



POST OFFICE BOX 110034 BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11211

Updates for November 2nd

17 Oct - Xinachtli Denied Parole, His Latest Writing

We have a new piece from Chicano political prisoner Xinachtli.

MORE:

There exists an ant-immigrant, anti-prisoners, and anti-people of color racist scare and hysteria engulfing the STATE OF TEXAS, led by TEXAS GOVERNOR GREG ABBOTT, his cronies, and its white supremacist social and political order, in a "unite the right" fascist crusade, that threatens a woman's right to control her own body through newly enacted abortion laws converting them into steps to overrule the landmark case on abortion in ROE V. WADE and converting those rights into cowboy vigilante bounty-hunter "justice" for the extremist right wing; repressive anti-immigrant, anti-prisoners profiling, stereotyping of people of color; enacting modern-day Jim Crow voting rights laws designed to suppress the voting rights of people of color, repeating the DONALD TRUMP BIG LIE the 2020 election was stolen from him; enacting "emergency orders" by GOV. ABBOTT on anti-mask mandates under the pretext of individual liberties, threatening the health, safety and lives of school children, teachers, workers, and entire communities, criminalizing or scapegoating those who elect to wear masks to prevent spread of the COVID 19 DELTA VARIANT virus; and the current "special session" of the Texas Legislature happening this very moment as we write this, called for by GOV. ABBOTT on re-districting, to carve out political voting districts gerrymandered by the Texas Republican right, to dilute ethnic minority political power, based on the 2021 census population data, reflecting 90% of the increase of Texas' population are in metropolitan cities of people of color residents, to impose a monopoly on Texas politics in the hands of the Republican right that dominates the Texas political power landscape for over a decade now; to include the known policies and practices of GOC. ABBOTT'S TEXAS BOARD OF PARDONS AND PAROLES agency, that is racist to the core, but sprinkled with a couple of "Hispanic-sounding names" like GUTIERREZ and MOLINA, to fend off any charges of institutional racism but who are in fact more racist against their own race to be "accepted" by the dominant white establishment, such as denying clemency petitions to Black death row prisoners, but granting clemency to white prisoners under similarly-situated case scenarios, and/or granting parole release to white prisoners, but using Black and Latino race as indicative of a "predisposition of minority prisoners to commit crimes in the future" based solely on race, as the denial of parole release to XINACHTLI will show statistically, once the files of the parole board in these cases are laid out side by side.

It is well known that XINACHTLI has always been, ever since his youth days, one who has resisted racist occupation of Chicano barrios, a fierce advocate in words and in deeds, OF THE RIGHT OF OPPRESSED BARRIOS AND NATIONS to true freedom and liberty and to self determination and freedom from the superimposed interdependency of the capitalist criminal and immoral structures, of a bankrupt and immoral system of economics under capitalism, breeding more crime, racism, poverty, mass incarceration, human alienation and the division of races and classes. XINACHTLI has always advocated for the right of oppressed people to rebel against the "knees on our necks" that has always meant "prison" for the poor, and specially for people of color, inside prison walls, and in oppressed communities of color also surrounded by an "invisible barbed-wire fence," that if you look "close enough" you will be able to see it. Also, XINACHTLI has also spoken very clearly, in his speeches, and writings as a community organizer, and writing his "papers" from his solitary cell, denouncing the unspeakable war crimes of U.S. Yankee colonialism, crimes against humanity committed against Mexicans, Chicanos and other indigenous nation-tribes, since the white settler colonial wars that colonized Northern Mexico, and stole the Mexican homeland through horrific, holocaust-type war crimes that still to this day have gone unpunished and exterminated native populations have never received reparations therefor, as compensation to make them whole again. THE MEXICANO, CHICANO BARRIOS AND PEOPLES CONTINUE TO SUFFER THE

TRAUMAS OF THESE COLONIAL WAR CRIMES TO DATE, WHERE "LAW" HAS BEEN USED BY THE OPPRESSOR PIGS TO CRIMINALIZE DISSENT AND RESISTANCE, OF AN ILLEGAL, ILLEGITIMATE CRIMINAL STRUCTURE CALLED THE STATE OF TEXAS AND THE United States OF AMERICA.

XINACHTLI's life story of resistance, inside and outside, must be publicized and made known through official zines, pamphlets, recordings, essays, studies, movies, film, or other documentaries, that should serve to inspire others to get involvement in liberation movements, and never let the overwhelming odds discourage you, nor adopting an attitude of defeat, as through the power of knowledge, you will arm the spirit, and always be able to find "light" even in the darkest of white AmeriKKKa's prison dungeons, concentration camps for the poor. There are many "lessons" to be learned from XINACHTLI's case history and story, in our mutual struggles for social and racial justice, and from freedom from capitalist tyranny and oppression, and the struggle against imperialism. XINACHTLI (meaning seed under Nahuatl dialect), has made it clear that only the power of a conscious-aware people can set him free from his EXTRAJUDICIAL SLAVER, for a "crime" he did not commit, as the ALPINE SHERIFF was in the act of killing him, and he only disarmed him in self defense, criminalized by the judicial system. He always speaks of the POWER OF THE PEOPLE, as in the case of NELSON MANDELA, once considered a "criminal terrorist" to turn the tables of imperialism, and transform him into the FREEDOM FIGHTER he always was, and the TSUNAMI OF PEOPLE'S POWER uniting and coming crashing down against the South African APARTHEID PRISON CAGE he was held captive under, to free him, to become PRESIDENT OF SOUTH AFRICA, LED BY THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS.

STAY TUNED TO THE NET, for further updates, and the formation of the new INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO FREE XINACHTLI, and XINACHTLI's CALL for freedom and justice loving peoples all over the world, to contact our AUSTIN DEFENSE COMMITTEE home-base, if you are interested in starting a CHAPTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO FREE XINACHTLI, for a copy of our guidelines and format mission statement and objectives. You can listen to a live-interview with XINACHTLI on thefinalstrawradio.noblogs.org/post/2021/06/27/free-xinachtli-and-updates-from-greece. Film producers ANDRES & FABIAN are now working to organize a film or documentary on XINACHTLI'S LIFE.

18 Oct - Free Jessica Reznicek t-shirts now available

We are so excited to announce new #FreeJessicaReznicek T-Shirts in partnership with Eagle Screen Printing in Minneapolis.

MORE:

Part of the proceeds will support the campaign to Free Jessica. Buy a tee in support of Jessica and to raise awareness around her case and many other earth and water protectors being prosecuted.

The following is a statement from her team who organized this fundraiser.

"Jessica Reznicek is currently serving an 8 year prison sentence for actions she took to stop the Dakota Access Pipeline. A "terrorism enhancement" more than doubled her sentence, and she has been ordered to pay over \$3 million in restitution. This is the criminalization of environmental protection!

Inspired by Indigenous leadership of the NODAPL movement at Standing Rock, Jess took a stand against the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline in Iowa in 2016. She and a fellow Catholic Worker disabled construction machinery and the pipeline itself. No one was injured by their actions, and the land was protected from the flow of oil for an additional 4 months.

Biden's Department of Justice continues to pursue terrorism charges against protestors across the country. We denounce this dangerous precedent and are working to appeal Jessica's sentencing and get the terrorism enhancement removed. What happens to Jessica happens to all of us!"

Please get a t-shirt at eaglescreenprint.com/shop/p/free-jessica-reznicek-tee

18 Oct - Drone Whistleblower Daniel Hale Imprisoned In Communications Management Unit Designed For Terrorists

Drone whistleblower Daniel Hale, who pled guilty to violating the Espionage Act, was transferred from a jail in Virginia to a communication management unit (CMU) at United States Penitentiary Marion in southern Illinois.

MORE:

by Kevin Gosztola (*Shadowproof*)

He is the first person convicted for an unauthorized disclosure of information to the press to be incarcerated in a CMU, which the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) claims is for terrorists and "high-risk inmates."

The decision may effectively cut him off from his entire support network, including friends and fellow whistleblowers who were by his side as federal prosecutors aggressively pursued charges against him.

Hale was a signals intelligence analyst in the U.S. Air Force. He was deployed to Afghanistan and stationed at Bagram Air Base. He later worked as a contractor for a firm known as Leidos. His contracting job gave him access to documents on the drone program, and he shared copies with journalist Jeremy Scahill.

He pled guilty to one count of violating the Espionage Act on March 31. The Justice Department had him jailed at the Alexandria Detention Center after he pled guilty, and he was sentenced to 45 months in prison on July 27.

After sentencing, Hale was transferred to Northern Neck Regional Jail, where he expected to be held for two or three weeks until a bed opened at Federal Medical Center Butner in North Carolina, a facility that could offer him some form of mental health treatment.

But he was held at Northern Neck until October 1, when the BOP transported him to Marion. He arrived on October 6.

'Another Draconian Move By The Government To Silence And Punish Whistleblowers'

Jesselyn Radack, who represented Hale as one of his lawyers, told the Dissenter, "It can only be seen as punitive that Daniel Hale, who has no criminal history and pled guilty to a nonviolent crime, got put in a secret, Kafkaesque, and isolated 'terrorist unit' with virtually no access to outsiders—or even other prisoners."

"It's another draconian move by the government to silence and punish whistleblowers," Radack added.

On October 17, Radack shared that she had called the case management unit at Marion twice to seek some explanation but was routed to voicemail each time. "No one has returned my calls. It's unprofessional, bordering on unconstitutional."

“Our worst fear when we discovered that he was sent to Marion was that he would be placed at their notorious CMU,” declared Noor Mir, a close friend and member of his support team. “Daniel is a curious loving person, who craves contact with the outside world. It’s going to be really hard for him to not be able to call his support system.”

Mir spoke with Hale on October 14, however, Hale did not share any details about what happened between his arrival and their phone call. The support network believes he was placed in quarantine under COVID-19 protocol.

“We know he has a case manager, and that he has to submit contact lists and addresses for approval to mail, email, and call people,” Mir added. “He is able to go outside once a day and that makes him happy.”

According to Mir, Hale did not say anything more about the conditions at Marion—except that “it would be tough to not be able to talk” as much with his support team.

‘Political Prisons’ For Isolating Individuals Whose Ideas Are Deemed Dangerous By BOP

The Center for Constitutional Rights filed a federal lawsuit in 2010 against the Bureau of Prisons and officials involved in overseeing CMUs. They had oral argument before the D.C. Court of Appeals on October 18, where they urged the court to reverse a lower court’s decision and recognize the necessity of preventing due process violations.

“Since the BOP secretly opened its first communication management unit in 2006, it has used them as political prisons—to isolate individuals whose ideas the government considers dangerous,” declared Rachel Meeropol, a senior staff attorney for CCR who represents prisoners held in CMUs.”

Meeropol noted they were before the appeals court to argue “CMUs violate due process, as people sent to the unit are not told the true reason for their placement and have no meaningful way to rebut the factual basis for that placement.”

“The BOP has no right to inflict CMU-level isolation and restrictions on anyone without proper procedural protections but especially not an individual struggling with PTSD and depression, and in need of significant medical care,” Meeropol commented, when asked about Hale’s placement in a CMU.

There are CMUs at two federal prisons—USP Marion and Federal Correctional Institution Terre Haute in Indiana. The BOP’s Correctional Programs Division sets the policies for designating prisoners to CMUs, and the assistant director approves designations. The assistant director is currently Andre Matevousian.

Initially, the BOP did not develop “written procedures or criteria at all.” That meant prisoners like Yassin Aref, Kifah Jayyousi, and Daniel McGowan, all plaintiffs in CCR’s lawsuit, were subject to “haphazard and retaliatory” decisions to put them in a CMU.

CCR’s appeal, which was submitted in 2015, outlined the differences between restrictions for general population and restrictions in a CMU.

“Most federal prisoners live in general population prison units, where they interact with a large population of fellow prisoners, receive 300 minutes of social telephone calls per month, and can enjoy contact visits with family and friends limited only by visiting hours and visiting room space—for up to 49 hours per month.”

“The BOP encourages these prisoners to use social telephone calls, visits, and letters to stay in touch with family and other loved-ones, due to the critical role such communication plays in a prisoner’s personal development and successful reentry back into society,” according to CCR.

However, prisoners in CMUs are not allowed interaction with other prisoners. “All avenues of communication with the outside world are restricted and monitored. All CMU social visits are live-monitored by BOP staff and must occur in English, unless previously scheduled for simultaneous translation.”

Prisoners and their visitors “meet in partitioned rooms separated by thick plexiglass, speak over a telephone, and are forbidden from hugging or even touching hands.” They are only allowed two four-hour blocks of visitation per month, but regulation allows Marion to limit visitation to only four hours with “immediate family.”

There are currently no visits allowed due to COVID-19, which means Hale is limited to restricted phone calls.

CMU prisoners are allowed two scheduled 15-minute calls a week, but regulation permits Marion to restrict calls to three 15-minute calls per month with “immediate family only.” Calls are subject to the same strict monitoring as visits, and that monitoring is done by an FBI agent.

Silenced By The Bureau Of Prisons

CIA whistleblower John Kiriakou faced a similar Espionage Act prosecution under President Barack Obama. He eventually pled guilty to violating the Intelligence Identities Protection Act in order to ensure he only went to prison for 30 months.

At his sentencing hearing, the judge, prosecutors, and his attorneys agreed Kiriakou would serve his sentence at the minimum security camp at Federal Correctional Institution Loretto in Pennsylvania. But when he arrived, Kiriakou learned the Justice Department had decided he was a “threat to public safety” and put him in the prison instead of the camp.

While in Loretto, Kiriakou wrote the “Letters from Loretto,” which were published by Firedoglake. They offered him a level of security in prison by ensuring people were watching how authorities handled him as a high-profile prisoner.

Kiriakou, along with NSA whistleblower Thomas Drake, have been mentors to Hale, offering him advice based on their experiences with Espionage Act prosecutions. They each talked with him regularly while he was jailed at Alexandria and Northern Neck. Both attended his sentencing hearing, where he delivered a 15-minute statement to the court.

When asked about Hale’s placement in a CMU, Kiriakou was in a state of disbelief. Hale was “supposed to be headed for Butner Low. He was recommended for Butner Low, and they put him in Marion Medium, CMU. For what reason?”

“How is he a danger to society? There are terrorists at Marion, like bonafide terrorists at Marion. And the purpose of putting him in Butner was because it’s a medical unit, and he needs medical and psychiatric treatment,” Kiriakou added.

Kiriakou last spoke to Hale in the final days of September, and he is certain the prison will not allow him on the list of approved contacts.

“Last time I spoke with him was on the 22nd of September,” Drake shared. “I expect to have trouble getting on his list while he is in the CMU at Marion.”

Lisa Ling, a former tech sergeant and whistleblower who worked on drone surveillance systems, is another close friend. She spoke to him just about every week after he was jailed in April.

“I was at his sentencing hearing, and now I may not be able to speak with him until he is released from prison on July 5, 2024,” Ling stated. “There is no telling what the requirements are for being on his call list. It’s not something they disclose to people.”

Ling added, “The man that told us strikes like the one in Kabul on August 29 are commonplace, and who told those erroneously placed on the No Fly List how lawyers could help them get off of the list, has now been silenced by the Bureau of Prisons.”

“These units are deleterious to anyone’s mental health. The military and the Veterans Affairs Department’s own study states social support is an integral part to healing from moral injury and post traumatic stress.” But CMUs are designed to prevent prisoners from having such social support.

As the lawsuit by CCR uncovered, “Prisoners are not told why they have been transferred to a CMU until after they arrive. Even then, the reasons they are provided are frequently vague, inaccurate, and/or completely false, and they are given erroneous—and even impossible— instructions for earning their way out of a CMU.”

It is likely Hale will remain cut off from the vast majority of his support network for his entire sentence, and his ability to weather the isolation will depend on how he manages to maintain his mental and physical health, which was already at a low point before he pled guilty.

21 Oct - Lawyers Plead Guilty To Molotov Cocktail Attack On NYPD Vehicle During George Floyd Protests

Two Brooklyn lawyers who were charged with firebombing an NYPD vehicle during the George Floyd protests last year have each pleaded guilty to one count of possession of a destructive device.

MORE:

by Jen Chung (*Gothamist*)

Urooj Rahman, 32, and Colinford Mattis, 34, were arrested on May 30, 2020 in Brooklyn. According to federal prosecutors, Mattis drove a minivan during a night of fevered protests, while Rahman left the car to throw a lit Molotov cocktail at an unoccupied NYPD van in Fort Greene. No one was hurt.

In an interview before she was arrested, Rahman said that they were targeting police precincts. "People are angry because the police are never held accountable. This has got to stop. And the only way they hear, the only way they hear us is through violence, through the means that they use."

Prosecutors said that other items that could be used to make Molotov cocktails were found with the pair, including gasoline and a beer bottle filled with toilet paper.

Mattis, who grew up in East New York and attended Princeton and NYU Law School, had worked at law firm Pryor Cashman's corporate practice but was furloughed during the pandemic. He reportedly had been caring for three young foster children his mother had been taking care of until her death in 2019.

When he pleaded guilty, Mattis said, "I deeply regret my conduct and wish I had made better choices on that night."

Rahman, a Pakistani immigrant who grew up in Bay Ridge before attending Fordham University and Fordham Law School, had been working at Bronx Legal Services. During her plea, Rahman told U.S. District Judge Brian Cogan that her actions "occurred on a night of civil protest in Brooklyn following the murder of George Floyd. I deeply regret my actions."

The guilty pleas also mean they will be disbarred.

Mattis and Rahman will be sentenced on February 8, 2022, and the U.S. Attorney's office is pursuing a "terrorism enhancement" in their sentencing recommendation.

Rachel Barkow, an NYU Law School professor who taught Mattis, wrote an op-ed in the Daily News arguing that the terrorism enhancement was a Trump administration tactic that's inappropriate in this instance.

"In this case, the enhancement could mean a 10-year sentence for Mattis and Rahman despite the fact that neither have any criminal record, no one was hurt, and neither had any intent to hurt anyone through their actions. There is a case of property damage to an abandoned police vehicle that should have never been a federal case in the first place."

Reuters reports that Judge Cogan admitted, "The terrorism enhancement is going to be a big issue. I have no idea where I'm going to come out on that."

22 Oct - Certain Days 2022 Calendar is at the printer!

From our friends at the Certain Days collective:

MORE:

"We are happy to announce that we just went to print and PRE-SALES for the 2022 Certain Days calendar (our 21st edition) have begun!

Order now and calendars will ship soon.

In the U.S., order from Burning Books.

In Canada, order from Left Wing Books.

In Canada, BULK copies can be ordered via certaindays.org/orders

Order for people in prison for just \$8 (we will mail it for you!) More information at certaindays.org

26 Oct - Russell Maroon Shoatz has been released on compassionate release!

Russell "Maroon" Shoatz has been granted a compassionate release by Judge Kai Scott on October 25th, 2021!

MORE:

Maroon has been imprisoned for over 49 years and now suffers rapidly deteriorating health due to stage 4 colorectal cancer. His condition is terminal, and now requires palliative care that involves parenteral nutrition through IV, which the PA DOC has neglected to provide.

Effective immediately, Maroon will be transferred from SCI Dallas to emergency care at an outside hospital. They will evaluate his current state of health and provide the necessary assessments to begin home hospice care.

This concludes a decades long campaign and is a major victory for the abolitionist movement. We are grateful for the diligent work of Maroon's family, the Abolitionist Law Center, Reed Smith, and countless friends and supporters. In love, in prayer, in solidarity!

27 Oct - A birthday gift to Lore Elisabeth

For her birthday gift today, Lore asks us to donate books to her friend Tess's daughters. Read Lore's portrait of Tess and her daughters below. (The girls' names have been changed for their privacy).

MORE:

We're looking for: Black girl hairstyles, kids baking, vegetarian recipes for kids, girls fashion (ages 4-10). Ship books directly from sellers to:

Tessicar Jumpp #92202-083

FDC Philadelphia

Post Office Box 562

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19105

You can also donate via Zelle to: howardelittle@yahoo.com

Lore writes:

Let me introduce you to one of the sweetest women and her two little girls, whom I've been so lucky to meet behind the walls of Philly's federal prison. To help illustrate her for you, I have re-imagined a photo of singer and icon Marian Anderson, taken on Easter in 1939. These two women, born in different decades, in different countries, united by their voices and their faith.

Anderson sang at the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. The venue replaced her original choice of Constitution Hall, where she was banned from singing (because she was Black) by the Daughters of the American Revolution. Anderson stood tall at the steps, poised, with her hands clasped together in front. She commanded the attention of a racially integrated audience, still quite a new thing at the time.

I imagined how things could look today in illustration: my friend Tessicar Jumpp, "Tess," sings at the mic, her hands behind her back. Even while handcuffed she channels Anderson's regality. Anderson set a stage for so many Black women to stand upon. In illustration, her mics show the country codes for Jamaica and America since Tess's voice carries through both of them. Tess is a Jamaican citizen imprisoned in America as part of an international treaty between the two governments: America confines convicted Jamaican citizens, in return Jamaica gets access to American trade.

Anderson now replaces Lincoln at the top of the steps. At this time, memorials to the Confederacy, symbols of oppression, are being taken down or litigated in court. Opponents of their removal argue that it rewrites history. I counter that the majority of white folk have always had the resources to tell their history in so many ways. Meanwhile, marginalized folk have not had the same privilege. Like a Black artist living through the Jim Crow era, a Jamaican & Black woman lacks the rights that US citizens have in prison, like

those protected under the First Step Act. Anderson's legacy succeeds Lincoln's. Who are we casting in stone? And who are we casting behind stone walls?

Just as Anderson made sure that her song was still heard, Tess still speaks up for herself and others despite the illustrated punishment. Keeping quiet in prison is rewarded with access to things like phone calls, email, and family visits--all "privileges" according to federal prison policy. We know them to be necessary connections to our families. Most of the imprisoned parents I have met choose silence as a strategy, and understandably so! But Tess is not torn between staying quiet and speaking up. She paves the road ahead for her daughters, like Kavi, who is not torn between realizing her dreams of becoming both a doctor and a model--get you a child who can do both!

In a world that makes Tess a convict, I know a woman who practices compassion and forgiveness, and a woman who would win any Great Prison Bake Off! She is a woman that her daughters can look up to. Their momma models compassion and self-compassion alike, even as our jailers try to discourage basic community efforts. She models the kindness to herself that we all must practice with those we are quick to critique. We are all flawed humans. Forgiveness is a daily practice.

In between the daily struggles, I see the beams that hold Tess up: her daughters. She always has a proud or silly moment to share: Kavi (nine years old) has been a fashion maven since she was in diapers, cutting up momma's clothes to make her own. (Sorry Tess, you will need to buy a new wardrobe when you go home). But Kavi is mature beyond her years and can still motivate herself to do extra schoolwork. Kalli (four years old) cracks her up on the phone with her Peppa Pig-inspired British accent. She's always so eager for her teacher and her peers to watch her dance and sing to a traditional Jamaican folk song. I think she's destined for stardom.

In every story that Tess tells, Kavi and Kalli already sound just as fearless as their momma. Her daughters are their own biggest fans (mom and grandmom aside) in spite of that deafening cycle of self-criticism. Tess has taught them that you don't need to criticize others to feel better about yourself.

Many of us are taught that Black women, uniquely, carry their pain quietly. We are taught that no weight is too heavy to bear for the strong Black woman. Tess works to reject that expectation. She carries, and not always quietly, the weight of her family departed, those who have passed during her imprisonment--so many that you need two hands to count them. She carries her girls, growing up so far away. She carries the weight of two governments' decision to trade her for economic opportunity.

Tess often shares with us the lessons that she learns and which she's reminded of in her daily prayers. She shakes out the heavy when she feels it building. Her eyes pour, her voice sings. She lets you know that she is somebody worth respecting. Her daughters have total command over her heart with their squeaky laughs and big girl dreams. Tess is as relentless in her voice as Kalli is in stealing the spotlight, or as Kavi is in convincing you that this plastic bucket held on her wrist is really a designer clutch. She is relentless in working towards a kinder, fairer world--one she can say she fought for.

27 Oct - Russell "Maroon" Shoatz is Free, But Other Political Prisoners Languish

The demand for freedom of political prisoners must be consistently made for their sakes and for all at risk of joining them in the future.

MORE:

by Margaret Kimberley (*Black Agenda Report*)

Russell "Maroon" Shoatz has been granted compassionate release after 50 years in prison. The length of his sentence is outrageous but it is hardly unique. The United States not only has the dubious distinction of

being the country with the largest population of incarcerated people, but it also has political prisoners held longer than anywhere else in the world. Shoatz is now 78-years old and suffering from cancer.

Of course there is deeply felt happiness that Shoatz will be freed for whatever time remains in his life, but no one should forget the tortures he suffered, including 29+ years in solitary confinement. No one should forget the other prisoners such as Mumia Abu Jamal, Ruchell Magee, Sundiata Acoli, and Dr. Mutulu Shakur. They are the best known, but there are hundreds of people imprisoned since the days of the liberation movement. That movement was crushed in part because its most committed fighters were locked away.

As the late Glen Ford pointed out, we must say their names while they are still alive. We must say their names because they still live, instead of only remembering those who are dead at the hands of the police. Our remembrance should not be restricted to those who have passed but should be expanded to include the men and women whose lives were taken from them by imprisonment under brutal conditions.

There is also an element of self defense in advocating for these elders. The members of the Black Liberation Army and Black Panther Party were obvious targets so many years ago, but so were people who took to the streets of Ferguson, Missouri in the wake of the killing of Michael Brown in 2014. Six of them died mysteriously in the years that followed. Others are serving long sentences for minor offenses. Anyone who makes themselves known as an activist is a potential political prisoner. The noble act of fighting for their freedom is also necessary self protection.

The defeat of the movement created amnesia for some and a genuine lack of knowledge for the generations that followed. Demanding community control of the police or defunding or abolition are logical steps in a process begun by the freedom fighters who have been locked away for so long. Today's struggle against the state is a continuation of what Shoatz and others carried out decades ago.

Lest anyone forget, the state is no less dangerous now than it was 50 years ago when he and others were first imprisoned. In the wake of the September 11, 2001 terror attacks the FBI changed tactics and began initiating crimes that were then prosecuted. Once again, draconian sentences were dispensed to Black people such as the Newburgh Four and the Liberty City Seven . They and others were entrapped by agent provocateurs who ensnared them in crimes they had created themselves and then testified against them in court.

Police departments all over the country surveil activists by old fashioned means and with the use of modern day technology. The Patriot Act was created in the days after September 11 and is regularly renewed by congress with as little scrutiny as when it was passed. The National Security Agency has records of every American's electronic communications, from phone calls to emails. The FBI created a new designation, the Black Identity Extremist, which can mean anything they want it to mean, and gives them the ability to ensnare anyone they like for any reason at all.

The word fascism is bandied about frequently and often incorrectly. But it certainly applies in any description of Black people's interactions with law enforcement. The mass incarceration state has quadrupled since 1970 and it can be said that most of those imprisoned are in fact political prisoners. The prison system grew so large in direct response to political activity. The end of legal segregation demanded a new means of control. It can be said that the more than one million incarcerated Black people are all political prisoners, locked away not because most of them are dangerous, but because the resistance of the 1960s and 1970s demanded harsh reaction.

We are grateful that Shoatz will be free but there are many more left behind bars. We can't celebrate the release of the surviving members of the MOVE 9 or Shoatz or anyone else unless all of the names are lifted up. "What's the call? Free 'em all!"

27 Oct - Mumia Abu Jamal Appeal Denied!

We regret to share with you some alarming news on the continued case of Political Prisoner Mumia Abu Jamal.

MORE:

via KYW Newsradio

The Pennsylvania Superior Court has challenged Mumia Abu-Jamal's latest effort for an overturned conviction and new trial — nearly 40 years after he was convicted of killing Philadelphia Police Officer Daniel Faulkner.

The high court said Abu-Jamal's appeal was untimely, adding that the lower court shouldn't have reinstated any part of his appeal because it lacked jurisdiction.

This fifth appeal attempt — filed in 2016 — was based on a federal ruling involving former Philadelphia District Attorney Ron Castille, who later became a state Supreme Court justice and ruled on a death penalty appeal. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled Castille had an "unconstitutional risk of bias" as the district attorney.

Abu-Jamal's attorneys argued to a Philadelphia judge in 2018 that Castille was also the district attorney when Abu-Jamal was convicted, and a state supreme court judge when appealed.

And, they pointed to a letter Castille penned to the governor in 1990, urging the death penalty be used to send a "clear and dramatic message to all police killers that the death penalty in Pennsylvania actually means something."

The Pennsylvania Superior Court concluded that "the 1990 letter cannot create a reasonable inference that Justice Castille had a personal interest in the outcome of the litigation," court documents say. "There is no evidence that Castille had ever personally participated in the prosecution of Abu-Jamal.

"The 1990 letter is not evidence of prior prosecutorial participation. It is evidence that while acting as an advocate, District Attorney Castille took a policy position to advance completion of the appellate process for convicted murderers: 'I very strongly urge you immediately to issue death warrants in each and every one of these cases. Only such action by you will cause these cases to move forward in a legally appropriate manner.' He was not arguing that the law should be changed or should be ignored. Rather, he simply took a position to facilitate collateral review of death sentences which was subscribed to by many prosecutors at the time." But, the state Superior Court noted, Castille didn't list Abu-Jamal, and they say Abu-Jamal didn't file a new petition, using the letter as an argument, in time.

"Further," the decision reads, "the 1990 letter was dated June 15th. At that time, Abu-Jamal's direct appeal was still pending before the Supreme Court of the United States. ... As such, Abu-Jamal was not even in the class of litigants that District Attorney Castille was referencing in the letter. The 1990 letter therefore cannot create a reasonable inference that Justice Castille was personally biased against Abu-Jamal."

28 Oct - RIP Former Political Prisoner Rita 'Bo' Brown

The Anarchist Black Cross Federation (ABCF) marks the passing of former political prisoner, Rita 'Bo' Brown. Donate to Brown's funeral fund at gofundme.com/f/pfsfu-show-up-for-bo-brown

MORE:

Former political prisoner Rita 'Bo' Brown passed away this week after a long and horrible battle with Lewy Body Dementia. For those not lucky enough to have met Bo, here is her bio from Matt Meyer's Let Freedom Ring: A Collection of Documents from the Movements to Free U.S. Political Prisoners (Kersplebedeb & PM Press):

Bo (rita d. brown) is a 74-year-old white working class butch dyke lesbian anti-authoritarian anti-imperialist ex-political prisoner who has done 9 years in federal prison. The first one was as a social prisoner in 1971 and the other 8 as a political prisoner in the 1980s for several bank robberies in Oregon claimed by the George Jackson Brigade, an independent underground cell operating out of Seattle, Washington.

She has been a prison abolitionist for more than 30 years. Bo is also a founding mother of Out of Control: Lesbian Committee to Support Women Political Prisoners and also works regularly with the All of Us or None as well as the Prison Activist Resource Center in Oakland, California where she lives and spends a lot of time on the phone talking with prisoners' families. All of this grass roots work is volunteer and solely motivated by the need to create real change and real community where children will matter and prisons will not seem to be so damn necessary and will not be such an incredible source of income for the ruling class.

28 Oct - David Gilbert to be released on parole!

We won't be printing NYC tabloid nonsense here. Democracy Now! reported on David Gilbert's parole and impending release. Congrats to David and his family!

MORE:

Former Weather Underground member David Gilbert has been granted parole after spending 40 years in prison. He is scheduled for release on November 30. Seventy-seven-year-old Gilbert was incarcerated for his role in the robbery of an armored truck in 1981 that left a security guard and two police officers dead. Release Aging People in Prison Campaign said, "Mr. Gilbert spent decades in prison creating rehabilitative programs and has been an unparalleled positive influence on the lives of countless incarcerated people. There is no doubt that he will be an asset to his community."

Release Aging People in Prison (RAPP) also released a statement:

We support the Parole Board's decisions to release incarcerated people who have served decades in prison and pose no risk to public safety. The purpose of parole is to evaluate people for release based on who they are today, not to extend sentences into perpetuity. Mr. Gilbert spent decades in prison creating rehabilitative programs and has been an

unparalleled positive influence on the lives of countless incarcerated people. There is no doubt that he will be an asset to his community. This and other recent decisions the Parole Board has made based on those principles are the right ones.

28 Oct - Native Lawmakers Ask President Biden to Release Leonard Peltier

On Tuesday, October 26, a group of lawmakers sent a letter to President Biden advocating for the release of Turtle Mountain Chippewa member Leonard Peltier.

MORE:

by Darren Thompson (*Native News Online*)

The group of lawmakers are all members of federally recognized tribes and represent 10 separate state governments.

The effort was largely organized by North Dakota Representative Ruth Buffalo (D-Fargo). Buffalo is a member of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nations and is the first female Native American Democrat elected to the North Dakota Legislature, in December 2018.

"Leonard is an elder of very poor health and is from a Tribal Nation located within my home state of North Dakota," said Rep. Buffalo to *Native News Online*. "He is housed in a facility with inhumane living conditions, where COVID-19 runs rampant and the water is contaminated."

The letter of support for the Turtle Mountain Chippewa activist and political prisoner comes weeks after 11 members of Congress sent a letter to President Joe Biden, U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland, Director of Federal Bureau of Prisons Michael Carvajal, and Southeast Regional Director of Federal Bureau of Prisons J.A. Keller, requesting the expedited release and clemency for Peltier. He suffers from diabetes and an abdominal aortic aneurysm. He is 77 years old.

Peltier was convicted and sentenced to two life sentences in 1977 for the murders of Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) agents Ronald Williams and Jack Coler. The agents were killed on June 26, 1975 during a confrontation with members of the American Indian Movement (AIM) on the Pine Ridge Indian reservation in 1975.

"We join the millions from around the world in calling for his release. We are simply asking the Bureau of Prisons to follow their own rules and release him," said Buffalo. "Let's do what is right. Peltier has spent 44 years in prison, and in the interests of justice and on humanitarian grounds, must be released."

The Native American state lawmakers also reference Amnesty International, a global human rights organization with over 10 million member, supporters and activists worldwide, continues to call for his release.

Separate from the letter, during Amnesty International Virtual Activism Conference held last Saturday, a panel entitled, "Leonard Peltier: 46 Years of Injustice" in conversation with panelists Jean Roach, who was a teen on the scene of the incident at Oglala, Lenny Foster, Peltier's spiritual adviser, and former federal district court Judge Kevin Sharp.

Sharp recalled how he first went through Peltier's file over the course of eight to ten hours.

"As a former federal judge and doing that as a former member of the military and doing that as a former attorney for Congress. All three of those jobs required me swear to uphold the Constitution of the United States. As I went through this file, I am appalled at what I see. There were mistakes by the U.S. Attorney's Office and even the judge," Sharp said. After reading the file, Sharp agreed to become Peltier's attorney on a pro-bono basis.

The Native American state lawmakers' letter ends with a plea to President Biden.

"We ask you, Mr. President, to do what is right. Let Mr. Peltier go home and live his final years among his people as an act of grace and compassion," the concludes.

3 Nov - Teach In and Support Dr. Mutulu Shakur

WHAT: Teach-in

WHEN: 6:00pm, Wednesday, November 3rd

WHERE: Wherever You Are (Zoom ID Below)

COST: FREE

MORE:

Zoom Meeting ID: 840 7659 5973

Sharing an Important Request to support the commutation of Dr. Mutulu Shakur through an event co-hosted by the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement and other networks!:

*We, the undersigned, demand President Biden, the Department of Justice and Federal Bureau of Prisons to immediately commute the sentence of Dr. Mutulu Shakur, a father, grandfather, healer, and human rights activist. Mutulu has imprisoned by the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) for over 35 years and has served his time. Dr. Shakur is 71 years old, has suffered 2 strokes, glaucoma, and has been battling Stage 3 bone marrow cancer for the last 2 ½ years. Despite being diagnosed with life-threatening bone cancer and catching COVID, was denied compassionate release and has been denied parole nine times. We must win his immediate release and the freedom of all political prisoners and prisoners of war. For more information on Dr. Mutulu Shakur's, visit **mutulushakur.com***