs to be a change to take place. We need people to contact their Members of Congress, Senators, and the President. The United States is not supposed to be the way it's become.

What's happening to me, and these other prisoners could happen to you, your family, and members of your community. If we can't put a stop to it, it will become normal, and people will die and commit suicide in prison. They will lose all hope that there can be any relief from their suffering. Reach out wherever you can to make a difference, to make a change. Maybe I'm talking too much about prison, but I can't talk enough about justice in this world, in this nation.

Every piece of evidence used to convict me has been proven false in court. It is built on lies. They broke all kinds of international laws to get me out of Canada. They have not lived up to the agreements they signed when they extradited me. These things are a matter of court record – not me just saying it with an attitude. Information is still coming to light about two nations colluding to bury me.

On that day in 1975, I stood against the extermination of our people. Almost five decades later I still stand, undestroyed.

For almost five decades my life has been a series of tortures. In Canada I was held on death row, in a cellblock with no light, waiting to be executed. In Leavenworth they kept me in the hole for weeks without telling my people, in 130-degree heat. In Marion I was held under complete sensory deprivation. In Coleman 1 I have been locked down for two years in a filthy coffin without medical care, communication, or even a shower, for weeks at a time.

Still, I stand in the truth.

I could have left prison on a lie, but my sacrifice must count for something, or my life counts as nothing.

Beyond that, I want to remind everyone of the need for us to help our children develop strong coping skills. Help them develop healthy leisure activities. We need to find a way to combat the rampant meth abuse I have become aware of throughout our reservations, and alcoholism, which has always been our downfall. Alcohol is a drug. Common people don't think of it as a drug, but it is something that has caused lasting generational trauma. Lasting generational damage to the DNA of our people and the children coming along.

Aside from all that, we need to develop survival skills so that our children know how to talk, to speak, conduct themselves, to know what to watch out for in this country that hates us.

They want what we have, and we stand in the way of it. They want the resources that are left on our reservations. They want gold. Uranium. Now they are wanting all the stuff it takes to make batteries, and they look to the reservations, land that hasn't been exploited.

You don't hear of them digging up a farmer's field anywhere, or moving a rich man's house, but they don't have trouble condemning an Indian's house, or land, and taking that.

We have to prepare ourselves. We have to take responsibility for our health and our wellbeing.

The food we are forced to eat, one way or another, is contaminated with poisons. We are given a shelf-life of years for food that will spoil in a day.

All of these things contribute to bad health. Bad hearts. Cancer.

These are things I am forced to think of in prison. I love our people. I stand for our people. If it was not for that, I don't know where I would be, but I probably wouldn't be in here.

You need to do your part. You need to stand up. You need to speak out. You need to not only speak out, but you need to do things. You need to do what's necessary to stop the exploitation and destruction of our people and our land. The best way to do that is through education. Make sure our children know how to provide for themselves and future generations and this Mother Earth.

The education system that has put us where we are at now is detrimental to life itself. Life seeks life.

Life isn't based on chemicals and oil. Life is based on the natural things the Creator made for us. We are connected to the trees. The trees give us oxygen. They give us shade. They give us food. They give us building materials – all these things.

That is why I am trying to promote a "plant a tree" movement around the world. A Food Forest.

You know, there is nothing I can do from in here. I do my best to use the limited contacts I have to enhance life for future generations, our children's children, children of the whole earth.

This is something we all need to do.

In talking, I want to remember Joe Stuntz. A lot of people have given their lives for the Movement. Joe Stuntz gave his life that day, June 26th. A young man stood as a man and said, "You can't come here. You can't treat us this way."

They shot him and killed him.

Joe didn't die. His spirit lives on. The spirit of resistance. The spirit of standing up for what's right and trying to right what is wrong.

This day of remembrance, a day of honoring people who stood here on these grounds. When I say "these grounds", all the grounds across the earth are ours. We are indigenous to this land. There are other people who are citizens here, but they are not indigenous to this land. They may be from Europe, Asia, any place else around the world, but we are indigenous to this land.

Wherever we stand. Wherever we walk, we walk amongst the ashes of our people.

I want you to enjoy this day, enjoy tomorrow, but do what you have to do. To be prepared, to prepare your children for all of the things that are coming down because of this society that believes they are always one purchase away from happiness.

Everybody in this society and the corporations teach you to live like a drug addict – anything for a quick fix.

We need to live for the generations. We need to live for our people.

If my words and thoughts sound a bit scattered, I do not often get a chance to express myself to you. There are so many things I want to say. Maybe I have said too much, or not enough.

I love you. I care about you. I pray about you.

I seek my freedom. In seeking my freedom, I hope I can overturn the illegal attitudes that have put me here and caused many of our people to over crowd prisons.

In South Dakota, I think the state population is around 15% for Native people, but we make up 45% of the prison population.

That's wrong. That is because of poverty, a lack of education, and the boarding schools that did their best to destroy us.

Having said all that – I love you. I care about you. I want you to be safe. I want you to live safe, I want you to live healthy.

Remember me. If you can, plant a tree.

For now, your relative, brother, elder, Leonard Peltier.

26 Jun - Pig Trial 4 Comes to an End

In 2019 in Quebec, Canada, folks entered a pig farm to orchestrate a blockade. Eleven people were arrested and charged with breaking and entering and impeding a police officer.

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As well as the blockade, they released a huge amount of footage showcasing the horrible conditions the pigs had to endure in their confinement.

After the action, the footage obtained was publicly released, causing a huge ripple effect. MAPAQ (the Ministry of Agriculture in Quebec), had never once inspected the Progreg farm in their forty years of existence. They visited the farm just a week after the occupation for the first time since the farm had opened, which made the farm lose its license. Due to the pressure and footage from the activists they ended up losing all investors and customers, shutting down the farm for good.

Since then, the eleven activists have had a long process through their trial, where the farmer insisted that they had turned the thermostats in the breeding units down and complained about the fact that they had to close down.

All activists were found guilty and sentencing was delivered last week. From the eleven, five people received suspended sentences, and six folks received conditional discharges. They also received two years of probation and ordered to pay 500 dollars fine to a charity of the judge's choice, as well as 100 hours of community service.

27 Jun - Anarchist Amadeu Casellas has been imprisoned again

From Libertat Amadeu, English version via Dark Nights

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After the last trial of comrade Amadeu, in which 8 years of jail were requested for a robbery in a watchmaker, the State sentenced him to 4 years in jail. As he had been waiting for trial, Amadeu had been released.

Once free, Amadeu, with the support of the soli-group, decided to submit an appeal to the Supreme Court, an appeal that is not accepted. So, he chose to ask for the pardon, this was also rejected.

The court decided to execute the conviction, so they now want to imprison Amadeu again.

Taking into account that it being a sentence of less than 5 years, the lawyer requested that the third degree be granted directly. This was rejected, without consideration, so it makes us think that the only reason is because Amadeu is who he is. We regret to communicate that Amadeu had to enter prison again on June 12. So, we shout again...Free Amadeu!!!!

27 Jun - Statements of Alfredo Cospito & Anna Beniamino

We are circulating Alfredo Cospito's statement at the June 19 hearing in the court of appeals in Turin on the calculation of sentences against Alfredo himself and Anna Beniamino as part of the Scripta Manent trial.

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From La Nemesi, English version via Dark Nights

Alfredo Cospito

This statement of mine is closely related to the trial because it goes into the merits of the sanctioning treatment you imposed on me. Sanctioning treatment that is unconstitutional and contradicts your own laws. Sanctioning treatment, 41 bis, that distorts the very meaning of my imprisonment, imposing on me a senseless censure that limits my right to defense.

It is obvious to all how my trial affair has been used as a sort of cudgel by one political party, "the government," against another political party, the so-called "opposition." My last-minute transfer from one section to another in anticipation of the arrival of PD parliamentarians is a striking example. Which shows how the DAP and 41 bis have been exploited for political purposes.

These facts are closely related to this trial because they are the product of past political dynamics that led to our disproportionate prosecution and conviction for political slaughter. To shut my mouth now, at the only time I can defend myself would mean endorsing this dangerous and totalitarian drift. Before talking about Fossano and the so-called "massacre" (although there is little to say, it would be enough to look at the images of the damage of the tremendous explosion) for just two minutes I will have to mention three deaths, two of which I am somehow responsible for, the third death that of Cosimo occurred at the clinical center of Opera, ward 41 bis.

They are all deaths linked to my case because they are linked to the impunity of the regime in which I have had to struggle and survive for a year now in order not to succumb. I cannot remain silent, I owe it to those sentenced to death locked up in that clinical center, I owe it to those who have been left to die and to those who at this moment in the Sassari prison are letting themselves die to make their voices heard. I owe it to Domenico Porcelli who has been on hunger strike for four months. At his side are his children and Maria Pintus, his lawyer. Supporting him are those few anarchist, communist and Sardinian independence revolutionaries who at the cost of jail and repression are fighting against 41 bis. Domenico for the state is a mafioso, therefore indefensible cannon fodder, for him the constitution does not apply. For him no cloying

catwalk of politicians, no media attention. I am sure, Domenico will not make headlines even when he is dead. As, moreover, has already happened to two poor souls who died one after the other on hunger strike in the Augusta prison. And for which I feel responsible, because influenced by the media hound that followed my strike, they gambled by quickly slipping to their deaths. Their deaths caused no stir, a complicit and obscene silence enveloped them. One of them was a Russian citizen and was simply asking to be repatriated. Imagine what would have happened if it had been an Italian who had starved to death in a Russian prison—humanitarian associations and the media would have raised a fuss. Instead, his death went unnoticed, indifference was total, revealing the hypocritical, racist, imperialist face of the West. The hypocritical face of the same ethical state that in order to keep its old complicities hidden keeps up the 41 bis horror slum. An open secret that has been resisting for 30 years, that no one has the courage to confront, whoever touches dies ... and that will end, in the will of those who conceived it, only when the last witness of that agreement between the State and the Mafia is dead and buried within these walls.

Sometimes I have the doubt that it is the system itself that wants to be told, why else move to Opera to what Nordio had the courage to describe as a medical facility of excellence. A chaotic and deadly slum where the old and dying are parked in solitude waiting for death. In this subspecies of asylum in the hallways it rains, summer you die of heat, air conditioning does not work, winter you die of cold. At the windows wolf mouths, cockroaches, ants, mosquitoes go crazy tormenting people who are bedridden, paralyzed, elderly, dying, blind.

Between June and October 2022, in a clinical center that can “house” 12 people, six did not make it, did not survive. If you are lucky a few days or hours before death you are transferred to the hospital where treatment is more humane, but where you always die among strangers without the affection of loved ones. Everything is on the shoulders of the boys and girls who clean and scramble between diapers and medicines, and the nurses—and who try to do their best but are few in number. The doctor in charge shifts the responsibility to the nurses, often calling herself sick, which is quite embarrassing. Of course, speaking of inmates in precarious health situations where just being neglected a tad more is enough to see you slip to your death, objections from the sick are scarce. But a few fearless inmates have protested and the courts have agreed with them, but speaking of 41 bis, a world apart and children of a lesser god, everything has remained the same.

No one should die isolated in a cell, under the cold eye of a camera filming him in the room 24 hours a day. As happened in June 2022 to Cosimo Di Lauro. This inmate died of starvation, he was not on hunger strike, he had simply stopped drinking and eating, according to the testimonies I have heard, and not only from inmates, “his head was not in it.” One morning the guard found him dead, monitored in his cell by a camera, his agony filmed, without anyone lifting a finger. Di Lauro never made it to the hospital, unlike yours truly, transported to the hospital at the slightest hint of illness even though his life was not in immediate danger. Cosimo a simple “mafioso” and in addition unable to reason and assert his rights was left to die. An investigation was opened, testimonies were taken, including those of a courageous prisoner, but everything was covered up, until today at least....

So many things I have seen in my year of 41 bis. It is not only deaths that are covered up but it can happen that 41 bis is misused for other purposes. And this “misuse” covered up. To be covered up is the all too clear use of DAP by the government to go after the so-called “opposition.” I’m talking about the parade of PD deputies in Sassari and the government’s instrumental use of the DAP briefings that concerned me to go after the PD. To make a point, the stupid placing of Fratelli d’Italia in parliament. Indicative is my transfer just a few days before the arrival of the parliamentarians (of which I am sure, the government was aware) from a “quiet” section where I was spending my days in solitude to a section where in the distorted view of the DAP there were the “big” pieces of Sassari, the so-called bosses. Who said by the way did everything they could to convince me to stop the strike, and who were then pilloried in the media because of me? No one will get it out of my head that the DAP was “inspired” by the government. Just after the visit of the parliamentarians the section was dismembered and I transferred to Opera.

How many naive traps were set for me that then regularly backfired on the system itself? Seizure of court notes turned into pizzini, the ludicrous accusation of an alliance between the Mafia and anarchists, the surreal accusation of pretending to go on strike.

The conviction I've formed over the past year is that 41 bis has no real goal of breaking the phenomenon of criminal organizations. But to gag a generation of mobsters, whom the state 30 years ago used and then betrayed. Locking them in here until they die shutting their mouths forever, and that is because of the fear that once they are out the dark secrets of the republic can be revealed. This is as I said the open secret behind the untouchability of this regime.

41 bis will be lifted when the last inconvenient witness of that era is dead. This of course if it is not extended to the rest of the so-called "justice system," barbarism tends to run rampant, and it can get out of hand. Between the Mafia and the State many similarities, hegemonic will, monopoly of violence, hierarchy, authoritarianism. But then once in here I realized that in addition to these undoubted common features there is a kind of "original sin" that needs a liberticidal system like 41 bis to hold the pieces together, without which the system as a whole would fall apart. This is precisely what the untouchability of 41 bis consists of, its having become the nerve center of the whole totalitarian democratic system, the true face of the Italian republic.

For the rest what can I say... nothing has changed, photos of my parents seized a year ago here in Sassari, and returned with a censorship stamp upon my arrival in Opera, again withheld upon my arrival in Sassari. No music, my request to buy a CD player rejected by prison management. Apparently books and music continue to be seen by the DAP as something subversive, and they have a point after all.

Since I have been in 41 bis I have not touched a blade of grass, a tree, a flower, only concrete, bars and TV. In the last few months with great difficulty, I managed to buy only one book, and only because the media was talking about me. Interviews only once a month with the glass and the metallic voice of the intercoms. My sisters and brother, who are the only ones who can visit me, come upon their arrival waxed on about tattoos and earrings because they might communicate cryptic messages through the tattooed designs.

However, these grievances of mine become ridiculous after what I saw at the clinical center in Opera. I have seen with my own eyes the state purporting to ethically enforce the law of retaliation on the old and sick, helpless and half-demented.

My naive request for books, music, anarchist, scientific, historical periodicals and a lawn to run in and a few trees becomes laughable, almost sickening. I realize this.

Anna Beniamino

After years of trial, dozens of hearings, I am not tired of continuing to reiterate what I have stated so far, to affirm some simple and tautological truths, against the exercise of falsehood perpetrated with scientific method in courtrooms.

Anarchists are anti-authoritarians. Anarchists are not mass-murderers, much less defend mass-murderous actions.

The massacres that have been perpetrated in this country have been the poisoned fruit of the intertwining of political and economic power, as far removed from antiauthoritarian thought and practices as possible.

We are in a political process for which not the reality of the facts but the power of suggestions is valid, the more abnormal and axiomatic the accusation, the vainer the defense.

You keep jabbering on about massacres but the real one is the one carried out on the reality of the facts. You have invented anarchist "bosses," "associations" functioning hiccup or structured like Chinese boxes in which it is no longer even clear which are the containers and which are the contents, "probabilistic"

graphical expertise to attribute the facts, the latest treat in order of time was the collusion between anarchists and Mafiosi.

The argumentative mechanisms in attributing crimes and creating ad hoc biographical profiles make Orwellian scenarios something exquisitely retro.

The inquisitors lie knowing that they are lying and shield themselves from the refractoriness of anarchists to the marketplace of justice. They play on the fact that anarchist ethics are not for sale to the highest bidder.

The infernal machine of the DNA (Direzione Nazionale Antimafia) turned DNAA (Direzione Nazionale Antimafia e Antiterrorismo) needs scalps to grind consensus and to fortify the scaffolding of preventive repression: internal enemies are needed, no matter if artfully constructed with historical, political, factual and procedural falsehoods, if not the machine runs out of gas and the special regimes devoid of flesh and souls.

Today there is only our head left on the plate, but it should not be forgotten that for years dozens of comrades and comrades have been indicted and jailed in this and in parallel self-feeding proceedings. Just as happened with the proceedings that led to 41 bis for Alfredo Cospito: the scaffolding of the Bialystok and Sibilla operations collapses, there are no leaders and instigators ... however, the 41 bis remains.

I catch a tragic irony in all of this: the various inquisitors muddle through not knowing well even the substance of the accusation, they stuff their papers with blatant falsehoods and contradictions, just get to the bottom line. Nothing strange: it is the sick ethics of this age where murderous profit is sanctified and poverty is criminalized.

1 Jul - Couple Indicted on Conspiracy Charges at Pitt Transgender Debate Protest

This piece reads like a Joint Terrorism Task Force press release, but also includes some of the details about how the state will resort to underhanded and, even by their own metrics, overreaching tactics. Read with a critical eye. We've decided to redact the names of the arrested.

MORE:

by Torsten Ove (Pittsburgh Union-Progress)

A couple from Regent Square who protested at a transgender debate at the University of Pittsburgh has been charged with obstructing police and, in the case of the man, throwing an explosive at campus officers in a federal case that could land him in prison for a decade.

[THE COUPLE] were charged Wednesday by a federal grand jury with conspiracy and obstruction counts following an investigation by the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force that involved surveillance of their apartment, a trash pull, a review of airport records and multiple searches.

[ONE] was also charged with using an explosive to commit a federal felony.

The case was unsealed Thursday after the FBI arrested the pair, and both appeared in federal court on Friday.

The incident concerned an April 18 debate at Pitt's O'Hara Student Center called "Should Transgenderism be Regulated by Law?" sponsored by a conservative college group and featuring conservative speakers Michael Knowles, a *Daily Wire* commentator, and Brad Polumbo, a columnist at the conservative *Washington Examiner*.

About 250 people protested outside the event as it was about to start. Pitt police sent out a public safety emergency alert after protesters set off smoke bombs.

The [COUPLE] were part of the protest after arriving on a motorcycle. Before the speeches, [ONE] ignited and dropped two homemade smoke bomb containers around a line of people waiting to get in, the grand jury said.

When Pitt police formed a barrier to keep the protesters from entering, [ONE], “concealed by his wife,” ignited and threw an explosive firework into the group of officers, causing a loud explosion and injuring several officers, according to the indictment. Several complained of hearing loss, and at least one went to a hospital.

The charge of throwing the explosive carries a mandatory minimum of 10 years in federal prison.

In an FBI search warrant for [THEIR] residence and motorcycle, agents said Pitt police initially received a tip on April 3 that a group of “anarchists” planned to disrupt the April 18 event. The tipster said the group meets Thursday evenings at Big Idea Bookstore on Liberty Avenue.

The FBI’s terrorism unit set up surveillance at the store on April 13 and identified [ONE] arriving and leaving on a motorcycle. Video surveillance at the April 18 event showed [THEM] putting on masks in preparation for the protest and later engaging in throwing the fireworks, according to the search warrant.

Agents tracked [THEM] to their apartment, which they said displayed a red and black diagonally divided flag that the FBI said is associated with anarchism. Agents said they also checked [ONE’S] permit to carry a gun as well as purchases of “cannonball” fireworks from Phantom Fireworks in Monroeville on April 15.

In later weeks, the FBI set up surveillance on the location [OF THEIR RESIDENCE] and saw the couple coming and going. Agents also reviewed flight records that revealed [ONE] had twice set off explosive trace alerts at airports.

In May, he set off the alert before a flight from Oakland, Calif., to Newark and then to Pittsburgh. He was allowed to fly but elected not to, the FBI said. A few days later, the same thing happened when he was traveling from Oakland to Denver and then to Pittsburgh, although this time he took the flights. In both cases, a swab of his belongings turned up explosive residue.

The FBI also searched the trash outside [THEIR] apartment and found a printed article called “The City in the Forest: Reinventing Resistance for Age of Climate Crisis and Police Militarization.” The article was about the “Defend the Atlanta Forest” movement in Atlanta, a long-running protest in which demonstrators have taken over a wooded area where police want to build a training center.

[ONE] was in federal custody Friday pending a detention hearing in U.S. District Court on Monday. [ONE] was released on a \$10,000 bond.

8 Jul - “Thompson is Everywhere”

This is an essay for Eric King to get into a program at ADX.

MORE:

Eric is in a step-down unit of the ADX. It was determined it would be unconstitutional to release someone from ADX-level-deprivation to the streets, so the ADX created a special unit for people within a year of their release. They are supposed to be able to earn privileges to help them adjust to the outside world. They have specialized caseworkers that help them know what kind of programming they’re eligible for, they can get phone calls, they can get snacks, they can earn a lot of things.

Eric has not been OFFERED any programming. Through other prisoners, Eric found out about a program (all by himself) in which he could write essays for treats and submit them to psych.

Eric asked for a “food grab bag” for the reward for this essay

(Eric has just made his third phone call since August when he arrived. And his third phone call since 12-2018 as a part of another program for prisoners that are on sanctions. Being on sanctions at ADX is a double whammy you are subject to the almost absolute communication restrictions as well as disciplinary sanctions from whatever incidents land them there. Predominantly these sanctions are removed when they hit the ADX although the lucky, like Eric, get to keep theirs).

Thompson is Everywhere

Recently the bop said it was shutting down the SMU. Liberals lauded this as lovely progressive move... they saw it as the Bureau recognizing a serious flaw and taking care of it. They brought up an audacious amount of 205 gunning shots (over a thousand in four years 🙄) the violence between prisoners and the overall shite living conditions.

While naturally I was happy to see (despite its best intentions perhaps) who on Earth thought locking up the supposedly most violent convicts in a cell with one another for 23 hours a day, all in the same prison, for 9 to 18 months was a good idea? This must be the most harebrained idea... ever? I assume they created the SMU much like the CMU to trick Congress into allocating more \$ to the Bureau... It's generally accepted among prisoners that the SMU was a project to get prisoners to hurt each other and empower gangs.

Second thought is; what took so long? The SMU isn't viler now than in the past, in every iteration it is a blood bath. Oakdale, Tallahassee, Florence and Lewisburg all had the same issues as Thompson, violence in the absence of any other stimulation is Colette stomping her foot down? *Staff* is responsible for a larger amount of that violence... Placing incompatible people as cellmates, not searching people on their way to rec, placing people in opposition rec cages, not observing wreck either in person or on camera, snitch and cho-jacketing people in front of their rivals. This is all basically easily solvable except that officer buy into their surroundings-the gang and convict culture, and the most basic human need to be liked...but it costs people their health and lives.

Lastly, what about the rest? Everything I listed happens at every custody level in the USPs it leads to severe violence, humiliation and death...in the mediums it's fights and ostracizing, and at low's it's stolen trays, occasional fights and mental stress. Everywhere prisoners are pitted against each other and set up to punish one another and it seems just business as usual. I've only been in the bureau since 2016 and it's happened personally six different times and it's a powerless terrifying feeling.