



POST OFFICE BOX 110034 BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11211

Updates for May 18th

3 May - Anti-Pipeline Protesters Charged W/ “Felony Kidnapping,” Held W/O Bond

Report on recent action against the Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP). Donations can be made at tiny.cc/MVP_Resisters

MORE:

by Appalachians Against Pipelines (*It’s going Down*)

Last Friday, Mountain Valley Pipeline protester Thomas Adams blocked a pipe truck just before it crossed a bridge over Sinking Creek in Giles County, and locked himself to the underside of the truck. The bridge is less than two miles away from the site where the pipeline is slated to cross the creek (although MVP currently lacks the permits to do so). A rally of over a dozen people gathered to support Thomas at the scene. Signs and banners on site read, “Save the Planet, Stop the MVP,” “MVP Just Give Up,” “Not Here, Not Anywhere,” and “Doom to the Pipeline.”

At 1 PM, after 2.5 hours blockading the pipe truck, Thomas was extracted and arrested. Another person on site, Molly, who had been at the support rally, was also arrested. Both are being held without bond. According to the New River Valley Regional Jail, Thomas and Molly’s charges — after 2.5 hours of a nonviolent blockade — are felony kidnapping (abduct by force without justification), felony larceny (unauthorized use of auto worth > \$200), and misdemeanor riot/unlawful assembly (obstruction of free passage). Both are scheduled to be arraigned on Monday.

Thomas Adams, Montgomery County resident, hydrologist, and elected Director of the Skyline Soil and Water Conservation District stated: “Many will ask: why have I chained myself to a truck carrying pipe for the Mountain Valley Pipeline? I had no choice.

“I know what looms before us if we continue down the path with our obsessive use of fossil fuels. As a scientist and engineer who has been active in the field of water resources and hydrometeorology in the U.S. and internationally, working on issues related to climate change and global warming, I believe the science. The science is unequivocal. The consequences stemming from our use of fossil fuels and atmospheric loading of greenhouse gasses (GHGs) from anthropogenic emissions are dire. It is not hyperbole to say that we are in the midst of the collapse of global ecosystems. Scientific studies show this is happening now. This necessarily implies the death of hundreds of millions, if not billions, of humans as a direct result of global atmospheric warming. [...] I have committed no crime. I would have committed a crime against humanity had I sat as an idle bystander, letting the greed of political and corporate forces advance — politicians in the Commonwealth of Virginia are in the pockets of corporate America. [...] WE ALL HAVE NO CHOICE!” Thomas’ full statement is attached separately.

Sinking Creek is one of hundreds of streams and wetlands for which MVP is missing permits to cross along the Virginia portion of the pipeline route. Since the Nationwide 12 permit for MVP (which would have given the pipeline blanket approval for most water crossings) was suspended in 2018 by the U.S. Fourth District Court of Appeals, the company is now seeking individual Section 401 and 404 water quality certifications for each crossing. MVP has again asked the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to rewrite their Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity to change water crossing methods from open trenching to boring for 181 waterbodies. Earlier this week, the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality’s (NC DEQ) Division of Water Resources (DWR) reissued and supplemented their denial of MVP’s request for a 401 Water Quality Certification and Jordan Lake Riparian Buffer Authorization for the MVP Southgate project (the 70 mile extension of the original proposed route).

David Yoltan, a landowner in Giles County who came to show his support, stated: “We’ve been faced with this nightmare for the last five years. Why are they proceeding if they don’t have the permits? It’s very, very upsetting and disturbing to me to have to listen to heavy equipment all day long, every day — they have blasted near my house and rattled the windows and bookshelves... we just feel bullied and ignored. As far as following regulations, those regulations were not created to address a project of this size through this kind of terrain, it cannot be done safely, and it has been shown by the violations that have happened. They need to stop, the governor needs to step in, the state water control board needs to step in, there are so many reasons not to put this pipeline in.”

The Mountain Valley Pipeline is a 42-inch diameter, 300-plus mile, fracked gas pipeline that runs from northern West Virginia to southern Virginia, with a proposed 70-mile extension into North Carolina. Staunch resistance to the pipeline has existed since its proposal in 2014. The MVP contributes to climate change, increases demand for natural gas (and as a result, fracking), and is entrenched in corrupt political processes. It endangers water, ecosystems, and communities along its route. The failing pipeline project is years behind schedule, several billion dollars over budget, and is still missing key permits from numerous agencies including FERC, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the VA and NC Departments of Environmental Quality, and the WV Department of Environmental Protection. These missing permits include the authority to cross streams, waterways, and the National Forest. Until recently, MVP was unable to work in Giles County based on its proximity to the Jefferson National Forest. In early April, the Virginia Council on Environmental Justice asked Governor Northam to issue a moratorium on all new fossil fuel projects.

Meanwhile, Acre and Wren are still being held in jail with no bond for misdemeanor charges after their extraction from the Yellow Finch tree sit, which blockaded the path of the Mountain Valley Pipeline for 932 days.

Thomas was arrested last Friday after blockading a Mountain Valley Pipeline pipe truck as it crossed over Sinking Creek in Giles County, Virginia. As a result of his peaceful protest, he was given egregious, trumped up charges of felony kidnapping (abduct by force without justification), felony larceny (unauthorized use of auto worth > \$200), and misdemeanor riot/unlawful assembly (obstruction of free passage).

Molly, who was also arrested on Friday, was arraigned today but does not have a bail set.

Thomas stated: “Many will ask: why have I chained myself to a truck carrying pipe for the Mountain Valley Pipeline? I had no choice.

“I know what looms before us if we continue down the path with our obsessive use of fossil fuels. As a scientist and engineer who has been active in the field of water resources and hydrometeorology in the U.S. and internationally, working on issues related to climate change and global warming, I believe the science. The science is unequivocal. The consequences stemming from our use of fossil fuels and atmospheric loading of greenhouse gasses (GHGs) from anthropogenic emissions are dire. It is not hyperbole to say the we are in the midst of the collapse of global ecosystems. Scientific studies show this is happening now. This necessarily implies the death of many hundreds of millions, if not billions, of humans as a direct result of global atmospheric warming. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) stated in its Global Warming of 1.5 oC report that not only do we need to begin reducing our use of fossil fuels now, we must start actively sequestering atmospheric CO2.

“The metaphor used by Greta Thunberg is that our house is on fire. She is correct... do we stand by and let our house burn down? When is it time to act to save our house?

“I have committed no crime. I would have committed a crime against humanity had I sat as an idle bystander, letting the greed of political and corporate forces advance – politicians in the Commonwealth of Virginia are in the pockets of corporate America. It’s called the ‘Virginia Way’... Environmental regulations that were enacted to protect our natural waters and conserve soil resources have been ignored and have been wantonly brushed aside to serve the interest of corporate greed. MVP and their supporters lie about the local benefits accrued from the flow of natural gas. Increased production serves only investors because the natural gas is intended for the expansion of service marginally, locally, but largely they are seeking the expansion of natural gas sales to overseas markets. They are not meeting demand, MVP and others only seek greater profit and do not care about the consequences that will befall our children and grandchildren in the years to come. MVP and pipeline supporters deny what climate science is telling us: we must be reducing our use of fossil fuels instead of increasing our use of them to avoid the worst of the consequences of global warming – NOW! Promoters of these pipelines are seeking expansion of our use of natural gas and other fossil fuels at a time when we must be reducing our use of them.

“What is more, there is the destruction of local forest and aquatic habitats that endanger unique, indigenous species and threaten drinking water supplies and fishing habitats. MVP has consistently and unapologetically violated Commonwealth clean water regulations, suffering minor and ineffective fines. It’s their calculated cost of doing business.

“We have, in the past year in the US, experienced near-record heat (globally), record wildfires in the west, the greatest number of recorded tropical systems ever, and a devastating arctic freeze in the central part of the US, extending deep into Texas, resulting from a “polar vortex” that is the direct consequence of global warming. This occurred due to excessive polar warming that produces dramatic swings in the atmospheric jet stream.

“Global warming must be stopped for the health of our home, planet Earth and to preserve the lives of our descendants. We can only do this by acting now to stop our use of fossil fuels.

“WE ALL HAVE NO CHOICE!”

May 5th - Pipeline tree stand protesters get jail time, fines

by Laurence Hammack (*Roanoke Times*)

Two nonviolent protesters must serve a day in jail for every day they spent in tree stands blocking the path of the Mountain Valley Pipeline, a Montgomery County judge ruled.

For Alexander Samuel Parker Lowe, who occupied the so-called Yellow Finch tree-sit from Nov. 16, 2020, to when he was removed by state police March 24, that worked out to a 254-day jail sentence.

For Claire Marian Fiocco, who went up in a tree Jan. 3 and was extracted March 23, the sentence was 158 days.

The case pitted the tree sitters’ right to protest a controversial natural gas pipeline against Mountain Valley’s legal authority to cut trees and plow a trench for its buried pipe through a forest near Elliston.

“There’s nothing wrong with peaceful protest,” Chief Deputy Commonwealth’s Attorney Patrick Jensen argued. “But the rule of law does not cease to exist just because people disagree with what the pipeline was legally entitled to do.”

After convicting the two of obstructing justice and interfering with Mountain Valley's property rights, General District Judge Randal Duncan said he tried to "apply some common sense" in sentencing them on the misdemeanor charges.

The jail sentences were actually double the time Lowe and Fiocco spent in the trees, but Duncan took into account a standard credit toward release of one day they will receive for each day served. Both have been held without bond since their arrests.

Later in the day, Lowe, 24, of Massachusetts, and Fiocco, 23, of Vermont, appeared before a different judge — Circuit Judge Robert Turk, who ordered them down from the trees last November, or risk being removed by police and fined up to \$500 a day.

For defying his order, imposed in a civil case after Mountain Valley sought an injunction against the tree sitters, Turk fined Lowe \$17,500 and Fiocco \$10,000.

He also ordered the defendants to pay Mountain Valley the \$141,386 it cost for a lengthy extraction that involved using a crane to hoist two state police officers to where the protesters were chained to a chestnut oak and a white pine, on wooden platforms about 50 feet above the ground near the top of a steep slope.

"To be honest, I don't know how you will get this money, if ever," Turk told Mountain Valley attorney Wade Massie.

Appearing in court wearing orange jail jumpsuits and shackled hand and foot, Lowe and Fiocco cut a much different picture than during their time in the trees, where they developed a larger-than-life profile among many pipeline opponents.

Going by the nicknames Acre and Robin or Wren, they often lobbed attacks at the pipeline on the Facebook page of Appalachians Against Pipelines and encouraged followers to join their fight.

But rather than use the witness stand as a soapbox Wednesday, they testified haltingly, sometimes declining to answer a question or invoking their Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination.

How two young people from New England wound up in the trees of Southwest Virginia was a question that went largely unanswered. Called as a witness by Massie, Lowe said only that he heard of the tree-sits through "word-of-mouth."

"He obviously was obstructing," defense attorney Brandon Ratliff said of Lowe. "But he was trying to obstruct the Mountain Valley Pipeline and not the police officers from doing their job."

Some pipeline opponents had called on the two to invoke a "necessity defense," in which they would have admitted to breaking the law, but only to prevent a greater harm.

But that defense — likened to someone ignoring a no-trespassing sign to save a drowning child — was not raised. In Virginia, the legal strategy applies to only "extremely limited circumstances" that did not apply to the tree sit, Fiocco's attorney, Matt Roberts, said after the hearing.

In asking for convictions, Jensen noted that a federal judge had granted Mountain Valley an easement through private property under the laws of eminent domain, and that the tree sitters had no right to be there in violation of Turk's orders.

Multiple anonymous protesters took turns occupying the tree stands off Yellow Finch Lane since they were erected Sept. 5, 2018.

But Lowe and Fiocco — identified in court filings as Tree Sitter 1 and Tree Sitter 2 until their identities became known following their removal — are the only two to be held accountable so far.

“I appreciate the passion you had in your protests,” Turk told them before they were led back to jail. “You just did it the wrong way.”

4 May – “Personalism” by Patrick O’Neill + KBP7 Updates and Writings

More writing by and updates on the Kings Bay Plowshares 7 (KBP7) is available at kingsbayplowshares7.org

MORE:

Prison Reflections from Patrick O’Neill

Birthday Pizza

A couple of nights ago, two of my friends, Sean and Tippy, surprised me with two steaming hot pizzas they made me for my birthday! They had planned to do it back in March, but I was in the SHU (Special Housing Unit – Solitary). They were very good, excellent, in fact. They spent about \$30 on the ingredients! Lots of toppings.

What Would Peter Maurin Say About Headphones?

In the “multi-purpose room” in the Fox Bravo unit where I live, there are 5 televisions. In order to have 5 TVs in one room the volume is shut off so the TV s can only be heard if you tune in to a FM radio channel on a battery-operated radio or an MP3 player and use headphones. The radios can pick up local stations, including NPR. The MP3 players can include songs that you can download. The radio costs \$52 (plus batteries) from the prison commissary. The MP3 player, which has a re-chargeable battery, costs \$88.40. So far, after 3 months of being at Elkton, I have opted out of the radio/MP3 options. I have hemmed and hawed in my own mind a bit – and many of my friends have offered to buy me the items (thank you), and I sure would love to listen to NPR or the TV news. But I have never been a fan of “earbuds” or headphones because they have really served to cut us off from each other. I have always been a fan of Catholic Worker co-founder Peter Maurin’s practice of “Personalism” – the importance of being present to each other, face-to-face, maintaining eye contact, listening. To be listened to and to listen to another is one of life’s great gifts. Yet, so often (especially when I am exercising – walking or running) I have spoken to someone not realizing they have headphones on, and they don’t hear me. Sometimes I use a hand gesture and they pull out the earbud or turn down their volume and other times I miss them altogether. Anyone who knows me knows that I love to speak to strangers; I am, and have always been, drawn to know someone in my midst. (I have often imagined what I would say to people if I was a toll collector and saw thousands of people for only a flash of a few seconds.) So, here at Elkton (where lots of people do wear headphones), I am trying hard to get to know these 100 or so men I will live with for part of a year. (I have already interviewed some of them for articles I will write about their lives.) Most of these guys don’t have anyone who cares to listen to them all that much, and of course they’re mostly cut off from the women in their lives (who are most often the best, most respectful listeners) – mothers, wives, daughters and sisters.

Support Federal Prison Reform with Compassion

I am enjoying most of my conversations with my neighbors (although in prison, many men are on a mission to get out by filing pro-se appeals in the hopes of getting a judge to overturn their convictions, which is not impossible, but rare.) Another problem is almost 98% of federal cases are plea-bargained, which is essentially the defendant admitting his or her guilt, which makes it harder to get a case back into court. Many of these guys talk at great length about the legal nuances of their cases, which can be tedious to listen to (but you have to because they are usually so passionate and persistent that you have to listen.) Of course,

most of the men in here have been screwed by the federal judiciary that stacks the deck against ALL of us, so I understand the fervor of these guys to seek justice, which is elusive. In addition, most of the men in Elkton have extraordinarily long sentences, which is why the U.S. leads the world in incarceration rates. In the federal system, Joe Biden is the biggest reason for the harshness of the federal penal system. As a senator, Biden introduced legislation that completely removed any mercy out of the federal system, did away with parole, and increased sentencing guidelines to obscene levels. The hope of the men here at Elkton – and in all federal prisons – is that the Black Lives Matter movement will successfully pressure Biden to reverse the damage done by his 1994 crime bill, which he created with the late segregationist South Carolina senator Strom Thurmond. For example, when I was in federal prison in 1982 and again in 1984, if a person stayed out of trouble, they only had to serve two-thirds of the sentence. (Biden did away with that as every prisoner had to serve his or her entire sentence – no incentive to be “good”.) The hope of these guys with long sentences is for Biden to bring back two-thirds and make it retroactive, which would knock huge chunks of time off peoples’ cases and result in many people being released right away – severely reducing the number of federal prisoners. So, let your congressional representatives know that you support federal prison reform with compassion!

Collective Punishment

Last night C.O.s found 6 guys in the TV (all-purpose) room who were not wearing masks, so as “punishment,” the guards locked the TV room all day today. This is causing major crowding in the living area because so many of the guys hang out in the TV room. Of course, it’s very unfair to punish 110 guys for the actions of six. Needless to say, some of the men are upset over this. I’m not sure when they will reopen the room.

Fog Count

“Fog count” is a new word I heard today. Because of an early fog that descended over the prison compound, “offender” movement was restricted so I couldn’t drop off my laundry, all of which got soaked in yesterday’s rain when I was out at “Rec”. The “Fog count” is a prison precaution to prevent escape, another dog and pony show to justify the fortress security here at Elkton. Bureau of Prison staff pretend that one of us will be able to escape under the cover of fog so all the C.O.s come outside on the compound to make sure we (inmates) only walk to the Chow Hall to pick up our breakfast trays and quickly return to lockdown. There has NEVER been an escape from Elkton FCI, and the BOP also claims that this facility, which is “cruel and usual” in the BOP, is protecting the public from dangerous criminals (many of whom have dire medical conditions, and use canes, walkers, and wheelchairs). I have yet to meet a man here who I would characterize as dangerous.

Elkton Fashion Standards

For the first time, prisoners in my cellblock were allowed to eat chow in the Chow Hall. Because of the lockdown, the Chow Hall’s been closed for eating. We only walk through the line to pick up Styrofoam trays at each meal. I did not realize this was happening because I had not checked the unit bulletin board, so I rushed to grab my “uniform” shirt and dashed out the door. The compound was loaded with C.O.s and staff watching this parade of “offenders” walking to the Chow Hall. Immediately, someone yelled at me: “Tuck in that shirt, inmate!” A second later another guard said “Take off your hat!”. Seconds later, I was met by a mean-looking higher-up officer, who came face-to-face with me, and said: “Didn’t you hear what he said?” I said, “Yes, I tucked my shirt in.” Then he said, “Button that button” on my shirt. We’re not allowed to button the top button on our shirts, but dress code apparently says we have to have all the other buttons buttoned. Such high standards of fashion are the norm here at Elkton! Who knew?

Matthew 25

It’s the male staff members here who have their “mean men” attitudes always on – talking loudly, barking commands, menacing looks, and threatening words. It’s like the male staff here are a collection of alpha

males with chips on their shoulders. In the SHU, I told some guards about Jesus' injunction in Matthew 25 that recognizes prisoners as "the least of these." I told them – especially the ones who were kinder (but not necessarily nice) – that any act of kindness toward an inmate would mean they would receive God's grace. (Saying it to the mean guards only seemed to make them angry.)

The Elusive Jesuit

I was happy to receive the news that Steve Kelly, SJ, my 72-yr. old co-defendant, was released after 3 yrs. 8 days in prison in about a dozen places. Fr. Kelly was reminded by the court that he had 3 days to report to his probation officer in Brunswick, GA from Washington State, where he was released. Fr. Kelly does not comply with probation, so by the time you read this, Fr. Kelly will likely be "wanted" by Judge Lisa Wood for probation non-compliance. So, please pray for Fr. Steve, who will now have to be "underground", so to speak, until he catches up with feds with another action. I'm not sure how much effort the U.S. Marshals will put into tracking the elusive Jesuit down. "Godspeed, Steve Kelly."

Bits and Pieces

This is the first week of a new "rec" schedule that is 4 days instead of 3, so I ran 6 miles yesterday and today. It started raining hard toward the end of "rec" today, so I was soaked by the end of my run. It was also a cool day.

Mary took Mary Evelyn to the doctor today. She was very congested (it might be allergies) so I'll be trying to call Mary tonight to find out how Mary Evelyn is doing. (Turns out she has a sinus infection and is taking an antibiotic.)

Today has me thinking of the many times I have been part of anti-war tax actions on April 15. I know the war tax deadline has been extended this year because of Covid.

My sentence is among the shortest in this place. The guy in the cubicle next to mine was moved to a special cellblock for people being released. Rob is a quiet man, kind, but shy. He has been in prison for 15 years of a 20 yr. sentence. He has a 22-yr. old daughter. Fifteen years in prison is horrible.

I sent out a draft of something I wrote entitled "I Yield to My Black Brothers." It will be available soon on KBP7 [kingsbayplowshares7.org].

If Fr. Steve Kelly can remain out and about, I am hoping the 7 KBP can have a reunion early next year. It would be great to see everyone again – especially Steve. I did get to see Steve at our sentencings, which was great.

A group of C.O.s just did an "inspection" of Fox Bravo, my lockdown unit. One C.O. just walked by with a bag full of "contraband." The bag was full of apples he had just taken away from guys. Some of the guys make fruit salad from apples and bananas and sell them with a sprinkled mixture of Kool-Aid on them. I contribute apples and bananas to this cause sometime, but I just give my fruit away rather than "sell" them for stamps. Again, thanks everyone for your prayers and support.

May 7th - Martha Hennessy Prison Dispatch **88 Years Old Today May 1st, 2021**

It is May Day, the feast day of St. Joseph the Worker, and a celebration of the dignity of work for International Workers of the World. I mopped the stairs and hall in front of the medical and psychological services office, now that I'm upstairs in quarantine for the next three weeks.

I will dearly miss the celebrations at Maryhouse and St. Joe's today. Last year was missed as well, due to COVID.

In today's reading of John 14: 7-14, Philip asks Jesus to "show us the Father, and that will be enough for us." Poor Jesus. His followers still don't get it, seeing and doing good works is never enough. If we ask anything that is of God's will, it will be done.

Psalm 46:9 sings "He makes wars cease to the end of the earth, He breaks the bar and shatters the spear; He burns the shields with fire."

This is my prayer and song as I sit out the last days of my time here in Danbury FCI Camp.

It took two months to resolve an outstanding case from a 2014 action protesting the use of weaponized drones at the Hancock Air Base in Syracuse, NY. Otherwise, I would have stayed here until the end of August, my full ten months.

We were all strip searched the other day as inmates continue to get in contraband and get caught smoking. I was rude and impatient with the guards and the women using the bathroom next to me for the contraband deliveries. But no matter how justified I think my outrage is, the system has no room for any efforts to come out right.

We are all either brain dead or complicit in the sin and absurdity.

The inmate rule is, "See something, say nothing." I won't become a snitch, but my tongue lashes out and to no avail. When will I learn to let go?

My fellow inmates say, "Give it up, don't criticize any of the injustice, just get through your last weeks, don't compromise yourself, just go along, get out, do your peace work on the outside, it is needed there." So I am enjoying this room with a view (if one stands on a chair to look out), an open window for fresh air, and natural light. Seeing the blue sky, clouds, and the tops of the pine trees makes me burst into prayer, feeling like I am in the Ritz now.

Six of us are in quarantine, (I am alone in this room), and we are allowed out one hour a day to share two phones and one computer. Outdoor exercise is given as well for one hour.

The other night I saw the blood red full moon rise and heard coyotes yipping on the hillside. Last week four of us saw a large bobcat on the edge of the field, – what a treat that was!

Guantanamo Bay Prison Camp has entered into the news lately with the so-called end of our war in Afghanistan.

Our Witness Against Torture community, since 2006, has worked to expose the atrocities and torture of the "Gitmo" prison.

A Palestinian named Zayn al-Abidin Mouhammad Husayn, as reported in the New York Times, described and even documented through sketches what was done to him.

The U.S. military used psychologists James Mitchell and Bruce Jessen to enhance the torture, all being experimental on the part of the CIA, expanding the "body of knowledge" on how long a human can be deprived of sleep and other methods of destroying the human psyche. How close to death can we bring a man with waterboarding?

"I can't breathe" takes on many forms, -now we even see it in COVID patients. A photo shows an elderly man lying on a sidewalk in India, attached to an oxygen tank.

When I worked in the Veterans Administration Medical Center in 1994, we were told that the overuse of antibiotics was going to come to haunt us in the years to come; bacteria and viruses were already mutating to fight back for their own immunity.

We have monkeyed with the cells of life in so many ways, at different levels, including the DNA of food. We are about to harvest a bitter fruit.

In 2007, while still practicing as an occupational therapist, (before compromising my official license), I attended a conference on trauma in Boston, MA. A presenter showed the face of Dick Cheney in his slide show and discussed how the current use of rogue psychologists in the implementation of torture eroded all of our cultural practices and institutions, similar to what happened in Germany under the Nazis.

While working the library here I found the image of the hooded Iraqi standing on a box with electrodes attached to his outstretched arms, crucified by the CIA. I showed it to the case manager whose office was next to the library. His reaction was something to the effect of him being of high school age at the time; he knew nothing about it, and didn't want to know any more.

He is young enough to be my son, his mind may be formed by the likes of Cambridge Analytica, the psy-ops program that helped to influence elections around the world, thumbing a tech nose at the peoples' efforts for democracy through voting.

I am sorry dear friends and readers. I could go on with my dark cynicism of what I have witnessed in my lifetime.

Through the power of positive thinking and faith in God, we must believe that we can and will prevent the launching of any nuclear warheads in these times.

After all, the Holy Spirit bows where she will and with the approach of Pentecost Sunday, we will renew our hopes and inspirations for hearing the Word of God, not only knowing who Christ is but also, through him, learning who we are called to be.

As God breathed into Adam, as the Hawaiians know the breath of life in aloha, as George Floyd called for his mother while his breath was robbed from him with the world watching, as Abu Zubaydah was waterboarded, as victims of COVID struggle to breathe, we are called to defend the spirit of God's law. Breathe, love, live, – it is the gift given to us in abundance. But that we could only see his face in each other.

5 May - Drone Whistleblower Daniel Hale Jailed Ahead of Sentencing

It's unclear precisely why Hale was arrested, and court documents show that his lawyers objected.

MORE:

by Alex Emmons (*The Intercept*)

Daniel Hale, a former Air Force intelligence analyst who pleaded guilty to sharing classified documents about drone strikes with a reporter, has been arrested ahead of his sentencing in July.

In March, Hale pleaded guilty to one charge under the Espionage Act, and he faces up to 10 years in prison. He is scheduled to be sentenced in July, but a federal judge has ordered him incarcerated until then for violating the terms of his pretrial release, according to court records.

It's unclear precisely what Hale is accused of doing, and court documents show that his lawyers objected to his jailing. Minutes from a hearing last week indicated that the prosecution "seeks continued detention at this time" and that Hale's lawyers argued that "there [are] no actual violations committed by the [defendant] as alleged."

An attorney for Hale, Cadence Mertz, declined to explain the reason for Hale's arrest. "Unfortunately there isn't any comment we can make," Mertz told *The Intercept* by email.

A spokesperson for the Department of Justice also did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Jesselyn Radack, a whistleblower attorney who has assisted Hale in the past, said in a phone interview that Hale was seeing a court-appointed therapist and that his arrest came as a surprise. "We had goodbye, farewell activities that his friends and supporters wanted to have in this final, very tense time before July," Radack said. "He didn't even have time to find someone to take care of his cat."

Last month, after Hale pleaded guilty, District Judge Liam O'Grady ordered that the conditions of his pre-sentencing release include submitting to "substance abuse testing and/or treatment as directed by Pretrial Services."

According to his 2019 indictment, Hale enlisted in the Air Force in 2009 and was assigned to work for the National Security Agency. He deployed to Afghanistan in support of the Department of Defense's Joint Special Operations Task Force in 2012, and was responsible for "identifying, tracking, and targeting" high-valued terror suspects.

As part of his plea agreement, Hale admitted to leaking 11 classified documents to a journalist. Other reporters have alleged that the documents were used in an eight-part series about drone strikes published by *The Intercept*. The series raises questions about the accuracy of strikes, targeting procedures, and special operations' expanding footprint in Africa.

After the series ran, the Obama administration committed to further transparency for the drone program, including releasing an estimate of the number of "noncombatants" killed outside war zones like Afghanistan between 2009 and 2015. Civil liberties groups praised it as a step forward, though the administration's figures were much lower than some independent groups had estimated.

The Intercept "does not comment on matters relating to the identity of anonymous sources," *Intercept* Editor-in-Chief Betsy Reed said at the time of Hale's indictment.

"These documents detailed a secret, unaccountable process for targeting and killing people around the world, including U.S. citizens, through drone strikes," Reed noted. "They are of vital public importance, and activity related to their disclosure is protected by the First Amendment. ... No one has ever been held accountable for killing civilians in drone strikes."

9 May - Mumia Abu-Jamal Update

An encouraging account of the visit yesterday with Mumia by Noelle Hanrahan, founder of prisonradio.org indicates he looks great following heart surgery.

MORE:

"I am here because people stood right with me. I love the hell out of all of them."

--Mumia Abu-Jamal, SCI Mahanoy

Pam Africa told me the other day that we need "to put our eyes" on Mumia.

When I walked into the visiting booth, Mumia said: "Well, well, well! Way to scale these walls, sister!" He chuckled. "How the hell did you get in here?"

I shrugged and asked: "Since when have walls stopped us?" A hand-to-glass exchange of a high five. Then I said: "I just asked the guard to check for the contact visit that was approved by the Superintendent's office yesterday, since you have cleared quarantine." Mumia said: "Okay, let's start talking and when he comes back, we can move."

Ten minutes later, the visit continues without the plexiglass barrier when they let Mumia have a contact visit. After an elbow bump and a hug we sit down at a table in the entirely empty visiting area of SCI Mahanoy.

First let me say that Mumia looks great. He has energy. He was smiling broadly under his face mask. He was laughing and explaining how he has another chance to live. He sounded just like Tony the Tiger when he roars: "I feel great!"

I could imagine that having a working heart after months of congestive heart failure would contribute to his feeling ready to tackle his rehabilitation. Heart disease can be reversed, though getting the proper diet and exercise will be a huge challenge in a prison known for lockdowns and a covid lockdown that lasted a year.

A long thin scar cuts all the way down his breastbone: The result of a double bypass open heart surgery just days ago. He is a trim 207 lbs. in a 6'1 frame and is now on path to recovery. He expects to be moved to general population very soon.

Mumia wanted everyone to know that he was aware that the movement made it possible for his condition to be taken seriously and finally accurately diagnosed. Mumia knows that if it were not for the world shining a bright hot spotlight on prison conditions and access to medical care, he fears that he would not have survived.

I always begin the process of leaving the visit, with this question for Mumia: "What do you want?" Mumia's answer: "I want to find a way to win and find a way to get the hell out of here."

Text of the hand-written message from Mumia to supporters:

*I love you all! Thanks for being in my life!
I am buoyed and lifted by your love and strength!
To freedom!*

Love, Mumia

May 15th - Report from Mumia Abu Jamal on his health!

I don't usually do this. This is discussing myself. I find it far more interesting to tell the stories of others, the revolving globe on which we dwell and the stories spawned by the fragile human condition and the struggles of humanity for liberation.

But I digress, uncomfortably.

This commentary is about the commentator.

Several weeks ago I underwent a medical procedure known as open heart surgery, a double bypass after it was learned that two vessels beating through my heart had significant blockages that impaired heart function.

This impairment was fixed by an extremely well trained and young cardiologist who had extensive experience in this intricate surgical procedure.

I tell you I had no clue whatsoever that I suffered from such a disease. Now to be perfectly honest, I feel fine.

Indeed, I feel more energetic than usual!

I thank you all, my family and friends, for your love and support.

Onwards to freedom with all my heart.

10 May - Your questions answered

We want to keep everyone up-to-date and in touch with Lore while the government tries to hide her and slow her eventual release.

MORE:

by Karl-Rainer Blumenthal

Thanks to everyone for your patience and generous offers of support during these last few quiet months.

So we're offering a new option to subscribe to the latest updates as they come by email and adding your FAQs, starting with the questions we've received the most below.

What is Lore's current status?

Lore is still detained at the Bureau of Prisons' Federal Detention Center at 7th and Arch Streets in downtown Philadelphia.

Does she have a trial date?

No, neither the prosecutors' office nor the courts have expressed any plans to hold a trial in the foreseeable future.

How is her health?

Lore is feeling fairly well after recovering from an untreated COVID-19 infection, but she now uses an inhaler daily and needs further testing to understand and manage her long-term breathing needs.

Is she vaccinated?

Lore has not received any COVID-19 vaccination at the time of writing and there is no timetable for her to receive one. She has expressed her desire to be vaccinated often and clearly.

How is her spirit?

All in all, pretty great! Your support continues to reach and uplift Lore there daily.

Right now she is especially inspired to win more and better access to COVID-19 information and vaccinations on the women's unit. In the meantime she is forming strong bonds with some amazing women in her unit, writing letters to everyone she can, and creating a lot of artwork.

How can I help?

More than anything else, Lore wants us all to support our friends and allies leading the fights against police violence and mass incarceration.

You can also support Lore directly by writing and sending photos! Your love and solidarity make this fight possible.

And you can always donate to Lore's commissary fund via PayPal or Venmo @WeLoveLore for food, clothes, and all the other essentials.

May 11th - A special appeal for incarcerated moms by Lore

Hi everyone!

I wrote something about one of my favorite mommas I have met here to share with you all in honor of mother's day. I have been lucky enough to have a mom I look up to, who is too humble to admit to being the idol to me she truly is. She is the perfect mother to me, living the meaning every day, and I miss her very much.

The majority of people here are parents. When I first got here, I was asked "do you have any kids?" more often than I was asked "what are you in for?" Okay, probably because my picture was all over the news, but still, you get what I mean!

Prison life exists in a black box for the most part, and most of the press that incarcerated folk get is skewed negatively. After all, how could a moral, just, and forgiving society put someone behind bars or sentence them to death if they weren't deemed monsters, incapable of functioning in society? I would like to spotlight people for the individuals they are — people who bear wild kindness and generosity, and are separated from their vibrant lives but still find ways to shine.

Some backstory

This past Tuesday, May 4th, the captain conducted a shakedown on the women's unit. The purpose and objective of a shakedown is to remove contraband. However, what happened was punishing, humiliating, and treacherous instead. We were removed from the cells into the recreation yard where we remained for hours. A nurse came by to administer morning medication and insulin to the inmates and diabetic folk but was turned away, leaving those folk without their morning medicine. Something felt wrong as the day got later and more staff members participated in the shakedown. It should be over by now.

The rec yard looks out to the doors exiting the unit so we saw exactly what was in the dumpster bins they rolled out: trash bags filled with stuffed animals, booties, and blankets went past to the women's horror. These were the knitting and crocheting projects that they had been working on to send home for mother's day to their kids and/or moms. The supplies were all bought on commissary or came from the prisons that the women were transferred from but were allowed to have.

This really hurt all the people here. When people were later called individually to claim their “contraband,” they were forced to either throw out the gifts themselves or watch an officer do it.

Many of us found water and chemicals thrown on our property. For myself, all my letters and pictures were taken out of the locker, put on the floor, and I found every page soaked through with water and some photos torn up. This was a rough lead up to mother's day, as many people's gifts and yarn were tossed out.

As we do, we comfort each other. As we do, we find things to still be grateful for. I am immensely grateful for you all, and for the opportunity I have to share with you about my pal below:

"A really good heart." "Not trying to copy, but yes, a really big heart."

In a room of more than 12 of her peers, Tessicar Jumpp ("Tess") listened with the humility that we have come to know her by, as we shared our favorite things about her. Today is her birthday. Today we celebrate her. She's an Aquarius. I started the round-table of joyful reflections about Tess: "She's got this laugh. Not her day-to-day laugh. She's got this really special laugh that's like winning the lottery when I hear it. It is a deep, down-to-your-soul kind of laughter. You can't miss it. And boy, does she know how to make me laugh too."

"No one has a single bad word to say about her." Let me tell you, that's next to impossible to find. Someone can have a problem with the way you sneeze or the way you fold your clothes in here! Really, it's not hard to get a bad review. Out of all possible compliments that says the most about her, the woman, the momma, the sister, the wife, the daughter, who we have come to know. We are all hurting in here, it's common to see people take their pain out on others. Every day we "wake up on the wrong side of the bed" because we wake up without our families within reach.

Or in Tess's case, more than an ocean away. Due to a 2016 treaty that the USA made with Jamaica, Jamaican people who are found guilty of a crime committed here in the USA can be taken into American custody to serve all of their time. They are not eligible to do programs or go to camps and lower security prisons where most incarcerated folk with non-violent crimes do their time. She is here, in the detention center where folks are often placed after getting kicked out of one place or another, a place that offers no job skill training. She cannot do any programs that US citizens convicted of the same exact crime can do to help her time go faster, because of the treaty.

Tess has seen her husband for a total of two hours on two visits since March of 2020, when visits to the FDC were shut down. He contracted Covid-19 along the way to the USA and missed the first month of visiting her. She was granted an extended visit with her husband by the warden, but a lower staff member denied it, despite allowing the same thing for someone who is white and the heir to a 100 million dollar company. (Yes, you read that right.) The exception was revoked for Tess's husband despite his extraordinary travel circumstances.

Every day she persists despite this infertile soil. Every day she hopes despite historical suppression. Every day she shatters the stereotypes and the stylized caricature of a prisoner as she is simply, unapologetically herself. But she is missing a part of her whole self here. When she laughs, I see the more complete picture: generations of her family sitting around a birthday meal as we did, in a way only families can do, reminding you of who you are and how much you bring to the table.

"She is passionate, she stands by her opinions." My first memory of Tess is a woman full of conviction, who laid down a faith so convincing that I had no choice but to pick my chin up. She did not know me, but she approached me, listened to me and moved me with her wisdom and expressiveness. Her words

reminded me that while I am physically separated from my family, the spiritual connection remains and can only grow stronger. There are things that the feds can never take away.

She has anything but a quiet mind. When Tess has an opinion to share, you **will** hear her out! :) I am honored to be in attendance to such a truth-seeking mind. She has so much to teach her daughters about grace, confidence, and determination. She has lessons on how to be humble: she blushes magenta as we spoke our truths about her, to her. She cooked all the food for her own birthday party, including something vegan for me. That is who she is. She does not want to leave anyone out.

If I am seeking her, I will find her knitting something for her kids, picking through her first-aid kit to salve someone's wound, singing her own arrangements of popular songs super loudly, and her own talk-version of raps songs. Tess has the kind of spirit you want to follow. Since this is the way she is while incarcerated, imagine how excellent she is with all the resources available to a free woman, with those who know her best, with her family who love and know her by her side.

Tess knows shelter, she knows suffering, she knows forgiveness. She is shocking and soothing in her compassion. She is startling in her beauty—I hope she knows this. And if she ever forgets, I'll remind her.

How to help the mommas on the women's unit

Send children's books! We are allowed to mail personal property home, hence all the crochet and knitted projects that were worked on for mother's day. Since books can be mailed, women here would appreciate books for all ages that they can mail home, hardback is okay! Send them to me and they will reach a momma. Requests: stories about Black/African-American Girls. Subjects for ages three and up: fashion, baking, princess, dolls, Peppa Pig, unicorns.

Or share this with a close friend! Please don't feel pressured to help if you cannot. Sharing is the best. Information is queen!

11 May - Older Prisoners Seek Release But Fall Through The Cracks

These 'old law' prisoners include people like Leonard Peltier, Bill Dunne, Veronza Bowers and Dr. Mutulu Shakur. The time to release them is now.

MORE:

by Carrie Johnson (*Morning Edition*)

Davon-Marie Grimmer has been struggling to get help for more than year for her cousin, Kent Clark. Sometimes, when he calls from prison, he asks to speak with relatives who are no longer alive. Sometimes, he forgets the name of his cellmate.

"As far as I know, he hasn't received any medical attention for the dementia, and he's just so vulnerable in there," Grimmer said. "He's 66 years old. He can't take care of himself."

Clark is one of about 150 people in federal prison who time mostly forgot. This group of "old law" prisoners committed crimes before November 1987, when the law changed to remove the possibility of parole. But even with the grandfathered-in chance for parole — and despite a push to reduce prison populations — dozens of men in their 60s, 70s and 80s still have little hope of release.

When Congress tweaked the law three years ago to allow sick and elderly people behind bars to apply to a judge for compassionate release, that change didn't apply to the "old law" prisoners. They're easy to overlook.

"They are the oldest and most vulnerable cohort of people within the federal prison system today," said Chuck Weisselberg, a law professor at the University of California, Berkeley. "I mean, their only path for release is through the parole commission, an agency that's been dying for decades."

A bipartisan group of senators has introduced legislation that would give "old law" prisoners the chance to petition judges for release based on their age and poor health, but it's awaiting action in Congress.

How Clark got here

The last time Grimmer saw her cousin face to face was before he went to prison 31 years ago. They were a tight family, sharing the same home in Newark, N.J., as children. She and his sister, June Clark, said relatives stood by Clark during his legal proceedings.

After a five-day trial, a jury convicted Clark of kidnapping and extortion. Prosecutors said he was part of a crew that abducted a postal worker, stole his uniform and tricked their way into the home of a bank manager in 1985. The alleged ringleader of the scheme fled the state — only to be captured, years later, after his girlfriend saw him featured on the television show *America's Most Wanted*.

Ultimately, he agreed to cooperate with the Justice Department — and testify against Clark at trial. He got five years. Clark got life, with the possibility of parole. A third man allegedly involved in the abduction was never charged with a crime because the statute of limitations had expired.

Prosecutors viewed Clark as a more serious threat because they said he raped the bank manager's 19-year-old daughter during the botched extortion. The judge cited her testimony when he imposed a life sentence, and in a recent interview with *NPR* she reiterated her belief in Clark's guilt. But Clark always denied the rape. His blood, hair and fingerprints did not tie him to the crime scene and the assailant wore a ski mask, according to documents provided to the parole reviewer.

Grimmer said her cousin's prison record has been clean for the past 20 years. But in 1992, Clark killed an inmate who he said was planning to rape him the next day. An official at that prison later told the parole commission he would have done the same thing. That official, Bill Henderson, has since died, but his wife reviewed a written record of his statements shared by *NPR* this year.

"No living inmate or staff member who knew Bill Henderson would say that Bill was anything less than a fair and honest man," Moni Henderson said. "I doubt Bill represented many at Parole Board hearings but, if he felt he could make a difference based on his knowledge and facts, Bill would not hesitate to stand up for inmates [and staff alike]. I knew the man for almost 35 years and say that with confidence."

The effort to get him out

Grimmer fears that her cousin Clark is at risk in prison now.

"He said, 'The younger guys, they're like picking on me,' " Grimmer said. "And I told him, I say, 'Kent, you got to you got to try to stay safe and you got to stay to yourself. You know, I said walk around with the Bible in your hand and that'll help, you know, and you just read the Bible when you're out in like the general population.' "

Grimmer has petitioned the authorities for her cousin's medical records and enlisted a lawyer to try to win his release.

Rahul Sharma, an assistant federal public defender in New Jersey, said he believes "the court has both a moral and a legal obligation to conduct an expedited resentencing for Mr. Clark."

Sharma told a judge he has doubts about the strength of the evidence from all those years ago. Biological samples are long gone, so there's no ability to test for DNA using new and better technology. Sharma said Clark is "suffering dearly" in prison and he wrote the judge that a prison worker recently told him Clark is "out of his goddamn mind."

People who advocate on behalf of prisoners said they tend to be less healthy than the general population; inmates over age 50 are considered "geriatric."

"Many people who are incarcerated have significant preexisting health conditions," said Kara Gotsch, deputy director of the Sentencing Project, which works to promote shorter prison sentences. "They have histories of substance use disorder, they have serious mental illness issues. And so they already have compromised health systems going in. Being incarcerated exacerbates that problem."

As for Kent Clark, the U.S. Parole Commission reviewed his case last year. According to written records, Clark's case manager told the commission that Clark is showing signs of dementia. He pointed out that as a young man, Clark was a boxer who may have a history of head injuries.

But the parole examiner denied Clark's bid for release. The examiner wrote that if Clark can't remember what he did, "how can the Commission be certain he has learned something from his mistakes and/or that he has developed the skills to avoid engaging in the same behavior?"

Gotsch, of the Sentencing Project, said the "old law" prisoners may have broken the law decades ago, but research suggests that crime is mostly a problem for young people, so they're not likely to do it again.

"Not surprisingly, as you get older you become more mature, you develop your brain functioning and decision-making process is much more advanced," she said.

The U.S. Attorney's Office in New Jersey is fighting Kent Clark's request for a shorter prison term that would send him home soon. Current Justice Department officials declined to speak about a pending case.

Last week the rape survivor in the case, whom *NPR* is not naming, said the damage to her family resounded for years. Her father died a year after the assault, before he could see anyone arrested for the crime.

"He took away my dad from me," she said. "Whatever his family wants to say ... he did commit a rape."

Asked about Clark's new attempt at release, she said she didn't "want to play judge and jury. It's been a lot of years." But, she added, she believes he would be convicted again if the crime happened now.

Paul Fishman, who prosecuted Clark in 1990, told *NPR* that he, the jury and the judge all thought that Clark was "guilty — beyond a reasonable doubt."

Fishman said it's hard to say now whether the life sentence was too long. It may well be that circumstances have changed, 30 years later, but Fishman said he doesn't know enough to say.

The Parole Commission is scheduled to grant Clark another hearing in 2022. He will be 67 years old.

11 May - June 11th: International Day of Solidarity with Marius Mason & All Long-Term Anarchist Prisoners

A call for an international day of solidarity with long-term anarchist prisoners on June 11th, 2021.

MORE:

Against another year of state encroachment, against the restriction of free movement under the auspices of “safety,” against the continued brutalization of our friends in prison, we call for a renewal of solidarity on June 11, 2021: International Day of Solidarity with Marius Mason & All Long-Term Anarchist Prisoners. For 17 years, June 11th has been an occasion for celebration, mourning, and revolt. It has been a moment to breathe, to remember those fallen and those in cages, to remind ourselves of why we remain committed to the Beautiful Idea of anarchism. Through our letters, demonstrations, fundraising, and solidarity attacks we keep the beacon lit for those who have given years of their lives for their conviction that the State is a horror against which we must wager our lives.

MEMORY REMAINS A WEAPON

June 11th is, in the words of Christos Tsakalos, a day against oblivion. The architects of prison society would have prison function as a memory hole, casting our dear rebels into the void and producing in free souls a stifling amnesia. They want us to forget those who took action against the state and economy and those who continue their rebellion behind bars. Our work of solidarity with imprisoned anarchists is a hammer blow against forgetting: against the prison walls and the narcotizing technological society that shatters all meaning.

As such, we remember not only our friends behind bars, but those who have died. Marilù Maschietto in Italy. Former political prisoner Alexei “Socrates” Sutuga in Russia. Robert D’Attilio, who kept alive the memory of Sacco & Vanzetti. Doris Ensinger, partner of lifelong anarchist and former prisoner Luis Edo. Tireless anarchist abolitionist Karen Smith. Lucio Urtubia, whose life of expropriation in service of struggle remains an inspiration.

Finally: Stuart Christie. Stuart’s life and example cast a massive shadow in our efforts. From his time as a young prisoner in Franco’s Spain and his reanimation of the Anarchist Black Cross in the 1970s, to his persecution in the Angry Brigade trials and work in archiving anarchist history through Cienfuegos Press and Christie Books, Stuart’s tireless work will not be forgotten. He and all of our fallen companions, whether we knew them personally or not, are alive in spirit in our work this year.

TO COMBAT THE PRESENT ORDER

Prison administrations around the world have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by implementing lockdowns and banning in-person visits, building upon prior movement to replace face-to-face visits with video chat. Physical mail is also threatened, with the United States federal prison system initiating a program to scan letters and make them only accessible on expensive tablets provided by a contracted company, Smart Communications. This allows for easier surveillance and is lucrative for Smart Communications, who can charge exorbitant rates for access to its services. It’s likely that this trend will continue in prisons around the world. With the pandemic as an alibi, prison administrations and profiteering companies have accelerated the abolition of direct human connection and the shifting of prisoners’ lives into the techno-sphere. Anarchist prisoners have been on the forefront of opposition to this regime of control, with anarchist prisoner Mónica Caballero going on hunger strike in 2020 to demand restoration of in-person visits.

REBELLION & REACTION

A year after George Floyd was murdered, our context is still strongly infused by the surge of protests, riots, and organizing that followed. In addition to the new energy, friendships, and practices that came out of the uprising, the repression that followed will affect us and our struggles for years to come. Over 13,000 arrests were made, with at least a few hundred state-level felony cases and over 325 federal cases. An unknown number have already taken pleas or are still incarcerated pretrial. Those arrested include all kinds of people: some young, some old; some long-term activists, some newly radicalized; some very connected to movements or struggles, and some very isolated. Existing bail funds and jail support projects have greatly expanded their reach, and many new ones have popped up all over the country. And some have already begun to contract, due to activity in the streets slowing down and from over-work in unsustainable models. These are part of the same continuum of anti-repression as supporting our long-term prisoners.

Some uprising defendants will most likely end up serving long prison sentences. While both immediate jail support and long-term prisoner support continue, we are now in a collective transition period between the two. Bail/jail support, court support, and prisoner support must all be done in a way that makes us stronger instead of draining us. Some connections have already begun to be made between movement prisoners and the uprising in the streets. Jeremy Hammond and friends recorded a video of a small protest and message of solidarity from Grady County Jail. Former black liberation political prisoner Dhoruba Bin-Wahad spoke about a BLM that means Black Liberation Movement and the importance of political education. This year, we seek to deepen the connection between different aspects of anti-repression, to bring the names and the wisdom of our long-term prisoners into current struggles – whether that’s in the streets against the police, in the forest against pipelines, or in the night against monuments of power – and strengthen networks and practices to support more comrades going to prison.

GIVE FLOWERS TO THE REBELS CAGED

The past year has given us the release of two long-term anarchist prisoners in the United States: Jeremy Hammond and Jay Chase. In Spain, anarchist Lisa was released on parole in April 2021. We send love and fraternal greetings to all of them as they adjust to a new terrain of life.

Sadly, many of our comrades remain behind bars, and for them we continue to fight. Eric King awaits trial (currently set for October 2021) for an incident in which he was assaulted in prison. Michael Kimble and Jennifer Rose both had their parole rejected. Sean Swain has been forced again to fight the perennial restrictions on his communications by the prison authorities.

Marius Mason continues to struggle through another year of imprisonment and could always use letters and printed articles to keep him connected to the world outside. He, like others in the US prison system, has not had an in-person visit in over a year. Marius is currently taking correspondence courses to become a paralegal. The pandemic has limited fundraising opportunities, and donations can help offset this change.

At least six anarchists have been imprisoned as the Belarusian state continues to repress the 2020-2021 uprising. They include Dmitry Dubovsky, Igor Olinevich, Sergei Romanov, Dmitry Rezanovich, Mikola Dziadok, and Akihiro Gaevsky-Hanada, many of whom have been imprisoned before.

In Greece, anarchists and others took part in bold attacks on corporate and state targets in solidarity with Dimitris Koufontinas, an imprisoned Communist urban guerrilla who began a hunger strike earlier this year. The anarchist prisoners Giannis Dimitrakis and Nikos Maziotis went on hunger strike in solidarity with him for over a month to help generate solidarity.

Mónica Caballero and Francisco Solar were again arrested in July 2020, this time facing charges related to incendiary attacks on government ministers and a real estate company. They, along with eight other anarchist prisoners, began a hunger strike on March 22, 2021 demanding the repeal of extremely punitive

measures against prisoners. They also demanded the release of anarchist prisoner Marcelo Villarroel as well as all Mapuche, anarchist, and subversive prisoners.

In Italy, Nicola Gai was finally released from prison, while Anna Beniamino and Alfredo Cospito have been sentenced to 16 and 20 years respectively for allegedly taking part in bombing attacks associated with the Informal Anarchist Federation (FAI). In 2020, anarchist prisoners Beppe and Davide Delogu began a hunger strike in response to punitive measures taken against them by prison administrators and were soon joined by other anarchist prisoners.

June 11th comes from a legacy of defense of animals, the earth, and the wild. While we do not seek to ascribe our anarchism to them, we support land defenders and water protectors on their own terms. Red Fawn Fallis, in federal prison on charges related to opposing the Dakota Access Pipeline, was released last year. Rattler, another No DAPL prisoner, was released to a halfway house early this year. Until his recent release, water protector Steve Martinez was held in federal detention for refusal to cooperate with a grand jury. Some of the Kings Bay Plowshares sit now in prison cells for their radical Christian witness against the horrors of nuclear war and omnicide.

We condemn the repressive operations against anarchists in the UK and worldwide counter-information networks. The raid on the nostate.net servers by the Dutch state is a blatant attack on international communication and solidarity. As with previous attacks on counter-information and prisoner solidarity projects, the state's actions make clear that combative solidarity with prisoners and coordination of informal attack are a danger to order. The police thugs would have us shrink back from solidarity in the face of their persecution, but we refuse. We stand in full solidarity with those facing repression in the UK as well as the comrades of 325, Anarchist Black Cross Berlin, Northshore Counter-Info, Montreal Counter-Info, and Act for Freedom Now.

We also want to express solidarity with those outside of self-identified anarchists and those taking part in social struggles. We see anarchy as a tension through which we strive in daily life. This leads us to look beyond the world of official struggles and anarchist milieus, and to find anarchy and subversion throughout the world more broadly.

People everywhere act anarchically, including many who are currently imprisoned. These are not necessarily special people to romanticize, bulldozers of revolt in all aspects of life. We don't pretend that everyone is a secret anarchist who, when psychic repression is removed, will flower as such. People may act in a way we find beautiful one moment but then do something we disagree with the next. We still express solidarity with these people because they engage in acts of refusal and revolt. We see anarchy not as a pure identity that fixates on special people, but instead as a spirit that emerges from activity that opens space for freedom and community. As anarchists, we share in the joys and difficulties of freedom, its contradictions and complications. We are not above others, pure arbiters of freedom, but individuals capable of the most cowardly submission and the most audacious rebelliousness. Rather than worship those who appear to embody our values the most, we will instead tend to the fire of anarchy wherever we find it.

ABOLITION, AND OTHER SLIPPERY WORDS

Despite the mainstreaming of prison abolition, well over 10 million people are currently locked in the world's dungeons, a figure rising faster than increases in population. At the same time that we have seen the idea of abolition generalize, we have also seen it mutilated. While this has largely related to the abolition of police, the same distortions must be challenged in discourse on prison abolition. The city of Camden, New Jersey "abolishing" their police department in 2013 was touted as a successful example that other cities could follow to address a racist and violent police force, but the city police department was merely replaced with a county one. This is not abolition. Just as decreased funding or fewer police are not

abolition; as civilian review boards have not and will not hold anyone accountable; as less money, fewer COs, or oversight committees will not abolish prisons. We know that police and prisons cannot be abolished from this society: they need each other. Political prisoners, prison rebels, and those who refuse to submit will be some of the last to be granted the reprieves from the state that come from reforms. When we say we want “abolition,” we mean we want police, prisons, and the society that necessitates them to cease to exist.

LET THE GAMES BEGIN

We stand at a crossroads. Do we allow anarchism to become flat and colorless, a new word to describe an old corpse? Do we evaporate into vague leftism and its tired theater of activism? Do we surrender our principles – solidarity, mutual aid, direct action, cooperation – to the new managers of revolt?

Or do we keep to our own light, our own vision, our own project? June 11th remains a light in the darkness: for our comrades in prison, but also for us. Our work renews our fidelity to freedom and a life in common. It affirms to us, in our doubt and confusion, that anarchy lives in our day to day lives and connects us to a rich and vibrant history of free spirited revolt. It asserts that anarchy will be combative or it will be dead. Solidarity with anarchist prisoners is not, for us, a humorless endeavor, a duty-infected routine. It is generative play and the substantiation of free community. Will you join us?

13 May - How to write Political Prisoners video

This is a brief instructional video, outlining how to write U.S. political prisoners, including a brief history of the Anarchist Black Cross.

MORE:

It's intended as a resource to be shown at local political prisoner letter writing events, or watched by individuals looking to learn some basics about writing political prisoners. It was produced by a collaboration between Page One and Burning Books.

Much of the model presented here was developed over several years of practice by the New York City Anarchist Black Cross (NYC ABC). Special thanks to the Buffalo Committee Against State Repression, the International Leonard Peltier Defense Committee, the Friends of Jeff Luers, and the Family & Friends of Daniel McGowan.

Watch the video at [youtube.com/watch?v=nu-qpGOwsSg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nu-qpGOwsSg)

13 May - Bring Sundiata Acoli home!

Our elders have been treated with neglect for far too long -- and it's on us to advocate for them.

MORE:

That's why we've got to come together to demand New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy release Sundiata Acoli -- a former Black Panther, civil rights freedom rider, mathematician, computer analyst, and former NASA employee who's been behind bars for nearly 50 years.

Sundiata has significant health challenges and is currently suffering from advanced dementia, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, emphysema, and glaucoma. He still suffers from lingering COVID-19 symptoms. As he continues to battle threatening conditions of the prison, his life and health are in jeopardy.

There is absolutely no reason for Sundiata to remain in prison -- it's unjust and inhumane. If we come together and demand Sundiata be released, then Gov. Murphy will have no choice but to address our concerns and hear us out.

We owe it to our eldest, most vulnerable leaders who put their lives on the line for Black lives and Black futures. Please sign the petition demanding Gov. Murphy release Sundiata:
campaigns.organizefor.org/petitions/bring-sundiata-home

There are countless injustices in Sundiata Acoli's case. He's already served nearly 50 years behind bars, taken responsibility, and expressed remorse. For the past 27 years, Sundiata has had a completely clean disciplinary record and is a strong candidate for commutation.

Sundiata has appeared before the New Jersey Parole Board a total of 6 times. Since his first appearance in 1994, 27 years have passed.

Last summer, Gov. Murphy claimed he would not accept systemic racism and bias and affirmed that Black Lives Matter and we're no strangers to holding elected officials to their word. This is the moment that Gov. Murphy can prove he meant what he said when he affirmed that Black Lives Matter.