

changeLinks

STOP THE WARS! PEACE, JUSTICE AND EQUALITY FOR ALL!

RESIST AUSTERITY, REPRESSION & WAR

More Information About These and Other Events in the Calendar; begins on p. 3

DISABLED VET CRIMINALIZED for distributing Change Links at VA Medical Center



Harry Tischler is a disabled veteran who distributes *Change Links* at the Veterans Administration health care center in Westwood, where he receives services, and did so for several years without incident.

That all changed in January. He has reported the harassment and intimidation he has been met with by VA staff and security in the April issue of *Change Links*, (still on-line at <http://change-links.org/the-events-at-the-west-los-angeles-va-on-february-27/>) and in a follow-up article which appeared on our website last month (<http://change-links.org/civil-liberties-denied-at-the-west-los-angeles-va/>). (In the interim, a *Change Links* crew member accompanied Harry to the VA on one occasion.)

Now, Harry reports, he has received a summons to face charges in federal court: “On May 16th I received a “United States Court - Notice To Appear” [telling me to be in court] on June 7, 2017 at the “Roybal Fed. Bldg./ Crthouse, Courtroom 341, 3rd Floor, 255 E. Temple Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012.”

Accompanying Harry, I saw a clinic coordinator order him to leave and confiscate copies of *Change-Links* he had left with people. I pointed out to her that copies of other non-governmental publications were widely available at the VA, including copies of *Pet Press* magazine on a rack in her clinic right along with VA health tips and paperwork. She replied, “I was only told to call the police about him.” This is clearly politically-motivated selective prosecution.

Staffers with *Change Links* have been trying to arrange legal representation for Harry to fight this violation of freedom of speech and of the press, as guaranteed under the 1st Amendment. If you are a lawyer, or know of one who can represent Harry Tischler in federal court June 7, to defend freedom of speech and the press, please contact *Change Links* ASAP, and we will put you in touch with Harry.

Email: changelinks2@gmail.com

TRUMP BUDGET SLASHES SAFETY NET Cuts Food Stamps, Medicaid, SSI



As *Change Links* went to press, Pres. DJ Trump released his full-year budget proposal for the next fiscal year. Like the partial revise of the current budget, it calls for cutting spending in many departments while increasing the military budget.

In particular, the new spending plan proposes cuts that will deny food stamps in the SNAP program to millions, while also reducing Medicaid, which had been expanded under the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare), and also projecting revisions and reductions in the Supplemental Security (SSI) program for people with disabilities. *More next month.*

IMPERIALISM & THE LOGIC OF MASS DESTRUCTION

by Carl Boggs [excerpts from: <http://www.counterpunch.org/2017/05/04/imperialism-and-the-logic-of-mass-destruction/>]

As it has through much of its war-obsessed history, the US is engaged in military conflict or threatening it across a broad terrain. In Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria, Washington’s been sending barrages of missiles and bombs, often hitting civilians and resources needed for their survival. Death tolls mount, the largest numbers lately in the battle for Mosul. Heavier casualties are visited on non-combatants in Yemen, thanks to US-backed Saudi savagery.

Trump, like Obama, the Bushes, and Clinton before him, is operating within a pattern of imperial war-making for which ‘rules of engagement’ matter little, if at all. There’s no deviation from the norm by Trump in this respect. Pentagon elites insist nothing’s changed in their methods of warfare. While the US accuses, threatens, and attacks others for their (real or imputed)

See “Imperialism,” p. 7

TRUMP IS THE SYMPTOM, NOT THE DISEASE

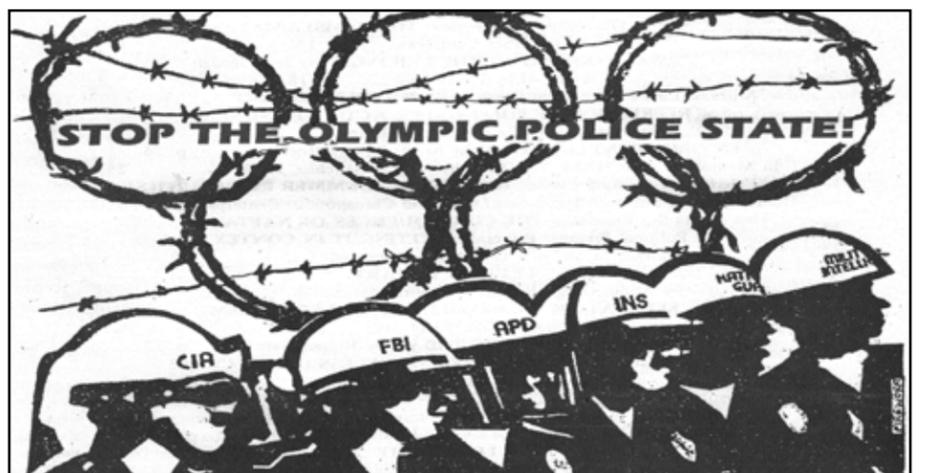
by Chris Hedges [excerpts from: <https://www.commondreams.org/views/2017/05/15/trump-symptom-not-disease>]

Forget the firing of Comey, the paralysis in Congress, or the press that covers our descent into tyranny as if it were a sports contest between corporate Republicans and corporate Democrats. The crisis we face is the result of a decades-long corporate coup that’s rendered citizens impotent, without authentic democratic institutions and allowed corporate and military power to become omnipotent. This has spawned a system of legalized bribery and empowered figures who master the arts of entertainment and artifice. Trump is the symptom, not the disease.

Our descent into despotism began with the pardon of Richard Nixon, whose impeachable crimes are now legal, and the extrajudicial assault, including targeted assassinations and imprisonment, carried out on dissidents and radicals, especially black radicals. It began with corporate-funded entities that took control of the press, the courts, the universities, scientific research and the two major political parties. It began with militarized police and the system of mass incarceration and the death penalty. It began with stripping our basic rights—privacy, due process, habeas corpus, fair elections and dissent. It began when big money was employed by political operatives to create negative political ads to deceive the public, turning political debate into burlesque. A narcissist and imbecile may be turning the electric shocks on and off, but the problem is the corporate state, and unless we dismantle that, we’re doomed.

See “Disease,” p. 7

NOlympics LA Launches



Brazil's MST Leader Joao Pedro Stedile:

We Need Direct Elections Now and an Emergency Plan for the People

By: Joana Tavares / Source: Brasil de Fato / May 18, 2017

Joao Pedro Stedile, leader of the Landless Rural Workers' Movement (MST) and of the People's Brazil Front, analyzes the Brazilian political scene in these excerpts.

Brasil de Fato: Why does the *Globo* network need to publish audios that incriminate Michel Temer? Why do they insist on indirect elections?

João Pedro Stédile: The *Globo* network became the main party of the Brazilian bourgeoisie. It protects the interests of capital, manipulates public opinion and coordinates with the ideological sectors of the bourgeoisie, which include the Judiciary Power, some prosecutors, and the press in general. They know Brazil and the world are going through a serious economic, social and environmental crisis, caused by capitalism. In Brazil, there's a political crisis, because the bourgeoisie needed to have hegemony in Congress and in the federal government to put the negative effects of the crisis on the shoulders of the working class. Therefore, the *Globo* network is an ideological author of the coup (**ED:** The removal of elected PT (Workers Party) president of Brazil).

Putting Temer in power after Dilma's impeachment was a mistake, since his gang is full of corrupt lumpen politicians and opportunists, who weren't concerned with the bourgeois project for the country—they merely cared about lining their own pockets. The "spoiled meat" operation was another faux pas that helped discredit the PMDB (Temer's party) since many of them were involved and ended up provoking a sector of the agro-exporting bourgeoisie. Now they need to create an alternative to Temer. It will be decided over the next few days, whether he resigns, is judged by the Supreme Electoral Court or if the impeachment requests submitted to Congress are passed. Over the next few days the successor will be chosen, and many factors will influence that. The outcome won't be the fruit of some Machiavellian plan but of the class struggle, and how that struggle plays out over the next days and weeks.

Q: How is the putschist sector reacting?

A: The sector that reached power through the coup is internally divided. That helps us, because in previous coups, like 1964, and during the 1994 government of Fernando Cardoso, the bourgeoisie was united, under a single command, a single project for the country and a strong rearguard in US capital. Now, they don't have a project for the country, they lost their US rearguard (they were allied with Clinton) and want to salvage only their own particular interest. José de Souza Martins, PSDB sociologist, said: "reforms in retirement and labor policies are measures that increase exploitation of workers, but they also go against the capitalist project for the country."

The putschists don't have a unified command. They're divided into the sector with economic power (including Finance Minister Meirelles, and the company that denounced Temer, JBS), the group of PMDB lumpens (Romero Jupé, Eliseu Padilha, Temer himself), who have power over the law but are beginning to crack. There's also an ideological group made up of *Globo* and the Judiciary Power, but there are internal contradictions among them. That's why they don't know whom to replace Temer with. Their ideal solution would be to take Lula out of the picture, make a transition government that the majority of the population accepts (like Minister Cármen Lúcia) until October 2018, and then try to win the elections.

But their division also affects the candidacies, since they can't manage to construct a candidate like Cardoso or Collor. They're testing public opinion, presenting João Doria (Mayor of Sao Paulo) or Luciano Hulk. But polls show they would deepen the political crisis.

Q: In this context, what can workers and people's organizations do?

A: We, at the Brazil People's Front, made up of over 80 people's movements and political organizations, are debating since last year that the best interest of the working class is in a packet of measures that complement each other. First of all, to take the putschists down and suspend every legislative measure they've taken against the people. Then, having a transition government that calls presidential elections in October 2017 and discussing an immediate political reform that guarantees the will of the people is respected, and voting for a new Congress. Another item is for the new government to convene an Exclusive Constituent Assembly to build a new "Emergency Plan for the People," which includes over 70 emergency measures that the transition government and the new government will have to implement.

Change-Links Monthly Poetry Corner

Regular curator Mark Lipman of Revolutionary Poets Brigade is on leave. Please send poetry submissions, along with articles, to <changelinks2@gmail.com> with "submission" in subject line. Thanks!

Tengo una hija en la mente

by Melissa Cardoza (C) 2016 Melissa Cardoza

Tengo una hija en la mente
y un duelo que me llena el vientre de nada
Perdí amigas
niños hombres que no conocí
Me quitaron los golpistas la vida que no había venido
y me dieron un tropel de mujeres indignadas
con ellas canto en silencio
conspiro en las miradas
por ellos resisto
al aliento de la palabra envenenada
al abismo de la guerra
que nos llama

I have a daughter on my mind
and a pain that fills my womb with emptiness
I lost women friends
men-children that I never got to know
The coup-sters took from me the life that hadn't come yet
and gave me a multitude of women, indignant
with those women I sing in silence
I conspire in our glances
for and by them I resist
against the breath of the poisoned word
against the abyss of war
that calls to us



Melissa Cardoza is a Honduran lesbian, feminist and activist in the ongoing resistance against the US backed coup against then Pres. Zelaya in 2009. She is the author of "13 Colores de la Resistencia Hondureña/13 Colors of the Honduran Resistance," from El BeiSMAN Press, 2016, ISBN-13 978-1539792055, edited by Vilma Hinkelammert and dedicated to the martyred environmentalist and resister Berta Cáceres Flores, from which the original Spanish poem is taken (new English translation for *Change Links*). Alicia Garza, co-founder of Black Lives Matter, calls the bilingual book "a must read for anyone who wants to learn about the many contours of the Honduran feminists fighting for self-determination and dignity. Cardoza is brilliant in storytelling, and ensures that feminisms are three dimensional and span multiple experiences - trans, Black, elderly, and more."

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IN MEMORY OF



Co-founder & Editor John Johnson,
b. July 4, 1944 - d. April 13, 2014

Editorial Staff: Terrie Brady, Donna Buell, Bella De Soto, Uncle Don B. Fanning, Greg Foisie, Charles Fredricks, Sheila Goldner, Cindy Gordon, Jeff Hirsch, Michael Novick, Dean Ruby, Ron Spriestersbach, David Troy & others.

Deadline for articles and ads is the 15th,
deadline for calendar items is the 20th
of the month before publication.

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Change-Links is a non-profit under the fiscal sponsorship of the Alliance for Global Justice (AFGJ). Donations of \$250 and above are tax deductible. Just send a check to our P.O. Box made out to: AFGJ/Change-Links.

This is an independent collective activity. We welcome your involvement to keep the paper and website alive. Views expressed in Change-Links are those of the authors, and not necessarily those of Change-Links, its volunteers, or sponsors. Letters of comment are welcome!

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

If you can help collect items for the monthly calendar, do print layout or handle a wordpress website, or do copy editing and proof-reading -- Change Links needs you! Please email changelinks2@gmail.com to volunteer and learn more. We hope you will step up if you value the paper!

Our next meeting is Wed., June 14, at 7:30 PM, at the Peace Center, to plan the July 2017 issue. The last weekend each month, we gather at the Peace Center on Thursday at 7:30 PM for a potluck, a mailing and bundle-distribution party and a discussion about the following month's issue. The next such meeting will take place Thurs., June 29, to distribute the July issue, assuming we can produce it, and discuss the August issue.

We have poetry in each issue; send submissions to: changelink2@gmail.com until further notice.

Submit articles, preferably in .doc format, to: changelinks2@gmail.com.

Calendar items to same address, (Change-Links calendar item in subject line); include title of event, day, date, time, location, fee if any, a short description, contact information for sponsors, and a small jpg graphic if you have one. Please spell out all words and capitalize street names, etc.

A \$5 donation for calendar items is appreciated.

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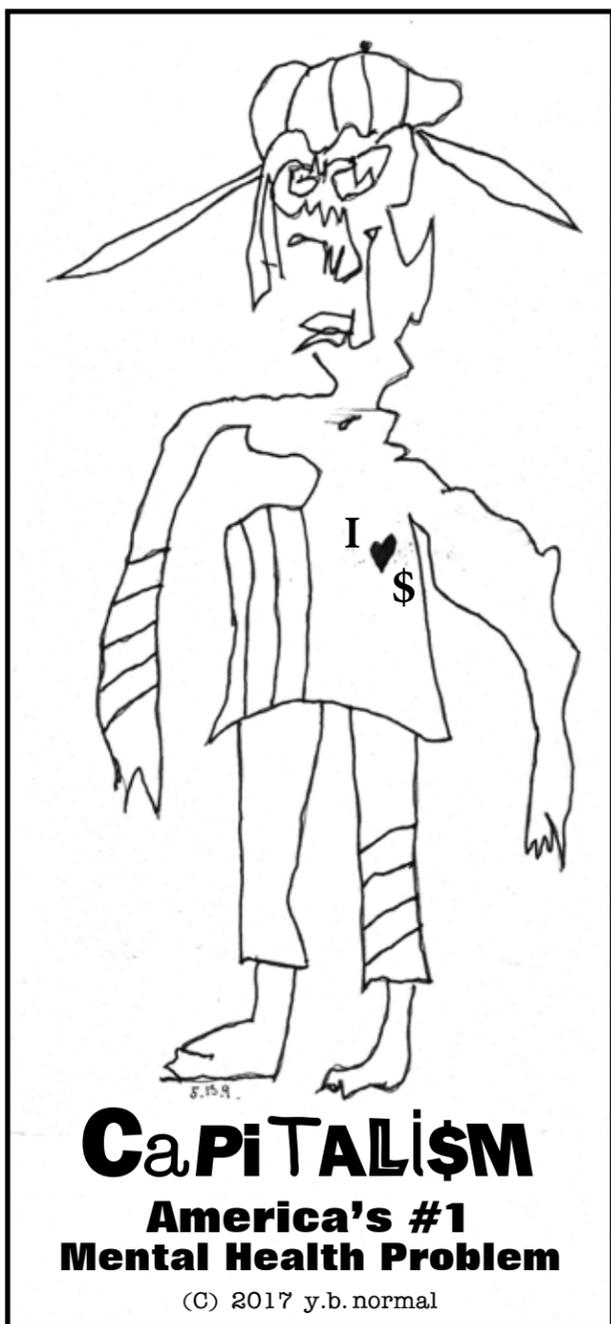
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IMPERIALISM & Mass Destruction ...continued from p. 1



DISEASE

...Continued from p. 1

“What’s necessary for the state is the illusion of normality, of regularity,” political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal told me last week by phone from Frackville, Pa. “... In Rome, what the emperors needed was bread and circuses. [Here], what we need is ‘Housewives of Atlanta.’ We need sports. The moral stories of good cops and evil people. Because you have that there’s no critical thinking during this period. You have emotion [only]. Someone who’s demonized, I can do anything [to him or her]. I can do anything. That’s how the state works, by demonizing people and putting them in places where they’re virtually invisible.”

“Here’s the reality,” he went on. “[The US] has never come to grips with what scholars call the Original Sin, because it never stopped happening. This country brags about being founded on freedom. It was founded on slavery. It was founded on holocaust. It was founded on genocide. After slavery ended, after the Constitution was rewritten and amended, we have the Reconstruction amendments, the 13th, 14th and 15th amendments. But what did the South do? They ignored it for a century.”

“It isn’t til the ’60s that you see this rich emergence of people fighting for rights that were enshrined in the Constitution a century before [between 1865 and 1870],” he said. “That’s because every state in the South and many states in the North were allowed to make exceptions to the Constitution when it came to black people. We learned that’s not just a Southern reality. You can’t talk about the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty [Act of 1996] unless you have the same mindset that makes the Constitution an exceptional document.”

Trump, an acute embarrassment to the corporate state and the organs of internal security, may be removed from the presidency, but such a palace coup would only further consolidate the power of the deep state and intensify internal measures of repression. Millions of people, including the undocumented, those who have felony convictions, those locked in cages and poor people of color, have already been stripped of their rights, and some have been indiscriminately murdered by police. Their reality of daily state terror will spread and become normal with or without Trump, unless this process of corporate pillage is halted.

Abu-Jamal’s experience embodies the endemic racism of the court system that railroads young black men and women into prison. The FBI placed him under surveillance when he was 15 years old. His crime was to be a dissident. He was followed, hauled in for questioning at random and threatened.

transgressions, its own apparatus of mass destruction continues with few constraints.

In recent weeks US bombs in Syria alone have killed several hundred people, mainly civilians. Daily raids in Iraq, targeting ISIS in Mosul, have accounted for more than 3000 civilian deaths, according to AirWars sources. There’s nothing “indiscriminate” about this: it’s been systematic. Moreover, the US has surpassed any other nation in production, deployment, and use of WMDs; its military doctrines embrace their virtues.

Weapons of Mass Destruction come in four types: nuclear, biological, chemical, and conventional (saturation bombing). We could add economic sanctions to this list, of the sort the US (thru the UN) imposed on Iraq during the 90s that killed 100s of 1000s of civilians. As the US resorted to sanctions in the postwar era – targeting Iran, Cuba, Yugoslavia, North Korea, and Russia as well as Iraq – the civilian death toll (well past a million) has far exceeded that from nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons combined.

Conventional warfare has brought the greatest destruction, for combatants and civilians, and remains the most imposing threat today. The WMD threat arrives in the form of saturation, carpet, or scorched-earth bombing, introduced by the UK and US during World War II and refined across decades.

The US is the only nation to have manufactured, stored, deployed, and used all five types of WMD. In densely-populated centers like Mosul and Raqqa – where 100s of drone strikes are carried out – efforts to distinguish between combatants and civilians are virtually impossible; large numbers of civilian dead and wounded are inevitable. That’s never deterred US decision-makers at the Pentagon or in the field, whatever “rules” are set forth in the Universal Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) or international statutes.

From World War II to Korea, Indochina, Iraq, Yugoslavia, and beyond, this carnage is alternately blamed on mistakes, “collateral damage,” intelligence failures, enemy use of “human shields” – all while boasting of the latest “precision weaponry.” The US military rarely conducts genuine investigations into the devastation it produces, and for good reason: it doesn’t want to face its flagrant war crimes.

Rep. Ted Lieu recently sent a letter to Defense Secretary James Mattis seeking clarification of US global behavior: “The substantial increases in civilian deaths caused by US military force in Syria and Iraq brings into question whether the Trump administration is violating the Laws of War.” Trump is indeed violating such laws – specifically the 1949 Geneva Protocol prohibiting wanton attacks on civilians – but, as noted, he’s simply following entrenched US practices. For more than a century US imperialism has been fueled by a combustible mixture of national exceptionalism, militarism, racism, and pursuit of global supremacy. Civilian inhabitants and their necessary supports have never stood in the way of these powerful forces, even where it has meant resort to WMD. Demonized Asian populations have been mercilessly targeted.

As Washington looks to reassert economic, political, and military leverage in the Asia-Pacific region – the so-called “Asian Pivot” to contain China – escalating US threats should be taken seriously. Whether conventional or nuclear, the Pentagon is poised to strike first against North Korea. For years, the US has done everything short of all-out war to intimidate and subvert the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea: military exercises, economic sanctions, cyber-attacks, troop deployments, constant threats. There’s talk of “preemptive war,” including efforts to “decapitate” the regime. A missile-defense system (THAAD) is being installed across South Korea.

Sec. of State Tillerson said that for talks to occur North Korea would first have to “exhibit good faith” by jettisoning its nuclear program – a complete non-starter. Given such arrogance, can mounting confrontation be avoided? With all that’s at stake rational leadership might be expected to retreat from such a nightmarish scenario and consider a more peaceful *modus vivendi*. For the US, a peaceful option is exactly what’s “off the table.” From the standpoint of Washington, imperial pursuits are “rational,” and imperial pursuits generally lead to military pursuits.

Koreans already know far more than they would prefer about the horrors of mass destruction emanating from the US. A war of annihilation, carried out by the US to secure battlefield victory in the face of strong Chinese and North Korean forces, left a death toll on the peninsula with estimates reaching as high as five million, nearly 80 percent civilian. When the US Army was forced to retreat in 1950, Gen. Douglas MacArthur ordered his air force to destroy “every means of communication, every installation, factory, city, town, and village” in Korea.

The US did launch biological warfare in Korea, a criminal project it has tried to keep secret. Evidence uncovered by the Koreans and Chinese revealed a US campaign to disseminate a wide variety of deadly biological agents, hoping to create epidemics, panic, and social breakdown in the north. In late 1950 large outbreaks of plague, cholera, smallpox, and encephalitis were reported in Pyongyang and several provinces.

Gen. Matthew Ridgway, US 8th Army commander, said in 1951: “The real issues are whether the power of Western civilization, as God has permitted it to flower in our own beloved lands, shall defy and defeat Communism . . . [and] whether we are able to survive with God’s hand to guide and lead us, or to perish in the dead existence of a Godless world.” Stephen Endicott and Edward Hagerman, in *The US and Biological Warfare*, write: “As it had been in World War II, strategic bombing was extended to the mass destruction of civilian populations, and as in World War II the reservations that the U.S. had about saturation bombing of Europeans in that earlier war were not extended to Asians.”

Gen. Curtis LeMay, architect of the firebombing attacks on Japanese cities in World War II, later conceded: “If we had lost the war we would all have been prosecuted as war criminals.” Allied prosecutors at the Nuremberg and Tokyo tribunals moved to exclude that possibility, so aerial mass murder was exempted from wartime culpability. The US refuses to participate in the International Criminal Court (ICC), fearing prosecution of its own government and military personnel for war crimes.

The 60s and 70s saw a war on black radicals, which the MOVE 9,” Ramona Africa told me in an interview last included FBI assassinations of leaders such as Fred week. “What people really need to understand is they came Hampton. This war against radicals, President Nixon’s so- to kill, not to arrest,” she said. “They could have arrested at called battle for “law and order,” put the police, the FBI any time. Those running this country, this entire worldwide and other organs of internal security beyond the reach of system, have never cared about black people complaining the law. This power has only expanded since. about their neighbors. Obviously, it was something other

By 1977, Abu-Jamal, distressed by the feuding that tore than that. Which was our unrelenting fight for our family apart the Panthers, had developed a close relationship with members who are still in prison. They shot over 10,000 members of the MOVE organization. MOVE members rounds of bullets in on us within 90 minutes. They dropped lived communally, ate natural foods and denounced a bomb.” The bomb ignited a fire that burned down a city established black leaders as puppets of the white, capitalist block containing 61 homes.

The Phila. PD besieged MOVE in late 1977. “A conscious decision was made to not fight the fire. On Aug. 7, 1978, a gun battle erupted. A police officer was When we realized our home was on fire, we immediately killed. Delbert Africa, a MOVE member, was savagely tried to get our children, our animals, and ourselves out. The beaten in front of television cameras. Nine MOVE instant we were visible to cops we were met with a barrage members would be charged with murder. The trial was a of police gunfire aimed at us so that we couldn’t escape farce. Two of the nine, Merle and Phil Africa, have died that fire. After several attempts, I got out with one of our children, a little boy named Birdie. We were immediately in prison.

The police and the FBI were determined to root what snatched into custody. It was a little later that I found out remained of MOVE out of the city with enough brutality nobody else [in the MOVE group] survived.” to discourage any other black radicals. Abu-Jamal was “The people who killed my family were never charged,” convicted of the 1981 murder of Daniel Faulkner, a white she said. “Meanwhile, my nine MOVE sisters and brothers police officer. His trial was a sham. It included tainted are in prison with the accusation of murder.”

evidence, suppressed defense witnesses, prosecution Our failure to defend those who are demonized and witnesses that contradicted their earlier testimony, and a persecuted leaves us all demonized and persecuted. Our series of unconstitutional rulings by a judge out to convict failure to demand justice for everyone leaves us all without the defendant. Terri Maurer-Carter, the stenographer at the justice. Our failure to halt the crushing of popular movements trial, later signed an affidavit stating that during the trial that stand unequivocally with the oppressed leaves us all she overheard the judge, Albert Sabo, say of Abu-Jamal, oppressed. Our failure to protect our democracy leaves us “I’m gonna help ’em fry the nigger.” Sabo sent 31 people without a democracy. The persecution of Mumia Abu-Jamal, to death row, more than any other judge in Pennsylvania. MOVE members and other radicals is not ancient history.

“On May 12, Sunday, Mother’s Day 1985, our home It’s the genesis of the present. It spawned the corporate was surrounded by 100s of cops who came out there coup and the machinery of state terror. We will pay for our because of our fight for our MOVE sisters and brothers, complacency.

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