

June 11: The History of a Day of Anarchist Prisoner Solidarity

Including a Chronology of Events 2004–2017

CrimethInc.

June 7, 2017

Contents

2006	7
2007	8
2009	8
2011	8
2012	9
2013	11
2014	12
2015	13
2016	14
2017	15

For 13 years, anarchists and environmentalists have observed June 11 as a day of action to mobilize around our imprisoned comrades. Over that time, the pace of revolt has quickened, with so many uprisings, clashes, and anarchist attacks that it is difficult to count all of them—not to mention all the indictments, raids, mass arrests, grand juries, and deaths. In this constantly shifting terrain, it's easy to lose track of the origins of our traditions. Our goal here is to trace a short history of June 11 as a small contribution to the global rhythm of revolt. At the end, we've included a timeline illustrating how many people around the world have contributed to the momentum around June 11. We hope to rescue these actions from oblivion, just as we work throughout each year to ensure that our imprisoned comrades will not be forgotten.

June 11 has been observed as a day of solidarity since 2004, when 27 cities hosted events to support Jeff "Free" Luers, an eco-anarchist in his fourth year of imprisonment for the burning of three SUVs in Eugene, Oregon. While a rich history of solidarity practices already existed in North America, those were focused on the Black Liberation and anti-imperialist movements¹ and the hundreds of prisoners still held captive for decades. The capture of Luers and his co-defendant Craig "Critter" Marshall forced the radical environmental and anarchist movements to confront the question of repression in new ways after Luers was sentenced to 22 years and 8 months for an action that didn't hurt anyone. Despite FBI harassment of public educational events, the Break the Chains collective and Luers's support crew organized the solidarity day to mark the third anniversary of his arrest, inviting Ramona Africa to speak in Eugene as a step toward bridging the gap between different generations fighting repression. Ramona is a member of the MOVE family, a group of predominantly Black revolutionaries, who has been supporting her imprisoned comrades for 39 years.

Luers's dignified position throughout his imprisonment and the ongoing fight to release him were vital reference points over the following years as repression intensified into what became known as the Green Scare. The Green Scare extended far beyond the series of cases directed against Earth Liberation Front groups. When Operation Backfire struck in December 2005, leading to the capture of many of the participants in a prolific ELF cell in the Pacific Northwest, it was also intended to sever the connections between eco-saboteurs and mainstream environmental groups, with the FBI aiming to punish many of the latter for their tacit support of radical action. Meanwhile, other FBI agents set out to entrap young people like Eric McDavid, who served many years in prison before his sentence was overturned.

The Green Scare also included many of the classic petty gestures of repression: police harassment and surveillance, blacklists preventing employment, frivolous lawsuits and interventions in civil cases. For example, the harassment directed over many years against Marius Mason and his then-husband Frank Ambrose left the two of them nearly unemployable and surrounded by a trench of fear. Years later, some of Frank's former friends suggested that this was the aspect of the Green Scare that wore him down—particularly as others in the Midwest chose to distance themselves from those under the most intense pressure rather than take a stand against it. Ambrose ultimately chose to cooperate with the authorities, informing against Marius and many others.

¹ We are not proposing an artificial division between these movements and anarchism. Many participants in these movements were influenced by or identified as anarchists, ranging from the George Jackson Brigade to Kuwasi Balagoon.

As more and more anarchists and eco-saboteurs entered prison, most of them to serve shorter sentences, Luers remained on the support lists. There was the danger that his case would slowly be forgotten amid new raids and disasters, some of which also struck members of his support crew. In response, supporters began to think about the particular needs of long-term prisoners.

Through years of struggle and legal filings, Luers won a shortening of his sentence, leading to his release in December 2009. By this time, however, Marius Mason had been imprisoned for 18 months, having received a nearly identical sentence of 22 years after pleading guilty to two major arsons (against a GMO research facility and logging equipment) and acknowledging responsibility for more than a dozen other clandestine actions. Eric McDavid had already spent nearly half a decade behind bars.

In 2008, the long period of defeats and shrinkage that had followed the Green Scare gave way to a new wave of revolt. Yet these new strikes, movements, and insurrections could have caused supporters to forget about Mason and McDavid as new indictments and prison sentences were doled out. There was no guarantee that the thousands of new radicals who emerged out of movements like Occupy Wall Street would be able to recognize Mason, McDavid, or other long-term prisoners as comrades deserving of solidarity.

There was also the problem of slowly diminishing support crews. Only a few years into their imprisonments, solidarity efforts for Mason and McDavid were stagnating by 2011. In response, members of Mason's and McDavid's support crews and social circles came together in early 2011 to discuss coordination, hoping to launch a shared solidarity project.

To summarize some of the goals expressed in this meeting:

1) Address the specific problems of long-term prisoners by discussing how to approach prisoner support in new and more sustainable ways.

This included considering the most exhausting elements of support, and the intention to develop fresh strategies for fundraising, spreading information about imprisoned anarchists, and other basic tasks. *To Libertarians*, an open letter written in the late 1970s to support autonomous prisoners in the Spanish state, was an important reference point:

“The first point is to make the problem widely known; then, to keep it from being forgotten, by demonstrating, always more powerfully, a growing impatience. The means will multiply as the movement takes its course. In support of the prisoners, a single small factory in Spain might go out on strike for a day, and this would be a model for the rest of the country. You will only have to make immediately known their exemplary attitude, and half the battle is already won. Right away, one shouldn't be able to start a University course, a theatrical performance, or a scientific conference without someone directly intervening or letting loose a rain of tracts that pose the questions, *What has become of our comrades?* and, *On what day will they finally be released?* No one should be able to walk down any street in Spain without seeing the prisoners' names written on the walls. And the songs that are sung about them must be heard by all.”

2) Take slow steps towards de-individualizing prisoner support in North America.

As more comrades entered prison, the model of “one support crew for one prisoner” seemed unrealistic, doomed to result in eventual isolation. This model also seemed to contribute to the depoliticization of cases, as it tended to emphasize particular aspects of individual situations

rather than developing an analysis of shared context. Bringing together solidarity for Mason and McDavid was a small step out of this trap, allowing for more communication and coordination across collectives and distances. It was also a decision not simply to react to the state's indictments, which acknowledged no relationship between the defendants' cases, but to assert a new understanding of how we could struggle around both.

3) Take up the proposal of revolutionary solidarity more ambitiously, going beyond the particular solidarity action.

Daniela Carmignani's description of this principle was vital:

“Solidarity lies in action. Action that sinks its roots in one's own project that is carried on coherently and proudly too, especially in times when it might be dangerous even to express one's ideas publicly. A project that expresses solidarity with joy in the game of life that above all makes us free ourselves, destroys alienation, exploitation, mental poverty, opening up infinite spaces devoted to experimentation and the continual activity of one's mind in a project aimed at realizing itself in insurrection.

“A project which is not specifically linked to the repression that has struck our comrades but which continues to evolve and make social tension grow, to the point of making it explode so strongly that the prison walls fall down by themselves.

“A project which is a point of reference and stimulus for the imprisoned comrades, who in turn are point of reference for it. Revolutionary solidarity is the secret that destroys all walls, expressing love and rage at the same time as one's own insurrection in the struggle against Capital and the State.”

In other words, solidarity is not simply reactive, nor just a matter of directly supporting specific imprisoned comrades. It is a positive project to spread and deepen the revolutionary struggle outside the prisons in conjunction with those who are in prison, even when repression is strong enough to prevent communication.

Linking imprisoned comrades to a broader subversive project felt particularly apt in the case of long-term prisoners for two reasons. First, new connections seem vital to combating their drift into isolation over time: solidarity appears as “active remembering.” Second, for comrades facing decades in prison with few remaining legal appeals, fighting for revolution and the literal destruction of the prisons is perhaps the most pragmatic path towards their release. Rather than conceiving of action and repression as separate moments, revolutionary solidarity suggests it is possible to treat repression as an opportunity to spread and deepen the broader struggle against the whole system. In turn, when anarchists spend time inside prison, it doesn't mean we are alone or that we have to wait for release to contribute to the struggle. Rather, even by simply maintaining a dignified, non-cooperative position relative to investigations, we demonstrate the possibility of defying the state.

4) Related to the above points, to develop an expansive approach to prisoner support, in which a constellation of groups, assemblies, and cells could contribute to solidarity with imprisoned anarchists using many different forms of struggle.

This meant finding ways to escape the model of isolated crews or committees of dedicated solidarity “specialists.” It meant developing an experimental approach to action.

On the basis of these aspirations, the meeting proposed a reinvigorated June 11 day of solidarity, deriving encouragement from Luers's example and the innovations his support crew had developed over his nearly decade-long imprisonment. In recent years, Luers has distanced himself from the proposal for anarchist solidarity, but he remains an important point of reference. His public statement in 2011 was profoundly inspiring:

“This June 11th marks the first international day of Solidarity with Eric McDavid, Marie Mason,² and all our long-term anarchist political prisoners. We are here to honor them, support them, remind them that they are not forgotten, and most importantly to demand their release.

“June 11th is a reminder to us that though we spend our days outside of a prison many of our friends and allies spend theirs behind bars having sacrificed what little freedom they had to fight for something greater than themselves. We have a responsibility to them and to ourselves to struggle and fight until all are free.”

As the June 11 statement in 2015 asserted, the struggle “assumes new forms” over time. The renewed solidarity day is now in its sixth year. Eric won his release in early 2015 through the legal research and efforts of his close supporters as well his own determination, against the backdrop of the solidarity and tension developed each June 11. At the same time, the solidarity extended by hundreds of actions and benefits around the world worked to organically transform June 11 into an international project that encompasses support for imprisoned comrades around the world. As a simple step towards maintaining this expansive approach, the assembly that has come together around the day produces a new call each year, aiming to suggest new connections or directions, with reference to ongoing revolts and transformations in anarchist struggle. Some prisoners choose to add to these calls with their own words, detailing experiences and ideas that add to the debate—see, for example, Marius Mason's June 2015 statement.

Autonomous initiatives also shape the development of the June 11 project. For example, the Fight Toxic Prisons convergence, now in its second year, draws connections between environmental organizing against pollution and ongoing struggles by prisoners and others against confinement.

The contributions of countless comrades around the world, imprisoned or not, have taken many forms—including written analyses and messages, benefit events, info-nights, demonstrations, actions, attacks, and bake sales. These do not simply accumulate quantitatively, but are also contributions to the evolution of anarchist revolt in the broadest sense, towards both sustaining our comrades and overturning the world that imprisons them. It's easy to make a contribution on a variety of levels, whether via a benefit show or an action, but it's also always possible to approach the challenge of solidarity in a new way. This creativity is essential to building new paths towards the liberation of anarchist prisoners—and everyone else.

“At the same time, June 11th is a day of war. It's a day of rebellion because law and order may rule but they do not reign.

² We did not edit any of the communiqués released before Marius came out as trans. They utilized his legal name, which he is currently fighting to change.

“The existence of anarchist prisoners reminds us of the existence of the anarchist war. A war that sometimes burns slowly and sometimes blinds the heavens with its fires.”

-Christos Tsakalos, anarchist prisoner in Greece

The first year that June 11 was observed as a day of solidarity saw 27 events and actions. While all were themed around Luers’s case, organizers maintained a strong focus on environmental action and remembering previous generations struck by repression. In Eugene, Oregon, 200 people gathered for presentations by former political prisoners Ramona Africa of MOVE and Claude Marks of San Francisco’s Freedom Archives Project, followed by a musical performance by the indigenous (Diné) band Blackfire. The event also included a showing of the Australian documentary film “Green with a Vengeance” about radical environmentalism in the Northwest and an interview with Jeff Luers, plus presentations by members of Break the Chains and Luers’s father, John Luers.

Overseas, in addition to a host of events across the UK, a group of anarchists in Moscow wrote “FREE JEFF LUERS!” in huge letters across the wall of the US Embassy, one of the most tightly guarded buildings in Russia, without suffering any arrests.

On June 19, 2004, Free released a defiant statement, including this observation:

“Each day it becomes more clear what we are losing. Worse, it becomes unbearably recognizable how much we have already lost. We are killing our planets’ ability to sustain human life. We are allowing freedom to be subverted by tyranny. Freedom is a birthright. Freedom cannot be granted. It cannot be given. It cannot be locked away!

“But, freedom can be given up. It can stop raging inside of you. It can be easier to be a slave. Compliance with this State, its corporations and their treaties is one of choice. Are there consequences to not complying? Yes, and they are severe. But acquiescence is a validation of their rule. Failure to resist legitimizes everything from taking civil liberties away to destroying the planet.

2006

By the third year that June 11 was observed, the number of towns hosting events had grown to 43, including four in Finland alone. In Eugene, Oregon, John Luers spoke alongside Derrick Jensen and the bands Ye Olde Howl & Smash and Meet Me in the Frozen Torso Heap. Olympia, Washington organized a roving street party. Many of the events drew connections between the SHAC 7 case, the Green Scare cases, and other examples of state repression.

2007

Luers won his resentencing decision this year, but solidarity events maintained pressure on his jailers. CrimethInc. released a children's book, *The Secret World of Terijian*, as a benefit for Luers and other eco-anarchist prisoners.

2009

Jeff Luers's release date was set for December of 2009!

2011

This was the first year that June 11 was revived as a day of solidarity with Marius Mason, Eric McDavid, and other long-term anarchist prisoners. The original call emphasized the continuity with the previous push to support Jeffrey Luers and to continue ecological struggles, while another strategy text raised specific concerns about long-term support and the importance of the linking this support with the ongoing fight against repression. Luers and the Sacramento June 11th crew also made appeals. From the latter:

“What we ask from each of you is a commitment. A commitment to the work that you do. To the people that you love. To the movements of resistance. A commitment that is unwavering and timeless and indestructible. It is no small task. But it is the only thing that will see us through to the end. And to a new beginning...”

Benefits took place in 30 cities, from Detroit to Tel Aviv. Solidarity actions included:

- A demonstration and leafleting outside a KFC in Paris in solidarity with Amelia Nicol, an anarchist arrested in Denver, and with Green Scare prisoners in the US.
- The arson of two ATMs in Argentina in solidarity with Walter Bond, Eric McDavid, Marius Mason, Chilean anarchists charged in the Bombs Case, prisoners in struggle in Argentina, and Billy, Silvia, and Costa (the three of whom had been arrested for the attempted destruction of an IBM nanotechnology research facility in Switzerland), and in memory of Mauricio Morales, who died in Chile in an attack on a police training school. In a separate incident, the sabotage of a vivisection school in Buenos Aires was claimed in solidarity with Marius Mason, Eric McDavid, Silvia, Costa, Billy, and Marco Camenisch.
- Waterloo, Ontario: “In the spirit of June Eleventh and inspired by recent actions against development in the Southern Ontario region, anarchists paid a visit to a condo development site on Belmont Avenue in Waterloo. The presentation building was painted in class war graffiti, all of the windows broken, and a nearby construction machine was covered in paint stripper and had its windows broken.”
- In the Eastern Townships of Quebec, “in solidarity with Marie Mason and Eric McDavid, the fighting Native people and with all the anarchist prisoners of the Western imperialist wars, here and abroad, who stood up for their love of life and freedom,” the Earth Liberation Front/Informal Anarchist Federation painted anti-gentrification graffiti.
- Early on Friday, June 17, individuals observing June 11 as a week of action employed graffiti, vandalism, and superglue to disable various banks and businesses.

– In Guelph, early on June 11, individuals broke the windows of a local subdivision developer in solidarity with long-term anarchist prisoners.

– In Finland, a railway line was sabotaged in solidarity with long-term anarchist prisoners, with Luciano Pitronello in Chile, and against the repression of anarchists and Roma migrants in Helsinki.

– There were four actions in the Pacific Northwest. Logging equipment was sabotaged in Olympia, as was a green capitalist developer. In Tacoma, another developer was attacked along with a bank. In Seattle, the destruction of an SUV was dedicated to Green Scare prisoners and those on the run, and to William Rodgers (aka Avalon), who took his own life rather than cooperate.

– In Russia, the following actions were claimed:

June 1: We torched electrical measuring and control devices in two underground service booths of a water communication system that brings hot water to a military intelligence site in Butovskiy forest. To add to the fact that this infrastructure serves military personnel, more than 800 trees were cut during earthworks for this water supply line to even appear in the forest. To hamper service brigades further, we also spiked the road they use for maintaining the system.

June 5: We torched an excavator at a highway construction site west of Moscow (Volokolamsk direction).

June 6 and 10: We expropriated some construction equipment and destroyed geologists' measurement posts in the glades of Butovskiy forest.

June 11: We broke into yet another underground service booth and set fire to all the digital and analog devices and tools inside. We dedicate these attacks to Marie Mason and Eric McDavid. We don't have the honor of personal acquaintance with them, but their dedication to protecting our planet and the conscious choices they've made not only to act, but also to stand their ground in the wake of state repressions, inspire us and help us to continue on our path.

2012

This year saw a deepening analysis of long-term imprisonment as the Green Scare receded further into the past, as well as the Never Alone tour, organized to spread solidarity with Marius and Eric across a wide swath of the US. From the 2012 call:

“The heyday of the ELF in the United States is over. We're moving into a dynamic period of growing social antagonism, and need to make sure that prisoners such as Marie and Eric aren't left behind or forgotten. Solidarity for them should not be relegated to prisoner support specialists or those who knew them personally—their absence is of importance to all of us, and support for them should be generalized. The struggle to free Marie, Eric, and others is the struggle against the society that not only creates and maintains prisons, but also commits the environmental devastation that Marie and Eric raged against.”

In Portland, Chicago and Washington, DC, banners were dropped over interstate highways. In Chile, the Informal Anarchist Federation reported bomb threats called in to the US, Bolivian, Turkish, Indonesian and Uruguayan embassies in solidarity with anarchists facing repression in each country.

– Milwaukee, Wisconsin: “On the night of June 11 we took fire extinguisher paint to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Chase bank, damaging the buildings, windows, and security cameras. The DNR has been an enemy of environmentalists and anarchists since its inception. Their deregulations, hiring contractors, and destroying the wild infuriate us to no end. We hope our actions help Marie Mason and Eric McDavid get a restful night’s sleep in prison. We demand that Marie writes at least one children’s book every year, and that Eric coaches a children’s football league upon his release. Chase bank was attacked in solidarity with friends in St. Louis. Fuck a cop! This Begins War. A war on the DNR, The State, and Capital. A war on misery. Shout outs to our friends in prison, friends in St. Louis, and friends in Ohio. Don’t regret your desire for freedom, or the way you are enlivened by rage and despair. Love, Some Animals in Human Attire.”

– St. Louis: “Last night four ATMs were disabled. Money should be locked away and forgotten, not people.”

And in another report from St. Louis:

“Last night, more than 50 parking meters in a bar district and an up-and-coming artist district of St. Louis were made inoperable with glue, paint and hammers. We intended to attack 41 meters—one for each of the 19 years Eric McDavid will be stolen from us and one for each of the 22 years Marie Mason will be stolen from us. But we got excited and forgot to stop.

“We did this to communicate through prison walls, so all our imprisoned comrades know we love them and so it is obvious we will not sit idly while they are locked away. We did this because the struggle in defense of the Earth that our comrades were deeply engaged is inextricably linked to the struggle against gentrification and the struggle against state control. Solidarity with all prisoners and all those who choose to resist. Greetings to the unknown STL rebels who attacked the ATMs the night before. Keep it up.”

– Benefit concerts turned into street demonstrations in Grand Rapids and Seattle, where a green developer’s office was also sabotaged.

– A report from a demonstration in Bloomington read, in part: “Solidarity statements periodically read over the PA were loud enough to be heard through all of downtown. These statements expressed solidarity with Eric and Marie, gave information and history about June 11th, discussed locally relevant cases such as the Tinley Park 5, and read excerpts from *Down*, a new book about long-term prison rebels in Indiana state prisons. A statement was also read expressing solidarity with prisoners of the Greek state who are being held and charged as terrorists, just as Eric and Marie are. We also acted in solidarity with comrades in Turkey from Yeryüzüne Özgürlük Derneği (Freedom to Earth Association), British prison rebel John Bowden, as well as Andrzej Mazurek, the last remaining imprisoned comrade from the Greek riots of December 2008, who will appear before the court tomorrow to appeal an 11-year sentence, as well as many other comrades who are imprisoned across the US and the globe.

“Here in Bloomington, ensuring lasting support for Marie feels especially important—Marie was a member of the radical environmental and anarchist communities here for many years, and her absence is palpable here as in many other places. I-69, a superhighway project she fought against, is currently in the first stages of construction, after a 20+ year battle against its existence. Marie’s continuing struggle inside prison informs and strengthens the struggles we carry on outside, and vice versa—we stand adverse to the daily and systemic violence of capitalism, which creates both the environmental devastation that Marie fought against and the prison walls that hold her captive. The state has taken her away from us for now, but they will never erase her from our hearts and minds.”

In a separate incident in Bloomington, individuals sabotaged four meter-reader trucks belonging to Duke Energy, and released a communiqué dedicating the action to Mason, McDavid, and Marco Camenisch.

– Olympia, Washington: “On the night of June 11th in the sleepy town of Olympia, WA, we laid waste to the Washington State Loggers’ Association building, breaking out all 24 of their windows and leaving the painted message ‘YOU ARE NEVER SAFE. GO LOG IN HELL (A).’”

2013

This year was themed around “Connections, Resistance, Celebration.” Connection was understood as the strengthening of connections of solidarity, but also as the function of actions in “concretely demonstrating new connections in the web of power (particularly by acting against surprising targets).” Benefit events continued in 2013, taking place in Sacramento, rural Vermont, Hamburg, and elsewhere. Many collectives began including support for the Cleveland 4 in their events, as it became clear they would spend many years in prison thanks to an agent provocateur.

In addition, Sacramento Prisoner Support organized an online exhibition fundraiser for Mason and McDavid, the Never Alone Art Show, featuring art created by Mason, McDavid, and fourteen other artists.

– In Olympia, a police substation was sabotaged and, separately, a Mormon Church: “In solidarity with Steve, Kerry, and other grand jury resisters on the run, and in celebration of the annual day of solidarity with long-term anarchist prisoners, a big front door at a Mormon church in Olympia had its glass busted out and lock glued on June 10. The Mormon Church, and churches in general, are institutions of the systems of patriarchy, white supremacy, homophobia and hierarchy in general. We are against those who would tell us that we must submit to authority, whether that be “god,” the father, the state, or some religious leader.”

– A microphone demonstration was organized in Pittsburgh. It was dispersed by police, but a benefit show followed. In Bloomington, and in Prague and Caslav in Czech Republic, benefit shows were accompanied by banner drops. In Portland, a fur shop was sabotaged in solidarity with anarchist prisoners.

– In the Penokee Mountains of Wisconsin, land defenders invaded a mining construction site as part of a longer struggle. One of them, Krow, was arrested and charged with felonies. From Krow’s statement:

“Those who fight against the destruction of the water, land, plants, and human and non-human animals of the Penokee Hills and Bad River Watershed are not ‘terrorists.’ The only terrorists are those who plot to blow up the hills with ammonium nitrate and use the power of the state’s

policing apparatus to repress and send fear and division through the communities that oppose them.

“Earth is our home and we must act to defend it. Regardless of the diversity of tactics that will be used, we need to show solidarity with all who strive to stop the Penokee mine, and focus on just that, stopping the Penokee mine.”

2014

The announcement of June 11, 2014 emphasized developing new connections between long-term anarchist prisoners and ongoing earth and animal liberation movements:

“Our struggles and movements are often mired by a lack of memory, a lack of understanding and connecting with the past as a way to inform our actions in the present. This is both a product of the techno-alienation of our age as well as a consequence of tactical repression by state forces. The state, for the time being, has the ability to kidnap our comrades and bury them alive, to force them to languish in cold steel and concrete for decades on end. They’re ripped from our communities, from our lives. And in their place exists a painful void.

“The state, for its part, is banking on the veracity of the old adage “time heals all wounds”; it is hoping that this void will shrink and that we will “forget.” If held in captivity long enough, so thinks the state, the actions of our courageous comrades will fade into the oblivion of history and we on the outside will be left without their constructive and loving presence in our struggles. We must fight against this repressive tendency; we must never forget. [...]

“Marie and Eric, being the focus of our June 11th organizing efforts, are both dedicated vegans imprisoned for acting in direct opposition to the destruction of the earth. In an effort to “actively remember” them and to engage with them in the present by connecting them to a continuance of their fight, we’re encouraging people to tie their June 11th events into actively ongoing eco- and animal liberation struggles.”

In particular, the June 11 assembly proposed that participants in ongoing rural occupations and eco-defense camps integrate memory of Marius and Eric into actions they would be carrying out anyway, and into time around the fires that are kept burning at such spaces.

Once again, in 2014, June 11 saw a wide range of events and actions.

– In Berlin, a solidarity event was organized featuring a call-in by Greek anarchist prisoner Tasos Theofilou.

– In Detroit, the Cass Café hung some of Marius Mason’s artwork, while a benefit took place in Cincinnati. Both are cities where Marius had lived and organized.

– In Bloomington, the AT&T office was covered in paint bombs to attract attention to AT&T’s collaboration with the NSA. The action was claimed in solidarity with long-term anarchist prisoners including Jeremy Hammond, and also with Chelsea Manning, who does not identify as an anarchist.

– In Durham, North Carolina, sixty people participated in a militant noise demo outside the jail. Banners were hung in Volos, Larisa, Crete, Athens, Patras, Ksanthi, and Kavala in Greece, and in Olympia and Chicago in the US. In Florida, a communiqué announced the spiking of trees in the Briger Forest to thwart logging. Seven cellphone towers were burned in Brighton, UK.

2015

The theme of 2015 was transition, celebrating McDavid's release from prison and Mason's announcement that he was coming out as transgender:

“This year Marius Mason publicly shared his new name and use of male pronouns that better reflect his masculine gender identity. To quote his lawyer, Moira Meltzer-Cohen, who is assisting with the legal aspects of his transition, Marius is someone ‘whose courage and integrity are made even more salient by the fact that his own liberation and autonomy have long been severely circumscribed.’ In the face of a world that systematically subjects trans people to violence, isolation and abuse, we hope that everyone shows their support of trans liberation by supporting Marius and the many imprisoned trans folks. This struggle should extend beyond mere fundraising. Trans prisoners are struggling not only for the material necessities of existence, but are also struggling against systems of domination which will stop at nothing to prevent them from simply being who they are. Our solidarity needs to be as creative and varied as the state's tactics are cruel and oppressive.

“On January 8, 2015, of this year, Eric McDavid was released from prison after nine years of incarceration. Eric returned home to his friends and family after a federal court granted his habeus corpus petition, stating that the FBI withheld evidence during the trial phase of his case. Because of this, Eric was able to plead guilty to a lesser charge which carried a five year maximum sentence—four years less than the time he had already served in federal prison. Eric's incredible determination and the awe-inspiring support from his family, friends and comrades have not only contributed to his emotional and physical well-being while behind bars but also to his eventual release. His release from prison after 9 years is a monumental change. Eric is now faced with building a new life after almost a decade of incarceration. This is a new phase of struggle for him, and we are committed to continuing our solidarity with him post-release.”

The proposal for a January 22 day in solidarity with trans prisoners was an exciting development after this call. It is now in its third year.

The benefit events and actions in 2015 reflected these transitions, while establishing new links with other anarchist prisoners and prison rebels.

In Atlanta, a noise demo went to the jail to support prisoners on hunger strike. A benefit drag show took place in Tel Aviv. Banners were hung in West Palm Beach, Florida; Malmo, Sweden; Chicago, US; Cheltenham, UK; and Chania, Greece.

Several banners were placed in central areas of Athens, Greece ahead of the anarchist gathering to be held on Thursday evening, June 11, at Voutie Park in the Athenian neighbourhood

Ano Petralona. Slogans in different languages referenced the struggles against the construction of the TAV Lyon-Turin high-speed rail project in the Susa Valley and the village of Chiomonte and against the installation of the MUOS military telecommunications system on Sicily; in defense of the Hambach Forest in Germany, threatened by devastation caused by lignite mining; and in solidarity with long-term eco-anarchist prisoners Marius Mason and Marco Camenisch, whose request for conditional release had just been rejected once again by the Swiss authorities. [Fortunately, Camenisch has just been released this year.]

- Graffiti appeared on the wall of an abandoned quarry and swimming hole in Bloomington, as well as in Melbourne, Australia and Athens, Greece.

- Microphone demonstrations took place in Denver and in Bloomington, during which participants read a statement by anarchist prisoner Sean Swain).

- Krow, who as of this writing is once again imprisoned for actions at Standing Rock, released a solidarity statement from jail in Wisconsin, where she was serving a sentence for an action on June 11, 2013.

- At an information night in Tucson, a comrade from Mariposas sin Fronteras spoke about her experience as a transwoman incarcerated in a male immigrant detention facility.

2016

Last year's call responded to a proposal contained in *Avalanche* magazine for an international discussion and development of struggle against maximum security and control units:

“For June 11th, 2015, we emphasized transition in the struggle and in the lives of the prisoners we support. This year we're focusing on a different kind of transition: the restructuring of the prison system and thus doubling down on opposition to Maximum Security, isolation, and Communications Management Units. High-security facilities are not new: for example, Communications Management Units isolated Daniel McGowan and Andy Stepanian for years. But now we are at a new juncture: there is both a fresh focus on the part of the authorities reorganizing prisons to maximize repression against long-term and combative prisoners, while simultaneously cutting costs. In response there has been a wave of resistance and revolt—in the streets and in the prisons. As this wave spreads organically, we feel impelled to contribute in support of our imprisoned friends and comrades.”

Not only did this proposal resonate with the June 11 project due to the central role of control units in caging anarchist and eco-prisoners in the US, it also offered new paths forward, with a perspective beyond support for specific prisoners (no matter how “active”), towards building a broader momentum against these units. And clearly, the question of solitary and control units is tied directly to the repression of the same prisoner struggles that might one day destroy the prisons. As Jennifer Gann stated in her solidarity statement that year:

“I became politicized after participating in the 1991 Folsom Prison hunger strike, and in 1992 began a long-term struggle against prison authorities and torture. This resulted in multiple prison terms of 16 years and 25 years to life for assaulting a guard, an associate warden, and Sacramento County prosecutor. I spent 11 years in Pelican Bay SHU solitary confinement (1994–2004).”

Along with Jennifer's statement, several more imprisoned comrades contributed their own texts, fleshing out the theme.

As is the case every year, there were a variety of inspiring benefit and informational events, from Dunedin, Aotearoa to Minneapolis and Bloomington, where a years-long tradition continued of hiking through the woods that Marius knew when he lived there. Alongside these, there were a number of solidarity actions:

- Following the Fight Toxic Prisons convergence in Washington, DC, more than 50 people blockaded an intersection in front of the Bureau of Prisons.

- In Thessaloniki, the Italian and Swiss consulates were attacked with paint in solidarity with long-term anarchist prisoners in each country. In a separate incident, the American consulate was briefly occupied, with fliers thrown and banners hung in solidarity with Marius Mason, Jeremy Hammond, Justin Solondz, Michael Kimble, Rebecca Rubin, Sean Swain, Bill Dunne, and Eric King. Two days later, the Chilean consulate was attacked with paint in solidarity with long-term anarchist prisoners and in memory of Mauricio Morales.

- Banners also went up in Athens and Volos in Greece, in Elgin in the US, and in Melbourne in Australia. Separately, in Athens, the Informal Anarchist Federation burned a van belonging to the French insurance company AXA, releasing a communiqué dedicating the action to “the rebellious minorities who have exceeded the limits of peaceful protest, legality, and morality dictated by domination, and find themselves in permanent confrontation with Power.”

- In Bloomington, the probation office was attacked and its windows broken: “The police, courts, and prisons constitute a web of control that seeks to crush human beings, forcing conformity to a social order of hierarchy and exploitation. While this manifests itself as police murders and the brutalization of prisoners, more and more it takes the role of diffuse repression via systems of home detention, work release, parole, and probation. In each of these systems of self-policing, the ability of collective resistance shrinks to none, isolating those rebels who will not submit to these forms of soft imprisonment.

“We can no longer accept the role of judicial power in our lives. We do not care if this takes the form of police cars on our streets, prison walls separating us from our friends, ankle monitors, or daily check ins. It all must go. We attack the system that floods into our lives as a reminder that its sprawl should not be normalized. As forms of repression grow beyond the prison walls it should be met with consistent attacks.

“Each act of revolt opens up space for joy in our lives, space to breathe freely. Against the asphyxiation of prison society, we choose rebellion.”

2017

In relation to last year's call and to reflections on repression against prisoners' movements following the prison strike of September 9, 2016, the emphasis this year is on communicating across the walls of prison and alienation. The prison authorities constantly work to limit communication or to channel it into harmless and symbolic forms—the same way other authorities do more broadly. This is why, for example, the June 11 solidarity day is not coordinated with prisoners, since they face heavy repression for organizing in this way.

As in previous years, though, some prisoners take initiative to make their own autonomous contributions, as Michael Kimble and Sean Swain already have. As Michael says from inside an Alabama prison:

“Through communication and acts of solidarity I have been able to save the lives of queer and non-queer prisoners whose life was threatened because of debts, and yes, drugs for the sick, with funds sent to me by comrades on more than one occasion. Without communication none of this would have been possible.”

As another experiment with extending communication, this year includes the release of interviews with ex-prisoners, those who’ve faced repression, and members of various support crews. An additional autonomous contribution is the release of music for the day. Building on earlier efforts by Sprank and on the important role music has played for Marius Mason and other prisoners, a benefit compilation called Sing Me Home was released earlier this week, along with benefit songs by Decide Today.

The first major action has already occurred in Forth Worth, Texas, with a noise demo marching to the Carswell federal prison where Marius is held. Occurring after the second Fight Toxic Prisons convergence, the demonstration also kicked off a campaign to shut down the admin unit (essentially a maximum security/communications management unit) where Marius was held until recently. Many other prisoners remain inside the hellish admin unit, however, and it continues to pose a threat to everyone held in federal women’s prisons. This initiative is an inspiring follow-up to the proposal for struggle against control units in 2016.

The Anarchist Library (Mirror)
Anti-Copyright



CrimethInc.

June 11: The History of a Day of Anarchist Prisoner Solidarity
Including a Chronology of Events 2004–2017
June 7, 2017

Retrieved on 23rd April 2021 from crimethinc.com

usa.anarchistlibraries.net