



POST OFFICE BOX 110034 BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11211

Updates for August 28th

31 Jul - A siege. A bomb. 48 dogs. And the black commune that would not surrender

Forty years ago, Philadelphia erupted in one of the most dramatic shoot-outs of the black liberation struggle.

MORE:

by Ed Pilkington (*The Guardian*)

The photograph is one of the standout images of the 1970s black liberation struggle. An African American man, his hair in dreadlocks, chest bare, stands with arms outstretched as though emulating Jesus on the cross. A white police officer is jabbing a shotgun at him with the muzzle inches from his throat. Another officer clasps a police helmet in his right hand as if preparing to whack him over the head with it.

Forty years almost to the day after that photo was taken, the same black man described how he came to be standing there on a sidewalk, half-naked and surrounded by angry police. His account was almost too graphic to grasp, sounding more like something out of a movie than the recollection of what really happened in the heart of one of America's major cities.

It was 8 August 1978 and he had just emerged from the basement of the house in Philadelphia that his black revolutionary group, Move, used as a communal home. In an attempt to evict them from the property, hundreds of officers had just stormed the building, pummeling it with water cannons and gunfire, and in the maelstrom a police officer had been killed and several other first responders injured.

"As I emerged from the basement I had the presence of mind to let them see I was unarmed, so I took my shirt off," the black man said. "That's when I put my arms out wide."

The black man is Delbert Orr Africa, Del for short. When I went to meet him he was wearing a burgundy one-piece with a white T-shirt and blue shoes. Everyone else around him was wearing the same uniform of Dallas maximum-security prison in Pennsylvania that he has worn every day since appearing in that photograph 40 years ago.

I had come to interview him as part of a two-year project in which I made contact with eight black liberationists who have all experienced long prison sentences. They each agreed to embark on an ongoing conversation with me about their political beliefs today and their battle to secure their own freedom.

Del Africa, 72, and I talked for three hours in the prison visitors' room. He spoke rapidly and intensely, as though he needed to get it all out, relating how he had joined the Black Panther party in Chicago and then switched to the Move organisation after relocating to Philadelphia.

He also told me what happened the second after that photo was taken, as though he were narrating the next few frames of a news reel. As it turns out, that police officer really had been about to whack him.

"A cop hit me with his helmet," he said. "Smashed my eye. Another cop swung his shotgun and broke my jaw. I went down, and after that I don't remember anything 'til I came to and a dude was dragging me by my hair and cops started kicking me in the head."

Del Africa is one of the Move 9, the group of five men and four women, all African American, who were arrested 40 years ago this August during the 1978 police siege of their headquarters in Powelton Village,

Philadelphia. They were charged as a nine-person unit with the murder of the police officer who died in the melee, James Ramp. Each was sentenced to 30 years to life, though to this day they protest their innocence.

The ranks of the Move 9 have slowly been depleted over the years. Two have died in prison. In June, the first of the nine to win parole, Debbie Africa, was released from a Pennsylvania women's prison.

As the 40th anniversary approaches, six of the Move 9 are still behind bars, Del Africa included. They are among a total of 19 black radicals who remain locked up in penitentiaries across America having been convicted of violent acts committed in the name of black power between the late 1960s and early 1980s.

Along with former Black Panthers and Black Liberation Army members, they amount to the unfinished business of the black liberation struggle. Many of them remain strikingly passionate about the cause, even as they strive for release in some cases half a century into their sentences.

In the case of Move members, their politics are a strange fusion of black power and flower power. The group that formed in the early 1970s melded the revolutionary ideology of the Black Panthers with the nature- and animal-loving communalism of 1960s hippies. You might characterise them as black liberationists-cum-eco warriors.

That sense of passion for the cause leaps out from the first email that Del Africa sent to me from Dallas in September 2016, after I'd contacted him asking to talk.

"ON THE MOVE! LONG LIVE FREEDOM'S STRUGGLE!" he proclaimed in capital letters at the top of the message. "Warm Revolutionary greetings, Ed!"

He then launched into a long deliberation about the "plight of political prisoners here in ameriKKKa!". Move members are still imprisoned, he wrote, "just because we steadfastly refused to abandon our Belief in the Revolutionary Teachings of Move's Founder" and because of "our refusal to bow down to this murderous, racist, sexist rotten-ass system". He ended with the quip: "But, hey, I don't wanna burn you out the first time I reply to your email."

There was a similar robustness to the first response I received in December 2016 after reaching out to Janine Phillips Africa, one of the four women among the Move 9. Unlike Del Africa's email, she wrote to me by hand, sending the letter by mail as she has continued to do over the ensuing 18 months.

"Me and my sisters are doing good, staying strong," was the first sentence she wrote to me. That was remarkable in itself coming from a woman who is not only approaching the 40th anniversary of her incarceration but has had two of her children killed in confrontations with police.

"Everybody knows how strong Move men are. We're showing the world how strong Move women are. That's how it's been since our arrest in 1978," she said.

In the course of that first letter, Janine Africa, who was 22 when she was arrested and is now 62, took me deep into the "torture chamber", the cruel solitary confinement wing where she spent the first three years of her sentence.

"There were no windows, just a section of the wall with frosted panes. You couldn't tell when it was night or day, they kept the lights on 24/7. They were ordered to break us but it didn't work – no matter what they did, they were not going to break us."

Over the months, I came to learn about the double tragedy in Janine Africa's life. In 1976, Philadelphia police officers turned up at the Move house in Powelton Village having been called out to a disturbance. Scuffling ensued between some Move residents and police. Janine was shoved and her baby, whom she had named Life, was knocked out of her arms to the ground. His skull appears to have been crushed, and he died later that day in her arms. He was three weeks old.

Then on 13 May 1985, seven years after Janine Africa was imprisoned, she received further terrible news. Philadelphia police had dropped a bomb from a helicopter onto a Move house on Osage Avenue in the west of Philadelphia in an attempt to force the black radicals to evacuate the premises after long-running battles with the authorities. The bomb ignited a fire in the Move house that turned into an inferno.

Janine's 12-year-old son, Little Phil, was being cared for in that house by other Move adults while she was in custody. The then mayor of Philadelphia, Wilson Goode, notoriously gave the go-ahead for the bombing, and the fire that ensued was allowed to rage, the blaze spreading across the black neighborhood and razing 61 homes to the ground.

Little Phil and four other children burned to death. So too did six adults including Move's founder, John Africa, AKA Vincent Leaphart.

I asked Janine Africa how she coped with losing two young sons during clashes with law enforcement. She was reticent. "I don't like talking about the night Life was killed," she wrote in April. "There are times when I think about Life and my son Phil, but I don't keep those thoughts in my mind long because they hurt."

In that same letter she said she had turned grief into what she contests is a force for good: deeper commitment to the struggle. "The murder of my children, my family, will always affect me, but not in a bad way. When I think about what this system has done to me and my family, it makes me even more committed to my belief," she said.

Del Africa also heard bad news on 13 May 1985. His 13-year-old daughter Delisha was also living in the Move house. She too died in the fire. When I asked him how he dealt with being told his daughter had been killed in an inferno that had been ignited by the actions of the city authorities, he wasn't as sanguine as Janine.

"I just cried," he said during my prison visit. "I wanted to strike out. I wanted to wreak as much havoc as I could until they put me down. That anger, it brought such a feeling of helplessness. Like, dang! What to do now? Dark times ..."

Mayor Goode made a formal apology for the disaster the following year. But a grand jury cleared all officials of criminal liability for the 1985 bombing that killed 11 people, including five children.

The only adult Move member to escape the inferno alive, Ramona Africa, was imprisoned for seven years.

All Move members take the last name "Africa" to denote their commitment to race equality and their strong bond to what they regard as their Move "family". "A family of revolutionaries" is how Del Africa once described it to me. Unlike the Black Panther party which formally dissolved in 1982, Move is still a living entity.

"We exposed the crimes of government officials on every level," Janine Africa wrote to me. "We demonstrated against puppy mills, zoos, circuses, any form of enslavement of animals. We demonstrated

against Three Mile Island [nuclear power plant] and industrial pollution. We demonstrated against police brutality. And we did so uncompromisingly. Slavery never ended, it was just disguised.”

Deeply committed as they were to each other, the Move “family” undoubtedly had the ability to incense those around them. They liked to project their revolutionary message at high volume from a bullhorn at all hours of night and day. Passersby were accosted with a torrent of expletives.

Then there were the dogs. When the 1978 siege happened, there were 12 adults and 11 children in the Move house in Powelton Village – and 48 dogs. Most of the animals were strays taken in by the group as part of its philosophy of caring for the vulnerable. Black liberation, animal liberation – the two are as one with Move. John Africa was known as the “dog man”, as he was rarely seen without one.

The unconventional nature of the Move community which drove some neighbors to despair in turn led to demands for their eviction, and ultimately to the fatal siege. Over time relations grew more belligerent. Months before the siege Move members made visible their threat to resist attempts to remove them from the neighborhood – they stood on a platform they had built at the front of the house dressed in fatigues and brandishing rifles.

On its side, the city was led at that time by the Frank Rizzo, Goode’s predecessor as Philadelphia mayor, a former police commissioner who liked to talk tough and was fond of dog-whistle politics. He once said of the Move radicals: “You are dealing with criminals, barbarians, you are safer in the jungle!” Another Rizzo classic was: “Break their heads is right. They try to break yours, you break theirs first.”

When Move refused to vacate the premises having been issued with an eviction order, Rizzo said he would impose a blockade on the house so tight “even a fly wouldn’t get in”. He was not kidding. For 56 days before the siege, a ring of steel was erected around the house, no food was permitted into the compound and the water supply was cut off. Rizzo bragged he would “show them more firepower than they’ve ever seen”.

At about 6am on 8 August 1978 the action started. Move members were battered by water cannon as they took refuge in the basement of the building. Tear gas was propelled into the house. At 8.15am shots rang out and a thunderstorm of gunfire erupted that is captured on police footage of the incident. Police and fire officers are seen scattering in all directions as bullets whistle overhead seemingly in all directions. It looked like a war zone.

Soon after Move adults and naked children began emerging from the smoke-ridden basement. Janine Africa can be heard in the police footage screaming. Next, Del Africa appears, his hands outstretched in that Jesus pose. The camera pans in on him as he lies on the street after he was hit with the police helmet. Two police officers begin kicking him on his head which bounces between them like a ball. Three officers later faced disciplinary measures but a judge dismissed the charges.

Prosecutors accused the Move 9 of collaboratively killing Ramp, even though he died from one bullet. They said the shooting had been started when gunfire erupted from the basement where the Move members were gathered, a theory supported by some eyewitnesses.

Move’s attorney gathered other witness evidence suggesting the fatal shot had come from the opposite direction – in other words, it was accidental “friendly fire”. At trial no forensic evidence was presented that connected the Move 9 to the weapon that caused the fatality. For the women in particular the prosecution did not even argue the four had handled firearms or had been involved in the actual shooting of Ramp.

Del Africa insisted when I interviewed him that though Move had guns in the house, none of them were operative. “There was no shooting from our side,” he told me. “No one in the house had any gunshot residue, none of us had fingerprints on any of the weapons they claim came out of the house.”

The Philadelphia Fraternal Order of Police has a plaque for Ramp on its memorial site. I reached out to the order many times in the course of a month to hear their reflection on his death and Move’s role in it, but they did not respond.

You can get a sense of the depth of feeling by reading the comments under Ramp’s page on the Philadelphia Officer Down Memorial website. Several commentators, some of whom vividly recalled the 1978 siege, sent blessings to the deceased police officer and his family.

Others expressed anger at the lack of justice for Ramp, though they didn’t specify what they meant. One woman, whose late husband was on duty at both the siege and the 1985 bombing, was more direct. She said of Ramp: “I was so sad to hear of your passing. I felt, and still do feel so badly for your family. Move were scum and cowards, hiding as they shot. You were SO brave. Never forgotten. RIP.”

As they approach the 40th anniversary of the siege and of their subsequent captivity, Del and Janine Africa described to me how they’ve coped for so long doing time for a crime they insist they did not commit. They each have their own survival methods.

Janine Africa told me she avoids thinking about time itself. Birthdays, holidays, the new year mean nothing to her. “The years are not my focus, I keep my mind on my health and the things I need to do day by day.”

Del Africa thinks of the eons behind bars not as “prison time” but as “revolutionary prison activity”. “I keep saying to myself: ‘I will not fall apart. I will not give in.’”

They’ve both experienced long stretches in solitary confinement, a brand of punishment that the UN has decried as a form of torture. In 1983, Del Africa was put into the “hole” – an isolation cell – because he refused to have his dreadlocks cut.

He stayed in the hole for six years. He relieved the stress and boredom by organizing black history quizzes for other inmates held in the isolation wing. Russell Shoaltz, a former Black Panther, helped him devise the questions, and shout them out down the line of solitary cells. Questions such as: when was the Brown v Board of Education ruling in the US supreme court? What year was the Black Panther party founded? Who was Dred Scott? For what is John Brown remembered?

Eventually Del Africa won the right to keep his dreads. When I visited him in Dallas there they hung, salt-and-peppered now, proudly down to his hips.

Throughout, the Move prisoners have drawn strength from companionship with other members of the nine. Janine shared a cell with two other surviving Move women – Debbie Africa and Janet Holloway Africa – in Cambridge Springs women’s prison in Pennsylvania. They called each other “sisters” and did everything together. “We read, we play cards, we watch TV. We laugh a lot together, we’re sisters through and through,” she wrote in a letter in February.

There was one other member of their gang: fittingly given the history of the organization, a dog called Chevy. The prison authorities let them keep the dog kenneled in their cell as part of a program in which they train the animal for later use as a service dogs for disabled people.

Life went on like this for years, and had acquired its own normality, almost a certain tranquility. Until last month when Debbie Africa was granted parole and set free. Her departure came as a jolt.

“It’s strange not having Deb here,” Janine said. “I keep expecting her to walk in from work. They snuck her out at 5.00 in the morning. We only got to hug her briefly and watch her leave. Chevy misses her, he keeps sniffing her bed.”

In June, Janine and Janet Africa also went before the same parole board as Debbie and made essentially the same case that they had earned their freedom. The board asked Janine whether she would be a risk to the public were she to be let out, and she referred them to her pristine prison record: the last time she had any disciplinary rap was 26 years ago. “The way I’m in here is the way I’ll be outside, there is no risk factor,” she told them.

While Debbie was set free, both Janine and Janet had their parole denied. The board said they showed “lack of remorse” for the death of Ramp in the 1978 siege.

Janine Africa wrote to me a few days after she learnt of the denial, speculating that games were being played with her mind. The contrast of Debbie’s release with her denial was “either to make us resent Deb or make me feel hopeless and break us down. Whatever their tactic, it isn’t working!”

Debbie’s release also made a profound impact on Del Africa. “I feel overjoyed that Debbie is out,” he wrote to me. “Her release is a breakthrough! I see it finally opening the door a crack.”

Del Africa also hasn’t had a misconduct report in prison for more than 20 years. Yet he too was turned down for parole last year and must wait another four years before his next chance to convince the parole board that he can safely be returned to society.

Like many of the 19 black liberationists still behind bars, Del Africa is caught in a trap attached to the crime for which he was convicted. He knows he will only be paroled if he expresses heartfelt remorse. But says he cannot do that.

“How can I have any remorse for something I never did?” he said. “I had nothing to do with killing a cop in 1978. Have they shown any remorse for what happened to my daughter in 1985?”

Would he show remorse to the parole board if he felt it would secure his release?

“No, never going to do that,” he said. “That would be akin to making them right. They are the ones who were wrong.”

14 Aug - Cuomo's parole board is woefully short-staffed and includes two political hacks, advocates say

The state Board of Parole is woefully understaffed, and two members who have deep political and police ties routinely reject prisoners without ever giving them a chance, a scathing new report by criminal justice activists charges.

MORE:

by Reuven Blau and Stephen Rex Brown (*NY Daily News*)
Commissioner Walter William Smith Jr., a politically connected member of the board since 1996, consistently denies parole to prisoners convicted of violent crimes and is prone to losing his temper and

mocking inmates seeking to convince him they've turned their lives around, says the report by Release Aging People in Prison and the Parole Preparation Project.

A second member, Commissioner Marc Coppola, meanwhile, arrives at hearings unprepared, often mixes up case files and fails to consider required aspects of a prisoner's life behind bars, the report says. During one hearing Smith belched loudly and frequently tries to rush prisoners as they recount their criminal histories and accomplishments behind bars, according to the report.

"The governor can and should dismiss these commissioners immediately and replace them with qualified candidates who better reflect the identities and experiences of people in prison," the 31-page report reads.

The report comes as prisoner advocates and police unions — who rarely agree — are urging Gov. Cuomo to give the board a complete overhaul. Both groups want the state to add more staff to the board as well as depoliticize how members are selected.

Patrick Bailey, a parole board spokesman, slammed the report, saying it is filled with "false accusations."

"Every day, hardworking staff help ensure board commissioners are provided the necessary information and tools to make fair, impartial decisions and the facts show that process is working," Bailey said.

The board is currently staffed with only 12 out of 19 commissioners, who must handle an average of 12,000 cases each year. Each member is appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Senate for a six-year term. They earn an annual salary of \$106,000.

The board has not been fully staffed since Cuomo took office, said Dave George, the associate director for the aging-inmate activist group. The state budget allocated money to pay only 16 parole commissioners this fiscal year, he added.

The board "is now facing staffing issues of catastrophic proportions, and continues to engage in unlawful, unethical and harmful behavior, despite repeated admonishments by the New York State judiciary and legislature," the report says.

A spokeswoman for Cuomo's office defended the current staffing level.

"The statute allows for — does not mandate — the nomination and Senate confirmation of up to 19 members, and the governor has maintained the same or higher levels as prior governors," spokeswoman Dani Lever said.

The lack of staff has made it impossible for the board to thoroughly review cases, prisoner advocates say. In May, the board had to interview 70 prisoners in Fishkill Correctional Facility in one week. One prisoner there was interviewed at 6:30 p.m. and said the board was rushed to finish the talk and seemed impatient, according to the report.

"Such severe understaffing has led to myriad procedural problems, overworked commissioners, higher caseloads, shorter parole interviews, and less time for individualized evaluations of parole applicant files," the report says.

"Those realities have led to devastating consequences for people in prison and their loved ones," the review concludes.

The staff shortage has also led to a major spike in two-person parole panels, despite promises from the board's chairman that the practice would end.

In one case cited by the report, a prisoner, listed as J.V., made his case before a two-member panel in February. But the board members were split, with one deciding to release and the other denying the parole request.

So J.V. was reinterviewed by another two-member panel in March. Those members issued a similar split decision.

Finally, he was interviewed by a three-member panel in April

"After giving what felt like everything he had at his first two interviews, he felt numb, closed-off, and defeated," the report says.

A week later the panel rejected his plea, noting his "demeanor" during the interview "showed agitation with the parole process." The decision added, "You need to develop further insight for your criminal conduct."

As for the controversial commissioners, Smith is the last Pataki-era appointee on the board. The report charges he has lasted so long due to his "repeated contributions to powerful legislators."

He has donated \$20,000 to state and national campaigns since 2000, records show. That includes \$16,997 to state Sen. Patrick Gallivan over the past eight years. Gallivan (R-Erie County), a former parole board member, is chairman of the state's Crime and Correction Committee.

"Accepting campaign contributions in exchange for political appointments, and then attempting to influence the decisions of those appointees who serve on an independent administrative agency is the definition of corruption," the report says.

The GOP lawmaker has opposed granting parole to former Weather Underground member and convicted Brinks robber Judith Clark and cop killer Herman Bell.

Cuomo commuted Clark's sentence in December 2016, making her eligible for parole, but the board denied her release in April 2017. She sued, and has been granted a new hearing.

Despite strenuous objections by the city's police unions, Bell was released in April, after nearly 40 years in prison.

Smith still utilizes an antiquated, tough-on-crime approach that was in vogue when he was first appointed by Gov. Pataki, according to the report.

Prisoners said Smith would flip through parole packets "like a deck of cards," "shrug sarcastically," groan as inmates spoke, make a gesture with his hand implying "hurry it up" and give sideways glances to fellow commissioners, according to the report.

Others described Smith "leaning back in his chair with his hands behind his head as if relaxing, belching loudly and other dismissive and provocative conduct," according to the report.

Cuomo reappointed him in 2017 over objections raised by prisoner supporters.

Reform advocates are also urging Gov. Cuomo to immediately toss board member Coppola for his “inappropriate” and “unprofessional” behavior during interviews.

14 Aug - Police Unions’ Opposition to Prison Reform Is About More Than Jobs — It’s About Racism

Law enforcement unions are not simply barriers to criminal justice reform and decarceration because of economic concerns for their members.

MORE:

by Natasha Lennard (*The Intercept*)

In its first few seconds, a new television advertisement targeting New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo appears to be an appeal for increased funding for public education. “Governor Cuomo is shortchanging our kids,” the short video begins. “In New York state, our classrooms are overcrowded and outdated.” This, however, is not a message from the state’s teachers unions, nor is it a campaign effort from gubernatorial challenger Cynthia Nixon. In fact, the ad is not about education at all.

Fifteen seconds in, the ad’s true intent is revealed: “Instead of taking care of our children, the governor’s radical agenda takes care of criminals.” The video is part of a six-figure TV, radio, digital, and outdoor advertisement campaign launched last month by the New York State Correctional Officers and Police Benevolent Association, or NYSCOPBA, with the aim, according to a union statement, “to put public safety before primary party politics this campaign season.”

The ad blitz is the latest cynical propaganda effort by a major law enforcement union to stymie and demonize prison reform by drawing on menacing and unsubstantiated claims that frame “dangerous criminals” as irredeemable threats — people that are apart from and in conflict with “the public.”

The campaign asks the public to call the governor’s office and urge him to reverse its criminal justice reform policies, including giving 35,000 parolees the right to vote and providing prisoners with tablet computers. Like fellow New York law enforcement union, the New York City Patrolmen’s Benevolent Association, the NYSCOPBA campaign decried parole reform that has assisted the release on parole of elderly prisoners, convicted decades ago, as “cop killers.”

“These ads constitute a step in the ongoing campaign of the police organizations to overturn hard-won gains in decreasing mass incarceration, improving the treatment of incarcerated people, and reducing New York’s reliance on punishment in place of social programs,” said Laura Whitehorn, an organizer with the project Release Aging People in Prison and a former political prisoner. “These gains now sit squarely in the crosshairs of the NYSCOPBA ad campaign.”

The recent steps forward for advocates of prison reform — including limiting the use of solitary confinement for young people, increasing the parole releases of people who pose low or no risk to public safety, and prohibiting the charging of young people as adults — represent, as Whitehorn noted, “massive efforts by communities around New York state who have traditionally had little access to the power wielded by the police unions.” NYSCOPBA cites Cuomo’s “radical agenda,” but the governor’s moderate and reasonable criminal justice reforms have been the result of years of applied activism and pressure.

Campaigns like NYSCOPBA’s — straight from the playbook of law enforcement union lobbying — go far beyond advocacy for union members’ well-being, wages, and job security. They seek to reinscribe the myth of the criminal “other” — people deserving only of punishment and exclusion. It is the carceral logic through which law enforcement continues to find justification for its authority.

Correctional officer and police unions have an obvious interest in opposing criminal justice reform when it comes to officer accountability and discipline — and with making sure that the criminal justice system keeps catching people in its maw: When prisons close, prison guards lose jobs. Law enforcement unions have for decades weaponized consistently racist narratives of criminal threats — threats that require management and punishment — to support policies that uphold mass incarceration.

The California Correctional Peace Officers Association, which spends about \$8 million per year on lobbying, poured \$100,000 into supporting the state’s 1994 “three strikes” laws and over \$1 million to beat Prop 66 in 2016, which would have reduced the number of crimes that carry mandatory life sentences. The union spent nearly \$2 million supporting Jerry Brown’s gubernatorial campaign, extracting support for prison expansions in return.

In Illinois, the state’s largest public-sector union waged a campaign with law-and-order politicians against the closure in 2013 of Tamms Correctional Center, a notorious Supermax prison. The campaign described the people locked up in Tamms as “the worst of the worst” in an attempt to justify the prison’s existence and vindicate its well-documented brutality.

But often these campaigns — like NYSCOPBA’s — go beyond veiled appeals for continued job security to focus squarely on opposing greater rights and better treatment for prisoners and former prisoners. Among the policies named by NYSCOPBA, for example, is Cuomo’s decision this year to grant 35,000 parolees the right to vote. “NYSCOPBA remains concerned that this will allow murderers, rapists, and sex offenders to enter polling sites in schools, community centers, and other places we designate as safe spaces for children, families, and seniors,” said Matt Hamilton, the union’s director of public affairs, in a statement. Similarly, the union opposes the plan to supply 51,000 incarcerated people with computer tablets. “Concerns about whether inmates would be able to hack these devices to do things they are not permitted must be taken seriously,” Hamilton said.

The NYC Correction Officers’ Benevolent Association deployed a similar logic last week to disavow a new law that would allow incarcerated people in New York City jails to use phones there for free. “Now the gangs will definitely be able to continue to run their operations from inside the jails,” Elias Husamudeen, the union’s president, told the New York Times. “They will definitely be able to continue to communicate free of charge with the other members of their gangs who may not be in jail.”

It’s not clear what the corrections officers’ union gains from its advocacy on issues like parolee enfranchisement and access to free technology. Suffice to say these campaigns are not legitimate appeals for public safety: Claims about gang organizing, hacking, and predators in polling booths are offered up without grounds and would only be believed by members of the public who already see prisoners as inherent dangers to society.

Yet if law enforcement unions are driven by economic concerns for their workers, this drive is couched in and shaped by an almost theodicean narrative in which harsh criminal justice is vindicated as the management of evil. And, in a country that conflates blackness with criminality, law enforcement narratives that equate criminality with evil are also intractably racist. When the New York City Patrolmen’s Benevolent Association President Pat Lynch called Herman Bell an “animal” after the former Black Panther was granted parole after over four decades in prison, we didn’t need to be dogs to hear that whistle.

If the conflict between law enforcement unions and prison reform rested only on the threat posed to certain jobs by closing prisons, there could be an opening for solidarity between prison workers, prisoners, and the broader labor movement. “Ultimately,” wrote historian and labor organizer Austin McCoy in a 2016 New

Labor Forum paper, “it is likely that ensuring economic justice for prisoners and workers will require connecting advocacy for decarceration to the call for mass employment, or a universal job guarantee, which in turn would necessitate connecting movements against mass incarceration to the larger labor movement.”

But that’s not how it works out. Law enforcement unions are different from other public-sector unions, both in terms of their vast political clout at a time when organized labor in the U.S. is weak, and their historic, structural commitment to elevating “blue lives” at the expense of others, particularly black lives.

Law enforcement unions, therefore, are not simply barriers to criminal justice reform and decarceration because of economic concerns for their members. As their campaigns and rhetoric make clear, their commitment is not only to mass incarceration as a job provider, but to the system of racist oppression and unjust societal organization that these jobs uphold.

16 Aug - Paper Chained 2—Going to Print Early November—Final Call!

Please circulate this final call for contributions to the second issue of Paper Chained in your networks.

MORE:

We are going to print in early November, any further contributions are welcome before the end of October by email: runningwild@riseup.net or by post to Post Office Box 1989, Armidale, NSW 2350 AUSTRALIA. Find out more at runningwild.noblogs.org

We primarily welcome contributions from prisoners, ex-prisoners, and family of prisoners, but we are also open to contributions from people who have been affected by the justice system, including short stays in jail, or court proceedings.

ABOUT THE JOURNAL

Paper Chained is a journal of writings and artistic expressions from people affected by incarceration, usually people who are in prison, are ex-prisoners or who have family or loved ones in prison. It aims to give these people a voice, to show them they are not alone, and to demonstrate to the wider public the humanity of those locked up in prison.

18 Aug - Eric King is now in the S.H.U.

It was just brought to our attention that on August 17th, Eric was sent to the Secure Housing Unit (S.H.U., the hole, solitary confinement, et cetera).

MORE:

At this point we do not have all the details, but it does seem like Eric will be in the S.H.U for the foreseeable future given what we know so far. We will be sure to update everyone once we get more information on the situation.

Eric is so appreciative of all of the mail he had received for his birthday, but unfortunately he won’t have any of it with him to respond to, so if you’re interested in writing him again he’d really appreciate that. We also encourage everyone to send him a note or a postcard or anything. The S.H.U is an even darker place than general population as a lot of you are aware of, so we have a couple of suggestions of easy ways to brighten up an otherwise drab cell he’ll be spending 23 hours a day in for a period of time.

If folks are willing and able, it would be great to include some articles about news, books, media, scientific discoveries, etc or pictures of beautiful nature spots by printing them off of a computer (remember, prisoners cannot get articles ripped out of the newspaper, polaroids, or real photographs).

Or, if you have money burning a hole in your pocket, please also consider sending Eric a book to get him some reading material while he's in the S.H.U.

This is an already particularly stressful time for Eric with the struggles his partner is going through, so if you could help us pass this along and encourage folks to write to Eric he would really appreciate that.

18 Aug - On Education: An Interview with David Gilbert and Jalil Muntaqim

Political struggle, anarchism, and education have a long, complex history. To help shed some critical light, and cut through layers of academic debris, Freedom News sought two political prisoners', and long-term peer educators', views on education and struggle.

MORE:

by Luther Blissett (*Freedom News*)

LB: How important is education in radical or revolutionary struggle?

Jalil: You did not define what you mean by education (?), therefore, the open ended question can only be answered that any form of education that serves to raise consciousness [sic] toward a revolutionary determination is important.

LB: In your view, as a revolutionary, what are key aspects of radical or revolutionary education?

Jalil: The study of revolutions throughout the world, the writings of other revolutionaries is extremely important to hone ones analysis and understanding of the forces opposing liberation. Secondly, study of the system one is opposing is necessary to better field a strategy to combat systems of oppression, repression.

David: [answering 1 & 2 together] Education is absolutely essential! We are barraged with the dominant ideology and a totally one-sided presentation of the "facts." To take just one of the infinite e.g.s, the crown prince of Saudi Arabia was just welcomed as a friend of democracy while the media and politicians are decrying the "dictator" in Venezuela. And it's not just that all the political terms and facts are wrong, but mass culture is designed to divert people and keep them misdirected or passive. Education is absolutely essential to help people see the world as it really is and to nurture critical thinking.

LB: Given your experience as a peer educator in prison, what teaching or education methods did you find effective?

Jalil: The effective way of teaching in prison is providing study materials, group discussions on the materials and writing assignments.

David: It usually works best with something that matters to the students. We got a great response in using education to respond to the AIDS crisis. Our method was in some way Freirean, in that we opened up ways for people to be active in facing the needs and crises in their lives. But we also needed to be very rigorous about mastering a body of material.

LB: Have you had many experiences communicating or collaborating with academics?

Jalil: My experience communicating with or collaborating with academics has been limited. Generally speaking, academic's [sic] are not pragmatic, certainly not revolutionary, and express little desire for engaging in challenging the system.

LB: If so, what are some of the shortfalls you see with academics interested in or working on topics related to radical social change?

Jalil: See above!

David: [answering 4 & 5 together] My limited interaction with academics have pretty much been with some gems who are activist orient—Becky Thompson, Joys James, Victor Wallis, Ward Churchill, Dan Berger and a few others. There are many more I haven't worked with directly who do great work, like Angela Davis and Barbara Ransby. So that experience has been rewarding. Naturally there is a problem when people get too severed from actual struggles of the oppressed. An example might be the ways that "identity politics" got severed from its original sense of the many voices of the oppressed against the systems as a whole to, for some, more of a cultural safe space. I'm not sure. But I think the key is for academics to work closely with oppressed people and their movements.

LB: What do you think academics, scholars, and researchers need to know when they are thinking about working with political prisoners?

Jalil: Working with political prisoners demand [sic] preparation to do work, be dedicated and willing to sacrifice to manifest specific tasks consistent with an agreed goal or objective to achieve.

David: That we represent a continuity of struggles from the 1960s to today. That we don't need or want sympathy for our situation but rather serious and critical engagement with the ideas we put forward.

LB: What research questions do you, as a political prisoner, think has been overlooked by academics or scholars?

Jalil: Academics has sorely failed to critique the capitalist system with an objective to forge a revolutionary determination. They have failed to give a class analysis of capitalism that exposes the reality that a capitalist system requires divisions, competition and a compliant work force to be exploited, using racism as a tool of racial division and exploitation. This is hypocritical on the part of scholars who find themselves feeding out of the trough of capitalist exploitation and oppression.

David: First of all, radical academics have been doing some invaluable work in recent years. There's been a real flowering of analysis of racial capitalism—Robin D. G. Kelly, Gerald Horne and several others. There's also been valuable analysis of patriarchy and capitalism, such as Maria Mies and Silvia Federici, and how it all fits together, such as Nancy Fraser. There's been some excellent work on analyzing the mad dash toward environmental catastrophe. I'm only mentioning a tiny fraction of academics doing very worthwhile, helpful work.

To me the biggest gap now is internationalism. It's so lamentable that we don't have a strong anti-wars movement, at a time when imperial interventions are turning whole countries—Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Yemen, and more—into humanitarian disasters. I'd love to see academics do a lot more to expose the lies on why the U.S. intervenes and the horrors of what it does, maybe at least something like the teach-ins we did early in the Vietnam War. Also, I'm sure there's some, but I'd love to see more, analysis of how white supremacy at home and imperialism abroad are all one system, one system also along with patriarchy and class rule.

LB: What is the best way that you think academics, scholars, and researchers can use their platform to support political prisoners and/or radical social change?

Jalil: Scholars and academics need to demand the U.S. government recognize the existence of U.S. political prisoners! They need to especially demand the amnesty and release of COINTELPRO convicted political prisoners, subject to the Senate Church report establishing the unconstitutional practices of the FBI's COINTELPRO practices. If they were to collectively do this, it would be a paradigm shift of national political awakening [sic] challenging the governments [sic] practice of political suppression and repression.

David: Support for PPs should be part of a broader program to promote radical social change. The reality of PPs gives lie to the U.S. pretensions about human rights and at the same time, as mentioned above,

underscores the continuity of the ongoing struggles for social justice. Encouraging students to write or visit PPs is one way to promote both goals. Also, support for PPs is intimately connected to opposing mass incarceration, the cutting edge of racism in the contemporary U.S. The rulers felt so threatened by Black lib. Struggle that they a. developed COINTELPRO to destroy rev. Black orgs. And b. promoted the “war on crime and drugs” to incapacitate the rebellious Black community. What’s most important is for academics to work in close solidarity with the movements for social justice.

21 Aug - Statement in Support of Cameron Crowley, Alleged to be Hacktivist “Vigilance”

Statement in solidarity with Cameron Crowley, accused of hacking in solidarity with Philando Castile.

MORE:

Philando Castile was murdered by police officer Jeronimo Yanez on July 6, 2016. On June 16th, 2017, Yanez was acquitted on all charges. Those mourning the loss of Philando Castile, those outraged by the acquittal of Yanez, and those wishing to change or abolish the racist and destructive law enforcement apparatus, stood up, spoke out, and struck back. The most visible examples were the freeway occupations where community members came together to be side by side in their grief and to disrupt business as usual.

Others also rose up – across the state, the country, and the world – fighting where they stood and adding their voices to the outcry. One such voice was that of the hacktivist, “Vigilance.” Vigilance disrupted a different highway, the “information super highway,” by accessing State-run websites. On May 22, 2018, Cameron Crowley was indicted by the US Federal Government, accused of being the hacktivist Vigilance, and charged with Intentional Access to a Protected Computer, Intentional Damage to a Protected Computer, and Aggravated Identity Theft.

While, at this time, we do not if or how Crowley was involved in Vigilance’s actions, we know the following to be true:

- Vigilance’s bold actions were taken in solidarity with the movement to end police violence. Any time the case is discussed, this struggle should be centered. Damage to a computer or disruption of someone’s day both pale in comparison to the legacy of police murder.
- In early news reports, computer security expert Mark Lanterman confirmed that if Vigilance had “malicious intent,” the hacks could have been much worse. This suggests that Vigilance was not acting to cause harm, but rather to draw attention to the injustice of Castile’s murder and Yanez’s acquittal.
- US Code, Section 1030, under which Crowley is charged, is over-broad. The statute equates principled hacktivism with harm-causing ransomware and cyber-warfare.
- In our increasingly computerized world, principled hacktivism – including cyber-civil disobedience – is an important tool for change whose use will only grow. The consequences for cyber-civil disobedience should be no more severe than those for traditional civil disobedience, and hacktivists should have the support of broader movements for social justice.

We, the undersigned, stand in solidarity with Vigilance. As such, we also stand in support of Cameron Crowley who, whether involved or not, is the one facing repercussions for actions taken in the struggle to end police violence. We know that power concedes nothing without a fight. We know that we are fighting one fight with many fronts. We know we are all stronger when we stand together.

22 Aug - Omaha Police Claimed Bomb Was Made at a Black Panther Home

Omaha police claimed a bomb was made at a Black Panther house setting the stage for the framing of two Black Panther leaders.

MORE:

by Michael Richardson

Forty-eight years ago today, August 11, 1970, a suitcase bomb was allegedly constructed in the kitchen of David Rice at 2816 Parker Street in Omaha, Nebraska. Rice who changed his name in prison to Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa, was convicted along with Edward Poindexter for the murder of Omaha Patrolman Larry Minard. The pair were leaders of the Black Panther affiliate organization National Committee to Combat Fascism and targets of harassment by both the Omaha police department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Omaha was a pent up racial powder keg with rioting the summer before after the police shooting of fourteen year-old Vivian Strong. The police had been actively harassing local Panthers since October 1968 according to a Federal Bureau of Investigation confidential memorandum. Meanwhile the FBI had targeted Poindexter with two bogus letters under the infamous clandestine COINTELPRO operation. Director J. Edgar Hoover had declared war on the Black Panthers and in December 1969 ordered Special Agent in Charge Paul Young to get both Poindexter and Mondo off the streets. Hoover demanded Young to be “imaginative.”

An August 17, 1970, fatal bombing attack on police presented the perfect crime to pin on the Black Panther leaders. An intense investigation turned up a fifteen year-old bomber, Duane Peak. However, Hoover did not want a teen bomber, Hoover wanted Poindexter and Mondo to take the rap. Peak was given a deal, no prison time in exchange for his testimony implicating the two leaders.

Although Peak gave police half a dozen different versions of the crime, including several of the bomb construction, the teen claimed at trial he helped Poindexter make the bomb in Mondo’s kitchen. The official version of the story was that Peak was at NCCF headquarters a week before the bombing when Poindexter told Peak he wanted him to help blow up a pig. Peak claimed he met Poindexter the following night at his cousin Frank Peak’s house and then went with Poindexter and Raleigh House to Mondo’s home. Peak then testified he went with House to pick up the suitcase and dynamite before returning to Mondo’s residence. Peak’s account is not only denied by Poindexter but also disputed by Frank Peak who said his cousin Duane did not meet Poindexter at Frank’s house.

Peak gave two versions of the ride with Raleigh House to get the dynamite and prosecutor Arthur O’Leary told the jury a third version. Peak’s two stories had House bring the suitcase out of his front door and alternatively, bring the suitcase around the house from in back. O’Leary’s version at trial during opening arguments had Poindexter accompany Peak to pick up the explosives. House was never charged with supplying the dynamite and suitcase for the bomb and only spent one night in jail until released on a signature bond by O’Leary. The trial contradiction between Peak’s story and O’Leary’s opening remarks was never explored by defense lawyers and not explained by O’Leary.

Peak gave several accounts of the bomb construction. Before trial, Mondo was in another room and possibly unaware of what was going on in the kitchen. At trial, Mondo helped with construction of the bomb by wading up paper to pad the suitcase. Years later, when Peak was interviewed by State Senator Ernie Chambers, the bomb was supposedly made by Poindexter and Mondo in the basement while Peak waited upstairs.

Before his death in March 2016 at the Nebraska State Penitentiary, Mondo steadfastly denied any role in the crime and said Peak was never in his kitchen as claimed at trial. Poindexter, who still is at the state maximum-security prison, also denies involvement in the murder of Minard and furthermore says he did

not talk to Peak at NCCF headquarters as he had personally banned the youth from the building for shooting a pistol at a bird.

In exchange for his testimony Peak was declared a juvenile delinquent and never spent a single day in prison for the death of a policeman. Raleigh House, the purported supplier of suitcase and dynamite, was never prosecuted.

23 Aug - NSA Whistleblower Reality Winner Receives Longest Sentence Ever For Unauthorized Disclosure

Former National Security Agency contractor Reality Winner was sentenced to five years and three months in prison at a federal courthouse in Augusta, Georgia.

MORE:

by Kevin Gosztola (*Shadowproof*)

It was part of a plea agreement approved by the court, where Winner admitted she disclosed classified information in violation of the Espionage Act.

Winner will be incarcerated at Federal Medical Center, Carswell in Fort Worth, Texas, primarily because she has been bulimic for 12 years. In a statement read before the court, Winner said bulimia has been “a constant struggle” for her and expressed fear that, if she wasn’t incarcerated at a medical facility, she could turn to bulimia as a coping mechanism. She also suffers from depression after the death of her father in 2016, mere months before the act for which she was prosecuted.

Additionally, Winner spoke about her motivations for learning the languages and cultures of countries in the Middle East. Following the attacks on September 11, she said she wanted to intellectually understand what had happened. Her interest in language is what ultimately led her to her line of work.

Defense attorney Joe Whitley described Winner’s disclosure as a “poorly considered act of political passion and protest” in an effort to ensure the judge accepted the plea agreement.

After incarceration, Winner will be subject to three years of supervised release. She will not be required to pay a fine. The judge also did not say whether time served would be factored into her sentence.

Winner apologized in her statement and indicated she took full responsibility for her action.

The plea agreement reflected the seriousness of the espionage defense, Judge James Randal Hall said, adding the oft-heard refrain that it would promote respect for the law.

Prosecutors claimed Winner’s disclosure of the NSA report “caused exceptionally grave damage to national security.” However, that was never proven during course of this case and in fact, prosecutors claimed it didn’t have to be proven to convict her of violating the Espionage Act.

In a statement after the hearing, Justice Department representatives celebrated Winner’s sentence as the longest ever for a defendant convicted of making an unauthorized disclosure.

Winner was in the United States Air Force for six years. She is fluent in Dari, Farsi, and Pashto and worked as a language analyst. When she left the Air Force, she was employed by Pluribus International and worked for the NSA at Fort Gordon.

She disclosed a copy of an intelligence report from the NSA that alleged Russian hackers targeted voter registration systems during the 2016 election. It was provided to the Intercept, which made several mistakes related to source protection that led authorities to identify Winner as the person who gave the report to the media outlet.

Winner was arrested on June 3, 2017, after FBI agents raided her home. In a small back room in her home, agents controlled her movements, never told her she was “free to leave,” nor did they inform her she had the right to remain silent. The FBI successfully induced a confession that agents recorded. (What happened during the raid was challenged by defense attorneys through a motion to suppress statements, but ultimately, no ruling on the motion was ever issued by the court.)

She was denied bail. Prosecutors used her service and training in the Air Force against her to make the case she would flee if she was not kept in prison. They also promoted the idea that Winner had no respect for the U.S. government and persuaded the court (as well as an appeals court) that she may be some kind of disloyal American.

For one year and 83 days, she was detained at Lincolnton County Jail. There she was assaulted by a state inmate. Her mental health deteriorated, as a psychologist was hired to help her with depression. Her struggle with an eating disorder worsened because the jail did not or would not accommodate her diet.

A trial was scheduled and postponed at least two times before her attorneys recognized it would be nearly impossible for her to defend herself in court. For example, her defense was hindered significantly when the court rejected 40 out of 41 subpoenas that were requested so evidence could be compiled to possibly show the government had not taken appropriate steps to protect information in the NSA report.

A sensitive compartmented information facility, or SCIF, was setup at the courthouse in Augusta for Winner to meet with her attorneys and work on her defense. Throughout this part of her case, she was routinely dehumanized, as she was shackled 12 hours each day. The shackles were at her waist so she could not drink a water bottle with her own hands.

When she wanted to use the bathroom, according to her mother, Billie Winner-Davis, officers would do a “complete strip search on her.” Any time she was “taken from the SCIF to return to jail,” they did a strip search on her.

Humiliating and degrading strip searches served the purpose of domination and ensured Winner would recognize who was in control over her.

She changed her plea from not guilty to guilty on June 26 and acknowledged in court the elements of the offense, which prosecutors brought against her.

Her sentence for violating the Espionage Act is extraordinary, particularly when compared to sentences issued in other leak prosecutions. Yet, it is representative of the extent to which the government will go to make examples out of whistleblowers.

There is no public interest defense available to individuals charged under the Espionage Act, a World War I-era law that is antiquated. It forces a person who reveals information potentially of public value to defend their act in terms of whether they are guilty of betraying the country or not. It was not initially used to punish sources and control the flow of information to the press, and yet, especially since President Barack Obama’s administration, the Justice Department has relied on the law to expand its ability to silence national security whistleblowers.

23 Aug - In Case Against Indigenous #NoDAPL Activist Chase Iron Eyes, Judge Accepts Plea Deal That Drops Most Serious Charges

On August 21, North Dakota state prosecutors offered attorney and activist Chase Iron Eyes a plea deal for charges filed against him.

MORE:

by Michael Sainato (*Shadowproof*)

They stem from protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline on February 1, 2017.

The plea agreement dropped all serious charges against Iron Eyes, which included inciting a riot and criminal trespass. He faced a maximum of six years in state prison and would have lost his license to practice law.

It reduces his charges to a class B misdemeanor of disorderly conduct, keeping him out of jail and removing the risk that he may lose his license to practice law.

North Dakota Supreme Court Judge Lee Christofferson approved the plea deal on August 23.

Private military contractor TigerSwan identified Chase Iron Eyes as one of the leaders of the No DAPL movement during the protests to stop the Dakota Access Pipeline and conducted surveillance on him according to documents obtained by the Intercept. He ran as the Democratic candidate in the 2016 election to try to unseat incumbent Republican Rep. Kevin Cramer to represent North Dakota's at-large congressional district.

In his first interview since the plea deal was offered and accepted, Iron Eyes explained why he accepted the deal.

"I'm ambivalent about accepting a plea agreement, but I have to make decisions that are beneficial to my family," Iron Eyes declared. "At this point, I'm definitely feeling a sense of accomplishment and a sense that we've reached a measure of the mission to uncover and achieve truth and justice in my criminal trial."

"For the first time ever at the behest of big (oil) extraction, private military contractors deployed their tactics, resources, public relations, and sophisticated operations that we've only been able to see in theaters of war in the Middle East and other places abroad," he added.

Iron Eyes fought hard in court over the past year to have evidence related to his charges and conduct of Tigerswan released as part of the discovery process. These efforts, Iron Eyes said, were important due to these court cases being a part of challenging who gets to write history and build narratives around movements.

"When your life hangs in the balance, you are to be accorded a measure of discovery," Iron Eyes shared. "I did not feel I had received the discovery evidence I deserved and felt that justice was denied to me in three separate occasions during my hearings. We just took a beating in court, and the message was being sent to me that justice could be denied in my case."

Iron Eyes' legal team agreed with his assessment of the discovery process. "Every single time we filed a subpoena to take a deposition, the state would file an objection and put us in front of a judge to explain to him what we were going to ask," Daniel Sheehan, chief counsel of the Lakota People's Law Project and

lead attorney representing Chase Iron Eyes, described. “Tigerswan lawyers joined in the case with the state insisting we not be allowed to take any out of state depositions.”

A judge agreed to set up a hearing on August 23 to decide on whether Iron Eyes’ defense team had a right to those depositions.

But Sheehan explained that on August 20 his team filed 3,000 pages of situation reports, internal emails, interviews, and documents from TigerSwan to present to the court that the Dakota Access Pipeline moved the pipeline based on racial bias and TigerSwan had racially profiled the Lakota people.

“We were going to be taking the deposition of TigerSwan CEO Jim Reese to show his background,” added Sheehan. “We wanted to get all the evidence on the record to show TigerSwan had developed an anti-indigenous racial bias.”

Furthermore, Sheehan noted his legal team received information from people inside TigerSwan alleging the contractor’s Chief Security Office John Porter would break into the radio communications of water protectors and give movement commands.

Porter was a prospective witness to be deposed in the case. The day after Iron Eyes’ legal team filed the evidence in anticipation of the hearing on out of state depositions, the prosecution offered to dismiss the charges.

Though Iron Eyes’ case has concluded, Sheehan and the Lakota People’s Law Project are currently considering their next options to pursue obtaining this evidence from TigerSwan and the Dakota Access Pipeline company, Energy Transfer Partners.

Chase Iron Eyes is one of several hundred water protectors who has faced criminal charges for protesting the Dakota Access Pipeline. Around 850 water protectors were arrested and charged during protests.

Out of hundreds of cases, 349 individuals had their cases outright dismissed. Thirty-six individuals were acquitted at trial, and more than 300 individuals had their cases settled with plea agreements or pretrial diversion to probation.

Five water protectors accepted non-cooperating plea agreements to federal charges with substantial prison time, including Red Fawn Fallis, who was set up by an FBI informant and sentenced to nearly five years in prison. Three water protectors await sentencing on federal charges this fall.

Sixty-five year-old Mary Redway one of only two water protectors who was convicted and sentenced to jail in charges filed by the state of North Dakota. “I was arrested October 22, 2016 as part of the first mass arrests. It was a prayer walk. We were kettled, arrested, and the local jail couldn’t take all of us so we were sent off to other parts of the state,” Redway recalled.

She spent two days in a Fargo, North Dakota jail before she was released.

Nearly one year later—and two weeks before her trial date, she was indicted with three additional charges: physical obstruction, disobeying a safety warning during a riot, and disorderly conduct. All charges besides the disorderly conduct charge were eventually dropped, and Redway was sentenced to six days in jail (minus the two days she previously served).

Since leaving jail, she's stuck around in North Dakota as a full-time volunteer for the Water Protector Legal Collective, handling nearly all of the cases for water protectors.

"I was originally planning to do other things, but I saw and visited the Water Protector legal collective around the time of my trial and felt they were overwhelmed and understaffed so I volunteered to help. It's been over a year since that date, and I'm still here." (Redway is in the process of appealing her initial conviction of disorderly conduct.)

Unlike Redway, Chase Iron Eyes does not face the risk of serving time in prison. He won't lose his license to practice law, but he has to report the disposition of this case to South Dakota's Supreme Court, Bar Association, and Bar Examiners. Based on the plea deal, the case will be sealed and completely dismissed if Iron Eyes does not violate the law within a 360-day period.

"It's been a long road to where we stand today. I am not the only one to be criminalized, and there are still others for whom justice has been denied and find themselves on the other side of the politicization of our cases," concluded Iron Eyes.

"As much as it hurts to read the plea agreement, it would hurt my family even more to lay my future in the hands of North Dakota jurors in Morton County, where I was going to be put on trial, who admitted that 80 percent of them were biased against water protectors, against those they saw as outsiders to agitate our quiet and sleepy state."

31 Aug - Black August

WHAT: Film screening

WHEN: 7:00-10:00pm, Friday, August 31st

WHERE: The Base – 1302 Myrtle Avenue Brooklyn, New York 11221 (directions below)

NOTE: The Base is on the ground floor, is wheelchair accessible, and has a gender neutral toilet.

COST: FREE!

MORE:

Black August is a 2007 that centers on the story of Black Panther George Jackson's life. The film covers the last 14 months of George Jackson's life as well as the conditions in California's prison industrial complex. George Jackson would spend 11 years incarcerated (7 of which were in solitary confinement) for a \$70 gas station robbery crime in 1960. He was 18 years of age when the sentence of one year-to-life was handed down to him.

Black August encompasses the infamous Soledad Brothers case in which George Jackson, Fleeta Drumgo, and John Clucheette are accused of murdering a Soledad prison guard, in retaliation for the killing of three Black inmates involved in a fight with White inmates on an exercise yard in Soledad State Prison, Soledad, California. The film reflects on the general prison movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and the role the Black Panther Party would play in organizing both the outside communities as well as the Party's influence on prisoners across the country.

Hosted by Revolutionary Abolitionist Movement-NYC

7 Sept - Metropolitan Anarchist Coordinating Committee General Assembly

WHAT: General Assembly

WHEN: 6:30pm, Friday, September 7th

WHERE: Verso Books - 20 Jay Street, Brooklyn, New York 11201

COST: FREE

MORE:

The assembly will begin @ 7:00 PM, orientation for newcomers begins 6:30 PM.

MACC assemblies are open to all anarchists, antifascists, anti-authoritarians and those interested in anarchist ideas and organizing so please invite your friends and share widely!

If you haven't attended before, these assemblies are an opportunity to get plugged in with MACC, its various committees and working groups, and other NYC based anarchist projects.

There is an orientation before the assembly starting at 6:30 PM for those interested in familiarizing themselves with MACC, the history, process and politics that undershirt general assemblies, and anarchist ideas.

As with all assemblies, we encourage everyone to come with ideas about what they would like to see for future campaigns or actions and what direction they'd like MACC to take in terms of building a more powerful, militant anarchist movement.

For more information contact us at info@macc.nyc.

8 Sept - Cabaret of Dissent

WHAT: Music and Poetry Festival

WHEN: 7:00-11:30pm Saturday, September 8th

WHERE: 17 Frost Gallery—17 Frost Street, Brooklyn

COST: \$15 at the door - proceeds benefit the Rosenberg Fund for Children

MORE:

Please join us on September 8th for Cabaret of Dissent, an evening of radical art celebrating free expression and benefiting families of political prisoners and other children of resistance who receive support from the Rosenberg Fund for Children.

Speakers and performers include:

- Jenn Meeropol, granddaughter of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg and Exec. Director of the Rosenberg Fund for Children
- jazz singer Judi Silvano who adds voice to experimentalists the Beyond Group
- pianist Chris Forbes presenting "Harmolodic Weill", liberation jazz and spoken word by the Red Microphone
- bassist/poet Larry Roland debuting his new all-star band They Come With Gold
- poetry duo Raymond Nat Turner and Zigi Lowenberg
- rising star, singer/songwriter Lindsey Wilson & the Human Hearts

Visit dissidentarts.com for more details.