May Day Reportbacks: Northwest and Worldwide

May Day, an international day of celebration for the working class, took place on May 1. The holiday has its roots in 19th century labor struggles in the United States, when hundreds of thousands engaged in a general strike to demand an eight-hour workday in 1886. The day is meaningful to anarchists because of the Haymarket incident that year, when a bomb exploded at a labor rally in Chicago and police opened fire on the crowd. Seven police were killed, mostly by friendly fire, and four workers were killed. Eight anarchists were accused, although there was no substantial evidence tying them to the bombing. In a highly controversial trial, they were found guilty of the bombing and seven were sentenced to hang. The sentences of two were commuted. Anarchist Louis Lingg killed himself with a blasting cap in jail. Four anarchists were hanged on November 11, 1887.

The largest mass demonstrations in U.S. history took place on May Day in 2006, as immigrants nationwide took to the streets to protest their repression by President George W. Bush, Homeland Security and Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or ICE, repression that has changed in form but intensified under Barack Obama, the president who has deported more people than any other before him. While May Day participation, until recently, has been in decline in the United States, it is officially celebrated worldwide.

Portland’s May Day involved immigrant and labor groups, as well as anarchists marching around downtown.

Worldwide, however, May Day celebrations took many different forms, with mass demonstrations by immigrants demanding their rights in the U.S., and workers clashing with police in countries all over the globe. Here’s a brief rundown of May Day celebrations around the world.

Bangladesh: Tens of thousands of workers took to the streets to protest a garment factory collapse last month which has now claimed more than 500 lives. Bangladeshi labor produces clothing for major Western retailers like Sears and Wal-Mart. A garment factory fire that killed 112 people last year in Dhaka, underscoring the dangerous working conditions inside factories there, yet there has been no reform. On Wednesday’s demonstration, workers called for the killing of the factory’s owner.

Cuba: Hundreds of thousands took to the streets nationwide in celebration of their country’s revolution, which ousted U.S.-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista in 1959. Cuba also joined Venezuela in marking the passing of Venezuela’s socialist president Hugo Chavez.

Greece: Workers marked May Day by staging another general strike. Greek workers brought transit to a halt in the country, which is suffering from severe austerity measures demanded by the European Union, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

Turkey: The celebration of May Day is banned. In defiance of the government, tens of thousands of people clashed with police to gather in a main square in Istanbul. Police used tear gas and water cannons on protesters. They responded with stones and Molotov cocktails.

Also, militant students in Chile clashed with the police, constructing barricades, throwing Molotov cocktails and stones. This was mirrored in other Latin American countries, such as Colombia and Argentina. Hundreds of thousands of people marched in austerity-ravaged Spain, as well as Germany. Workers also demonstrated in Cambodia, the Philippines, and Taiwan.

Last, and certainly not least, after a year of federal repression coming on the heels of last year’s May Day demonstrations in Seattle, people in that city took to the streets, destroying property and throwing stones and fireworks at police. 18 people were arrested and a handful of police were injured. FBI agents and U.S. Marshals had fanned out across the Northwest the week previous, showing up at schools, homes and workplaces in a clear attempt to dissuade people from showing up. It didn’t work.
Climate, Coal and Confrontation
by Paul Messersmith-Glavin

In a previous essay (Capital and Climate Catastrophe, November, 2012), I outlined how capitalism is responsible for the current climate crisis and how it is not capable of solving it. Here I talk about the local effects of climate change, the effort to export coal through the Pacific Northwest, and about bringing an anti-capitalist perspective to organizing against climate catastrophe.

More Rain, But Less Water

Over the last century, the average annual temperature has increased 1.5 degrees Fahrenheit, with increases in some areas up to 4 degrees. Changes in forest cover, stream flows, and snowpack are already occurring in our region and will continue. The average annual temperature is expected to increase up to 10 degrees by the time today’s infants enter old age. The winters here are likely to get wetter and the summers drier. Insultingly, people living in the Pacific Northwest are being asked to help further facilitate these devastating changes to our environment by allowing coal trains to export coal to Asia to accelerate global warming.

Much of the region’s water supply is stored in snowpack in the mountains. Snowpack melts in the late spring and summer, running into streams and rivers throughout the year, providing drinking water, a healthy environment for fish, and water for agriculture, and driving energy production through dams. Higher winter temperatures will cause more precipitation to fall as rain, rather than snow. The decreased snowpack, estimated to decline by 40% in only the next 30 years, would increase the incidence of drought in increasingly drier, hotter summers. Increased rain (rather than snow) at higher elevations in the winter would also increase the probability of winter flooding. Overall we’ll experience less availability of drinkable water.

Decreasing water availability would strain existing social relations, as people compete to use dwindling supplies for agricultural irrigation, hydropower, municipal drinking water, industrial uses, and the protection of endangered and threatened animal species. Seventy percent of electric power in the Northwest is supplied by hydropower. At the same time that rising temperatures will increase the demands for air conditioning and refrigeration, decreased summer water supplies will limit hydroelectricity. Salmon, already threatened, will become increasingly vulnerable, with at least a third of their habitat destroyed by century’s end.

Additionally, the impact on the region’s forests will be immense. We can expect increased damage due to proliferating insect attacks from the mountain pine beetle and others, slowed tree growth, and a bloom of forest fires.

This will all be exacerbated by the increased population demands, as people from regions even worse off come to the Pacific Northwest. In the next fifty years, the Portland metro area could grow to as many as 4 - 6 million, from the current level of just under a million. Increasing numbers of ‘climate refugees’ in the region will likely lead to more authoritarian police enforcement. Police play a role of ensuring race and class divisions, often through brutality and murder. This will likely increase with more desperate people.

On the coasts, ocean acidification accompanying climate change is already impacting oyster and other sea life populations and will continue to affect all marine life, as coastal erosion and sea levels increase.

North Portland is most vulnerable to flooding, as the Columbia River floods natural areas such as the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge, the airport, and potentially up to two miles of North Portland in the decades and centuries to come.

As much as climate change will affect the ecological integrity of our region, it will continue to be much more devastating to people living in parts of the world not responsible for producing greenhouse gases. The largely white, European people of the so-called global North dominate and exploit the people of the South. It is primarily poor people of color, not contributing to global warming, who will endure its most devastating effects. It is mostly they who will continue to suffer and die. That’s the racist nature of climate change.

Capitalist Coal Trains

One of the major causes of climate change is burning coal. Due to the cheap availability of natural gas and the increasing reliance on hydraulic fracturing extraction, or “fracking.” To get it, coal use in the US has been on the decline. In response, coal companies are seeking to export coal to Asia. China now burns more coal than the US, Europe, and Japan combined. China is currently building roughly two power plants every week and, following vast coal plant construction the last decade, plans to build 363 more. India is planning 455 new plants.

Worldwide, 1,200 new coal plants are planned, and the greenhouse gas emissions of those plants will be the equivalent of adding another China to the planet, currently the largest single emitter of greenhouse gases.

Coal is intrinsic to contemporary capitalism, assisting in its initial development and continuing to support its existence. It is essential to capitalist profit, providing a cheap form of energy to fuel production. There’s a lot of money to be made from coal. For instance, the price of coal is about $10.55 a ton in the Powder River Basin in Montana and Wyoming. By the time it hits the export market in Asia, that same ton of coal can be sold for $60 or more.

The devastation burning coal will cause also affects public health: Physicians for Social Responsibility released a statement saying that coal affects all major body organs and contributes to 4 of the leading 5 causes of death in the US: heart disease, cancer, stroke, and lower respiratory disease.

Several coal companies have targeted the Pacific Northwest as their passageway to continued profits. The coal export plans are comparable to the Keystone XL pipeline, which, if approved by the Obama administration, will bring dirty tar sands oil through the heart of the country. There are currently five ports slated for potential coal exports.
The coal is being dug in the Powder River Basin, and will take two possible routes west. One route winds south out of Powder River, through Wyoming and Idaho and to coastal and inland ports like the Port of St. Helens in Oregon and Longview in Washington. A second northern route leaves Powder River and terminates at Cherry Point in Washington.

The coal would be transported by mile-long trains or by barge through the Columbia River Gorge, and some would pass through Portland, on the way to India, China and other locations in Asia. This would represent 150 million tons or more of coal a year, enough to fill 10,000 trains. There are two ports in Washington: Cherry Point and Longview; and three in Oregon: Port of Morrow, Port of St. Helens, and Coos Bay. The Coos Bay option recently suffered a major setback.

To put the size of this in perspective, currently trains unload 80 million tons of freight in Oregon and Washington annually; at full capacity the six export projects would add more than twice that. Trains would travel across the Columbia rail bridge, cut through a canyon in Portland to the Willamette River bridge, then head north up US 30 through Northwest Portland Linn ton neighborhood, Scappoose, St. Helens, and Columbia City. Thirty-seven of forty public crossings are street level, with two high schools, housing, senior centers, stores, and emergency services scattered on either side of the tracks. Terminals in Longview, Port Westward at St. Helens, and the likely dead proposal for Coos Bay are possible routes coal trains would take through the city. The Port of Morrow proposal would see barges loaded in Boardman, then coming through Portland to be loaded on ocean-going ships in St. Helens. The primary companies behind this are Ambre Energy, Arch Coal, SSA Marine, and Peabody Coal, notorious for its ill treatment of Native Dine and Hopi in the Four Corners region.

The Portland Business Alliance and some unions support these projects. The Yakima Nation, the Lummi Nation, the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, and a wide coalition of grassroots activist groups, concerned citizens, and various city councils oppose them.

In addition, there are proposals for Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminals in Coos Bay and Astoria; tar sands oil and gas terminals in Kitimat, BC; oil export (potentially tar sands) in Greys Harbor, WA; and an existing oil export terminal in Clatskanie/St. Helens that exports Baaken shale oil to the refinery near Bellingham. These constitute an additional six terminals in addition to the five. Most of these have been proposed in the last couple years, again showing the emergence of the Northwest as a major front in the climate movement.

Steal to survive!
portlandradicle.wordpress.com

Rising Up Angry!

In Portland, a group of organizers initiated by Portland Rising Tide, the Parasol Climate Collective, and members of the Hella 503 Collective are organizing grassroots confrontation. The summer project involves door-to-door canvassing in poor and working class areas likely to be affected by both the destabilizing effects of climate change and the presence of coal trains moving through their neighborhoods. The campaign will involve talking with folks about their concerns, doing educational events, helping to organize study groups, and training and engaging in direct action.

The goals for this work include broadening the understanding that the climate crisis is not in the future but is happening now in our communities; spreading the acceptance of mass illegality as necessary and effective to bring about change; developing mutual aid and community resiliency to complement direct action work; broadening the current focus on opposition to coal trains to a systematic analysis of the workings and responsibility of capitalism for the crisis; and building a replicable model that can be used in other parts of Portland and around the country. Also, international solidarity will be an important element, seeking to reach out to people in Asia working against burning the coal being shipped from the US. This effort will seek to develop relations between indigenous activists affected by the coal shipments and climate change, Longshoreman, community members, and others.

This work seeks to develop not only a movement against the coal trains but a broader movement against burning coal and fossil fuels generally, and for reorganizing our entire society. It hopes to develop an anti-capitalist movement for direct democracy. The organizing against coal trains is an entranceway into a larger critique of contemporary social relations, a way to point out the many problems with capitalism, and an argument for organizing society along directly democratic lines. It offers us the opportunity to present our visions for a fundamentally different society, one in which humans do not dominate and exploit other humans, nor attempt to dominate nature. It offers us an excellent opportunity to present a vision for a different type of society, an ecological society in which the people affected by political decisions are the ones making them. It will take an insurrection against the state, capital, and patriarchy to bring about an end to climate catastrophe. This is just the beginning, and we do not have much time.

If you are interested in getting involved in canvassing and organizing about these issues, write to: canvass@portlandrisingtide.org

Paul Messersmith-Glavin is part of the Parasol Climate Collective, the Hella 503 Collective, and the Institute for Anarchist Studies.
We’re All in This Together
by Relating Ships

A few years after I got married I realized how selfish my decision was. How could I privilege one person over everyone when I hold the capacity to simply, love? Now, I want to be your wife because I think it has potential as a social and political construct.

I don’t want to be your ‘comrade’ I don’t want to be in your affinity group. I want to love you and I want to serve you, to whatever end that means, as long as we encourage each other to be better human beings, remember who and for what reasons we are engaged in struggle, to remind ourselves to become even more of who we are, and to continually deepen, not only our bond, but the bonds we hold with people whom we misunderstand and to other non-human living beings we also may not feel confident in communicating with, taking initiative and responsibility for.

I want to stand with you, any of you and ask you how your day is, how your life’s been, what you’re having troubles with and ask you questions you already have answers to, but need to be asked. I want to cook you tasty healthy vegan meals from farmer’s markets and compost bins and dumpsters. I want to know about what aids you and work with you to find some healing modalities that might be able to help with that. I want us to open up and yell and cry and laugh, to feel truly alive. And I want this for me too.

We talk about terms and concepts just to disconnect ourselves from our past in hopes that by cutting our roots or our chains, we might be free. And I agree to a certain point. But there is nothing wrong in serving others, in protecting others when we come from our hearts, have a clear head about it and stay aware of what feels right in our actions. In serving ourselves, it depends on how we use these concepts.

The last thing I want to have happen is to be raped into submission and told to stay in the home or in my place. But if it were consensual sex and I chose to work on projects I deem necessary from home and I have an understanding that other women in history were responsible for most of the craft we have today, like looms, cooking and medicine, and I want to honor that, if I have community, if it moves me, then I’ll do it. I find the institution of marriage important for relating to others as long as there is just as strong of a connection to something other than the relationship. Having the ingenuity of working at something, achieving mastery over it and then utilizing that, that is what I want. And it doesn’t have to be in the home. We can draw conclusions to working together with others by combining our mental strength of experience and come up with more efficient and effective solutions to working out our relationships with others. Whether that’s in our organizing or it’s fixing bikes, raising children, building useful and simple structures or learning what herbs to use in what circumstances, or when to say yes or no, to find our voices.

Sometimes I think about how we are so triggered by circumstances, or when to say yes or no, to find our voices. I don’t want to be your ‘comrade’ I don’t want to be in your affinity group. I want to love you and I want to serve you, to whatever end that means, as long as we encourage each other to be better human beings, remember who and for what reasons we are engaged in struggle, to remind ourselves to become even more of who we are, and to continually deepen, not only our bond, but the bonds we hold with people whom we misunderstand and to other non-human living beings we also may not feel confident in communicating with, taking initiative and responsibility for.

We should be calling each other out and we should be listening to others and receive what is being said. Not just our friends or people who wear black or fit in with some aesthetic or reasoning which we find affinity in. We need to not shut ourselves off from ourselves or each other simply because we have so much pain and hatred associated with the rest of the world, with certain ignorances, with certain aesthetics we find displeasing. Even if it’s ourselves we hate.

But if being a wife means I turn what I see off. If it’s obedience to being an individual. If it’s being quiet cause I shouldn’t offend. If it’s not my place to pose opinions on matters I may not have expertise in. If it’s obedience to the standard, even if it’s in radical circles where we know we should know better and that makes us even more rotten, for the consensus or the image, THEN FUCK THAT. I’ve done that. We do that. I’ve served the idea of what I thought was connection. I’m not interested in crushing the rebellion from the inside. I want to create openings so we can allow that rebellion to come out of us. In ways we didn’t think possible. In ways we create, because it’s expressive and nurturing and healing for those involved and those who might hear about it. Because it’s what we see and because we must, from the inside.

I want to protect and serve you because you are all my kin, the plants and the ocean and all kinds of animals. I want to love everything how I want to love it, cause that’s what makes me move into action. Not cause I’m told what campaigns to work on, not cause my friend or my partner or someone I admire is doing it. I want us to fall in love with all the different types of work we do and marry it all. It feels terrible when we’re forced to do things that don’t move us. FUCK THAT. To work, to protect and serve means to follow you. Honor your boundaries. Honor other’s boundaries. Explore boundaries in safe and consensual ways. What are you already good at? Who are you, anyway? Do, be, explore that. Protect and serve that. Love and honor that. GIVE AS MUCH AS YOU TAKE. Let that be one of our motto. The wisdom of love, the gift of the radiance of the sun.

I need all these things from you, just as much as you need it from me or anyone or anything else. ‘Til death do us part, and as our seeds produce more seeds, we’re all in this together.
The War at Home: Boston and the Repression of Muslims and Radicals

by Mike

On Monday, April 15, two bombs exploded at the finish line at the Boston Marathon, killing three and wounding 264 more, some with gruesome injuries. What followed seemed like September 11 in miniature, as a panicked public was reassured by authorities and the press went into overdrive. A tense week lead up to the killing of one suspect after a night of gunfire which left another cop dead. There were explosions, the lockdown of a city and a siege of one of its suburbs, as police scrambled to find and capture the remaining suspect, 19-year-old Chechen-American Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, who was taken into custody April 19.

On the day of the attack, air traffic at Boston’s Logan International Airport was briefly restricted while marathon runners and tourists tried to leave. One traveller was quoted as saying of airport security: “They can give me a cavity search right now and I’d be perfectly happy.”

This wouldn’t be a change; since 9/11, the government has been thoroughly installed up everyone’s asses. So much so, in fact, that when police pulled bloodied Dzhokhar Tsarnaev from the deck of a boat on which he was hiding in a Watertown, Mass. back yard, commenters on Twitter were enjoining others to “hug a cop.” Chants of “USA! USA!” rang out at a Boston Bruins hockey game the next night and the whole country assumed the mantle of “Boston Strong” via t-shirts and images on social media. All in all it was perfect Pavlovian patriotism.

Since 9/11, the government has built a massive regime of surveillance and repression, both through powers granted to them by law and illegally. The official end of the Iraq War has come and the imminent drawing down of forces in Afghanistan is on the way, bringing to an end two Bush-era wars on “terror,” yet the government still affords itself power to strike anywhere around the world and kill whomever it sees fit with drones or special forces strikes. Though there are no more official black sites where those suspected of terrorism are kidnapped and tortured, the U.S. government still operates the ostensible indefinite detention camp at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Domestically, local police forces have become reserve troops for the FBI’s Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTF), and are acquiring drones. The FBI, through domestic terrorism sting operations it has pioneered since 9/11, is ensnaring far more terrorists it creates than intercepting plots like the one that shook up Boston. They have targeted mostly Muslims, treating an internal population with extreme suspicion and malice, and, for good measure, have used these same repressive tactics against anarchists and environmental radicals.

Throughout the Boston ordeal, signs emerged that the U.S. is a populace traumatized by the events of terrorist attacks more than ten years ago or at least popularly conditioned by them. While Americans have acclimated to this new reality of supposed imminent danger, removing their shoes at airports, and remaining largely uncritical of what measures the government has deemed necessary to keep people safe, the majority of those people also never feel the full brunt of government repression, and when an event like the Boston Marathon bombing happens, dark indications of American attitudes resurface that expose racism, xenophobia and a willingness to assent to the comforting touch of an iron fist. What emerges with clarity in these times is a country with all the tools for a functional police state, with a hair’s-breadth separating bored resignation to social control from full-blown popular mania when this imagined peace is shattered.

Are Chechens White?

Before the identities of the Boston bombers were known, the media struggled with the question as to whether the perpetrators were “foreign,” which stood to mean immigrant or non-white jihadists, or “domestic,” which stood in for potentially right-wing white terrorists. What the Tsarnaevs represent is neither, giving the media a pause it can barely handle, grappling with the suspected bombers’ ethnic and religious identities. Some outlets, however, have seemed content with portraying the suspects in the traditional manner, the popularly-understood figure of the sinister Middle Eastern terrorist.

A few news outlets stood out for their racist reporting in the days after the Boston Marathon bombing. The New York Post being one, with their story on the day of the attack strongly suggesting that a Saudi man injured in the blast was a suspect in the case. In reality, the man had been running from the blast and was tackled by frightened bystanders who obviously equated a dark-skinned Persian man with a terrorist. Confirming this profile the next day, CNN’s John King announced that a suspect had been arrested when one, in fact, had not, and described this imaginary person as a “dark-skinned male.” The New York Post also doubled down that Tuesday, most likely following the lead of hundreds of deluded internet sleuths on Reddit, fingerling two back-pack-carrying Boston-area students of Middle Eastern descent as suspects, publishing their photos in their awful, vomitous rag with the headline “Bag Men.” The two people in the photo later turned out to be two area runners who were merely watching the race like thousands of others of varying ethnicities, dark-skinned or otherwise, who were nearly killed or maimed and will remain forever traumatized.

When photos of the subjects were finally released, and the identities confirmed after their one-night war with Boston-area police, the press struggled: as ethnic Chechens, they hail from the Caucasus region of what is now southern Russia. This, historically, is where the term “caucasian” originated. By the simplistic definition of equating race with one’s skin pigment, the Tsarnaevs are white. They are also Muslim, something which not many Americans are apparently able to rectify with whiteness, so now the media is engaged in some bizarre molting phase, trotting out stories of Chechen terrorism, of which the Tsarnaev brothers, largely raised in the U.S., had no hand in. While older brother Tamerlan took a trip to the Dagestan region of Russia to reportedly make contact with jihadists, or “domestic,” which stood in for potentially right-wing white terrorists. What the Tsarnaevs represent is neither, giving the media a pause it can barely handle, grappling with the suspected bombers’ ethnic and religious identities. Some outlets, however, have seemed content with portraying the suspects in the traditional manner, the popularly-understood figure of the sinister Middle Eastern terrorist.

The W ar at Home: Boston and the Repression of Muslims and Radicals (WAR, cont. Page 6)
The events he directed most of his ire towards were the U.S. military occupation of Afghanistan. Younger brother Dzhokhar, in testimony given to authorities after his capture, said that he and his brother were angered by the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. It seems as though the geopolitical events in Chechnya, which has been brutalized by military occupation by Russia, have nothing to do with the attacks. What would be more uncomfortable for U.S. media then, would be to explain how the effects of two wars led to the radicalization of two American-raised Muslim men and brought some terrible chickens home to roost. Some have referred to the Boston Marathon bombings as the first act of terror perpetrated on American soil since 9/11, true if only white people are victims of terror. Tell that to the Sikh worshippers at the Oak Creek, Wisconsin gurdwara shot up by Hammerskin white supremacist Wade Michael Page last year. Last August 5, Page burst into a packed temple enjoying a community meal and opened fire, killing six and wounding four others. Perhaps mistaking them for Muslims, or just being as stupid and indiscriminate as your average neo-Nazi, Page apparently talked to friends about an impending “racial holy war” before the attack, at the end of which he took his own life.

Another white man flew into plane into a building and this somehow didn’t enter into popular discourse as terror. Joseph Stack flew a small personal aircraft into the IRS office in Austin, Texas in 2010, leaving behind a manifesto railing against the government and corporations, making his act undeniably politically-motivated, yet Stack, who killed one person beside himself in the attack and injured numerous others, falls outside of a definition of terrorism that is essentially racialized to mean that Muslims and Middle Easterners are the primary perpetrators of terror.

This has borne grave consequences. The concerted effort to demonize Muslims has lead to Muslims being targeted by racist crimes. Hate crimes against Muslims spiked to 481 in 2001 after the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, according to federal statistics. Since then they have fallen, but since 2010, when popular anger was stoked by conservative politicians opposed to a Muslim community center being sited at the reconstructed World Trade Center, they have hovered around a second uptick in attacks, averaging 160. Even federal officials say that these statistics, compiled from state figures, are deceptively low, with the Justice Department saying 50% of hate crimes go unreported. Numerous incidents of anti-Muslim violence were reported after the Boston Marathon bombing, targeting dark-skinned Muslims and those wearing ethnic dress. It seems as though whiteness cannot be equated with terrorist violence in popular understanding, although it isn’t as though white men have not expressed the desire and ability to murder en masse for political ends.

**Muslim Repression**

The suspicion of Muslims is not only the function of racist individuals, but also that of racist institutions. Muslim persecution has been codified into the practices of law enforcement. The same NYPD who targets “male blacks” with stop-and-frisk contacts is also engaged in the widescale, acknowledged surveillance of Muslims. According to the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund’s (AALDEF), report “Mapping Muslims,” released in March, mosques, social centers, bookstores and other community spaces have been regularly surveilled and infiltrated by the NYPD, the largest and best-funded police force in the world. Though NYPD commissioner Ray Kelly has steadfastly supported the police force’s program, the NYPD’s Chief Intelligence officer, Lt. Paul Gilati has said under sworn testimony that the program, begun after 9/11, has never produced a criminal lead. AALDEF’s report goes on to describe the intimidation and harassment American Muslims feel, which, owing to the sheer inefficiency of the program’s stated purpose, investigating terrorism, must be the program’s actual goal.

The federal government is of course in on this action as well, domestically surveilling Muslims as part of a $3.3 billion annual FBI “counterterrorism” effort. This takes the shape of employing informants, usually serial criminals, to infiltrate and contact Muslims, attempting to induce them into terror plots. The FBI’s use of informants, which, according to journalist Trevor Aaronson, in his book *The Terror Factory*, numbers 15,000 currently, even produces the absurd. One former informant, Craig Monteilh, was a fitness instructor in Irvine, California. After meeting some off-duty police officers at work, he was introduced to FBI agents who convinced him to become an informant. Using an audio recorder attached to his key-ring, Monteilh tried to stir discussion toward jihad at a local mosque, reporting his findings to the agents once a week. His actions became so suspicious to worshippers that they reported him to the FBI.

After being outed, Monteilh was frank about his role with the bureau: “The way the FBI conducts their operations, it is all about entrapment ... I know the game, I know the dynamics of it. It’s such a joke, a real joke. There is no real hunt. It’s fixed,” he said in an interview.

And yet, the FBI’s use of informants for their controversial terrorism sting operations goes on, essentially cooking the books, inflating the number of terror convictions and creating threats where there are none. In the case of the Boston Marathon bombers, these tactics may have even led the bureau to miss their chance to stop the bombing.

**Mohamed Mohamud and the Cleveland Five**

While the Boston attacks were horrific, actual terrorists are hard to come by in the U.S. More often than not, the terrorists imprisoned all over the U.S. are products of FBI stings. The practice, developed by the FBI during the drug wars of the 1980s, is supposed to ensnare operating terrorists active in the U.S., but more often than not, they have involved the government prodding along disaffected men who have no capability to perpetrate such attacks into outlandish plots in which the government supplies them with fake weapons.

The case of Mohamed Mohamud, the Somali-American student from Corvallis who was convicted of conspiring to blow up Pioneer Square with a fake bomb, was international news, trumpeted by the press in their usual breathless screed. Mohamud, however, while sympathetic to radical Islam and believing he was going to murder thousands assembled at the annual Christmas tree-lighting downtown, was not a credible terrorist. He came to the government’s attention when he was accused of date rape at a
Daniel McGowan is a convicted terrorist living in Brooklyn, New York. McGowan was convicted and imprisoned for his participation in Earth Liberation Front (ELF) actions in Oregon. McGowan spent most of his time incarcerated in Communications Management Units (CMUs), prisons within prisons which drastically restrict inmates’ access to phone calls, letters and visits by family. McGowan was released to a halfway house in New York last year, after five years of imprisonment, mostly in CMUs. In March 2010, the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) filed a lawsuit on McGowan’s behalf, challenging his detention in the CMU’s; McGowan had never been informed as to why he was jailed in one. In a legal memorandum obtained by McGowan’s

**Federal Repression:**

*The FBI and COINTELPRO*

by Andrew

1963: U.S. Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy authorizes the FBI to wiretap the phones of Martin Luther King Jr.

1969: Forged letters from the San Diego FBI office antagonize the US Organization and the Black Panther Party against each other. Deadly shootouts between the groups are affirmatively noted as “tangible results” in an internal FBI memo.

1971: The Citizens’ Commission to Investigate the FBI breaks into a Pennsylvania FBI office and steals over 1,000 classified documents revealing the massive domestic spying and counterintelligence operation known as COINTELPRO.

1975: Gary Thomas Rowe testifies to a Senate committee that the FBI endorsed his participation in assaults and murders of black activists during his years as an undercover informant within the Ku Klux Klan.

1981: The FBI launches an all-out investigation of the Committee in Solidarity of the People of El Salvador, targeting the group for surveillance, harassment, break-ins and placing 100,000 activists on the Bureau’s terrorist databank for raising awareness about the civil war in El Salvador.

1990: Cofounder of Earth First! Dave Foreman is charged as a conspirator in the sabotage of a powerline, despite the FBI admitting he is not an actual perpetrator, an attempt to “send a message”.

1997: Judi Bari’s deposition in her civil rights trial against the FBI reveals that the pipe-bomb placed in her car closely resembles those made in an FBI bomb school for northern California police officers. Five years later the court rules in favor of Bari, finding that the FBI sought to blame her as a victim and discredit her environmental organizing.

2001: Over 1,200 people are detained and held incommunicado in the two months after the September 11th attacks. Targeted for being Arabs, Muslims, or immigrants, none are linked to the Al-Qaeda attack.

2004: The FBI’s professional confidential informant “Anna” begins infiltrating and entrapping environmental activists, providing them with bomb-making information, money for raw materials, transportation and a remote cabin to plan ecosabotage actions.

2010: Activists file suit against John J. Towery, an intelligence analyst for the military’s Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Tacoma, WA. His infiltration of the Port Militarization Resistance and Students for a Democratic Society activist groups violated several statutes which forbid the military surveillance of civilian groups.
lindsey Graham, to New York state senator and vitriolic Islama

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fense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld calling it "the kind of struggle

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deems terrorism. Both the ELF and ALF, decentralized non-organizations, subscribe to a tactical ethic that

stresses that no life should be harmed in their actions, preferring

sabotage and property destruction, usually accomplished

through arson. Hasn’t stopped federal prosecutors from using

the considerable powers granted them when terrorism enhance-

ment sentencing was created, after the Oklahoma City bombing

in 1995, to imprison them for decades. In cases not only seen in

the western U.S., but also back east, with the cases of the SHAC

7, animal rights campaigners who set up a website to publicize ac-

tions taken against notorious animal-abusing laboratory Hunting-

don Life Sciences, environmental and animal rights radicals have

felt the full pressure of government repression, with some, includ-

ing ELF prisoner Marie Mason, receiving multi-decade sentences

for property destruction. This wave of repression has been re-

ferred to as the “green scare,” a wave of sensationalistic targeting

of environmentalists who are now considered terrorists. These

cases should be regarded as a bellwether for growing government

power, and though leftist radicals face nowhere near the same de-

gree of repression as Muslims, a disconcerting parallel remains.

So This is Freedom?

During the Bush administration, the president’s inner

circle sought to re-brand their efforts. What was once referred to

as “The War on Terror” would now be referred to as “The Long

War,” a name which exposed intentions though it never

cought on. In 2006, seeing that a fierce insurgency in Iraq meant

that the mission was not accomplished and the war was not over,

nor would it be for quite some time, the administration re-framed

their approach to compare the war to The Cold War, with De-

fense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld calling it “the kind of struggle

that might last decades as allies work to root out terrorists across

the globe and battle extremists who want to rule the world.”

It is readily apparent who does rule the world. Some con-

servative ideologues who do, from Lynne Cheney, wife of neocon-

servative former vice president Dick Cheney, to leathery senator

Lindsey Graham, to New York state senator and vitriolic Islam-

phobe Peter King, were all in the media after Dzhokhar Tsarna

ev’s arrest, urging surveillance, indefinite detention, and drone

assassinations. Conservative billionaire and former presi-

dential candidate Donald Trump called for Tsarnaev to

be waterboarded. Right-wing senator Rand Paul, who had filibus-

tered for 13 hours in protest of John Brennan’s appointment to

head the CIA, afraid of the government’s power to kill Americans,

as it has done abroad with drones, changed his tune after the Bos-

ton episode, saying that killing Americans like the Tsarnaevs with

a drone would be just fine, and disgustingly inserting the case of

the brothers into the immigration debate. (The Tsarnaev brothers

emigrated to the U.S. as children.) These are people with enor-

mous political power, and while most can reasonably be accused

of simply grandstanding, their revolting opinions do, in fact, lead

to policy. Their comments can also be seen as seeking to placate

popular feelings, toward a revengeful catharsis after a dramatic

and traumatizing episode shocked a major American city.

With the specter of of never-ending conflict morphing

into the dull routinization of drone strikes, surveillance and politi-

cal repression, it becomes apparent that those who rule the world

are granting themselves all the power they can to do so. But in the

face of traumatic events and their attendant fear, which terrorists

and governments seek to exploit for their own gains, the only thing

that will guide Americans away from a definite police state is calm,

clear, critical thought, and concerted resistance against these pow-

ergists. Instead of blithe ignorance in the face of repression world-

wide punctuated with indignation when others choose to attack in-

side the U.S., what is needed are more people to stand up and say

that ethnic and political persecution is wrong. Indefinite detention

is wrong. Torture is wrong. Indiscriminately killing people half a

world away with weaponized robots is wrong. All of these tactics

are signed off on by a quiescent populace that either passively al-

low such atrocities or are spurred into support through a story of

patriotic vengeance. What Americans have come to believe, or at

any rate accept, is the logic that the only way to remain completely

safe is to accept the fate that others may be scrutinized and sur-

veilled and that an evil segment of the populace exists among us,

waiting to for the right opportunity to do us harm. This has been

any number of groups throughout history: different races, anar-

chists, Communists, Arabs and Muslims. The common thread

is this proposition that in a state of imminent threat, one must

accept anything in the name of security, at the expense of, and to

ultimately preserve, freedom.

But what is this freedom? If Americans can be said to

be free now, this is an awful freedom, one that is only attainable

when one acquires more than others, when one is born into a

class or caste that enjoys power over others, or when one gains

passage into one. The freedom to buy. The freedom to watch TV.

The freedom to wall oneself off from each other, imprisoned in a

passage into one. The freedom to buy. The freedom to watch TV.

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passage into one. The freedom to buy. The freedom to watch TV.

The freedom to wall oneself off from each other, imprisoned in a

nuclear family, in a house in a gated community. The freedom to

conform. The freedom to obey. At the opposite end of this equa-

tion are people who will never enjoy these meager little slices of

what is understood as freedom and the people regularly terrorized

to perpetuate the lifestyles of those most “free.”

A full and dignified freedom can only arise when people

stop falling for the conditioned responses of fear and repression,

when people take into account their role in reproducing these dy-

namics, and the role of the government which claims to represent

them, and, at that point, when they resist that representation, with

its brutal and regular displays of force, they create something new,

and their own.