



POST OFFICE BOX 110034 BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11211

Updates for June 25th

11 Jun - Leonard Peltier Parole Hearing

We have updates on Leonard's parole hearing, including the statement from his attorneys below.

MORE:

We began this year with a triumphant motto, coined by Brother Dhoruba bin Wahad: “We will not give up the fight.” Fight we will for Leonard’s freedom. The struggle for Leonard’s freedom is not over-until it is over. We will use every available legal mechanism to secure his release, but we know the law and justice are not the same thing, and so the law alone is not sufficient to access meaningful justice. As such, we encourage continued legal support but also social and political support for Leonard.

Leonard had his parole hearing on Monday, June 10, 2024, and we feel that he was as supported as possible. We are aware that the parole process itself, like every part of the criminal penal system, is both a political and legal process, and the flaws in this process specifically concerning Leonard have been meticulously documented by the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention. The appropriate inquiry for the commission is to assess the person who stands before them, not the alleged offense.

Leonard’s parole hearing lasted more than seven hours. There was nothing unexpected about the hearing itself. The surviving loved ones of the agents killed on June 26, 1975, gave impact statements as did representatives from the FBI and the U.S. Attorneys Office for the District of North Dakota. Dr. Rene Morrissey and organizer, Nick Tilsen, the only two witnesses permitted to testify, spoke compellingly regarding Leonard’s seriously deteriorating medical condition and the plans made to care for Leonard upon his release. Dr. Joel Morrissey, particularly, gave thorough testimony highlighting the ongoing long-term medical neglect to which Mr. Peltier is subjected.

Lead attorney Jenipher Jones, who was present at the parole hearing, devises the overall legal strategy and framing regarding Leonard’s post-conviction relief, civil, and human rights. For the past year, Attorney Jones has been working to ensure Leonard’s medical care is both constitutionally sufficient and in accordance with human rights provisions. Attorney Jones also develops the constitutional analysis with respect to all aspects of Mr. Peltier’s case. Ms. Jones’ esteemed co-counsel, Attorney Moria Meltzer-Cohen, brilliantly developed and delivered the arguments to support Leonard’s release. Attorney Meltzer-Cohen also, in part, developed the legal framework for Leonard’s parole. Unfortunately, Kevin Sharp was not permitted to deliver arguments to the Hearing Examiner nor present evidence during the hearing.

Leonard was asked about the underlying offenses, but he also had the opportunity to speak about his grandchildren, and his personality and pride really shone through. A massive amount of material was presented, and we hope the hearing examiner has been convinced of the obvious fact that if released, Leonard is not in danger of violating the law and that after 50 years, his release will not be seen as promoting disrespect for the law. Attorneys Jones and Meltzer-Cohen expect a decision within 21 days and are responsible for spearheading any necessary appeals and subsequent litigation though they hope such action will not be necessary.

We thank everyone who contributed to this process, including families our mentors, shout out to Attorney Meltzer-Cohen’s students at CUNY School of Law, the National Conference of Black Lawyers (NCBL), and the National Lawyers Guild (NLG), both organizations to which Attorney Jones is a board member. We also express sincere gratitude to the members of the LG Mass Incarceration Committee Old Law Prisoner Project.

Professor Chuck Weisselberg, Attorney Brad Thompson, Professor Audrey Bose, Dr. Joel Morrissey, Dr. Giselle Dias, Kalonji Jama Changa, Silja Talvi, the Leonard Peltier Official Ad Hoc Committee, and the Jericho Movement, and all those who have supported their work and advocacy. This work is part of the long tradition of liberation work for Indigenous Peoples everywhere: When we fight, we win.

13 Jun - Urgent Call for Solidarity with Mexican Anarchists

Mexico: Call for solidarity for the unconditional freedom of Indigenous anarchists Miguel Peralta Betanzos and Jorge “Yorch” Esquivel Muñoz.

MORE:

What’s Happening with Yorch?

Yorch is a political prisoner who is facing fabricated criminal charges as a part of an ongoing attack against the “Okupache” squat in Mexico City. He has been locked up in the Reclusorio Oriente since December 2022 and his legal process has been plagued with irregularities and constant attempts to delay the proceedings so as to keep him in prison as long as possible.

Despite the fact that all of the evidence presented during his trial by both his defense and the prosecution proves his innocence, on June 3 – one day after Mexican elections – the judge sentenced Yorch to 7 years and 6 months in prison. His legal defense has filed an appeal, nevertheless this again drags out the process even longer.

What’s Happening with Miguel?

Following a sociopolitical conflict in the community of Eloxochitlán de Flores Magón, Oaxaca in 2014, Miguel was arrested in April 2015 on fabricated charges and held for over four years in prison. In October 2019 he was absolved of all charges and released. Over two years later, on March 4, 2022, the Supreme Court of Oaxaca overturned his freedom, resentencing him to 50 years in prison and releasing a warrant for his arrest. Following an appeal to that ruling, the court in Oaxaca ruled to return his legal process back to the testimony stage—setting back his legal process by over seven years. In January of 2024, the Supreme Court of the Nation admitted a challenge to that ruling, and on June 19, 2024, they are scheduled to rule on Miguel’s freedom.

Act! Call! Email! Post!

- Organize and agitate in solidarity with Miguel Peralta and Jorge Emilio Esquivel Muñoz to demand their immediate and absolute freedom.
- Call or email your nearest Mexican embassy or consulate (see sample text).
- Share information about their cases with your friends, family, communities and collectives.
- Make graphic art, paintings, stencils, etc. to bring visibility to Miguel and Jorge’s cases.

Sample text:

My name is _____ and I am calling/writing to express my deep concern for the ongoing state repression being carried out against Miguel Peralta Betanzos and Jorge Emilio Esquivel Muñoz. Both Jorge and Miguel have faced years of persecution and imprisonment for their community and autonomous organizing. Jorge was recently sentenced to 7.5 years in prison on fabricated charges without a shred of evidence. Miguel is currently awaiting a ruling from the Supreme Court on his case, which is to be dictated on June 19. As representatives of the Mexican government, we demand you do whatever is in your power to secure Miguel and Jorge’s immediate and unconditional freedom.

14 Jun - Illustrated Guide Version 17.5 Uploaded!

nycabc.wordpress.com/2024/06/14/guide_17_5

MORE:

We've finished the latest version of the NYC ABC "Illustrated Guide to Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War" and it's available for viewing (and download) by visiting the link at the top of this post. This update includes updated mini-bios, photos, and address changes for several prisoners.

14 Jun - Cobwebs Spy Software Locks Onto Protesters

Last year, Unicorn Riot reported on a contract between the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Cobwebs, an Israeli tech firm that licenses web surveillance tools to law enforcement and intelligence agencies.

MORE:

via *Unicorn Riot*

We can now provide that contract and details about the software — sensitive technology DHS has used to spy on activists during the last several years.

In August 2020, three months after the murder of George Floyd by then-Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin kicked off the largest civil rights protests in the United States since the 1960s, DHS signed a contract with a representative of Cobwebs America Inc., the American arm of Cobwebs Technologies. That contract, obtained via the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), identifies a "software interface tool" not referred to by name, but since identified in a DHS report published by U.S. Senator Ron Wyden (D-Oregon) as Tangles, a web-based intelligence tool that collects information on social media users. *

The Cobwebs Homeland Security contract, a Statement of Work (SOW), and additional documents provided as part of the FOIA request outline a troubling multi-year collaboration between DHS's Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A) and Cobwebs Technologies that could run through 2025.

This report covers the DHS-Cobwebs contract deal, but before going into the details, we take a broader look at the little-understood I&A office, and how fusion centers and counterintelligence tactics can be abused and misused to harass protesters and other members of the public using powerful tools like Cobwebs products.

Enter the DHS Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A)

Created in 2007 under the long shadow of the 9/11 attacks, I&A's original mission statement claimed its purpose was to facilitate better intelligence sharing between federal agencies and local law enforcement through data analysis, while also "protecting the privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties of the people I&A serves."

This statement reflected a growing concern among privacy advocates over the rapid expansion of America's national security apparatus. DHS, itself established only five years prior, was developing a plan for the rollout of fusion centers — information-sharing hubs that would bridge divides between federal, state, and local agencies and law enforcement, private defense contractors, and the military. But as one DHS report would later observe, the public's concern for the potential for abuse created the perception of fusion centers as "mini-spy agencies or akin to the [Federal Bureau of Investigation]'s discredited—and long abandoned—COINTELPRO program."

The notion that a federal agency might abuse the intelligence privileges authorized to it by Congress wasn't outlandish in 2007, because only three decades earlier, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) ran covert counterintelligence programs, or COINTELPRO, targeting American anarchists, communists and college students. This involved everything from the use of informants and provocateurs to infiltrate political organizations and protests to manipulating conflict between groups of rival Black militants, culminating in the 1969 shootings of Black Panther Party members Alprentice "Bunchy" Carter and John Huggins by members of a rival group called the US Organization.

DHS, like the FBI, has a domestic mandate for intelligence-gathering and analysis. I&A officers are one of the primary means for accomplishing this and are embedded in 80 DHS-affiliated fusion centers across the United States. At any given time, an I&A officer might conduct intelligence activities ranging from reviewing tips and formatting raw intelligence into actionable information for local partners, to more direct methods of surveillance like monitoring publicly accessible content on social networks.

I&A: From Potential to Abuse

In the years since its founding, I&A has delivered on fears that its existence would lead to abuse:

- Since at least 2016, I&A has overseen the Overt Human Intelligence Collection Program, a domestic-intelligence program that allows I&A officials to collect information on Americans through interviews, often through contact with prisoners and detained immigrants without legal counsel present.
- In 2018, DHS posted a job listing for “media monitoring services,” to be used to create a database of “journalists, editors, correspondents, social media influencers, bloggers, etc.” At the time, it was unclear how I&A might use such a database, but DHS has since been caught compiling intelligence dossiers on journalists covering immigration and I&A’s internal practices.
- In 2020, during the George Floyd protests, I&A officials monitored Telegram group chats of protesters in Portland, Oregon, prompting Congressional concerns about unlawful surveillance. Information taken from these conversations — including travel routes — was formatted into a DHS report that was shared with federal agents and law enforcement officials.

The DHS report referencing those Telegram group chats, identified by the *Washington Post* as a DHS Open Source Intelligence Report, points to the use of web surveillance tools by I&A or another party. While social networks like X (formerly Twitter) have provided law enforcement and government officials with information about their users, typically through third-party developers that collect and sell user data, these companies have been loath to discuss how their platforms are being exploited by intelligence agencies, defense contractors, and law enforcement for surveillance via the creation of fake accounts.

Unicorn Riot documented fake “sockpuppet” accounts tied to DHS-affiliated fusion centers. In 2019 we reported on the existence of social profiles for an Angel Garcia-Lonetree that appeared to be run by Lt. Jeff Rugel, then-commander of the Strategic Information Center (SIC) — a fusion center run by the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD).

The SIC would later act as the hub for Operation Safety Net (OSN), a program aimed at unrest around former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin’s murder trial. OSN was an interagency collaboration between the MPD, FBI, DHS, and numerous other state and local law enforcement groups to surveil and spy on civil rights activists in Minneapolis in the wake of the George Floyd protests. One tactic used both prior to and during OSN was the creation of fake social media accounts to surveil and harass Black activists.

Documents obtained through the Freedom of Information Act offer new insight into how agencies like DHS — and I&A in particular — are spying on activists.

Infiltrating Telegram for Homeland Security

When the DHS intelligence report was published on July 17, 2020, I&A was in the trial phase for a web surveillance tool known as Tangles, which its creator, Cobwebs Technologies, bills as a “deep web detective.” According to a description of the technology in promotional material, Tangles uses artificial intelligence and machine learning to identify patterns across the deep, dark, and surface webs, allowing intelligence agents and law enforcement officers to monitor online communications in near-real-time.

The problem, however, comes in how this monitoring occurs. While Tangles is promoted as a tool that relies on open-source intelligence, or information that's publicly accessible online, the *Washington Post* article about the Telegram group chats highlights a key concern for activists navigating online spaces.

Telegram offers groups that can be accessed by anyone on the site, but not all information on the encrypted messaging app is public. According to the Post, I&A had somehow gained access to messages sent by Portland protesters about their travel routes, from what appeared to be a private group chat. Per the *Post*, "It's not clear how DHS obtained the messages and whether an informant or undercover officer had access to the Telegram group."

A little over a month later, on August 25, 2020, Eyal Bachar, the managing director of North American operations for Cobwebs America Inc., signed off on a deal with DHS worth \$587,510, with the option for DHS to renew annually for up to five years. Although the contract doesn't identify Tangles by name, a license extension issued by Cobwebs in 2021 does, confirming that the contract was for Tangles and Cobwebs' other services.

A Statement of Work obtained as part of *Unicorn Riot's* FOIA request states that Tangles would be paired with Cobwebs' LYNX platform. On a promotional page that Cobwebs has since deleted, it described LYNX as a "global proxy infrastructure" that allows users to "join darknet forums, hacker communities and other platforms without their cover being blown."

In contractor parlance, a Statement of Work "provides a description of a given project's requirements. It defines the scope of work being provided, project deliverables, timelines, work location, and payment terms and conditions."

Cobwebs, Tangles, and Social Engineering

Another indicator that I&A may have used Tangles to infiltrate private group chats and other closed forums is a contract Cobwebs Technologies inked with the Department of the Treasury the same month it closed on the DHS deal. On August 6, 2020, the Treasury awarded Cobwebs \$181,000, on an initial agreement, for a "Gold Subscription WEB Intelligence Platform" — a euphemism echoing the "Software Interface Tool" listed in the DHS contract for Tangles.

In 2023, Joseph Cox, writing for *VICE Motherboard*, reached out to the Treasury about the contract. The department said the subscription was for the Internal Revenue Service's Criminal Investigation office, an investigative unit that handles tax fraud, narcotics trafficking, and public corruption.

A representative from IRS-CI told Cox: "In certain circumstances, agents may operate in an undercover capacity and employ certain tools to gather evidence for a criminal case. Obviously, discussing specifics of how a special agent uses various tools in an undercover capacity is viewed as law enforcement sensitive information. In all cases, however, agency personnel must follow all legal and agency policies and procedures in the execution of their duties."

Cobwebs has been accused of facilitating the creation of fake social media accounts. In 2021, Meta announced it had removed 200 fake accounts from its Facebook platform associated with Cobwebs and its customers. (Describing them as "Cyber Mercenaries," the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz* noted at the time that "Israel's Spyware Industry is Getting Slammed Around the World.")

A section of the Meta report reads: "In addition to collecting information about their targets, the accounts used by Cobwebs customers also engaged in social engineering to join closed communities and forums and trick people into revealing personal information."

This Cobwebs Statement of Work also includes “avatar management” capabilities — a term also used by Royi Burstien, CEO of another Israeli electronic intelligence firm, Percepto International, to describe how his group manages sophisticated sockpuppet accounts.

The DHS-Cobwebs Statement of Work, Reports and ‘Baseball Cards’

The material produced by Tangles to generate profiles of activist’s echoes COINTELPRO-era “cards” produced by the FBI. System requirements listed in the Statement of Work appear designed to support I&A’s undercover work. Two of the requested tasks for Tangles provide clarification on how I&A develops targets on social media:

“2.1.14 The software interface shall have algorithms used to identify linked content of users and known or suspected associations to the target.

2.1.23 The software interface must have the capability to conduct deep target identification via keyword search with social link analysis for both direct entities and associates to generate a risk assessment indication based on customized user driven dictionaries and severity levels.”

DHS Statement of Work for Cobwebs contract

In the DHS report disclosed by U.S. Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR) in 2022, DHS stated I&A used Tangles to compile what were known as Operational Background Reports and internally as “baseball cards.” These were threat assessments on individual protesters in Portland, Oregon, and initial drafts contained information about friends and social media followers.

The references to “associations” and “associates” in the SOW suggest that DHS may still be creating risk assessments of individual social media users based on their connections to other accounts, or generating new targets using this same criterion. This kind of targeting tags activists for surveillance through friends and followers rather than anything more substantive. Even with this type of intelligence gathering, DHS continues to dismiss critiques of their fusion centers as “mini-spy agencies” akin to the FBI’s COINTELPRO, which they mention in their 2008 report.

Both preceding and during COINTELPRO, the FBI compiled secret lists of political activists, including their Security Index, Communist Index, and Rabble Rouser Index. Information contained on “cards” in these indexes referenced associations with political groups and other activists as a justification for their surveillance. In some cases, as with singer and activist Paul Robeson, this also resulted in American citizens being “tabbed for DETCOM,” short for ‘detain as communist.’ In the event of a national emergency, individuals tabbed for DETCOM would have been arrested and placed in internment camps without due process.

Cobwebs, Deleted Accounts, Bitcoin and Geo-Tracking

This leads to an obvious question: does privacy exist online? Many privacy advocates now argue for deleting your social media accounts altogether, but DHS is prepared for this as well.

Two other tasks listed in the SOW between DHS and Cobwebs:

“2.1.13 The software interface shall enable locating web connections of deleted material, to include associations of users not visible directly on accounts.

2.1.17 The software interface shall capture the metadata from deleted or suspended accounts.”

DHS Statement of Work for Cobwebs contract

The SOW offers other indicators that DHS has developed complex profiles of social media users, using workarounds to anonymity and privacy measures. In the same list of tasks, DHS asks for the ability to link social media users to Bitcoin and other cryptocurrency transactions:

“2.1.26 The software interface must have the capability to conduct block chain analysis for Bitcoin wallet address transactional direction and amounts.”

DHS Statement of Work for Cobwebs contract

All of this information taken together (both deleted and still online), can then be used to locate social media users based on integration of location-tracking technology:

“2.1.18 The software interface shall have a built-in geolocation feature without additional cost for use of the feature. [...]

2.1.25 The software interface must have fully integrated deep analysis capabilities on accounts, posts, hashtags, locations and generate automatically entities and perform SNA [social network analysis] for topic, persons, transactions and visualize present relevant data over map for location data.”

DHS Statement of Work for Cobwebs contract

The final set of features involving geolocation and mapping functions suggest that Cobwebs’ WebLoc platform may have been included in the deal. WebLoc is a geospatial and signals intelligence tool that uses commercial data purchased from brokers to identify unique mobile advertising IDs assigned to smartphones and mobile devices. This information can be used to track a person’s movements. Unregulated data brokers are an ongoing intrusion on privacy that enable law enforcement to evade civil liberties protections like warrants, according to the Brennan Center for Justice.

The ability to connect social media accounts to real people and their physical locations has made Tangles and WebLoc increasingly popular among federal and state agencies. In 2021, the West Virginia Fusion Center purchased an image and face processing module from Cobwebs in conjunction with a subscription to Tangles and WebLoc, and the Texas Department of Public Safety subscribed to both services for border surveillance.

Similarly, journalist Joey Scott, writing for the Los Angeles-based progressive news site *Knock LA*, discovered that the Los Angeles Police Department purchased a subscription to Tangles and WebLoc in 2022. As part of a presentation to the LAPD, Cobwebs provided a case study demonstrating how its tools were integrated by law enforcement in Europe to develop profiles of soccer fans attending a game and predict who in the crowd was “most likely to cause trouble.” Using only keywords and hashtags, officers were able to identify specific individuals and obtain photographs so that they could be tracked on the ground, in real-time.

Spire Capital Partners: Assembling a US Surveillance Empire

When the contract was signed by DHS in 2020, Cobwebs Technologies was still its own company. But in 2023, as noted in *Unicorn Riot’s* earlier investigation into Tangles, Spire Capital Partners, a New York-based equity firm, bought Cobwebs, bringing all of its services — including Tangles, LYNX, WebLoc, and another called Trapdoor — into its growing surveillance empire.

The year prior, Spire purchased a controlling share in surveillance communications firm PenLink, best-known for its cell-phone-tracking PLX software, and bought location-tracking software GeoTime outright. Cobwebs is now a part of PenLink, and some Cobwebs employees have been moved over to the latter company under the same or similar job titles. Based on his LinkedIn profile, Eyal Bachar, the Cobwebs representative who signed the DHS contract on behalf of the company, maintained his position under PenLink and works as its managing director.

Given that Cobwebs' services may have been used to create fake social media profiles (as Meta reported) to access activists' private communications, which are protected by the Fourth Amendment, does this mean PenLink might be assisting I&A in similar investigations as part of Cobwebs' contract?

The initial terms of the contract state that it would run through 2021 and provide for the ability to extend until 2025. An attachment provided with the contract, identified as an "end user license (extension)," states that "option period 1" for Tangles was exercised through August 2022 for 30 users. A subsequent memo from Cobwebs to I&A requested the agency notify it in writing if it would like to extend the contract again. No additional attachments were included with the FOIA request, making it unclear if I&A is still using Cobwebs' services — overtly or covertly — to monitor the social media accounts of activists.

During the 2020 protests in Portland, when Homeland Security staff at the DHS I&A Current and Emerging Threat Center (CETC) used Tangles to build profiles from social media surveillance, the erosion of privacy rights was severe enough that some CETC staff "voiced significant concerns over the legality of such an intrusive collection of mass amounts of [U.S. persons] information on protestors arrested for trivial criminal infractions having little to no connection to domestic terrorism. For some, the concern was so grave that they refused to work on [operational background reports] altogether." On July 16, CETC leadership demanded they continue, saying "requests from leadership are justification enough, don't need specifics ... if he gives tasking, it's clear/legal to do." The report says staff were alarmed enough to contact the oversight "analytical ombudsman" and Intelligence Law Division attorneys. Even during a chaotic wave of mass protests, Homeland Security staff knew this was dangerous to civil liberties and possibly illegal. How could technologies like Cobwebs be used against protesters in the future, and what privacy protections would be in place?

** Note: The DHS report on policing protests in Portland in 2020 also references TECS (Treasury Enforcement Communications System). See our December 2019 report, "Icebreaker Pt 7 – ICE Case Management Handbook Based on Federal Law Enforcement "System of Systems" for the full Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Case Management Handbook (2008) for agents using TECS.*

17 Jun - Arrest Made In UC Berkeley Arson Investigation

Given that this is both pre-trial and sensitive, in addition to our regular disclaimer about reading corporate media with a critical eye, we will be redacting identifying language about the person who was arrested.

MORE:

by Velena Jones (NBC Bay Area)

An [REDACTED] has been arrested in connection to multiple arson cases on the University of California, Berkeley campus.

[REDACTED] was arrested Monday in connection with a firebombing attack of a law enforcement vehicle and three other arson attacks at the campus in June, Cal Fire said.

Pro-Palestinian groups have claimed responsibility in the three arson cases, calling it an act of protest and retaliation.

The latest arson happened Sunday afternoon when a small fire was set at the Dwinelle Annex construction site.

Last week, another arson was reported outside Koshland Hall. In that case, a group called Student Intifada claimed responsibility.

In an online post, the group claims they retaliated with a firebomb after UCLA student protesters were allegedly attacked by police.

The group is threatening further acts if the university does not divest from Israel.

The same group is also claiming responsibility for setting a law enforcement cruiser on fire earlier this month. Pictures showing what appeared to be a burned patrol car were also posted online. The group claims the act was once again retaliation for the police treatment of protesters on other campuses.

The university did not comment on the arsons, except to say Cal Fire and University of California police are investigating.

"...the department is, as always, prioritizing the safety of the campus community, and therefore will not hesitate to change staffing levels and/or security protocols when warranted," a UC Berkeley spokesperson said.

The university said no one was injured and no damage was done to the buildings involved in the arsons.

Cal Fire, UC Berkeley police, ATF, and the FBI worked together in identifying and arresting [REDACTED] as a suspect.

[REDACTED], who faces multiple felony charges, is being held at the Alameda County Jail. Bail is \$1 million.

17 Jun - Prisoner Support Is the Backbone of All Liberation Movements - Show Up!

Prisoner support ensures folks feel empowered to take risks that could make them face the law.

MORE:

via *UNOFFENSIVE ANIMAL*

It tells people they will be backed for all who might not be willing to risk their freedom but that appreciate that others do.

We know many folks are not willing to risk their freedom but appreciate those who do because hit reports are extremely well received, welcomed and commented by many of our readers.

Unfortunately, it is not translating into prisoner support. Cheering for all the fantastic work that anonymous people do fighting back against speciesism or freeing animals from places of abuse is not enough. We must show up for those who have ended up facing legal issues due to those kinds of actions.

We understand that not everybody is able to afford donating towards prisoner support, but that is not the only way you all can show up. Writing letters to prisoners is hugely important, and interacting with posts about fundraising for prisoners goes a long way. If you can't donate, please comment, share, send it to people privately, email distros who might be able to share it too or in any other way engage with it so more people see it and hopefully support!

Currently we are running a pre-order only merch sale to raise funds for the Susaron Prisoners, who are locked up accused of arson at a meat packaging plant, but that is only one of many; today we received a request for support for almost 2k GBP for folks convicted of taking animals out of farms!

Unoffensive is prisoner support. We believe it to be the most important job we can do, but for us to do it we need you to do it too. Please help us support prisoners around the world.

Pre-order some merch to support Presos Susaron (a group of four antispeciesist anarchists accused of an incendiary attack at a butcher shop and slaughterhouse in Chile.); we have not reached the minimum orders to make it profitable yet: **unoffensiveanimal.is/product-category/susaron**

18 Jun - BOP Again Seeks to Avoid Accountability for Abuses at FCI Dublin

On Tuesday, June 18, the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) filed a motion to dismiss in California Coalition for Women Prisoners et al. v. United States Bureau of Prisons et al., the historic class-action lawsuit on behalf of people who were incarcerated at FCI Dublin demanding systemic change to end rampant staff sexual abuse, retaliation, and life-threatening medical neglect.

MORE:

via California Coalition for Women Prisoners

The BOP filed their motion after Court-Appointed Special Master Wendy Still submitted her report about conditions at FCI Dublin. Judge Gonzalez Rogers appointed Still to investigate and address unconstitutional conditions at Dublin, after concluding that the facility was "a dysfunctional mess" and "in dire need of immediate change," and that the BOP "has proceeded sluggishly with intentional disregard of the inmates' constitutional rights despite being fully apprised of the situation for years." Just days after Still and her team arrived on site, BOP announced the abrupt closure of the prison, and began transporting incarcerated people across the country under horrendous conditions. Still subsequently submitted a report to the Court about what her team uncovered at Dublin, but this report has not yet been released to the public.

The BOP now seeks to dismiss the case before the public can learn the full scope of the problems at FCI Dublin, in another blatant attempt to avoid accountability and transparency. Meanwhile, congressional pressure continues to mount for BOP Director Colette Peters to explain the chaotic closure and transfers and the Federal Prison Oversight Act just passed the U.S. House of Representatives.

The Dublin Prison Solidarity Coalition (DPSC) has worked for over two years to amplify the voices of people speaking up from inside FCI Dublin, and make public the horrific conditions they endured there.

"At every turn, the BOP has tried to silence incarcerated people and avoid public scrutiny. For years they failed to prevent rampant sexual abuse, and allowed survivors to be punished with solitary confinement simply for speaking out, said Kendra Drysdale, DPSC member formerly incarcerated at Dublin. "For months their lawyers argued in court that the problems at Dublin were due to the actions of a few bad apples, and people at the prison were safe. But days after the Special Master arrived, they closed the facility and tried to disappear the hundreds of people detained there, separating them from their families, communities, and supporters—in many cases by thousands of miles. These are not the actions of an agency interested in public safety or community accountability. They are not the actions of an agency that takes seriously learning from its mistakes and protecting the people in its custody."

"If BOP succeeds in its plan to evade court scrutiny there will be no accountability as they continue to abuse and retaliate against people behind closed doors," said Emily Shapiro with California Coalition for Women Prisoners, organizational plaintiff on the class action lawsuit and member of DPSC. "The next person assaulted by one of their guards or punished for coming forward will know that the Biden BOP and Director Collette Peters are responsible."

20 Jun - Prison reflections by Susan Crane and Susan van der Hijden

Germany: Susan Crane is serving a 229-day sentence, and Susan van der Hijden a 115 day sentence, for their nonviolent nuclear disarmament actions at Büchel air base.

MORE:

via The Nuclear Resister

Vigil behind Bars – For a Disarmed World

Here in Rohrbach prison we are awakened by the sounds of doves and other birds, giving the illusion that all is well in the world, until other sounds, keys rattling, doors being shut, and guards doing the morning body check, bring us back to reality.

We are sitting in a prison cell, 123 km from Büchel Air Force Base, where ~20 U.S. nuclear bombs are deployed. At the moment, the runway at Büchel is being rebuilt to accommodate the new F-35 fighter jets that will carry the new B61-12 nuclear bombs that were designed and built in the U.S.

The planning, preparation, possession, deployment, threat or use of these B61-bombs is illegal and criminal. The U.S., Germany and NATO know that each B61 nuclear bomb would inflict unnecessary suffering and casualties on combatants and civilians and induce cancers, keloid growth and leukemia in large numbers, inflict congenital deformities in unborn children and poison food supplies.

“We have no right to obey,” says Hannah Arendt.

Although our actions might seem futile, we understand that it is our right, duty and responsibility to stand against the planning and preparation for the use of these weapons. They are illegal under the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which both Germany and the U.S. have signed and ratified, and under the the Hague Convention, the Geneva Convention and the Nuremberg Charter.

During the international peace camps in Büchel (organized by the G.A.A.A. which consists of, among others, IPPNW, ICAN and DFG-VK; the German War Resisters League), we, together with other war resisters, and with the help of many supporters, went onto Büchel Air Force Base to communicate with the military personnel about the illegality and immorality of the nuclear bombs. We also wanted to withdraw our consent and complicity to their use.

The judges who sentenced us for these actions made a decision to follow some laws and ignore others. It is common sense, and we all know, that even the law against trespass can be broken when life is endangered.

The judges and prosecutors, as well as the guards in prison, treat us respectfully and politely while at the same time sticking to laws and rules that are unjust and cause suffering. The biggest crime in their eyes is to upset the “order”, even though the order is set up to be criminal.

We wake up every day with determined joy to continue our “vigil behind bars”. A joy constrained by knowing that the other women here have pain, from being separated from their family and children or from constant physical or psychological difficulties or from being locked in a cell all day with nothing to do.

We are only able to “vigil behind bars” through the immense support of people making sure our Catholic Worker houses can continue, people sending us cards and stamps, organizing visits and money for phone calls, remembering us in their prayers, doing press work and those that continue fighting the death dealing warmakers in the world.

20 Jun - Black Liberation Activist Sekou Odinga’s Legacy Lives On

Activist dequi kioni-sadiki, who was married to the Black Panther for almost 13 years, reflects on his life and death.

MORE:

by susie day (*Truthout*)

To the mainstream press, Sekou Odinga was a fearsome Black Panther in the infamous 1969 Panther 21 case, a member of the Black Liberation Army and the underground strategist responsible for the 1979 prison escape of Assata Shakur. To the Black liberation movement, Sekou was a community organizer who helped establish the Panthers’ International Section and a hero who served over 33 years in maximum-security prisons for militant actions to free his people.

Prison is where Sekou met his wife, dequi kioni-sadiki, a Black liberation activist and chair of the Malcolm X Commemoration Committee, who, as part of her political work, had come to visit this revolutionary.

Looking back, dequi reflects, “I juxtapose how the state sees Sekou, and how movement people think of him as a legendary freedom fighter. But to me, he’s such a man of peace.”

Sekou and dequi didn’t immediately fall in love, dequi remembers: “It was more of a growing into.” They were married in a New York state prison visiting room in 2011, three years before Sekou was released on parole in 2014. Then, for a little over nine years, they shared a life together, in relative freedom, traveling, seeing friends, listening to music.

Sekou Odinga died on January 12 this year in a Manhattan hospital after months of paralysis caused by a virulent systemic infection. His memorial service on June 8 drew hundreds of mourners to the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, and thousands more online.

I was their friend. Years ago, I was a guest at a party dequi gave to celebrate her marriage, long before she knew Sekou would be released. I also interviewed dequi for *Truthout* in 2014 about what it’s like to love somebody behind bars. And, because I’ve never known dequi when Sekou wasn’t a part of her life, I wanted to interview her again. I began by going over old ground, asking dequi why she decided to marry Sekou, knowing that he might never get out...

dequi kioni-sadiki (d k-s): I don’t know. I’ve never been a woman who felt like she had to have a man, and that’s served me well. Maybe it was — I don’t want to say naivete — I just believed he was going to come home. A lot of people didn’t.

I can’t say what moment led me to tell him, “OK, I’ll marry you.” I just loved him, despite him being in prison. And I was willing to be with him, however that was.

susie day (sd): After you and Sekou married, you gave a celebration for yourself at a friend’s house in Brooklyn. It was one of the bravest, most brilliant things I’ve seen anybody do. Obviously, Sekou couldn’t be there, but you asked your women friends to show up, and everybody dressed to the nines. You had on this amazing headdress...

(d k-s): I remember calling it “Women Who Help Me Fly.” Women have long been central to my life. They support me, they nurture me. Sekou couldn’t be there, so I celebrated with the people who are important to me.

Also, weddings are a cause of celebration, right? I didn’t feel the state should take that away from me. I wanted to celebrate that the prison system — like the slave system — couldn’t crush our ability to be together and see beyond the bars. The circumstances weren’t the best, but it was joyous — I met the love of my life, a perfect match for me. That didn’t mean that we were perfect...

(sd): But I’d have felt so sad, being at this party alone, without my partner.

(d k-s): Interesting, you say alone. Now I feel alone. When Sekou was alive — even when he was in prison — I didn’t feel alone. I felt protected, safe. I mean... we didn’t always agree on stuff, but we shared the same values. After he got out, we had to combine our lives — his 33 years in prison, and my years of being a single woman, living on my own. You know, when two people come together, you bring in both your lives, and we had to get adjusted.

(sd): Sounds like a relationship to me.

(d k-s): Yeah. We also watched a lot of movies; went to listen to live music. We liked jazz; Monk, Parker. There was a Temptations song that Sekou sang to me all the time: “My love is growing every day” ... I forget the words. He used to write that in his letters from prison. When I listen to Otis Redding’s “These Arms of Mine,” I hear Sekou singing that. And “Tennessee Whiskey”? He’s as smooth as Tennessee whiskey; sweet as strawberry wine...

When people fussed during COVID and couples got sick of each other? We never had that. I enjoyed his company. We laughed. I used to tell him: I don't just love you; I like you. You're funny. I was annoyed with him at times, and he was annoyed with me. But he could always make me laugh.

(sd): Did your politics change, being involved with Sekou?

(d k-s): I learned more about different people in the Black Liberation Army, and it may have made me more fiercely determined on the side of armed resistance. But what I really learned is how Sekou was able to endure for years with almost nothing. It made me see that I had a semi-privileged life. I used to tell him, "You don't have to save food like that; you're not in prison anymore." But I kept seeing him making do, never buying himself anything. I was never penniless, but when Sekou was underground, he didn't have any money.

When Sekou first came home, he went grocery shopping with me. They totaled the price, and he let out this huge scream. He couldn't believe how much stuff costs. Of course, I was buying everything organic. I said, "We got to undo 33 years of piss-poor nutrition." And he was like, "Man, things cost so much!" He wouldn't go shopping with me again.

I also told him that he was not a feminist. "You are truly against women's oppression as it relates to capitalism, colonialism, imperialism," I said. "But there's always food in the house — if you was a feminist, you'd cook. The fact that you will not eat all day unless I cook, tells me something." Actually, I'm not very domestic. We went out to eat a lot.

(sd): This time last year, you had no idea how your lives would change.

(d k-s): Maybe last July or August, Sekou began saying his legs bothered him. Then his neck. He thought it was just arthritis. I said, "You really need to get that checked." He didn't, and by the time September rolled around, he was in excruciating pain. On September 1, we went to the emergency room. That's when we found out he had the urinary tract infection.

(sd): Two days later, he was in the hospital?

(d k-s): Yes. The surgeon told me that the UTI had traveled into Sekou's kidneys, his blood and culminated in an abscess on his spinal cord. That evening, they did emergency surgery, and found that some of the bones had weakened or disintegrated. They had to take out a couple of inches of vertebrae and put in some rods to strengthen his spine.

He came through the surgery. That's when they told us they didn't get the whole abscess; it would have been too dangerous.

(sd): Why do you think Sekou took so long to see a doctor?

(d k-s): A lot of it is the self-diagnosis most of us tend to do. I also think it has to do with living decades in prison. Sekou just wouldn't let his body break down behind the walls. Incarcerated people usually just ignore shit, because you know it's not going to be treated.

This is a man that don't ever sit with his back to the door. I remember him talking about when he was in prison, being in horrible pain. And just scrunching down in the yard, with his back against the wall, so he could see everything, but not let anybody know he was in pain. That was the arthritis.

(sd): The doctors said Sekou might get better, but that he'd need to be in medical facilities for months, with dedicated — and incredibly expensive — nurses and attendants. You couldn't possibly have done all this alone. So you asked for help from your community of friends, activists, other former prisoners.

(d k-s): Because he couldn't move, he was vulnerable. Sekou said, "When I open up my eyes, I want to see someone I know and trust. So I want to ask brothers in particular — because sisters always come through — but I want to remind brothers about being men and that we should take care of each other."

So this whole infrastructure developed, where people volunteered, "I'll do this or that day; take this or that shift." That's how the collective came to be. We were an impromptu collection of friends, family, comrades, even lawyers, from different parts of Sekou's life, and we're still together. People got up at 5:00 in the morning to get to the hospital at 7:00. People fed him and sat there with him. They gave up their beds at night to sleep on a hard chair next to Sekou. It was his vision about community.

(sd): I did a few shifts. And every time, I was knocked out by how centered and kind he was — even paralyzed, how he kept it together.

(d k-s): That's what I saw. I lived with him. He prayed five times a day, did Ramadan, even when he wasn't feeling good. One thing people had always asked him was, "How did you do that time?" And his answer was always, "My faith."

He's a deeply spiritual man. But I saw it in a whole nother up close and personal way, from September until January 12. I saw how his faith enabled him to be present, to not take it out on people or feel sorry for himself.

We spent a lot of time together in the hospital alone. Sometimes it was just us looking at each other, the unspoken. I wanted always to be there, because those nurses, they never knew how to position him in the bed, to keep his legs up and the swelling down; they just never got that shit right.

A couple of times, he caught me crying. He said, "What's the matter? You don't think I'm gonna get better?" I'm like, "No, I'm crying because I feel like I'm more worried about you than you are of you." He said, "Well, I'm gonna work hard to get my strength back. This is just what I have to deal with." And I told him that I would never leave his side, that we were in it together. So yeah, I wouldn't have been as stoic and put together. I really saw in those months what he meant about his faith.

(sd): Then in January, they came to tell you the prognosis — that all this was not working.

(d k-s): I already knew that was going to be it. Even though Sekou was on a ventilator by then and couldn't speak, he could shake his head "yes" or "no." He was still a decision maker. We decided, and at 10:30, the morning of January 10, we took him off the ventilator.

We had talked about death. He said he wanted to go first. But I never imagined that if he went first, I'd be by myself. He just said, "Whenever you're ready, baby, because I'm ready."

I said, "I'll never be ready. But I will respect your decision." That was a moment where we were in the room by ourselves.

(sd): And these days, how are you doing?

(d k-s): I don't lie to people and say I'm OK. But I'm functioning. I get up every day, I take a shower, make up the bed. Every day's different; I never know what the trigger will be. I was in Best Buy the other day, and they were playing Tammi Terrell. I just started crying, because Sekou loved Tammi. Also, Sekou's thing was, he eats a piece of candy, he takes the wrapper, he makes a little bowtie out of it. I still find those all over the place. What's that thing when people are in recovery? I take it one day at a time. Because I do feel alone. I feel less safe in the world.

(sd): Do you want to mention Sekou's memoir to be published by The New Press?

(d k-s): Yeah, he worked on it with the writer asha bandele. There's no publication date yet, but it's gonna be beautiful. He chose wisely, doing it with asha. She's a beautiful writer.

I used to tell him, "You don't just want political people, you want everybody to read this book. Like, you're not some militant who said, 'Pick up the gun.' This is a history lesson about the Black freedom struggle, but also about your life." His father came from a self-sustaining town, founded by Black people. It's these things — seen and unseen — that strengthen a man like Sekou. This book will put Sekou's story into the context of: This has been going on since we were kidnapped.

So I feel enriched because I met Sekou, and we grew into love. I'm thankful that Sekou was home for nine years — because how many of our folks never got that? But I'm also tired of waking up every day without him. Every time I have to tell somebody that he passed away, I feel like I'm struck by lightning.

26 Jun - Letter-writing For Marius Mason

WHAT: Letter-writing

WHEN: 7:00pm, Wednesday, June 26th

WHERE: Property Is Theft - 411 South 5th Street, Brooklyn

COST: FREE

MORE:

All supplies provided! Marius, a trans, longtime anarchist political prisoner is fighting medical neglect! Join us in writing letters to support him and to pressure the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) to get him the medical care he desperately needs.

26 Jun - Summer Liberation School

WHAT: Political Education

WHEN: 7:00pm, Wednesday, June 26th

WHERE: TBA. RSVP For Address: tockify.com/mlsupport/detail/394/171944280000

COST: FREE

MORE:

Come study anarchism at the intersections with us this summer, as we sharpen our ideas and tools for the moment and the long haul. Together we will collaboratively build our knowledge and practices of anti-capitalist, anti-state, intersectional liberation that is focused on strategies towards freedom and building the worlds we want and need. We will meet every week for 12 weeks, with each week focused on a different topic and having different discussion leads. Each session will be conducted less as a run-of-the-mill reading group, and more as a practice of the kind of multi-directional and horizontal education, including opportunities for relationship-building, music, food, and fun, to the extent people want to participate!

Course topics include: Black anarchism and autonomism, Indigenous anarchism and autonomism, Black feminisms, women of color feminisms, decolonial feminism, anarcho-feminism, queer anarchism, disability justice, and anarchisms and autonomisms in Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia, SWANA, and Africa, as well as other potential topics to be decided collectively. Multiple ways of learning/processing/sharing information will be included, incorporating art, drawing, small group discussions and zine-building. Will build a collective zine to share our learnings with each other, other MACC members, and beyond, and have a final project that focuses on strengthening our material commitments to and praxis of the topics we're studying. If you have any questions about the school, please e-mail us at macc_summerliberationschool@protonmail.com

29 Jun - 49th Anniversary Oglala Commemoration. Free Leonard Peltier!

WHAT: Commemoration

WHEN: 2:30pm, Saturday, June 29th

WHERE: Freedom Hall - 113 West 128th Street, NYC

COST: FREE

MORE:

NYC Jericho, NYC Free Peltier, and Other Comrades will be hosting this event. We will also have speakers from Samidoun and others linking the struggles of indigenous peoples worldwide.

Please join us for a wonderful event, discussion and networking!

Flyer to follow as we confirm speakers and guests. We also hope to have Maureen from the Social Justice Collaboration Quilts Project with the quilt with Leonard's painting "Parole Denial" at the center.

4 Jul - Guinea and the Fulani

WHAT: Teach-in

WHEN: 7:00pm, Thursday, July 4th

WHERE: Tompkins Square Park, NYC

COST: FREE

MORE:

Metropolitan Anarchist Coordinating Council (MACC) is having an anti-border anti-state Fourth of July! Join us for a teach-in on Guinea and the Fulani people led by The Resilient People of Guinea (IG: [@peaceful.9546](#)) and translated by MACC. Dinner will be served by Lower East Side Food Not Bombs (IG: [@lesfoodnotbombs](#))

Instead of celebrating the fascist settler colony we live in on the 4th, let's learn from our new neighbors, and share our knowledge, our food, and our ideas for a better world - one without citizenship labels, borders, or states. Thank you to Ismaela (IG: [@ismaelart_art](#)) for the beautiful artwork showing Fulani hairstyles and fabrics.