

# Page One Newsletter

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## Chelsea Manning Remanded

*Former political prisoner re-jailed after refusing to testify in front of a grand jury*

On March 8, 2019, International Woman's Day here on Turtle Island, former political prisoner, whistleblower, and human rights advocate Chelsea Manning was taken into custody after refusing to testify in front of a grand jury in Virginia. She will remain in custody until she testifies or until the grand jury terminates.

Manning released a statement, written below, detailing her reasons for resisting this grand jury.

*"I will not comply with this, or any other grand jury. Imprisoning me for my refusal to answer questions only subjects me to additional punishment for my repeatedly-stated ethical objections to the grand jury system. The grand jury's questions pertained to disclosures from nine years ago, and took place six years after an in-depth computer forensics case, in which I testified for almost a full day about these events. I stand by my previous public testimony. I will not participate in a secret process that I morally object to, particularly one that has been historically used to entrap and persecute activists for protected political speech.*

This remanding of Manning is concerning for many reasons. Firstly, as she detailed in her statement above, the purpose of this subpoena was seemingly futile since the questions being asked were ones she offered extensive testimony on in the past. Secondly, she has been free just shy of two years; she walked out of prison a free woman May 17, 2017 after former president Barack Obama commuted her sentence, much to the delight and relief of supporters who feared for her mental health and wellbeing after multiple attempts to take her own life while incarcerated in a men's military prison. Since Trump has assumed office he has made it clear that he disagreed with her release, identifying Manning as a "traitor" and calling for her re-imprisonment.

Lastly, under Trump's direction, the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) altered policies last spring that were

doing the very minimum to protect transgender prisoners in BOP custody. A "biological sex" rule is now enforced, meaning that all prisoners must be designated based on their "biological sex" rather than the gender by which they identify. The former rules, instated by Obama, had allowed prisoners to choose which cell blocks and bathrooms they felt most comfortable in based on their gender identity after going through the institutionally required process. According to these amendments, BOP now dictates housing for prisoners based on their "biological sex" and only honors their true gender identity on a "case-by-case" basis. Alexandria Detention Center, where Manning is being held, is not a BOP managed facility so these rules do not apply, luckily. However, it is indicative of the potential harassment and mistreatment she will be subjected to while behind bars. All of these things signify that Manning is being targeted for unclear reasons, potentially driven by the tone set by Trump when he first called for her re-imprisonment in January of 2017.

## Grand juries in the movement

Grand juries are one of the most insidious tools the state has. Originally established as an "initial screening" so to speak to decide if there is reason to prosecute, they have become a key tool in the state's efforts to disband, intimidate, and harass revolutionary movements. They are closed to the press, the public, and the person on trial is not even allowed legal representation. An individual may sustain a large number of grand jury subpoenas (such as Craig Rosebrough, one of the former ELF spokesmen). Or, grand juries may target vulnerable members of the movement who do not have the option to risk jail time.

If you or someone you know gets subpoenaed for a grand jury, don't keep it to yourself. Call a lawyer. Tell your friends, tell the press. Don't keep it quiet- there is a lot on the line.

If you are approached by the authorities DO NOT say anything. Even answering the simplest questions can subject you to further harassment. Get their information and get in contact with a lawyer. ■

## Prison letters and international solidarity

On Feb 5 1935—less than two years before he would end his own life—former political prisoner Alexander Berkman wrote a long letter to old friend and comrade Tom Mooney. At the time Mooney was serving a life sentence for his alleged role in an anti-war action 18 years prior at the "Preparedness Day" march in San Francisco in July 1916. The march was a nationalist propaganda exercise aimed at drumming up support for entering the Great War. A bomb went off during the march, and anti-militarist radicals were targeted in the ensuing repression. Five people were arrested, but only labor militants Tom Mooney and Warren Billings were convicted, despite little to no evidence (and subsequent proof that they had not participated in the action). Billings received a life sentence in October 1916 and Mooney was sentenced to death in February 1917.

The anarchist and radical labor community around San Francisco and abroad rallied around their convicted comrades, supporting them through their trials and working on their behalf after the convictions. Berkman especially took on the support of the men, which became a major focus of his radical work, alongside anti-draft activism and editing *The Blast* and co-editing Emma Goldman's *Mother Earth*.

February 1917—the month that Mooney was sentenced—also saw the outbreak of the Russian Revolution, which deposed the Tsar and his government in a populist uprising. Prisons were opened, communities took direct control of workplaces and barracks, and things seemed to portend a great shift towards social equity and freedom. Radicals around the world were given great hope by these events, and a great many Russian Jewish emigres and others ventured back to help build the Revolution.

When Berkman learned that among these returning radicals close comrades would be traveling to revolutionary Russia, he drafted statements on behalf of Mooney and Billings to be sent to anarchist contacts in Kiev, who distributed them statements to comrades in Moscow and Petrograd. The Petrograd protests in particular were huge, and activated the revolutionary sailors and soldiers of nearby Kronstadt (later to gain attention as heroes of the October revolution, and later as left-wing

foes and eventual victims of Bolshevik centralization). In addition to holding mass demonstrations, the Kronstadters went so far as to physically threaten Ambassador Francis to get his attention, demanding a stay of Mooney's impending execution. Francis alerted President Wilson as to the seriousness of the demands, which helped compel Wilson to officially ask for Mooney's death sentence be commuted, just 6 days before he was due to be hanged, lest his execution or continued time on death row stir up further trouble with the "unpredictable Russians."

Thus the international organizing efforts of a handful of exiled political prisoners helped galvanize a radical community abroad into direct and tangible support for a political prisoner across the world. This story points in all directions to increasingly interesting stories worth learning for those interested in radical history, or how we came to be where we are now. A few books I'd suggest are *The Mooney Trial*, *Nowhere At Home*, and *the Russian Tragedy*.

Almost two decades later, still in prison, Mooney asked Berkman to recount his role in supporting himself and Billings the months and years following their arrest and conviction. Interestingly, Mooney seemed not to have known much of what happened on his and Billings' behalf. What Berkman reveals in the following letter is an interesting example not only of international solidarity, but also of creative militant organizing, the importance of working with *and outside* existing organizations, and is also a fascinating diagram of intersections of critical moments in radical history. Here's a couple paragraphs (out of 4 or so pages):

"...Then the other chapters in this drama: the eventful trip to New York to secure defense counsel not prejudiced for or against those arrested by the San Francisco atmosphere and labor antagonisms, to secure such impartial and *able* counsel without having a cent to offer them for their expenses and services. To interest the labor organizations of New York in the case, of which *not a word* had till then been heard in the East. The struggle in New York with some socialist and "pure and simple" labor elements who were opposed to getting mixed up with "a local fight" in San Francisco. Then a trip through the country, talks to hundreds of labor unions, big and small, who were either not interested or positively antagonistic, and yet who were gradually induced to give not only moral but also financial support. Well, my dear Tom, familiar as you are with the red tape, the methods and attitudes of unions, you know what a Herculean job that was.

<continued on Page 3>

## SAME OLD STORY

FAMILY, FRIENDS, AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS EAGERLY AWAITED AN ANNOUNCEMENT ON MARCH 2<sup>ND</sup>, 2019 AS TO WHETHER THE TWO SACRAMENTO COPS WHO SHOT STEPHON CLARK IN THE BACK 20 TIMES WHILE IN HIS GRANDMOTHER'S BACKYARD AFTER ALLEGEDLY "MISTAKING HIS CELL PHONE FOR A GUN" WOULD BE INDICTED. MUCH TO THE SURPRISE OF NO ONE, THEY WERE FOUND TO HAVE "ACTED LAWFULLY UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES" AND WERE NOT INDICTED. THIS IS THE 34<sup>TH</sup> TIME THAT SACRAMENTO DA ANNE MARIE SCHUBERT HAS ESTABLISHED THAT THE OFFICERS ACTED LEGALLY IN A POLICE SHOOTING.

THIS ASININE AND INSULTING ASSESSMENT OF THE MURDER OF YET ANOTHER BLACK PERSON IN THIS "COUNTRY" INSPIRED MULTIPLE PROTESTS THROUGHOUT SACRAMENTO, INCLUDING STUDENT WALK OUTS, DEMONSTRATIONS AT THE CITY COUNCIL, A DIE-IN AT UC DAVIS, A PROTEST IN ONE OF THE MOST AFFLUENT NEIGHBORHOOD OF THE CITY, RESULTING IN THE ARREST OF 84 INDIVIDUALS, AND AN ONGOING OCCUPATION OF POLICE STATION. POWER TO THE PEOPLE! ■



"Then the word of getting the word to the Russian proletariat about happenings in San Francisco, the monster meetings in Kronstadt and Petrograd in the case of "Muni," and how the matter reached Wilson through Francis, then U.S. ambassador in Russia, who was visited by a determined delegation of Kronstadt sailors and soldiers. Incidentally, their interpreter [Louise Berger] on the occasion was a close friend and comrade of ours...who had returned to her native land soon after I arrived from New York."

This is of course only one example of international solidarity with political prisoners (and by necessary extension the movements they come from). A more recent and similarly dramatic example was the refusal by militant Longshore workers of ILWU Local 10 (Oakland/SF) refused to load South African band ship the *Nedkelly* to protest the Apartheid regime and the ongoing imprisonment of ANC leader Nelson Mandela, then still locked up on Robbin Island. Once free, then President Mandela spoke of how this action helped galvanize the international anti-apartheid movement and steer it in a materially effective and eventually victorious direction. ■

## Prison Letters

*Below is a poem by Diana Block*

Last time I walked these streets,  
I could have picked up the phone  
and called any one of you –  
whether I did or not,  
I could have  
without knowing  
if I was on your phone list,  
without worrying when  
the fifteen minute phone limit  
would click your voices shut.  
I could have sat with you  
in a San Francisco, New York, or Chicago  
coffee house and planned  
freedom for all political prisoners  
and I wouldn't have been talking  
about you in the third person...

- Poem to the sisters inside FCI Dublin,  
December 1995

## CALLS FOR SUPPORT

**Chelsea Manning:** Write Chelsea!

Chelsea Elizabeth Manning #A0181426  
William G. Truesdale Adult Detention Center  
2001 Mill Rd., Alexandria VA 22314

\*Letters must be on plain white or lined paper written in blue or black ink. DO NOT send cards, postcards, or packages. DO NOT use anything from an arts and crafts corner (ie glue, paint, stickers, glitter, etc...)

**Jalil Muntaqim:** Urge Governor Cuomo to grant Jalil's application to Commute the Sentence to Time Served. You must refer to Jalil as: Anthony Bottom, 77A4283, Sullivan Correctional Facility, Fallsburg NY 12733-0116.

Call: (518) 474-8390; Tweet: @NYGovCuomo  
Write: The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo  
Governor of the State of New York  
Executive Chamber  
State Capital Building  
Albany, NY 12224  
<freejalil.com for more info>

**Leonard Peltier:** On March 4<sup>th</sup> Leonard was notified his request to be transferred to be closer to his family was "unceremoniously denied by the United States Bureau of Prisons." (via NYC Jericho). The International Leonard Peltier Defense Committee appreciates the outpouring of support and asks for folx to continue showing up for Leonard as they plan to appeal the decision. Donate here:

<https://www.whoisleonardpeltier.info/donate-now/>

**Veronza Bowers:** Veronza, a former member of the Black Panther Party, has been incarcerated for over 44 years and endured multiple health problems recently. He has beaten lymphatic cancer (!) and also had a hip replaced. He is raising some modest funds to help ensure his health continues to be stable.

From Veronza: "Sooo, again, imagine THIS ... if you dare: You've been in continuous federal custody for 44-plus years, 14 of them beyond the time required by law for you to do on your sentence. Now you've been told you have cancer!!!"

Donate here:

[www.gofundme.com/support-veronza-bowers-jr](http://www.gofundme.com/support-veronza-bowers-jr)

## Book Watch

Solitary: Unbroken by four decades in solitary confinement. My story of transformation and hope by Albert Woodfox

*Solitary* is the autobiography and story of survival of Albert Woodfox, former Black Panther and one of the Angola 3. Albert spent four decades in solitary confinement in Louisiana State Penitentiary (also known as Angola Prison) and on February 19, 2016 was released. Read an excerpt from the book below:

*On my release, on 19 February 2016, my brother Michael took me home and I lived with him and his wife and son in their house for almost a year. I got medical care that I needed. In my mind, heart, soul, and spirit I always felt free, so my attitudes and thoughts didn't change much after I was released. But to be in my physical body in the physical world again was like being newly born. I had to learn to use my hands in new ways – for seat belts, for cellphones, to close doors behind me, to push buttons in an elevator, to drive. I had to relearn how to walk down stairs, how to walk without leg irons, how to sit without being shackled.*

*It took about a year for my body to relax from the positions I had gotten used to holding while being restrained. I allowed myself to eat when I was hungry. Gradually, over two years, I let go of the grip I held against feeling pleasure, and of the unconscious fear that I would lose everything I loved. ■*



Page One Collective focuses on spreading the word/s of and about political prisoners past and present. Our name comes from the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) justification for rejecting a letter sent to a U.S. held political prisoner:

"Page one calls for solidarity"

Write to us: [pageonecollective@protonmail.com](mailto:pageonecollective@protonmail.com)

Twitter: @page1collective