

IN MASSACHUSETTS
413-586-4407
PO BOX 4690
SPRINGFIELD, MA 01101

THE SEDITION COMMITTEE

OHIO / ON TRIAL FOR SEDITIOUS CONSPIRACY

IN NEW YORK
212-969-0448
PO BOX 1418, CATHEDRAL STA
NEW YORK, NY 10025

OCTOBER 1988 SCHEDULE

OCTOBER 13
UMASS
CAMPUS CENTER
7PM

SEDITION COMMITTEE INFORMATIONAL MEETING
Video and Speakers
Bring a friend or two or three

OCTOBER 15
SPRINGFIELD
CITY HALL
11AM

RALLY & WALK
AGAINST THE WAR IN CENTRAL AMERICA
Springfield Area Central America Project (SACAP)

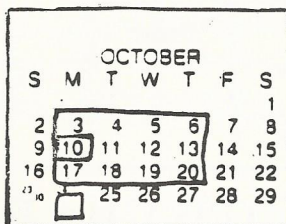
NOVEMBER 1
BOSTON
FEDERAL COURT
9 AM

Attorney Linda Thompson will give oral arguments to counter the government's appeal of the June 20, 1988 suppression ruling on objects seized by FBI in Curzi-Laaman home. —**COME TO COURT!**

COURT DAYS THIS MONTH

WHERE: Federal Courthouse, Springfield, Mass.

WHEN: 9:30-1:00, 2:00-4:00. There are two fifteen-minute breaks in the morning and one in the afternoon. You may come and go at any time during these periods.



The Ohio 7 need your presence in the courtroom!
The marshals outnumber the defense lawyers and the defendants combined. Come and support our movement and our comrades. Don't let them stand alone!

CALL 586-4407 to arrange a ride or to find someone to go with you

OPEN LETTER TO JUDGE YOUNG AND THE PUBLIC from JAAN KARL LAAMAN

The federal prosecutors recent dismissal of all the charges against two of the Ohio 7, Tom Manning and myself, in the sedition case ongoing in Springfield, MA., has obtained Judge Young's approval and has been deemed legally correct. Now the proceedings continue against the remaining five. The government with the judge's consent had Tom and me quickly removed from jail in Hartford, although we are still named in the conspiracy and we are needed to contribute to the defense of our wives and comrades. Judge Young did not even allow me to stay until the first court session after the dismissal so that I could be heard. Yet, with the significantly changed reality now, at least the following observations are warranted.

The Ohio 7 has steadfastly maintained that we are guilty of no crimes. Having these charges dropped against the two of us certainly fits into our position. Speaking for myself, with Judge Young's recent ruling on the search of my home, I had every intention of having the jury dismiss all charges, not only against me, but my wife and probably the others too.

The government's comments on our dismissal about prior sentences and shortening the case is just pure nonsense. All of us have some prior charges. As for trial reduction, it's even less true. The government's whole case, witnesses, evidence, etc., will be introduced. The only reduction is 2 or 3 defense lawyers to examine witnesses.

In one way though this case is substantially changed. Originally these charges of sedition and RICO were brought as general prosecution to criminalize certain types of political resistance to the U.S. government. Then General Attorney Meese's hope was not only to intimidate similarly situated revolutionaries, but progressive activists in general. Now the case has additionally taken on the vindictive nature of a selective prosecution of three mothers, politically active and concerned women who have refused to renounce their husbands and life-oriented progressive politics they hold. If the government can dismiss charges against me, how can it justify the continued prosecution of my wife and Tom's wife?

From its inception - the investigation before our arrests, the grand jury hearings, the wording of the indictment, up to the day they dropped the charges against Tom and me - we have been the focus of the whole situation. So, if the government has now rightly and legally dropped all it's charges against Tom and me, how can it morally or ethically prosecute our wives and Pat Levasseur?

This case is now just a miscarriage of justice, a flagrant continuing waste of tax payers' money, a mockery.

Real justice demands: Drop all charges!!

Release the Women/Mothers Now!!

Jaan Laaman
Otisville Federal Prison
Sept. 11, 1988

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN OTISVILLE

Immediately following the surprise dismissal of all the charges against Tom Manning and Jaan Laaman, they were abruptly taken from FDC Hartford. Jaan was put in a segregation unit in Otisville Federal Correction Institution that was specifically designed for political prisoners. These cells first held the Puerto Rican comrades in the alleged "Macheteros case", and IRA captive Joe Doherty, and now Jaan and others. Jaan describes the cells as "deep-down-back-under" and the conditions are, by far, the most punitive conditions he has been in since his arrest 4 years ago. Although he had no disciplinary charges, he was put on a 3-man hold (a lieutenant and 2 guards have to be present when his cell is unlocked) and he is handcuffed and shackled before he can step out of his cell, even for the shower which is 15 feet away. He is kept in 24 hour lock up for all but 1 or 2 hours a week. He is not allowed to shave or to have his legal papers and at times is not given any paper or pencils at all. Meanwhile Jaan is supposedly being transferred to Lewisberg Federal Penitentiary in Pennsylvania, before the first of the month, where Comrade Kazi Toure is presently being held. Jaan's attorneys have been informed of a contract between Mass. and the federal government, an agreement in which Jaan Laaman will do his state time in a federal prison.

Before his transfer this week to Lewisburg, Jaan was told by a prison administrator that he would be at Lewisburg three or four weeks before he would be sent to Marion. Jaan's spirits are high despite the harsh conditions.

T O M

Locked Down In New Jersey

M A N N I N G

On Tuesday, August 30, during a week-long recess of the Sedition Trial, with no forewarning or notification to the defense, the government moved to have Tom Manning and Jaan Laaman dropped from the case. The motion was approved by Judge Young. The two were scheduled to be moved out of FDC Hartford immediately. Early Wednesday the attorneys sought and won an order to stay movement to allow time to consult. The stay was granted for 12 hours. At 12:30 am Thursday morning Tom Manning was taken out of FDC Hartford and moved by New Jersey State Police and prison guards in an armored truck to the state prison at Trenton, New Jersey, and placed in the MCU—the Maximum Control Unit. After nine days, Tom had a hearing before the classification committee and had a chance to argue against his placement in this control unit. All of the reasons given by the prison administration on their criteria sheet were of a political nature. When Tom argued this fact to the classification committee, the chairman stated, “It could be that we are calling your politics criminal.” Following are a few paragraphs from the criteria sheet used to justify Tom’s placement in the control unit:

“...given his status as a dissident and revolutionary terrorist.”

“Subject inmate is a Clinical/Administrative Management Unit referral for special housing status...based on the governor’s proclamation that the subject inmate is a terroristic threat in the State of New Jersey, whose sole purpose is to overthrow the government by violent means.”

“Inmate’s record further indicates a preference for secretive, paramilitary-like schemes. Subject inmate has displayed this behavior by becoming involved with various politically radical and violent groups who advocate the overthrow of the federal government.”

“This subject inmate has proved to be a leader. Because of his established revolutionary dissident record could use this position to negatively influence and manipulate the prison population.”

Despite these fearful allegations, Tom’s criteria record shows him to be an average inmate with no criminal activity in prison. After the hearing, the board issued an order placing Tom Manning in the Maximum Control Unit indefinitely with a review every 90 days. The Maximum Control Unit, Trenton State Prison, is New Jersey’s Marion, held over the heads of prisoners throughout the state. It is a block of 48 single cells, whose prisoners spend 23 1/2 hours a day (and that’s if you take a long shower!) locked in their cells. The MCU houses 36 of Trenton State Prison’s 2200 prisoners; they are separated into left and right sides. There are no work or educational opportunities, but prisoners are allowed an hour of exercise every other day. Prisoners accused of infractions within the state prison are sent to administrative segregation as punishment, NOT to MCU. Visiting is limited to non-contact, window visits, with one contact visit a month, for those allowed congregate status. Tom Manning joins Ojuré Lutalo, accused and sentenced for Black Liberation Army actions, who has been in MCU for six years and many other Black Nationalist and Muslim leaders in this control unit. The Maximum Control Unit at Trenton State is yet another government strategy to silence those who organize and fight for liberation and social justice within the USA, and attempt to carry on that fight in prison.

My name is Barbara Jean Curzi-Laaman.

I am a mother, wife, comrade, community activist and political prisoner

Since I was illegally arrested on November 4, 1984—my natural and legal rights to my three children, my husband, family and community have been denied to me. My daily struggle in jail is to deal with petty and dehumanizing experiences and still maintain my dignity, the trust in who I am, and the energy to strive for what I believe in.

While my heart and mind are out in the world with my children, wishing I could be taking care of them, I am forced to endure, instead, the reality of prison and of being on trial continuously for four years because of my beliefs and my ideals.

When called awake by the prison guard at 3:00 am, claiming they must be sure it's me under the covers, I sit up and wonder—what am I doing here? Is anyone checking on my kids as they sleep? Are they having sweet dreams or nightmares? Did they feel my goodnight kisses even though they were on their photos?

When morning comes and I'm being strip searched and then chained and shackled at the wrist, ankles and waist, and transported to court by a large caravan of federal marshals, I wonder what the children had for breakfast, what they're wearing, and what they might be thinking and feeling as they begin another school year without their mother around. I sit in court with my four comrades/co-defendants who I'm on trial with (my husband Jaan Laaman and Comrade Tom Manning were recently cut off from the case), surrounded by US marshals. We listen to one potential juror after another say we must be guilty or there wouldn't be so much security in the court and on the street, and the government would never spend all the money they are to prosecute us if we weren't guilty. Guilty of what, I ask? I know I am guilty of no crimes, but find it ironic to be held and punished by a government that's guilty of many crimes against humanity.

Am I guilty of what one of my daughters painfully accused me of after years of being alienated from me while I was away in prison?

"You care more about all the children of the world, Mama, than you do about me and my sister and my brother," she said.

Are there any words in the world that could comfort the sense of abandonment a child must feel when they are told, "Your mother is in jail because she wants to be. If she'd stop expressing those ideas that the government is bad, she could be home with you now!"

Sounds easy enough to children who want their mother home, but what does it really mean? To me, it means that when the Constitution says, "a government for the people, by the people, of the people," it is not accepted by those running the show.

My "crime" is feeling with all my heart that if all of the people in this country had access to the truth about what this government is up to (in collusion with great monopoly corporations run by the richest men in the world), then there would indeed be an end to homelessness, hunger, racism, crime and illness, to the abuses of the people, land, air and water, that the masses suffer from.

But the policy makers of this government work hard to maintain the facade of "freedom and democracy" to cover the greed and power-mongering they are guilty of.

How did I come to feel this way? Why does the government see me as such a threat that they have brought 265 years worth of charges against me since my arrest, when I had no prior police record and have committed no crimes.

EARLY CHILDHOOD: I was born November 10, 1957, the youngest of four children, to children of Italian immigrants, raised in Boston, Mass.

I formed my opinion of what was important throughout my childhood as I watched TV as Black people were being beaten and sprayed with water cannons by white men in uniforms just because they wanted to sit on a bus or at a counter to eat.

The words of Martin Luther King, Jr., and his dreams of little girls and boys of all colors and creeds, growing, learning and living together, gave my life direction.

TEENAGE LIFE: I grew up fast and eager to "get out in the world" to "do something good!" Although I loved to study, I found school too confusing and fought to marry at age 15 against my family's advice. I married a distant cousin, with similar aspirations to "better the world,"

After five years of work, study, and trying to raise a family—I had one child when I was 16 and my second when I was 17—I found my marriage shattered by the harshness of the struggle to survive.

During those years, I began my involvement in community organizing and began to see first-hand how the system worked.

SURPRISING LESSONS: When racist violence erupted in Boston around school segregation and bussing, I joined the Anti-Racist Committee and saw, to my surprise, the police were on the wrong side of justice, joining up with racist forces in the city—against us.

"I could never again raise my voice against the violence of the oppressed (in the ghettos) without having first spoken clearly to the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today—my own government."*

When I went for health care for my babies and myself, I learned the problems of the poor and working people in trying to maintain their health. I worked with the People's Rights Committee (a welfare rights group) and saw the problems that handicap people, such as low wages for hard work, or no respect for their culture or language. I worked for the Catholic Charities, translating for families trying to reunite after the state had removed their children from home. I worked in garment factories fighting for unions while management refused the workers' demands. I took courses on health and social subjects to help me better care for my children, understand women's health issues and to help me for my job in a neighborhood health care center.

In 1977 I moved to a multicultural neighborhood. With my two little girls, I joined an anti-sexist, anti-racist child care collective, a natural food co-operative, a neighborhood dinner collective and tenants' union group, where my children and I made friends from EL Salvador, Mexico, Cuba, the Black Nation in Amerika, and the Women's community among others. I saw how beneficial collective work was for all involved and regretted that these benefits were for only a few. I wished to understand how more people could resolve the problems of housing, nutrition, medical care, education and apathy.

I began studying Marxism and other political theories, first at the Women's Center and later with national organizations and small groups of friends. This helped me to look beyond my community and even my country to world issues.

AMANDLA FESTIVAL OF UNITY: In 1979, I was part of an effort to have a peaceful fundraising concert at Harvard Stadium to support the liberation struggles in Southern Africa, called the AMANDLA Festival of Unity. Women, men, Black, Latin and white all practiced crowd control and self-defense methods together to prepare to do security for this event featuring the late Bob Marley, Patti LaBelle, Olatunji and other great artists. Political education about the situation in Southern Africa was part of the effort. After a successful concert, the group known as AMANDLA PEOPLE'S SECURITY continued serving community events. Part of this work involved anti-Klan rallies and marches where we found ourselves squared off against gangs of racists protected by forces of police who supported them.

During this I time I met my comrade/husband Jaan Laaman, with whom I shared and still share the special love of comrades in struggle combined with the passion of romance and marriage. In late 1981 we had a son together.

During that pregnancy, we found ourselves confronted with threats and harassment by racist police who did not approve of our anti-Klan and Free South Africa work, nor our roles as community security in places where police could otherwise have been employed. After the threats turned to break-ins, we changed our last names and moved to a nearby community. This was our first step as a family in clandestinity.

As we were enjoying our new baby and raising my two little girls, we heard that Jaan was being sought for questioning about our friend and comrade Richard Williams (who is still a co-defendant in this case) about a shoot out with a New Jersey state trooper during which the trooper was killed. Not wanting to be imprisoned for not cooperating and in order to keep functioning as the revolutionary he is, Jaan was abruptly forced to go further "underground."

"Our only hope today lies in our ability to recapture the revolutionary spirit and go out into a sometimes hostile world declaring eternal hostility to poverty, racism, and militarism."

I was faced with the decision of whether or not to join him with my children, from who I could not voluntarily separate myself, and remain the family unit we had become—or go live with my parents, risk a custody battle over the girls, and be under the constant eye of FBI and police trying to locate Jaan.

I chose to keep my family united. But before leaving in March of '82, Jaan was accused of being in a shoot out with two state troopers in North Attleboro, Mass., was charged with two counts of attempted murder, although no one was injured.

Then I quickly came to understand what being FOLLOWED meant, as I had a 24-hour tail of FBI and state troopers on me, trying to find Jaan. In a time of great pressure, fear and harassment, I slipped away with my three children and joined Jaan underground.

"Our nation has taken the role of those who make peaceful revolution impossible by refusing to give up the privileges and the pleasures that come from the immense profits of overseas investment."

During the time underground, I contacted none of my loved ones, but saw to my dismay that my most loved, my innocent children, had their baby pictures splayed on wanted posters with political fugitives—comrades with who it was assumed we were travelling. I was in fact living a relatively "normal" life in Cleveland, Ohio, where my two girls went to integrated public schools and I maintained a home for our family under an assumed name.

Upon my arrest the government barely acknowledged my existence. But while trying to destroy my husband and our ideals and hopes for a world without class and race distinctions and for all nations to be left free to develop to their fullest potential, this government continues to prosecute me and to try to destroy any hopes of this family being even partially reunited.

While my husband has a 98-year sentence, I have a 15-year sentence for the same alleged actions I'm charged with here: conspiracies against the U.S. military, South African agencies, and corporations involved in the extreme exploitation of war for profit. While the government acknowledges that I have never made or placed any armed device that damaged buildings of the imperialist groups named above, they keep pressing on to try to break me—to be able to



"True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar; it comes to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring."

**All quotes from Martin Luther King, Jr's BEYOND VIETNAM.*

to be able to claim the victory that they destroyed a principled person who believed in something and supported it: the right of People to determine their destiny and denounce those would and do control the majority for their own personal gain at everyone's else's expense.

My daughter was not correct when she said I care more about all the children of the world than I do about my own. I too long to give the care I feel for my child to them, but the U.S. government is trying to force me to sell out to the idea that my children are more important than the child of a mother in South Africa, or Nicaragua or Palestine. . . 'cause while they are most important to me as my own flesh and blood and the constant occupiers of my heart, my love for them only allows me a greater capacity to love all of Humanity.

The birth of each of my babies created a clearer vision in me of a future where my children can develop to their fullest potential alongside children of all colors, nations and cultures, with the love and protection of parents who treasure them as I do mine.

A HOSTAGE IN AMERICA

"Allah - u Akbar -- WaAshadu - ana -- la - el -ahha - ila - Allah..." drifts through the air in a very melodic and serene tone. No, it is not from a tower in Beirut or Cairo nor even from a mosque in Brooklyn or Detroit. This call comes several times a day from the deepest, most locked down area of the Segregation Unit in Otisville Federal Correctional Institution in upstate New York. This is where I was hustled off to after the federal judge dismissed all charges against me and Tom Manning in the OHIO 7 sedition trial in Springfield, Mass.

Arriving in Otisville, I found myself put in more chains than I had on during the trip in the car. Demanding to know what was going on, I was told that I would not remain here permanently, but in the meantime I would be kept in segregation in what they called 'Machetero cells.' It turns out that a special unit was set up here for the independentistas when they were torn from their homes in Puerto Rico in 1985 and brought to the US. This unit consisted of four cells behind several gates within the segregation building.

I learned that the person singing out his praise to Allah and maintaining his cultural and personal integrity in this dungeon area was a young Lebanese father, a devout muslim and a member of the Amal militia named Fawaz Younis.

I remembered this name from a news report about someone being seized by the FBI in Cyprus in 1987. Although he has a little difficulty with English, I came to understand Fawaz well, and heard this story. On September 13, 1987, Fawaz was lured onto a yacht near Cyprus by an old Lebanese acquaintance who in fact was then a paid CIA operative. As soon as he got on the boat he was attacked by FBI agents. He was thrown to the deck, both of his wrists were broken, he was twisted, flattened and chained up. This civilian boat was met by a US warship. He was taken aboard and locked in a small cell with armed guards and often an attack dog within inches of his body. After two days he was transferred to a US aircraft carrier. Then he was placed inside a coffin or body box inside a US military jet, injected with what sounds like a combination of morphine and anectine or prolixin, (drugs that make you think you are dying and that are conducive to making you answer questions,) and flown while being questioned from the Mediterranean Sea to Washington, DC, arriving on September 17, 1987.

On the following day he was finally treated for his broken wrists and other injuries. For the next two months he was kept in a secret military jail in the Washington, DC area.. During this period he was charged in the federal court in DC with hijacking a plane. Since his captivity in the secret military jail, Fawaz has been kept at Otisville in segregation.

The US government has charged Fawaz with being the leader of a squad of guerrillas who hijacked a Jordanian airliner in June of 1985. The plane was on a local mideast flight, and while no one was injured during the incident, two US citizens were passengers and the US has claimed jurisdiction. This indictment is probably valid under US law, but what is clearly illegal under international law was the literal kidnapping of Fawaz from Cyprus to the USA.

After a year of a news blackout on this situation, recently US News and World Report did a cover story on Mr. Younis and in addition to prejudicing potential jurors, the intent is clear. There is now a effort being made not only to get the US public to accept this kidnapping and hostage-taking, but to proclaim it as a noble act that people should support. There is often talk in the media about American hostages in other places, but the true AMERICAN HOSTAGE, a hostage taken by and held by the US government is Fawaz Younis, #02121000, Box 600, Otisville, New York 10963

(SHOW) TRIAL UPDATE:

**DEFENSE FILES MOTION TO DISMISS ALL CHARGES
ON GROUNDS OF PROSECUTORIAL MISCONDUCT
AND/OR IN THE INTERESTS OF JUSTICE!**

During the month of September the Ohio 7 spent only five and one half days in court, mainly with jury selection which is expected to last another three months. It is now twenty eight months since the indictment was returned in this case.

On August 30th, the government dropped all charges against Tom Manning and Jaan Laaman. On September 20th the defense filed a motion with the court seeking the dismissal of all charges against the remaining five defendants.

With this motion, and a subsequent press conference outside the Springfield Federal Building immediately following the filing of the motion, the Ohio 7 made clear that such action is necessary based on a intentional pattern of government misconduct which included:

- interrogation, intimidation, and attempted bribery of defendants' children
- attempting to gag the defense by moving for contempt sanctions against defense lawyers who speak to the press
- imposition of punitive conditions of confinement of defendants and their illegal transfer throughout the country during pre-trial proceedings (including Marion, Il. and various isolation units)
- confiscation and denial of legal materials by prison authorities.
- government failure to disclose materials to the defense as required under federal law
- attempts to prejudice the community and perspective jury through the implementation of so-called "security measures" that resemble an armed camp of federal marshals

At this point the government interest lies in having a "show trial" to propagate a message that those who support militant action against the racist and reactionary policies of the U.S. government, at home and abroad, will face the full wrath of the state, including life sentences in prison.

The prosecutors in supporting their decision to dismiss against Tom and Jaan, cited the lengthy prison sentences already held by both. Extending the same argument, the defense has argued that the remaining defendants have all received substantial prison sentences on charges that are essentially the same as those contained in the present indictment. The defense claims a "double jeopardy" violation by a government that is attempting to try them on the same charges twice.

The government has sought to disrupt the defense any way it can. In the wake of the dismissals against Tom and Jaan and the subsequent publicity generated by the U.S. Attorneys office, the prosecutors asked the judge to dismiss each of the six jurors that have been seated to date! The hidden agenda is to dismiss a jury that is composed in part of two Black women, one of whom is Puerto Rican.

The Ohio 7 have long maintained that this sedition trial is a testing of the waters by the government to see what it can get away with in prosecuting and persecuting its political opponents. The noose is tightening around the women, whose children desperately need them. We appeal directly to you to join our defense and support the dismissal of all charges! And to fight these charges should it come to trial!

In the August issue we reported that the government had filed papers to have Attorney Ken King held in contempt because he was quoted in a lengthy article on the Ohio-7 trial.

Not about to be intimidated by a potential gag order, the defense team responded with a position based on the right to a public trial (something the judge and the government are doing their best to prevent) and that we have a basic right to present our views directly to the people. The Massachusetts Civil Liberties Union and several prominent attorneys, including William Kunstler, offered their assistance in challenging the government's motion. Faced with resistance, the prosecution withdrew its contempt motion on September 19th.

On September 20th the defense filed a motion to have the jury pool supplemented in such a way as to have greater inclusion of Black, Puerto Rican and other Third World people. To date, only 6 of 263 potential jurors have been Black or Puerto Rican. Since almost 8% of the population in the district is "non-white", this represents a 300% underrepresentation of Third World people in the jury pool.

WRITE TO THE COMRADES:

TOM MANNING-202-873

Trenton State Prison

CN 861

Trenton, NJ 08621

JAAN LAAMAN-103-72-016

FCI Lewisburg

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Lewisburg, PA 17832