OMNI US POLITICAL PRISONERS NEWSLETTER #1.
Compiled by Dick Bennett for a Culture of Peace and Justice. June 18, 2012

Here is the link to all OMNI newsletters:  http://www.omnicenter.org/newsletter-archive/  For a knowledge-based peace, justice, and ecology movement and an informed citizenry as the foundation for change.

See related newsletters: National Security State, Prisons, Torture, War on Terror, and more.

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“BRADLEY MANNING’S COURT MARTIAL SET”
The Nuclear Resister (June 5, 2012).  For updates and support actions see www.bradleymanning.org.
Write Bradley at:
Commander
HHC USAG Attn: PFC Manning
239 Sheridan Ave., Bldg 417,
JBM-HH, VA 22211

This number of the Resister contains words of several political prisoners, including Lynne Stewart, Steve Kelly, S.J., Susan Crane, Norm Lowry, and Theresa Cusimano.

US POLITICAL PRISONERS
US POLITICAL PRISONERS 2005, COLLECTION OF WRITINGS :

As defined by Amnesty International, a political prisoner is one who is detained because of her or his belief, color, sex, sexuality, ethnic origin, language, or religion, and has not employed or advocated violence. Arranged by country, over 3,500 articles from journals, pamphlets, organizational reports, and books on political prisoners and their trials are included here. Each entry gives a descriptive annotation. 475 US ITEMS.


The Nuclear Resister
Nonviolent Resistance for a Peaceful and Nuclear-Free Future

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June, 2012

**What We’re About**
Posted on March 6, 2010
The Nuclear Resister networks the anti-nuclear and anti-war resistance movement while acting as a clearinghouse for information about contemporary nonviolent resistance to war and the nuclear threat. Our emphasis is on support for the women and men jailed for these actions.

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**Two pensioners blockade Scotland’s Faslane Trident submarine base**
Posted on June 16, 2012
On the morning of June 14, two Trident Ploughshares activists sat in the road at the North Gate of Faslane Trident Submarine base, stopping any traffic from entering the base for 15 minutes as part of the Faslane Peace Camps call for 30 Days of Action.

Joy Mitchell, 79, from Berwick on Tweed and Joan Meredith, 82, from Malpas, Cheshire have taken action against nuclear weapons many times before.

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~ Post prison reflection from Susan Crane

Posted on June 16, 2012

Peggy Coleman, Susan Crane, Chet Collins and Larry Purcell in the FCI Dublin visiting room.

A Reflection on Coming Out of Prison: On Contradictions and Responsibility

From the Disarm Now Plowshares website

After the Disarm Now Plowshares action, trial and sentencing, I was in prison with a fifteen month sentence: an eye-blink in comparison to the sentences of most of the women I was with in FDC SeaTac and FCI Dublin. FCI Dublin is a federal women’s prison in California that is behind two fences and rolls of razor wire. There are about 1000 women there; 85% were foreign nationals, mostly Hispanic, who would be deported by ICE when their sentences were over. I have no regrets about going onto the US Naval Base in Washington, where the largest stockpile of nuclear warheads are stored, and where 8 of the trident submarines that deploy the nuclear warheads, are homeported.

The time in prison was full of contradictions and bookended by two passages: a quote from George Bernard Shaw about prisons, and a story from the gospel of Matthew about the judgement of the nations. Both bring up the question of how we as individuals and as a collective are responsible for what is happening in the culture we live in.

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~ Prison reflection from Lynne Stewart

Posted on June 16, 2012

We Must Raise The Level Of Our Resistance


Too many wars, too much death and destruction on both sides…

And our ever-present legacy of these wars? Go down to your local “shelter for the homeless” or state prison and count the veterans… Watch any sport on TV and the ads that sell the glamorous, patriotic life of the military are the best that big money can produce. It attracts, as it is meant to do, the kids this government means to “throw away” in the projects of the big cities, on the farms that can no longer compete, in mines of Appalachia, in the immigrant communities. And these sons and daughters of “someone else” die; they are maimed; they are driven mad, in faraway places where people hate them and the flag they operate under. And then they come home to haunt us.

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The Nuclear Resister needs funds – please help!

Posted on June 15, 2012

Felice & Jack at the Nevada Test Site, October 2011

From activist and musician Joyce Katzberg:

Thank you, dear Jack and Felice,

for chronicling our hope these long years. I still carry my weatherbeaten copy of the April, 2003 issue of the Nuclear Resister [which chronicles over 7,500 anti-war arrests] in my purse to prove to people that there really IS a nonviolent resistance movement in our country. I love it when I see the light in
their eyes when they see page after page after page after page of evidence of courage in the face of the Beast.

XO Joyce

From activist Rachel Winch:
Dear Felice and Jack,

I was reading through the last edition of the Nuclear Resister today and was filled with such hope and inspiration. At times when it feels like all is lost, it is beautiful to be reminded of the creative resistance of people around the country and around the world. Thank you for your work and your loving presence.

Much love,
Rachel

From imprisoned Plowshares activist Steve Kelly, S.J.:
The Nuclear Resister – tracking, chronicling, supporting prisoners-of-conscience to nukes and war – deserves our material and constructive support. I’m not alone in saying I’m empowered by this newsletter, which serves as much more than a bulletin board or website. It is us – caring, taking pulse, hearing each other.

God bless, Steve

June, 2012

Dear friends,

Letters like these recent ones, from old friends and new, remind us why we have continued to publish the Nuclear Resister newsletter for the past 32 years.

A few significant reasons stand out as to why this work remains as vital as ever – worthy of our time, energy and commitment, and of your continued support.

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~ Prison reflection from Steve Kelly, SJ

Posted on June 13, 2012
From issue #166 of the Nuclear Resister

Unrecognized political prisoner:
A Year’s Reflection

Or as Steve Baggarly of the Norfolk Catholic Worker wrote in a letter from jail:
“If the SHU fits…”

Many folks, mostly activists, write to us with this first thought: “Oh, I could never do what you are doing”, meaning either months or maybe years of prison or time in the hole (segregated housing unit – SHU). In one way of course it could be true of the infirm or very inexperienced. It’s not necessarily true of the elders though.

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Resisting drones in Missouri: “Let Justice Flow Like a River…”

Posted on June 12, 2012
Mark Kenney, Brian Terrell and Ron Faust in front of courthouse

*by Brian Terrell*

June 12, 2012

The United States District Courthouse in Jefferson City, Missouri, is a modern and graceful structure sitting on a bluff over the Missouri River. Less than one year old, it is a virtual temple in white marble, granite and glass, its clean lines all the more immaculate in contrast to its nearest neighbor, the crumbling 19th century hulk of the derelict and empty Missouri State Penitentiary, now a tourist attraction and occasional movie set. Set into the floor of the courthouse rotunda, executed in marble and bronze, is the image of the Great Seal of the United States, the eagle with arrows in one talon and olive leaves in the other, circled by a quote from the Bible, from the prophet Amos, “Let Justice Flow Like A River.”

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**A message from Bradley Manning’s attorney, David Coombs**

Posted on June 12, 2012

*by David Coombs*

June 12, 2012

Over the past two years, thousands of individuals have either donated to the defense fund or given freely of their time to support PFC Bradley Manning. The support provided has come in many forms:

1) Signing petitions ([standwithbrad.org](http://standwithbrad.org));
2) Standing up to say “I am Bradley Manning” ([iam.bradleymanning.org](http://iam.bradleymanning.org));
3) Writing to military/government authorities;
4) Writing letters to the editors of local and national newspapers;
5) Attending marches, rallies, and other public events to raise awareness about Bradley Manning;
6) Using [social media](http://social-media-url) to write about the case and the events of every hearing;
7) Contacting government representatives;
8) Sending messages of support to my law office;
9) [Donating to the legal defense fund](http://legal-defense-fund-url); or
10) Volunteering with the Bradley Manning Support Network and [Courage to Resist](http://courage-tor-resist-url).

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**Shut It Down women bring health facts to Entergy Headquarters**

Posted on June 11, 2012

The Shut It Down Affinity Group on Monday, June 11, 2012, from left: Marcia Gagliardi, Hattie Nestel, Susan Lantz, Priscilla Lynch, Ellen Graves, Paki Wieland, Sherrill Hougen, Connie Harvard, Nancy First, and Julie Levy; Judy Wolter was not present for the photo.

Carrying facts about the dangers of radiation and nuclear power and attired as medical professionals, women of the Shut It Down Affinity Group appeared at Entergy headquarters Monday, June 11 to alert officials to the necessity of closing their Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant in Vernon, Vermont.

Brattleboro police commanded by Lieutenant Robert Kirkpatrick arrested eight women when Entergy’s
Larry Smith, a public relations officer, contacted police to have the women removed from the premises. When the women refused to leave, Lieutenant Kirkpatrick and his detail booked the women for unlawful trespass. They are scheduled for arraignment July 17.

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**Undercover cops instigate clashes and conspiracy arrests at NATO summit**

Posted on May 28, 2012
"Die-in" outside Boeing’s headquarters, Chicago on May 21 (AP Photo/Charles Rex Arbogast)

The demonstrations during NATO’s summit in Chicago were overwhelmingly peaceful, punctuated only by the predictable clashes when overwhelming numbers of hyper-militarized police meet a relative handful of demonstrators who are willing to push back when provoked. Such situations led to the majority of more than 100 arrests reported over a week of protest, most for misdemeanors or infractions. More than a dozen people face more serious charges including felony assaults on police as a result of these incidents, and three remain jailed on high bail.

Additionally, the use of undercover informants who supplied verbal encouragement, alcohol, access to equipment and expertise is alleged to be the common link behind at least five pre-emptive arrests on conspiracy and explosives charges of young men protesting NATO. The five also remain behind bars on bail ranging from $500,000 to $1.5 million.

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http://www.nukeresister.org/

1. **Political Prisoners in the North American Homeland** Alex Jones

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Feb 8, 2012 – The legal systems of Canada and the U.S. make no separate recognition of “political prisoners.” This encourages police malfeasance and a ...

**Political Prisoners in the North American Homeland**

J. B. Gerald
Global Research
February 8, 2012

*The legal systems of Canada and the U.S. make no separate recognition of “political prisoners.” This encourages police malfeasance and a bending of the legal system to cope with political protest in the same manner as crimes of self-interest. Confused by the difference, society prefers to sort its members into “good” and “bad”. As totalitarian controls by government increase, more people will probably assert their humanity and the numbers of political prisoners will grow, but in the process criminalize entire groups of people who have strong convictions, integrity, loyalty to community, and care deeply*
In Canada the concept of what is a political prisoner, varies by community. Native people have been political prisoners for generations, as have the poor, confined by prison or circumstance. Due to the Canadian government’s Middle East policies which involve strong interface with Israel, media focus on political prisoners for the past ten years concerns Muslims as suspects in the ‘war on terrorism.’ The high profile political prisoners were arrested on Canadian Security Certificates which according to Canada’s Supreme Court, ignored the victims’ human rights and needed adjustment. The Conservative government’s compliance was minimal and inadequate. Held on a Security Certificate for 12 years in detention and house arrest, without charge or knowing his accusers, Mohammad Mahjoub was released from several limitations of his freedom, February 3rd, by Federal Court in Toronto which found the intrusive surveillance unreasonable. Mahjoub had previously chosen to return to prison rather than inflict the government’s surveillance on his family.

With current trials of G20 protestors and an “Occupy” movement which may last, Canada begins to field the edge of its conscience. June 2010 in Toronto, thousands of Canadians protested the G20 conference of global leaders and were met with illegal police tactics, massive pre-planned detention, threats, and abuse of the peoples’ human rights. With occasional possibly ‘staged’ exceptions, the protests were non-violent. According to The Dominion, of the more than eleven hundred arrested, 66 remain in legal battles while some still face charges. Seven are serving sentences for their participation: Ryan Rainville, Mandy Hiscocks, Alex Hundert, Leah Henderson, Peter Hopperton, Erik Lankin (released Jan. 26th), Adam Lewis, and Greg Noltie-Rowley.

Mandy Hiscocks, convicted of “Counseling to Commit Mischief and Counseling to Obstruct Police,” faced the judge before her sentencing and objected to his comparison of G20 protest tactics to the illegal and racist tactics of the Ku Klux Klan. She noted there’s no comparison between G20 protest tactics and the K.K.K.’s, and that it was tactics the judge objected to rather than the Klan’s insistence on White Supremacy. She is a credit to Canadians and was sentenced to from 20 months to 2 years.

A historical note about the Klan: a White Supremacist group in the U.S. South the Ku Klux Klan was one result of the U.S. Civil War and Northern Occupation. While the K.K.K. claimed to protect Southern values its insistence on White Supremacy betrayed the people’s tradition. In the old South insurrections of black slaves and poor whites joined forces and were an ongoing primary resistance to enslavement. This brought extreme control mechanisms to keep the groups apart. White Supremacy always serves the machinery of controls. The K.K.K. relied on lynching effected by mobs within a hierarchy of authority. By the 1960’s the murders became more clandestine with overt burning of crosses and gatherings as symbolic shows of assent. During the 1960’s the U.S. K.K.K. increasingly included FBI, Tobacco and Firearms, local law enforcement and other covert informants. These were implicated in the murders of civil rights workers and Blacks. The Klan’s effect on white communities through its code of silence, the fact that it denied its victims the chance to answer any accusations against them (familiar in current U.S. law on detentions and Canadian Security Certificates), and exclusion of non-white enterprises, provides an unspoken more polished interface with contemporary neo-conservatives in the U.S. and Canada. In Canada the subliminal strain of White Supremacy is rarely addressed directly, in a culture increasingly formed by intellectual management.

On the U.S. rolls of political prisoners the culture’s areas of intolerance remain constant. In this century so far Muslim suspects in a “war on terrorism” have been primary targets within a framework that has brutally suppressed Blacks and all dissidents, an ongoing oppression with repeating patterns of targeting, entrapment, or selective application of the law in crimes unrelated to the moral crime the dissident is addressing. Revolutionaries whose crimes are a result of being trapped into direct confrontations with police could be considered prisoners of war and granted nominal rights at least under Geneva Conventions.
Increasingly at risk are community leaders, “Occupy” activists, veterans, and any who subscribe to an internationally recognized code of human rights. Application of international laws, including the Geneva Conventions, is discouraged in the U.S., if permitted at all. Because application threatens the fabric of U.S. law, government targets are ‘processed’ with whatever grey area of crime can discredit them most effectively.

On Feb. 3rd U.S. Federal Court in Syracuse forfeited a chance to correct its injustice, and Dr. Rafil Dhafir was re-sentenced to his original term of 22 years in prison, with close to a million dollars restitution required. Dr. Dhafir had supplied Iraqi children with medicines and food in an attempt to save those he could. His actions affirmed Islamic religious law and Judeo-Christianity. His efforts were effectively stopped by prosecution and imprisonment. He was charged and convicted on 59 counts for breaking “Sanctions,” fraud, tax evasion, etc. The thorough vetting of the case by all U.S. agencies involved, left out of the equation a genocide of the Iraqi people.

Community leaders are taken out of community by charges intended to disgrace them, rather than by confronting the necessity of their moral stands. It’s such a customary practice that in Boston, the incarceration of Charles Turner passed unnoticed by national media. A Harvard graduate in the days when Harvard accepted token people of colour, Turner was unpretentious, easy going but very careful. Years later, as a community leader in Boston representing Blacks and the poor he was elected to the Boston City Council. An effective outspoken Councillor he was provably targeted for disgrace by an FBI operation, then charged with extortion for accepting a campaign contribution from an informant applying for a liquor license, and then not telling FBI agents ‘the truth.’ Without guile and loyal to his constituency, Turner tried to explain the framing in court. He’s serving a three year sentence in West Virginia and Boston is left with the message: if they can do that to Charles Turner they can to anyone.

Mumia Abu-Jamal as a journalist was known as a “voice of the voiceless” covering the dispossessed of Philadelphia. He was taken out of paid work by a murder charge. After a corrupt trial and years on death row international pressure, community outrage, the U.S. court system and Philadelphia’s D.A., managed to grant him a reprieve. No longer subject to the death penalty and freed from death row Abu-Jamal was transferred to Mahanoy State Correctional Institution’s “Restrictive housing unit,” ie. solitary confinement, with no access to the media. Finally on January 27th Prison Radio [access:<http://prisonradio.wordpress.com/>] could report his release into the general prison population.

Long-time political prisoner Dave Gilbert’s Love and Struggle: My Life in the SDS, The Weather Underground, and Beyond was published by PM Press, 2011 and is currently being launched at ‘alternative’ venues throughout North America. Gilbert grew out of Boston and New York student anti-war resistance in the Sixties, worked the Weather Underground during the Seventies, was arrested in 1981 with a unit of the Black Liberation Army. He’s serving a 75 year minimum sentence for involvement in the deaths of 2 police and a guard during a Brinks robbery to raise operating costs. His other published works include: AIDS Conspiracy?

Tracking Down the Real Genocide. Gilbert was one of a few North-eastern U.S. whites who could work with a Black American resistance that lacked the option of non-violence.

Marilyn Buck died August 3, 2010 in Brooklyn New York, shortly after her release on July 15, 2010, from federal prison. She was serving eighty years of sentences (accused of supplying arms to the Black Liberation Army, of complicity in Assata Shakur’s escape from prison, of bombings in the U.S. and internationally). With most of her co-defendants released (Susan Rosenberg received pardon from President Clinton), Bush’s Justice Department granted her an early release on presumptive parole. On Jan. 21, 2010 she wrote “…been battling since Oct. to be treated medically. Found out I have a sarcoma, just got out of hospit. post-surgery…” It was the last letter I received. She was transferred to a hospital prison, and dead less than seven months later. She was an American poet.
Lynne Stewart, the U.S. court appointed attorney for Islamic Sheikh Omar Abdel-Rahman, is over 71 and fighting cancer as well as diabetes in a U.S. prison. Her appeal challenging the length of her sentence goes to court February 29th in Manhattan: the government extended her prison time from 28 months to 10 years after she bravely joked about the initial sentence on the courthouse steps. Her conviction: communicating on behalf of her blind and imprisoned client. She never should have been sentenced to jail. Known through her life’s work as an uncompromising lawyer for the disadvantaged of varying political beliefs, her case represents a clear public attempt to intimidate attorneys representing fundamental human rights.

There are other political prisoners who were/are thinking of the people, and without self-interest. There are a lot of them. There will be more, of all ages. The paradox is that many are in no way “criminal” but simply the articulate and deeply caring people of their communities.

See original article and sources here

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ILPS ENDORSES AND SUPPORTS CONFERENCE FOR FREEDOM OF POLITICAL PRISONERS

By Prof. Jose Maria Sison
Chairperson
International League of Peoples' Struggle
19 October 2010

As chairperson of the International League of Peoples' Struggle (ILPS), I wish to express the endorsement and support of the ILPS for the International Conference on Solidarity, Defense and Struggle for Freedom of Political Prisoners to be held in Copenhagen, Denmark on 22-24 of October 2010.

I am personally moved by the nature and purpose of the conference because I was a victim of prolonged torture and was a political prisoner under the Marcos fascist dictatorship in the Philippines for many years, from 1977 to 1986. And once more I was arrested and put in solitary confinement in The Netherlands in 2007 on a false criminal charge cooked up by the US, Philippine and Dutch authorities after having me blacklisted as a terrorist by the Council of the European Union since 2002.

We in the ILPS endorse and support your conference in accordance with Concern No.3 pertaining to human rights in general and Concern No.15 of the ILPS, pertaining to the freedom, justice and indemnification political prisoners in particular. We are most interested in the freedom of those who fight for national and social liberation against imperialism, fascism and other forms of reaction.

We wish the utmost success for the conference workshops concerning the five themes:
1. the conditions of political prisoners all over the world; 2. administrative detention; 3. terror lists/blacklisting; 4. class, race and gender; and 5. tribunals. We are also pleased that the various conference participants can avail of the opportunity to create solidarity networks across borders and between movements and groups working for freedom and the defence for political prisoners all over the world.

We stand firmly in militant solidarity with the conference organizers and participants in the determination to work for the freedom of all political prisoners the world, to join forces and cooperate in achieving such goal and be part of the people's struggle against the inhumane conditions generated by the world capitalist system and the imperialist powers. ###

Invitation: We invite the conference organizers and participants to attend the Fourth International Assembly of the ILPS in Manila, Philippines on 7-9 July 2011 and present further the cause of fighting for the freedom of political prisoners.
The theme of the assembly of the International League of Peoples' Struggle is: “Build a bright future! Mobilize the People to Resist Exploitation and Oppression Amidst the Protracted Global Depression, State Terrorism and Wars of Aggression!”

For further details, please contact: ILPS General Secretariat, email: Ruth De Leon <ardiel2003@yahoo.co.uk>

APRIL 14, PALESTINIAN POLITICAL PRISONERS DAY
Mazin Qumsiyeh to jhennet, Human
Prisoners’ Day by Mazin Qumsiyeh

…Palm Sunday, we visited Jerusalem (even though I do not have a "permit" from the occupiers). This even commemorates the entering of Jesus, the Palestinian who spoke Aramaic (the precursor of Arabic), into Jerusalem; then under foreign occupation knowing that his liberty and his life were at stake. The acts of civil resistance by Jesus continue to inspire Palestinian Muslims and Christians. My colleague and dear friend Lubna Masarwa, an amazing activist, introduced me to an old women who has been selling used cloths on the side of the street and having to run away each time the occupying authorities show up. She is a strong women with big hands, piercing determined eyes, a wrinkled face that tells a thousand stories of suffering but also of persistence and resilience. She has no family here, all her children and grandchildren and other relatives are in the besieged Gaza strip. We met with the staff and employees of the Al-Quds community action center (see www.cac-alquds.org) and learned of the amazing work they do to help people on the ground. Also on Sunday in Ramallah we met with members of Al-Hiraq Al-Shababi (the youth movement), amazing and inspiring activists who had just done a demonstration in front of the Ofer prison on Prisoners day. We remembered and held vigils for prisoners and for murdered activists (including our heroes Juliano and Vittori). The people I chose to associate with are those flowers of Palestine, full of positive energy, willing to sacrifice, willing to believe that the future can only be better than this reality of colonialism, racism, oppression, incarceration, and murder. One of those is Faris Badr, a 19 year old who was captured when there was a peaceful demonstrations by families and friends of prisoners on prisoner day on Sunday. It was sad to see mothers and brothers and sisters tear-gassed and pushed back and attacked for wanting their loved ones freed. It is sadder yet to see one more youth added to the growing list of political prisoners. Read more:

END POLITICAL PRISONERS NEWSLETTER #1