



POST OFFICE BOX 110034 BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11211

Updates for January 21st

2 Jan - International Week of Action for Polo Roupa and Nikos Maziotis

Greece: In the face of the world of the state, the bosses and the horrors of their wars, we stand in solidarity with the condemned comrades of Revolutionary Struggle, Pola Roupa and Nikos Maziotis, who through the ranks and action of the organization fought steadfastly and uncompromisingly on the side of the class oppressed by the violence and terror of economic exploitation, poverty, and political extermination in the sweatshops of wage slavery.

MORE:

With consistency and dedication to the struggle for social revolution, the comrade and comrade took on the political responsibility of their participation in the organization, as befits guerrilla dignity and revolutionary consistency.

They did not review and defended politically, one by one, the 18 armed and bombing actions undertaken by the Revolutionary Struggle, one by one, on high-important symbols and infrastructures of the state and capital, from 2003 to 2018, achieving significant blows to the correlations of domination: Ministries - of Economy and of Employment -, Evelpidon Courts, Police Departments, Police Officers and riot police, Minister of Public Order, US Embassy, Stock Exchange, Bank of Greece - branch of the European Central Bank - office of the International Monetary Fund in Greece, banks - Citibank, Eurobank -, up to the attempted escape of comrade Nikos Maziotis and other prisoners from the Korydallos prison by helicopter (hijacking), which was personally undertaken by comrade Pola Roupa.

Judicial Power - Repentance - Double Prison: The state bi-historically maintains to the end its practices of war of attrition and subversion, against its armed political enemy, the militant(s) who attacked it by all means, challenging and shaking its imperium in practice.

"Justice" as a pillar of state violence and terrorism, assumes the regime's role of "punishing" not only the class oppressed and undisciplined, but also the execution of the total "punishment" of the armed political enemies of the state and capital, constantly upgrading the criminal arsenal and the "maximum security" prisons and imprisoning the struggling comrades with heavy sentences. At the same time, it acquits cops/killers/nazis, child rapists, politicians, big businessmen-businessmen, etc. And when the time comes for the release of the militants from the "penitentiaries of democracy", the dirty role is taken over by the judicial councils which, in the case of political prisoners, are intended to damage their political choices and revolutionary conscience by extracting "statements of repentance".

DEFINITIVE RELEASE OF COMRADE POLA ROUPA

On 17 November 2023, comrade Pola Roupa was released from prison with restrictions until 2032. One month later, the mechanisms of the terrorist state, with an appeal by the deputy prosecutor of the Chalkida appeal court against her release, tried to put her back in prison. Last year, on 10 January, the comrade passed a court hearing in Chalkida and since then, the decision has been pending and she remains hostage.

Exactly one year later, on January 10, 2025, the comrade with a new summons and a new positive prosecutor's proposal for her release, will be back before the judicial mechanism, so that the judicial council of Chalkida will decide on her release or re-arrest. And this, at the same time that the comrade is required to pay exorbitant fines which were imposed for her participation in the activities of the Revolutionary Struggle organization and which crush her survival, forcing her and her child into economic extinction, while her companion remains a prisoner of the state.

The selflessness, the militant integrity of the comrade and her contribution against social misery, highlight the revolutionary resistance within the socio-political disaster and against global totalitarianism. Through its ranks, the Revolutionary Struggle organization has made it clear that the state, banks and ministries will accept guerrilla social resistance for all the violence, bloodletting and bloodshed they have unleashed on the exploited and oppressed sections of society.

On the side of solidarity, we stand by the anarchist comrade Pola Roupa in this new judicial trial.

IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF COMRADE NIKOS MAZIOTIS

After 16 years (mixed) in prison for the action of the organization Revolutionary Struggle and with the completion of 4/5 of the actual serving of the 20-year sentence last month, comrade Nikos Maziotis will pass the next period of time by the judicial council (in Lamia), as he filed an application for release on November 25, 2024. This is the 7th request for conditional release, after 6 consecutive rejections. In the case of a new rejection, he is effectively forced into captivity at least until March 2027, with vindictive and abusive (even by their laws) serving up to the last day of the entire sentence. This despite the fact that he has long ago (since January 2022) fulfilled the prescribed conditions (state of exemption).

The judicial staff of Lamia - as a mechanism of state and economic domination - applies tactics of political extermination, inspired by the tradition of the counter-revolutionary terror courts. It releases and grants regular licenses to Nazi murderers, in contrast to the continuous denial of the conditional release of the anarchist Nikos Maziotis and the cutting of the licenses of militants (D. Koufontinas). It demands a definitive exit from prison only by enforcing the renunciation of value and moral principles. The regime of blackmail of repentance that they attempt to extort from comrade Nikos Masiotis implies the alienation and imprisonment of conscience, in order to achieve absolute discipline through the pervasive control of the core of the revolutionary's consciousness and values.

The anarchist Nikos Maziotis is at a rather critical point in his captivity. We should not leave the comrade hostage in state captivity, because most probably this condition of exemption from conditional release, while he has already served 4/5 of the total 20-year sentence, will not only set a precedent, but foreshadows the future that they have in store for other prisoners in an era of intensifying repressive treatment by the state for the world of struggle.

To strengthen solidarity. To stand by the anarchist comrade Nikos Maziotis.

6 Jan - Leonard Peltier Update

Leonard Peltier started experiencing intermittent blindness over a year ago. LAST MINUTE UPDATE: On January 20th, Biden granted Leonard clemency, with the restriction of home confinement. While not parole, or even freedom without constraints, this is a huge step for Leonard.

MORE:

He was told his eyesight would be treated within four to six months. Leonard's eyesight has worsened severely, and they are still saying it will be four to six months before he is treated. Leonard Peltier is going blind.

On 12-31-2024, Leonard was taken to the hospital because a blood vessel in his eye ruptured. The lockdowns have lessened in severity. Many of you have been pressuring the Senate Judiciary Committee, and they may be hearing us. Thank you for your efforts.

When Leonard had lockjaw, supporters found a senator willing to intercede and fly him to the Mayo Clinic for treatment. We must find someone in Congress willing to intercede to save Leonard's eyesight. The prison treats emergency symptoms when they arise, but the underlying conditions must be treated.

January 7th - Joe Biden is Leonard Peltier's last hope

by Rose Styron and Alex Matthiessen (*The Guardian*)

As Joe Biden prepares to leave office, he has a chance to do something singularly honorable in the name of American justice and basic human rights. With a grant of clemency to Leonard Peltier, Biden could ameliorate a half-century-old injustice not just against Peltier but, in effect, against Native peoples everywhere, many of whom consider Peltier an enduring symbol of racism and state-sponsored oppression in the US.

For those Americans who may not have heard of him, Leonard Peltier is known around the world as the US government's number one political prisoner. A member of the Chippewa and Lakota Nations, Peltier was convicted in 1976 for the deaths, the year before, of two FBI agents killed during a shootout on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. While he was in the area at the time of the shootout, Peltier, who maintains his innocence, has served nearly 50 years and counting for a murder he was never proved to have committed – or even to have aided and abetted.

It is widely understood that the federal government railroaded Peltier into prison by withholding and falsifying evidence, coercing witnesses and forcing a change of jurisdiction, among other acts of prosecutorial misconduct and malice. The US attorney James Reynolds, whose office handled the prosecution and appeal of the case, issued a public apology in 2021, acknowledging that the federal government failed to “prove that Mr. Peltier personally committed any offense on the Pine Ridge Reservation”. Reynolds has since called on Biden to release Peltier.

Reynolds's statement alone should have been grounds for granting Peltier parole and ultimately clemency. Yet, despite multiple pleas over many decades, Peltier – who just turned 80 and is suffering from multiple health crises including diabetes, kidney disease, heart issues and near blindness – continues to languish in a high-security prison in Florida called Coleman 1.

Starting with the breakout of Covid-19 nearly five years ago, Peltier and his fellow inmates at Coleman 1 have been regularly subjected to lockdowns, the practice of confining inmates in their cells for nearly 24 hours a day without the usual breaks, human contact and access to needed healthcare. This despite the fact that most, including Peltier, committed no in-prison infractions.

During these lockdowns, which can last for months at a time, inmates are often subjected to cold air, non-working toilets (ie raw sewage), and other conditions equivalent to torture, which have led to the deaths of more than a few of them. The lockdowns are tantamount to solitary confinement – which is defined as being imprisoned in isolation for 22 to 24 hours a day – essentially a death sentence for an elderly man with life-threatening ailments.

Five presidents dating back to Bill Clinton have been petitioned to grant Peltier clemency. Some, including Clinton and Barack Obama, apparently have looked at Peltier's case. Yet for whatever reason, each of the five ultimately declined to act. One cannot know for sure what persuaded these powerful men to refuse Peltier his freedom. But one thing is certain: for decades the FBI has waged a high-pressure political campaign on the courts, US Parole Commission and the White House to make sure Peltier never draws another breath as a free man.

The retired FBI agent Coleen Rowley, who worked with prosecutors on the Peltier case, has stated: “The FBI's opposition to the release of Leonard Peltier is driven by vindictiveness and misplaced loyalties.” In a recent letter sent to Biden appealing for Peltier's release, Rowley wrote: “Retribution seems to have emerged as the primary if not sole reason for continuing what looks from the outside to have become an emotion-driven ‘FBI Family’ vendetta.”

According to the Department of Justice, Peltier's crime, and the parole board's rationale for keeping him locked up, is that he aided and abetted the murder of two FBI agents. Yet the two people he is accused of

aiding and abetting – Dino Butler and Bob Robideau – were acquitted of the murders within months of going to trial in 1976.

In 2022, the UN human rights council's working group on arbitrary detention issued an opinion outlining the violation of Peltier's civil rights and calling for his immediate release. Over the years, the late Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and even Pope Francis, have called on the US government to release Peltier.

In mid-December, Biden granted clemency to 1,500 prisoners. A week later, he commuted the sentences of nearly all the country's death row inmates to life without parole. He may still be considering issuing pre-emptive pardons to those Donald Trump has cast as his enemies to prevent the president-elect from deploying the FBI and Department of Justice to harass or imprison them for purely political reasons.

Joe Biden has shown admirable sensitivity to the plight of Native Americans. He is the first president in history to appoint a Native American to his cabinet. Biden is the only president to have publicly acknowledged the atrocious conditions and abuse of young Native Americans in the US-backed Indian boarding schools – where Leonard Peltier was forcibly sent and mistreated starting when he was just nine years old. Just a few days ago, the president established a pair of national monuments in California honoring two Native American tribes.

Without Biden's intervention, Peltier will die in prison. Given the shameful history of this case, the long sentence he has already served and the extreme jeopardy of his health, it is time to let Leonard Peltier return home to his people and die in peace. Biden has the opportunity to place the US on the side of mercy and justice, not further retribution.

If Biden commutes Peltier's sentence, he will be hailed around the world – by heads of state and advocates alike – for matching America's vaunted adherence to human rights with action at home.

Joe Biden has a chance to take a big step toward healing the wounds of Native Americans. We urge him to seize this opportunity and by doing so distinguish himself as one of modern history's most compassionate and just American presidents.

January 13th - 120+ Tribal Leaders Call on Biden to Grant Leonard Peltier Clemency

In a show of broad support from Indian Country, today over 120 tribal leaders sent a letter calling for President Biden to grant clemency to Leonard Peltier. At 80 years old, Peltier is in his 49th year of incarceration.

Below is an excerpt:

"For the majority of his life, Leonard Peltier has been serving a sentence based on a conviction that would not hold up in court today and for a crime that the government has admitted it could not prove. Mr. Peltier's continued incarceration is a symbol to Native Americans of the systemic inequities of the criminal justice system in America.

"Mr. President, we honor your demonstrated commitment to Indian Country. You have stood with us many times – both in the White House and in the U.S. Senate. Our standing in the world as a champion of freedom, justice, and human rights cannot be maintained in a system that allows Leonard Peltier to die in prison."

Leonard Peltier is the longest-incarcerated Native American political prisoner in American history, and one of the oldest people currently in federal prison. He is a survivor of the federally funded boarding school system where he endured years of physical, emotional, and spiritual abuse. Peltier endured a trial rife with constitutional violations and prosecutorial misconduct that the prosecuting office itself later acknowledged, and have since urged for his release.

9 Jan - Update and Joint Statement From Peppy and Krystal

On Monday, January 6, with roughly 40 supporters of Pep and Krystal packing the room, Judge Nicholas Ranjan heard arguments from the prosecution and the defense, and a Victim Impact Statement read by a University of Pittsburgh police officer.

MORE:

Ranjan then agreed to the non-cooperating stipulated plea and sentenced the two.

SENTENCING DETAILS

Pep was sentenced to serve 60 months in BOP. As he's served 18 months already, he anticipates being eligible to transition to a halfway house around March 2026 (between 15 and 22 months). After that, he will be on supervised release for 3 years. Krystal was sentenced to 3 years of supervised release and 80 hours of community service.

Pep and Krystal were jointly sentenced to pay \$50,225.03, mostly to University Of Pittsburgh Officer TH, with a smaller sum to the University of Pittsburgh. They also were given special assessments of \$200 and \$100, respectively, and sentenced to repayment of some costs of prosecution and their own punishment. Critically, however, there was no further fine.

Pep and Krystal issued a joint statement:

"We hold in our gravity a deep reverence for love beyond the limited words we have. We know the devoted embrace of solidarity – people leaning in to one another against involuntary servitude and for a world of mutual aid.

If we are convicted, it is of love for each other, and for our community, to which all brave hearts beat devotion to the impossible task of liberation. We are grateful for those who care take, for without you, freedom would be even more distant."

NEXT STEPS

Pep has been transferred out of Butler County Prison and is now at Northeast Ohio Correctional Center. He may be moved around a bit before ending up at his designated facility within the BOP. We'll update the **Write To Peppy** page on our website as soon as he gets there. In the meantime, you can also email us messages of solidarity to Peppy or Krystal. We'll hold on to them and be sure they reach him in the prison where he'll be doing his time.

You can find more information about the initial intake and orientation process, including about property and visitation and correspondence here. Information about phone calls, Trulinks emails packages, and sending money is here.

DONATIONS

Peppy and Krystal need your support! In their sentencing, they're jointly tasked with paying more than \$50k dollars in restitution. This is in addition to commissary and the costs of prison support for the remainder of Peppy's sentence. Please donate today and spread the word!

We remain so grateful to all of you. These punitive structures that we've been navigating together exist to separate and isolate, and our solidarity stands as a rebuke and inspiration.

12 Jan - Get Alfredo out of 41 bis – Hands off the anarchist publications

Italy: The preliminary hearing in the Sibilla case, which led to a repressive operation in November 2021 mainly targeting the anarchist newspaper 'Vetriolo', is scheduled for January, after the one dated October 10th was postponed.

MORE:

via *La Nemesi*

The Public Prosecutor's Office of Perugia is demanding the indictment of 12 anarchists accused of 19 charges, almost all of which aggravated by the purpose of terrorism.

Over the last few months, there have been notifications of the opening of a procedure by which the Perugia Police Headquarters intends to issue a series of 'expulsion orders', justifying them on the grounds of the solidarity presence that took place in front of the court on 10th October. The preparation of such preventive measures – imposing the obligation to stay out of a given municipality for a minimum of six months and a maximum of four years – for a moment like that one, where what happened was what usually happens in all circumstances of this type without any particular turbulence (the hanging of banners, a leaflet, a few interventions, etc.), assumes a clear meaning: to drive away comrades, to prevent any manifestation of solidarity during the hearings against the accused and in particular Alfredo Cospito, who is imprisoned under the 41 bis regime in the Bancali prison in Sardinia and is one of the 12 accused in this case.

While states are gearing up for war and armament profits are growing out of all proportion, while words are being wasted to justify the genocide in Gaza – the first automated genocide in history in which artificial intelligence plays a decisive role –, while we are all witnessing the usual chatter about massacres at work in defense of the interests of masters, while a security decree (Ddl 1660) being examined in the Senate prepares a further attack against social conflicts... these gentlemen are once again in hurry to put on trial the anarchists, an 'internal enemy' that must be eradicated because of their long struggle against the state and capital.

In order to attack anarchists and revolutionary paths, the state rants about 'inciting' and 'orienting' capabilities in such an area as the anarchist movement, which has always defended an obstinate and radical autonomy of thought and action. A statement that goes hand in hand with having supported, in the Scripta Manent trial, convictions for 'political massacre' in a country where the massacres, the real ones, have always been perpetrated by the state apparatus.

Together with that trial, operation Sibilla was decisive in the transfer of Alfredo Cospito into 41 bis prison regime. With the intense mobilization of 2022-23 against 41 bis and life imprisonment without the possibility of parole, we prevented the sentences of up to life imprisonment resulting from Scripta Manent charge of 'political massacre'. Today, as yesterday, as a possible trial of Sibilla looms, it is therefore not a mere rhetorical exercise to express solidarity with the accused and in particular with Alfredo, who is imprisoned in one of the most afflictive prison regimes in Europe.

January 19th - Alfredo Cospito and 11 Other Anarchists Acquitted

via *Abolition Media*

There is no place to proceed for Alfredo Cospito and 11 other anarchists. This is what the judge of Perugia, Angela Avila, decided today, January 15, in the afternoon, at the end of the discussion during the preliminary hearing. Cospito and Michele Fabiani from Spoleto, together with the other 10, were charged with various charges of incitement to subversion and of some episodes of damage. In November 2021, the Perugia ROS had applied six precautionary measures against as many exponents of the anarchist sector. The charges were related to the publication of a newspaper considered clandestine, *Vetriolo*.

Lawyer Flavio Rossi Albertini, who defends Cospito, in the 41 bis at least until next year, declares: "We have obtained a result for which we have fought from the first hour. Here there was a tendency to mystify the free expression of one's own political opinion, making thought pass for crime. Let us not forget that also thanks to the Sibilla operation, the 41bis was requested for Cospito and now that everyone has been acquitted, as well as in another investigation in Rome that had been used for the 41bis, I hope that this will induce the Minister who will be responsible for this decision, in the event that its renewal is requested, to deny it."

Satisfaction was also expressed by the lawyer Carmelo Parente, who assists Michele Fabiani: “These are very delicate issues, crimes of opinion can affect everyone, not just the anarchists, it is important that the judge has evaluated them with due care and not considered it configurable.”

Lawyer Caterina Calia is also on the same wavelength: “Years ago they wanted to criminalize all activity attributable to that anarchist zone, but as always we have maintained that none of the crimes that the prosecution had challenged were committed.”

12 Jan - Anti-fascist political prisoner Jesse Cannon

Anti-fascist political prisoner Jesse Cannon is currently on the ground fighting the Los Angeles fires as part of a prisoner fire crew.

MORE:

If you want to express gratitude for him and his crew mates putting their lives on the line, even while incarcerated, to defend vulnerable communities from apocalyptic destruction, please send him a postcard. Every piece of mail lifts the spirits of those fighting the fires while locked up.

13 Jan - What are Cara and Celeste up to?

Cara and Celeste currently do not have a next court date scheduled.

MORE:

They have both been in regular communication with their lawyers. A recent travel request was denied, but C&C will appeal to hopefully reduce restrictions in alignment with the judge’s order at the last hearing.

Cara has been making lots and lots of cookies and still biking despite the cold.

Celeste has been doing TTRPG (tabletop role play games) and having a lot of fun with that.

They hope that people will continue to donate to the fundraiser, support other political prisoners, and talk to people in your community about repression and resilience.

14 Jan - UC Berkeley firebomb suspect pleads guilty to arson

Casey Noonan has plead guilty, as part of a non-cooperating plea agreement. There’s a hack-ey article about it below, so read with a critical eye, and other updates follow that.

MORE:

by Tomoki Chien and George Kelly (*The San Francisco Standard*)

A suspect pled guilty Tuesday in federal court to firebombing a police car in June as part of a pro-Palestinian protest at UC Berkeley.

Casey Goonan, wearing a red Alameda County Jail shirt and red-and-white striped pants, pled guilty to a felony count of arson under a plea agreement with prosecutors.

“I lit the police car on fire,” Goonan told Judge Jeffrey White.

White scheduled Goonan to be sentenced April 8. Goonan faces a prison sentence of five to 20 years, according to federal prosecutors.

Goonan initially pled not guilty to multiple charges after being arrested in June on suspicion of a string of arson attacks at the university between June 1 and June 16. (Goonan uses they/them pronouns, according to their attorney.)

“Dr. Goonan plead guilty today to one count of arson and took responsibility for four additional acts of arson,” defense attorney Jeff Wozniak said in an email. “As outlined in the plea agreement, these acts were undertaken in response to the University of California’s and the Federal Government’s treatment of pro-Palestine protestors.”

Goonan will provide additional information contextualizing the actions due to their “mental health struggles and the ongoing genocide in Gaza,” Wozniak added.

Goonan must pay restitution of \$89,846.51 to the regents of California for the replacement cost of the patrol vehicle and additional expenses incurred by the regents. Goonan must also pay \$4,421 to the General Service Administration to cover the cost of replacing windows broken during an attempt to throw Molotov cocktails into the federal building in downtown Oakland on June 11.

“In America, we are all free to express our political views and petition the government. But we are not free to do so using violence,” said U.S. Attorney Ismail Ramsey. “Politically motivated violence undermines our democracy, and we will continue to investigate and prosecute those who engage in it.”

An FBI affidavit paints Goonan, 34, as an ideologue and careless criminal.

FBI investigators wrote that security footage from the early hours of June 1 showed a hooded, masked suspect kicking a shopping bag under the fuel tank of a campus police car. The suspect ignited the bag’s contents, which set the car on fire, then drove off with an unidentified accomplice.

The affidavit does not indicate whether the car’s license plate number was captured in the footage.

Hours later, an identical vehicle returned to the scene, and a person who matched the suspect’s description spent several minutes taking photos of the burnt-out police car from various angles. This time, security cameras captured the license plate. The car belonged to Goonan.

After obtaining a search warrant for the Goonan family home in Pleasant Hill, feds said they found a box of matches, lighters, a gasoline container, a mask, and discarded disposable gloves in the car.

DNA testing indicated the paper towels used in the Molotov cocktails closely matched a swab taken from Goonan after their arrest.

The Standard previously reported that an online post took credit for the arson, writing “Death to amerikkka” and “Glory to the martyrs.” In the affidavit, investigators said they believe that was written by Goonan or an accomplice. The post contained information about the attack that wasn’t yet public and included photos taken from the same angles as the suspect who returned to the scene after igniting the car.

“I believe the blog post could only have been authored by a person with intimate knowledge of the attack on the UCPD police vehicle,” wrote FBI Special Agent Tiffany Speirs.

Ahead of Tuesday’s hearing in Oakland, Goonan’s parents, brother, and aunt met with several of the defendant’s friends and Wozniak outside the courtroom before filing into the front row of the gallery. Also present for the proceedings were two Cal Fire police officers in navy uniforms with gold badges and police patches.

“It probably went as best as could be hoped for,” Goonan’s friend Dylan Rodriguez told *The Standard* after the judge accepted the plea agreement. “Their words today speak for themselves at this hearing. I’m looking forward to their transformation and growth from this moment.”

Goonan graduated from Northwestern University in 2022 with a doctorate in African American studies and is described in online bios as a “scholar-activist” and “abolitionist.” Goonan’s writings describe the United

States as a “god-awful fascist hell hole” where social injustices are “concealed under the blinders of white supremacist American reason.”

Their attorney previously described the arson charges as “political persecution.”

This was not the first time Goonan has faced criminal charges. In September 2023, they were accused of wielding a hammer outside the Women’s Declaration International USA conference in San Francisco. Court documents say Goonan was arrested after smashing the Hilton Hotel sign on Kearny Street with a hammer. Protesters had gathered at the conference, which they deemed anti-transgender.

Women’s Declaration International has said the concept of “gender identity” threatens the rights of women, and transgender women “should not be included in the category women in the context of women’s human rights.”

The charges came as a shock to many who knew Goonan years ago. In high school, Goonan, at 6-foot-3 and 185 pounds, was a standout football and baseball player whose parents threw massive July 4 parties.

“He was the man,” a former teammate said of Goonan. “I guess you could consider him a stud.”

Local newspapers described Goonan as a dominant pitcher who led the school to its first-ever sectional championship. The East Bay Times quoted an opposing coach remarking that Goonan had a “good curveball” and “pounded us inside.”

Another story in the Times detailed a high school battle of the bands competition that Goonan entered with the thrash metal band Killit.

Since their arrest in June, Goonan has earned considerable support from fringe ideological groups. A group called UC Davis Cops Off Campus has organized fundraisers. Student protesters who occupied a building at Columbia University once wore “Free Casey Goonan” T-shirts. In a December post, the “Casey Support Committee” urged “comrades” to support Goonan. The post implied that most U.S. pro-Palestinian protesters belong to “a petty bourgeois group” who refuse to “bring the Intifada home” like Goonan.

“Abandonment of prisoners is where revolutionary ideals die,” the post concluded.

January 16th - Update from the Casey Goonan Support Committee

We estimate that up to 100 people turned out in support of Casey at their plea agreement hearing on Tuesday, 1/14. Supporters and family filled several pews in the courtroom with many more in the lobby outside and even more downstairs outside the federal building where the local Coffee Not Cops collective supported with coffee, tea, and snacks over the course of the afternoon.

In brief, the judge accepted the plea agreement and the terms of the negotiated plea agreement were read out.

After the hearing was adjourned, outside the courthouse, a statement prepared by Casey and their legal team was read to supporters and press.

"Dr. Goonan plead guilty today to one count of arson and took responsibility for four additional arsons. As outlined in the plea agreement, these acts were undertaken in response to the University of California's and the federal government's treatment of pro-Palestine protesters.

Dr. Goonan's sentencing will occur on April 8th, related to the sentencing hearing Dr. Goonan will provide additional information contextualizing their actions within Dr. Goonan's mental health struggles and the ongoing genocide in Gaza."

We have already spoken with Casey on the phone and let them know about all the support and love for them inside and outside the courtroom. They send their love and thanks to all!

Requests and guidelines for letters of character to be included in Casey's pre-sentencing report will be forthcoming soon. Stay tuned.

Casey will still be at Santa Rita Jail up through their sentencing process.

Support the Casey Goonan Legal Defense Fund

Casey is still in need of ongoing support to cover increasing legal fees. Though they've had some great support, we are nowhere near the goal to cover the costs of this trial. The plea agreement also includes restitution charges which, in addition to legal costs, will likely more than double the currently estimated financial burden of this case.

Some ways to support

- Throw fundraising events and raffles
- Spread the word, share posts, and directly contact large donors.
- Print up the QR code for the Chuffed account, share the details of the case and the legal defense fund while tabling at events
- Send funds directly to the Chuffed account at chuffed.org/project/SupportCasey

You can reach out to us at cscommittee@proton.me or the [freecaseynow](#) Instagram for any questions about collaboration, promotion, or guidance on fundraising.

14 Jan - Alissa Azar is going to trial for covering a pro-Palestine protest

Alissa Azar said her recent arrest is part of a larger pattern of escalating intimidation and harassment by local law enforcement

MORE:

by Jen Byers (*Prism Reports*)

Independent journalist Alissa Azar was arrested and charged with trespassing in May 2024 while recording video at a student-led Palestine protest at Oregon's Portland State University. Azar said she was singled out in the crowd by a Portland Police Bureau (PPB) officer familiar with her work and later harassed in jail by officers who said they "missed having run-ins with [her]." She said some even took selfies with her in handcuffs on their cellphones.

Azar is one of at least 48 journalists arrested in the U.S. in 2024 and, in relation to a separate case, she is one of only four reporters to have been sentenced to jail since the U.S. Press Freedom Tracker began documenting repression of journalists in 2017. She is now also facing charges for her coverage of the pro-Palestine student protests. Despite support from groups like the Committee to Protect Journalists, the National Press Photographers Association, and the Society of Professional Journalists, Azar's charges have not been dropped. She has been offered a plea deal twice, which included 16 hours of community service. However, the charge carries a maximum of 30 days in jail. Her trial is set for Jan. 27 in Multnomah County.

Due to a felony conviction in a separate case from August 2024, Azar may face harsher sentencing in this case, which would defy journalistic legal precedent. During the 2024 trial, stemming from a 2021 clash between antifascist activists and the Proud Boys, the state of Oregon called into question Azar's role as a journalist. They argued that she is not a reporter, but rather an antifa leader.

Azar's case has brought to light a complex history of harassment, violence, and abuse of power by local law enforcement and reveals a landmark legal condemnation against social media journalists and press

freedom in the U.S. Her identities as a self-taught movement journalist, Arab, and antifascist woman puts her at the spearhead of state repression—an apparent consequence of going against the status quo and daring to report a counternarrative. In an era when newsrooms are rapidly shuttering and political dissent amounts to “terrorism,” Azar’s supporters say her arrests, jail time, and legal harassment mark a clear erosion of both journalistic and free speech protections. Her mistreatment is a harbinger that should concern all reporters, they say, and especially movement journalists staring down at a second Trump presidency.

False accusations

Oregon’s repression against Azar has been building for years and hit a crescendo last summer.

In August 2024, Azar became the first known journalist in the Pacific Northwest convicted and jailed over covering a protest. While covering a violent clash between the Proud Boys and antifa at Clackamette Park on June 18, 2021, a Proud Boy assaulted Azar and knocked her unconscious. Azar is seen on video deploying pepper spray twice, an act she said was self-defense against far-right protesters, some of whom had previously assaulted and harassed her.

The legal consequences she suffered following her assault were staggering.

Police made no arrests on the day of the protest; instead, they conducted an open-source investigation of the event, combing social media for photos, videos, and posts from that day. Azar received an indictment five months after she was assaulted and was charged with felony riot, a misdemeanor of second-degree disorderly conduct, and another misdemeanor of second-degree use of tear gas/mace. In the initial motion to convict Azar, Clackamas County Deputy District Attorney Josh Cutino said that Azar’s use of pepper spray was a key act that led to her indictment. The maximum sentence for Azar’s charges could have been five years in prison. The pepper spray charge was ultimately dismissed by a hung jury.

The state also charged three Proud Boys for their roles in the clash. Two were charged with felony riot and one with misdemeanor disorderly conduct and harassment. One stood trial in November 2024, pleading guilty to the misdemeanors. As of December 2024, the other two still have active warrants out for their arrests.

Azar’s trial largely focused on the six-week period leading up to the June 2021 clash in Clackamette Park. Cutino scrutinized Azar’s reporting, arguing that she was not a journalist with antifascist viewpoints, but rather an antifa “leader.”

In the weeks leading up to the clash, local activists tipped off Azar about escalating tensions at weekly demonstrations in Oregon City between right-wing groups, antifascists, and Proud Boys. Azar reported the information on social media, calling attention to a right-wing group that initiated weekly recruiting events. The recruitment efforts were met with counteractions from antifascists. In response, the Proud Boys came to march with the right-wing group, and the antifascists continued their counteractions.

Azar posted tweets and photos detailing the events. Her reporting depended on her access to the antifascist counteractions, which included vandalism, communiques after actions, and calls for a community show-out. Cutino claimed that sharing this information was not reporting, but Azar’s personal and intentional advocating for violence and further protest. In part, this is how Cutino framed Azar as being responsible for the counterprotests. He claimed she was a member of “team” antifa.

During the August 2024 trial, Cutino harped on Azar wearing black cargo pants and a tank top at the demonstration, as well as an interaction she had with law enforcement before the clash, where she reportedly “claimed ownership” of antifascist shields. He argued that her outfit and the shields declared her “intent” to riot and commit violence at the park.

When Azar took the stand for cross-examination, Cutino hammered her with leading questions: What were you wearing that day? What does violence mean to you? Do you agree that people should fight back with any means necessary?

“She’s inserting herself,” Cutino argued. “She’s trying to oppose [the far-right organizing]; that’s very different from journalism. ... [The journalists] were standing off to the side, not doing opinionated violent actions.”

Cutino’s closing argument was that Azar was not a journalist; she was antifa.

Bearing witness

The landmark trial, *Oregon v. Alissa Azar*, took place in Oregon City, a former sundown town in the county south of Portland. Ultimately, Azar served two weeks in Oregon City’s Clackamas County Jail and was sentenced to three years probation, which includes provisions that require her to disperse when law enforcement declares an assembly “unlawful.” For the duration of her probation, she also cannot legally wear body armor or a ballistic vest in public—even while covering a protest.

Azar’s trial came on the heels of what she characterized as a pattern of escalating police harassment and fascination with her. It began, she said, when PPB began singling her out during the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests, calling her by name in the crowd. She subsequently endured officers’ “weird, inappropriate comments” about her OnlyFans account as well as alleged stalking. According to Azar, she was followed by people in unmarked cars that sometimes parked outside of her home.

“Activists [and] protesters often will have police follow them around, post outside their homes to intimidate and scare them,” Azar said. “I was very aware of what they were trying to do, and they did that to a lot of people.”

When reached for comment, the Portland Police Bureau said they “do not have any internal investigations regarding any of what is mentioned.”

PPB also noted that its internal affairs division “is also not aware of any of the allegations” and, therefore, “cannot speak to any of them.” They encouraged concerned parties to contact the Independent Police Review division and make a formal complaint.

Azar’s 2021 arrest in Clackamas County was followed by two more arrests in Portland: one in November 2022 after a small rally and another in May 2024 during the pro-Palestine student protests at Portland State University. State authorities have consistently called Azar’s work as a movement journalist into question.

The 33-year-old Syrian American independent journalist has an extensive body of work, largely focused on covering the Pacific Northwest. Based in Portland, Azar has lived in the region since she was 4 years old. In 2020, Azar began posting videos, pictures, text, and livestreams of Portland protests following the police murder of George Floyd. More broadly, her work focuses on documenting violent far-right movements. In 2022, she helped break a major story when over 30 members of the white supremacist hate group Patriot Front planned to attack a Pride parade in Idaho. She’s written for publications like *Left Coast Right Watch*, and her footage is often distributed across digital, audio, and TV news after being picked up by journalistic outlets and wires, including Getty and Storyful.

Across social media, Azar has amassed over 80,000 followers. Azar identifies as a journalist as well as an “antifascist.”

“This stance encompasses not only the rejection of fascism, authoritarianism, and nationalism, but also a passionate defense of dissenting voices and opposition to the suppression of dissent. A passionate defense of all marginalized people, against racism, misogyny, classism, and all forms of bigotry,” Azar told *Prism*.

“It means actively resisting gender fascism and violence directed at queer and trans folks. It’s advocating for personal and bodily autonomy and civil rights for all people.”

State authorities who question Azar’s credentials often parrot the language of right-wing outlets like Fox News and the Daily Mail, which have referred to her as a “faux” reporter and an “Antifa ringleader.” Azar is referred to as an “independent journalist” by reputable publications who have quoted her, published her stories, or otherwise picked up her work, including the New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, Newsweek, Columbia Journalism Review, Al Jazeera, and Vice.

In traditional journalism-speak, Azar is considered a stringer or freelancer. Her style of work and proximity to her community make her a movement or citizen journalist. Originating in the South, movement journalism prioritizes the stories and perspectives of marginalized or oppressed groups. It is often produced alongside social justice movements, with the reporter getting involved in the action and maintaining deep connections with activists and community members while practicing traditional fact-checking and journalistic standards.

Given her platform on social media, Azar also fits the definition of a news influencer, blending her reporting with analysis and commentary.

Allissa Richardson, an associate professor at the University of Southern California, Annenberg, characterized Azar as both a mobile journalist and a gonzo independent journalist.

“She is transparent about her politics and gets in the action herself,” said Richardson, author of “Bearing Witness While Black: African Americans, Smartphones, and the New Protest #Journalism”. “I feel like with a lot of smartphone reporting, this can be a normal thing.”

Richardson, who founded the first university mobile journalism lab in the U.S., explains that mobile journalists like Azar often report from perspectives that are left out of traditional mainstream journalism and can offer critical counternarratives that challenge and threaten the status quo.

“Mobile journalism is a form of watching,” Richardson explained. “And typically watching from below, from a position of less power, so that somebody is taking account of the powerful misbehaving, or it is sometimes just observing in the moment right away, almost in an instinctive way.”

Richardson calls the process of watching from below “sousveillance,” which creates a fundamental shift in power. “It warns the person who’s trying to be the bully, ‘I’m looking at you too,’” she said.

This act of watching isn’t without risk.

Across the course of Azar’s nearly five-year career, the Press Freedom Tracker has recorded 13 incidents of violence against her, including attacks and arrests by law enforcement, physical violence, and harassment from far-right groups.

What the tracker doesn’t note is the toll that Azar’s work takes on her day-to-day life. She is regularly sexualized and taunted by law enforcement, as well as stopped and extensively searched at airports. In November 2022, the PPB arrested her and searched her home, confiscating electronic devices and even searching through her underwear drawer.

This incident came after a demonstration in August 2022 in which Azar was accused of stealing the cellphone of a far-right livestreamer. She recounted hearing a PPB officer “trying to encourage [the livestreamer] to press charges against [her] ... ‘So we can finally get her.’” After Azar’s home was searched, she was sentenced to a restorative justice program, and ultimately, all seven felonies were dropped.

Stephanie Sugars, a senior reporter for the Press Freedom Tracker, explained that Azar's position as an independent journalist likely contributes to her vulnerability and repeated targeting.

"Independent [journalists] are significantly more at risk because they don't have the reputational protection of a very formal-looking New York Times press credential," Sugars told *Prism*.

She noted that independent journalists often don't have the financial, legal, or security resources that reporters at mainstream outlets may have. "They are living in these communities, so they're at much greater risk of repeat exposure to the same groups of people," she said.

Because of her identities as an Arab woman and an antifascist, Azar said she receives more scrutiny than other independent journalists.

"I don't think I would get the harassment that I get, whether it's from unabashed fascists or the state and police, if I wasn't a woman," Azar told *Prism*. "I also don't think it would be what it is if I wasn't an Arab. So, both of those things [are] also preceded by being an antifascist woman and an antifascist Arab and an antifascist Arab woman."

Who gets to decide?

Law enforcement's framing of Azar as an antifa leader has clear social and legal impacts on her ability to continue reporting safely. Not only is her incarceration a repressive signal to all movement journalists, but her designation as an activist "leader" adds a potential harbinger for any news outlet that reports a counternarrative—and who may also be subject to anti-terrorism crackdowns. Azar's case also highlights a key rift within the news media landscape, one that was arguably exploited to incarcerate Azar, and that is at risk of getting worse under the second Trump administration.

That is, unless journalists quickly learn to practice meaningful solidarity.

In preparation for the Clackamas trial, Azar's defense attorney, Lauren Regan of the Civil Liberties Defense Center, called around to local and mainstream press to find support for Azar.

"If I had a dollar for every time someone basically said, 'Well, she blurred the line,'" Regan. "Almost like an assumption, 'She got what she deserved because she blurred the line.' That was a trope that I heard a number of times from mainstream journalists."

Mickey Osterreicher, general counsel to the National Press Photographers Association, said a journalist's rights are contingent on being an observer, not a participant.

"The sole reason for journalists being anywhere is to gather and disseminate information on matters of public concern," Osterreicher explained. "Almost all of the statutes in the various states that talk about unlawful assembly talk about someone being a participant in the assembly, and our argument has always been, 'Journalists are not participants.' Journalists are there to observe and exercise the First Amendment, free press rights."

But the position of movement journalists is more complex.

In her research, Richardson found that there are essentially two types of what she calls mobile journalists. The first are people who accidentally become reporters by witnessing an event and posting about it. As one example, she cited Darnella Frazier, who recorded George Floyd's murder and received a Pulitzer Prize special citation.

The second type of mobile journalist "is fed up and frustrated" with the way their community has been featured in mainstream media, Richardson said.

“They have become disillusioned with the news media,” she said. “They feel like they have been misrepresented or maligned, and oftentimes, they are tired of asking the mainstream media to get it right. They often fashion themselves as the counternarrative makers, the ones who are telling an opposite story, and an effort to set the record straight.”

It’s that position—the outsider status as well as being embedded in movement spaces—that gains movement journalists unique access to breaking news events. This unique access also helps them act as first responders or early detectors of trends or danger.

“Citizen journalists are the ones who are the EMTs, the first ones on the scene, who often can stabilize an issue,” Richardson said. “They can grab that patient, grab that news story, report on it right away, and sound an alarm.”

As legacy news outlets shutter or impose mass layoffs, the pool of independent freelance reporters will only grow, making an even larger group of journalists vulnerable to attacks and threats. And as the incoming Trump administration vows to crack down on the free press, free speech, and “woke” culture, antifascist movement journalists like Alissa Azar will continue to serve an essential role as digital-first responders.

“Antifascism is, at its core, a resolute stand against fascism—it is beautifully simple and straightforward,” Azar said. “It reflects a profound commitment to justice.”

16 Jan - ONE Year of Solitude

It's been one year since the world lost former political prisoner Sekou Odinga and his partner has written a beautiful piece.

MORE:

by dequi kioni-sadiki

it's been One Year since my Man's Man—Sekou Mgobozi Abdullah Odinga—made his Transition to the Other Side. For me, January 12th, 2024 still feels like yesterday when i saw Sekou for the last time in that hospital room. & as i sailed across the Atlantic looking out over the ocean, i sat thinking, Praying & talking to Sekou about what this One Year has been for me. this doesn't mean Sekou's death is more prominent in my mind than his life. i Love Sekou Odinga to life. Sekou lived, Loved, struggled & left a powerful example & legacy for us to live by & follow. he & i shared a revolutionary Black Love that neither of us had ever experienced before making his physical absence from all my every-days more painful & heartbreaking than anything i've ever felt before.

& so it's been One Year of abject loneliness, inconsolable tears, missing Sekou beyond measure, Praying for the expansion of his grave & that he be granted entry into Paradise while also selflessly wishing what has been true for One Year wasn't, that i didn't need weekly grief counseling or a healing traveling tour just to be anywhere but here. thankfully, despite my many waves of emotion/trauma, it's also been One Year of gratitude, revelation, counting my many Blessings & slowly forging ahead into this new life i've been forced to create, learning to adjust to the revolving web of folk coming into & out of my life, letting go of those i thought i could count on but couldn't & holding onto those i didn't know i could count on but could & learning to distinguish between those who Love me for me & those who profess to due to my marriage & life with Sekou. no malice or shade, i get it. what i want folk to know more than anything is how thankful i am that Sekou was able to count on & hold onto the Love so many showered him with across his 33-1/2 year-bid, his last 9-1/2 years of being home & especially the last 4-1/2 months of his life.

& so on this One Year later, i send this to you who have stood with me, cried alongside me, held me close - literally & figuratively - watched over me, checked on me - frequently &/or sporadically - sent me text messages of hope, affirmation & inspiration, invited me to stay in your home(s) for days/weeks at a time, cooked for me, carried me out to lunch/dinner &/or invited me out for a date or a walk to get out of the

home Sekou & i shared, sat/visited with me, brought me a meal to share, embarked on days-long road trips to get me, chauffeured me up to Ferncliff Cemetery for my monthly grave site visits & so much more through all my spoken & unspoken moments to say how deeply humbled, honored & privileged I am to feel the warmth of your acts of Love, kindness, compassion, patience & generosity surrounding me.

& though i continue to feel terribly alone every time i walk through our apt door that Sekou will no longer be waiting on the other side of & never coming back into, sleep in our bed at night, start my day, complete the marital status question on some official document or walk anywhere in this world without the Love of my Life by my side, i think about all the ways many of you show up & reinforce for me that - in the truest sense of the word - i am not alone.

for that please accept my heartfelt gratitude for the support & Love you have gifted me through this most unimaginable period of grief, pain & sorrow. "ain't no way i could pay you back" just know that i Love & Appreciate you all!!!

23 Jan - Get Lit

WHAT: Literary Trivia benefit for the Saxapahaw Prison Books Program

WHEN: 6:00pm, Thursday, January 23rd

WHERE: The Francis Kite Club - 40 Loisaída Avenue, NYC

COST: \$12 advance, \$15 at the door, \$7 with donation of a gently used paperback

MORE:

Come show off your book nerd cred! A literary trivia that (we are told) is challenging. Ticket sales return to incarcerated people in the form of books, lovingly mailed by Saxapahaw Prison Books Program. Come have fun and do good. Prizes for the top two teams/individuals!

Saxapahaw Prison Books is an all-volunteer nonprofit that sends free literature and information to people incarcerated in Georgia. They meet twice a month to read letters from incarcerated readers and send them free books that match their interests.

24 Jan - Cafe Anarquista

WHAT: Open Meeting and Movie Screening

WHEN: 6:30pm, Friday, January 24th

WHERE: Interference Archive - 314 7th Street, Brooklyn

COST: FREE

MORE:

Join Cafe Anarquista for their first open meeting of the year followed by a screening of How to Blow Up a Pipeline. From 6:30 to 7pm there will be an orientation for new members and a discussion of 2024's activities. The movie will begin at 7. See you there!

1 Feb - NYC's Last Black Panther Political Prisoner

WHAT: Organizing Meeting

WHEN: 11:30am, Saturday, February 1st

WHERE: The Peoples Church, 163 East 111th Street, NYC

COST: FREE

MORE:

The Safiya Bukhari-Albert Nuh Washington Foundation is encouraging all organizers from the five boroughs to plug into this event to strategize and organize the release of Kamau Sadiki.