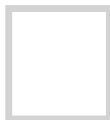




Art by Micah Bazzant



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Stiletto

MARCH 2015 | VOLUME 8 | ISSUE 1

#BLACK LIVES MATTER



#BlackTransLivesMatter #BlackImprisonedPeoplesLivesMatter

PHOTO: JULIA CARRIE WONG



TRANSGENDER GENDER-VARIANT & INTERSEX JUSTICE PROJECT

TGI Justice Project is a group of transgender, gender variant and intersex people—inside and outside of prison—creating a united family in the struggle for survival and freedom. We work in collaboration with others to forge a culture of resistance and resilience to strengthen us for the fight against imprisonment, police violence, racism, poverty, and societal pressures. We seek to create a world rooted in self-determination, freedom of expression, and gender justice.

Miss Major Griffin-Gracy, *Executive Director*
Janetta Johnson, *Program Director*
Woods Ervin, *Administrative Director*
danni marilyn west, *Development Director*
StormMiguel Florez, *Leadership Team*
Malachi Garza, *Leadership Team*
Billy Chen, *Leadership Team*
Paper Buck, *Leadership Team*
Kris Hayashi, *Leadership Team*

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Hello My Precious Dolls:

With all the horrid things that are happening, we must be cautious. No matter your living arrangements, we are “prey.”

There are some wonderful goings on - - - however not what there should be. Let there still be “HOPE.”

We here at TGI Justice are doing as much as we can, with what little we have to work with. We will let you down and keep the light burning for as long as we can. We’re committed to you and are here to help, as we believe in our community. As I have heard—tomorrow can be a better day!

We treasure your letters and calls. It is important to maintain our connection so we can build a safe haven together.

Be safe—as safe as we can be—and stay strong – not physically, but spiritually, emotionally and mentally!

Love,
Miss Major, Executive Director



Hello peeps!

Just want to send some love and well wishes! Please know we’re declaring every Tuesday as Trans Liberation Tuesday!

It’s the day’s focus and highlights showing some love for all trans folks and that’s also the day we here at TGJIP are responding to mail from the folks on the inside.

We are also working on developing our grassroots re-entry plan, so if you know a sister getting out let them know that we love them and would love to receive them!

It’s all about keeping our community safe and outside of jails and prison.

Much sisterly love and new beginnings! Please learn to stick together and love on one another.

Charity starts at home. If you are not loving your community, ask yourself if you’re loving yourself.

Please be safe and stay strong!
Janetta Johnson, Program Director

GREETINGS FROM THE ST. JAMES INFIRMARY!

The St. James Infirmary is a peer-based health & safety clinic for current and former sex workers and their current primary partners. Since 1999 we’ve been offering services like primary medical care, mental health care, massage and acupuncture, support groups, harm reduction services, and hormone replacement therapy by and for the trans community. All of our services are confidential, non-judgmental and free to the sex worker community. In the spring of 2014 we were lucky enough to welcome TGJIP into our office space. It has been amazing to share community with an organization so dedicated

and driven towards justice and liberation. Since TGJIP moved in with us, we’ve had some great opportunities to collaborate on political projects, to support each other’s work, and to coordinate our services to the maximum benefit of our community. Between the legal and social support offered by TGJIP and the physical and mental health services of the SJ, there’s a lot happening by and for the trans community in our shared space. If there’s any information about our services we can send you, let us know! And if you’re coming home to the Bay Area, stop by and check us out. We’d love to meet you!

ALLY UPDATES

NLG & TLC

In 2015, TGJIP has expanded our relationship with the National Lawyers Guild and Transgender Law Center to better inform our organizing work and legal advocacy work. Thank you to the deepening relationships that will benefit our TGI people inside of prisons, jails, and detention centers as well as those of us outside.

DECARCERATE PA

Decarcerate PA is a grassroots campaign working to end mass incarceration in Pennsylvania. We formed in 2011 to fight the \$685 million expansion of Pennsylvania’s prison system amid drastic cuts to education, social services and healthcare. We set out to build a campaign to shrink the prison system and expand the community institutions we actually need, education, employment, housing, reentry, and health care. Our three point platform demands 1) no new prisons, 2) decarceration, and 3) community reinvestment. We work to build public consciousness that prisons don’t keep us safe and to develop a statewide movement to end mass incarceration. This includes creative protests, civil disobedience, grassroots advocacy, and community building events.

In the last few months we successfully stalled six anti-prisoner bills intended to extract additional costs and fines from people convicted of crimes, and led the outside support efforts for the 1,300 people at Coal Township prison who staged a week-long boycott of the dining hall to protest food cutbacks and human rights violations. We are currently mobilizing for a 24 hour “speak in” to protest a law that attempts to silence prisoners. This spring—along with our allies—we will also be launching a campaign to end life without parole sentencing in PA. Decarceration now!

ALL OF US OR NONE

All Of Us Or None is a grassroots organization led by formerly-imprisoned people committed to fighting for the human dignity of people who have been or are being held captive in America. We are fighting for the full restoration of our civil and human rights and against the systemic discrimination facing us while in captivity and upon our release. We demand to be called people and not the dehumanizing labels we are usually referred to, such as offenders. These characterizations prevent us from being seen and treated as human beings. Although we may have been to jail or prison, our lives are much more than the sum total of our past indiscretions or accusations. We are presently working towards building the leadership of formerly-incarcerated people. Our nationally-recognized Ban the Box campaign challenges the stereotypes of people with conviction histories by asking employers to choose their best candidates based on job

skills and qualifications, not past convictions. The question on applications for employment, housing, public benefits, insurance, loans and other services, means lifelong discrimination and exclusion because of a past arrest or conviction record. We have chapters throughout California, with our most active chapters are in the SF Bay Area, Riverside, and Los Angeles. For more information, please contact us at

1540 Market St., Suite 490
San Francisco, CA 94102

BLACK & PINK

For those who don’t know us, Black & Pink is an open family of LGBTQ prisoners and “free world” allies who support each other. Our work toward the abolition of the prison industrial complex is rooted in the experience of currently and formerly incarcerated people. We are outraged by the specific violence of the prison industrial complex against LGBTQ people, and respond through advocacy, education, direct service, and organizing. We send out a newsletter to our incarcerated LGBTQ members and maintain a national list of incarcerated LGBTQ members whom we support in finding free world penpals. If you are LGBTQ and want to be on our list, you can write to us at:

Black and Pink
614 Columbia Ave
Dorchester, MA 02125

2014 was a big year for us. We have been developing chapters across the country – including Boise, Buffalo, Chicago, Denver, New Orleans, New York City, San Diego and San Francisco. Each of these local chapters has been working locally and in connection to each other to bring in new free world penpals and do other projects, including study groups, workshops, support for recently released members, organizing more winter holiday card parties than ever before, participation in the Black Lives Matter movement, fighting prison censorship rules and advocating for our members in various ways. We also did a survey of our incarcerated members and received over 1,500 responses. We are currently entering all the results.

We are excited to continue all of our work in 2015, and especially excited to be celebrating our 10 year anniversary this year with a week-end of celebration, community building, healing, skills sharing, and planning for the future. It will take place in Boston from October 16-18 and we will be offering stipends to support formerly incarcerated members to attend. Please get in touch with us if you are being released soon and want to attend.

JUSTICE NOW

Justice Now partners with people in women’s prisons and communities impacted by imprisonment to challenge gendered violence and build a safe compassionate world without prisons.

In September of 2014, we celebrated the passage of SB1135, a bill to end the coerced

sterilization of people in women’s prisons. This win was the culmination of decades of hard work and organizing, both inside and outside of prison. We forced public attention on California’s history of eugenics, and modern day practice of controlling bodies and families.

We welcomed the new year with a change in our leadership, to a shared, non-hierarchical structure. Amanda Scheper and Allison Barahona, our interim co-directors, transitioned out of their roles as staff. We celebrate their years of incredible work building this organization, and are glad they will remain connected to our community on our Board of Directors. The new leadership team is Misty Rojo as Director of Campaign and Policy, Nora Wilson as Director of Legal Advocacy, and Hannah McFaull as Director of Development and Communication.

Justice Now stands in solidarity with protesters across the country who have raising their voices to say that Black Lives Matter. We recently shared statements from people imprisoned at CCWF, compiled by Justice Now board member Cookie. Abolishing the police and dismantling white supremacy is central to our vision of social transformation. We are committed to continuing to draw the connections between the movement to end police violence and our work at Justice Now.

MAJOR!

MAJOR!, the documentary film about Miss Major, is currently in post-production and scheduled to be complete by summer 2015. The film follows Miss Major’s extraordinary life, from her early childhood to Stonewall, Attica, and her tireless HIV activism and advocacy for her girls on the inside. It also includes interviews with over 20 community members, including many TGJIP members. We’re so excited to see our communities portrayed on film with dignity and love, and will share news about the film’s premiere, including photos, in the next Stiletto.

TGI Justice Project was continually inspired by the existence of, activism of, and leadership structure of **TYSN** in Minnesota and wanted to send a salute and a thank you for the legacy your organizers and contributions are leaving for the movement as you transition to closing the organization. Thank you! We look forward to the day that our communities have the support we need to thrive as we build and maintain organizations for us and by us. TGJIP also wants to celebrate the ongoing TGI youth leadership of **BreakOut** in NOLA and **FIERCE** in NYC!

We have been fortunate to partner with so many incredible organizations to bring about this change. In particular we want to thank the Legal Aid Society and Willie, Farr and Gallagher for their incredible drive and legal expertise in guiding this case. We are grateful to the Health Care for All New York campaign for supporting us and lifting up our communities. And of course, we are grateful to the Cuomo administration for being willing to step up and address this long-standing injustice.

The regulation is not perfect – we would like to see care covered for young people under 18, and we would like to see all forms of gender-affirming care covered. But this is a great start. We invite all transgender people of color, low income people and allies to join us as we plot our next steps. Stay tuned for campaign updates and next steps in early 2015!

And the fight continues. As we have seen in Ferguson, Staten Island, and all over the country, the legal system is not designed to protect our communities. We must fight for the lives of our community members, fight to end racism and all forms of oppression or violence and poverty will persist.

Only hours after yesterday's news was announced, we received devastating news that the appeals court in Massachusetts overturned the decision in *Kosilek v. Spencer* – a groundbreaking case where the court said that a transgender prisoner has the right to gender-affirming surgery. The decision to deny this right will be appealed to the higher courts, but we cannot rely solely on the legal system to fight for healthcare access and gender self-determination. Just as our community mobilized for this Medicaid win, we must continue

to organize with our community members in prison. We believe that all people are entitled to gender-affirming care. We believe that all people deserve to be free. We believe that the fight for gender self-determination will not be over until all people are free to self-determine their gender – and until the prison system as we know it is abolished.

The work we are doing is the work of liberation. This week's Medicaid announcement is a tremendous victory for all transgender people. It is also a testament to the power of movement building, to working together to bring about the world we believe in, and to the combined strength of legal work, community organizing, media, and government advocacy. We could not be more proud of our communities and our allies for the work we have done.

Transgender surgeries are now covered for San Francisco residents on Medi-Cal or without insurance.

It's a new day for transgender health.
These surgeries are now covered:

Masculinizing

chest reconstruction/"top" surgery
hysterectomy
salpingo-oophorectomy
vaginectomy/colpocleisis
metoidioplasty
phalloplasty
scrotoplasty
urethral reconstruction

Feminizing

mammoplasty/"breast implants"
orchiectomy
penectomy
vaginoplasty
clitoroplasty
labiaplasty



San Francisco Department of Public Health

“Liberation, Not Deportation”

Queer & Trans Immigrants from Across the Country Denounce Deportations

BY FAMILIA TQLM AND DECOLORES

President Obama continues to deport queer and trans immigrants. The Obama administration has deported a record number of more than 2 million people, which has resulted in the separation of parents from their children and queer and trans immigrants from their families and communities. There are more than 267,000 undocumented queer and trans immigrants living in the United States who continue to be persecuted by the current inhumane immigration policies of the White House. Queer and trans immigrants are coming together to demand President Obama to stop all deportations of LGBTQ undocumented immigrants and our families, and expand the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program for all undocumented immigrants in this country.

Familia: Trans Queer Liberation Movement and DeColores Queer Orange County are bringing together Queer and trans immigrants from across the country to proclaim “liberation and not deportation,” and denounce the deportations separating our families and communities.

We will continue to organize and mobilize in order to ensure all of our families are safe and remain together. Queer and trans immigrants rise up to demand “not one more deportation,” of our queer and trans undocumented brothers and sisters and our families.



Organizers protest outside an ICE detention center in Santa Ana, CA, May 2014. Photo via Familia TQLM.

Sistahs Doin' It For Ourselves 2014

BY WOODS ERVIN, ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR

In October of 2014, 40 members from TGJIP pulled together for our semi-annual retreat. We drove over 75 miles from San Francisco to the Quaker Center in Ben Lomond, CA to spend 5 days and 4 nights in the woods for learning and bonding.

The woods at the Quaker Center welcomed us with towering trees and deep quiet. We set ourselves up in cabins 2-people to a room and settled in. The staff at the Quaker Center was generous and lovely, as Quakers often are and made sure that we knew how the space was set up. The Quaker Center itself is fully stocked and set up to be a self-sufficient space so we had full reign of the space. Our beloved community member Gail was chef for the week and TGI staff supported her in the kitchen to dish out delicious meals in one of the beautiful community lodges that we had available to us. We made certain to set up Miss Major in an adorable little private cottage and she had members come and visit regularly to love on her.

Programming consisted of story sharing, workshops on health and community resources for trans women and time to practice healing and spirituality within community. The story sharing – formally facilitated by Miss Major – was one of the things we did that had the most

impact on the participants. Just sitting and exchanging with one another what brought people to the space and to the organization was powerful – especially given how brave our members were with the pieces of themselves that they shared. We also made sure to take time and write messages of encouragement to you, our beloved folks inside.

Members took time to walk through the woods and enjoy fresh air – but sometimes folks wanted to shake up the quiet by travelling

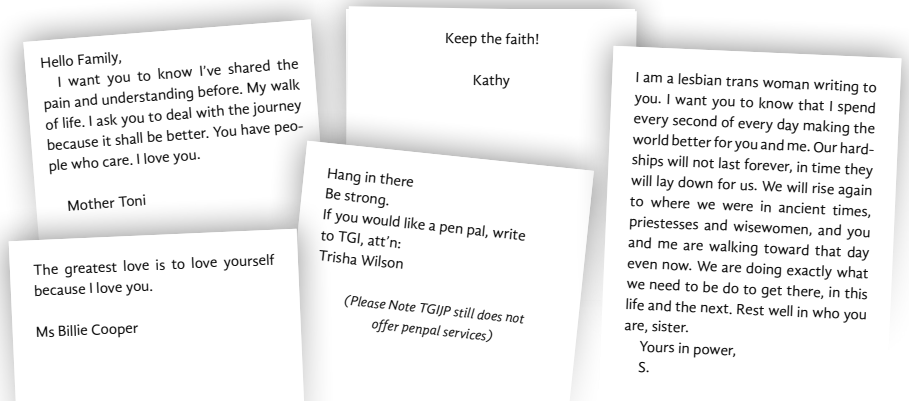
away from the retreat. We went on a day trip to Santa Cruz and visited the boardwalk for rides, games and beach time. Everything was not open but we had a fun time just hanging out and playing games and standing in the sand near the ocean.

All in all, we were able to bond more deeply, which helps make it easier to rely on each other in times of need – which come often. It also encourages us to fight for our sisters and people inside and out.



Chef Gail at Sistahs Doin' It For Ourselves 2014

Statements from the Girls from the Retreat



Hello Family,
I want you to know I've shared the pain and understanding before. My walk of life. I ask you to deal with the journey because it shall be better. You have people who care. I love you.

Mother Toni

Keep the faith!

Kathy

Hang in there
Be strong.
If you would like a pen pal, write to TGI, att'n:
Trisha Wilson

(Please Note TGJIP still does not offer penpal services)

The greatest love is to love yourself because I love you.

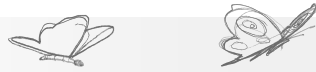
Ms Billie Cooper

I am a lesbian trans woman writing to you. I want you to know that I spend every second of every day making the world better for you and me. Our hardships will not last forever, in time they will lay down for us. We will rise again to where we were in ancient times, priestesses and wisewomen, and you and me are walking toward that day even now. We are doing exactly what we need to be do to get there, in this life and the next. Rest well in who you are, sister.

Yours in power,
S.

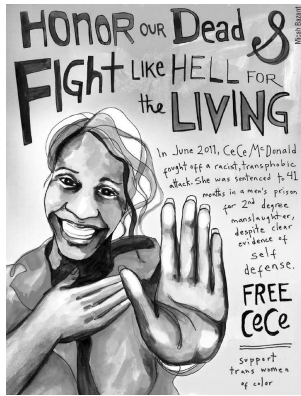
Good News

SPECIAL THANK YOU TO KATHY AND BEJA FOR COMPILING THE GOOD NEWS SECTION



JANUARY 2014

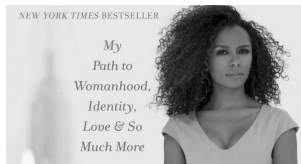
Transgender hero CeCe McDonald walks free after being paroled two thirds of the way through her sentence. McDonald, who had been serving out her time in a men's prison, was greeted by Orange Is the New Black star and fellow trans woman Laverne Cox upon her exit. Cox is producing a documentary on McDonald, slated to be released in 2016, titled Free CeCe!



Poster by Micah Bazant

FEBRUARY 2014

Author and trans activist Janet Mock's memoir, Redefining Realness, debuted at Number 19 on New York Times' nonfiction bestsellers list.



APRIL 2014

A New Zealand trans teen made history when she became the first trans competitor in a national beauty pageant. Amy Brosnahan, 18, almost did not get to compete in the finals after initially being dumped when she said she was trans. She had been in the process of making a Human Rights Commission complaint

after her exclusion from the Auckland final of Battle of the Babes Worldwide. Friends quickly took up the cause and also complained on her behalf. Organizer and spokesman for Battles of the Babes Andrew Featherstone then decided Brosnahan could still compete.

The U.S. Department of Education (DOE) issued guidance which makes clear that the federal Title IX law prohibits discrimination against transgender students. This announcement was a huge breakthrough for transgender students and made it clear that they can seek protection from the DOE and the courts if the schools fail in their responsibility to ensure that they are safe and respected. (Recent research indicates that 4 out of 5 transgender students feel unsafe at school).

The U.S. Supreme Court rejected an appeal from a studio that refused to photograph a lesbian couple's commitment ceremony, letting stand a New Mexico high court ruling that helped spur a national debate over gay rights and religious freedom. The justices left in place a unanimous state Supreme Court ruling last year that said Elane Photography violated New Mexico's Human Rights Act by refusing to photograph the same-sex ceremony "in the same way as if it had refused to photograph a wedding between people of different races." Tobias Barrington Wolff, a University of Pennsylvania law professor representing the couple, said "no court in the United States has ever found that a business selling commercial services to the general public has a First Amendment right to turn away customers on a discriminatory basis.

MAY 2014

Medicare has lifted its ban on coverage for gender reassignment surgery thanks to the conclusions of an independent review that found existing policy was "not reasonable" given current understanding of the procedure. The decision responds to an administrative challenge filed by the American Civil Liberties Union, Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders, the National Center for Lesbian Rights and civil rights attorney Mary Lou Boelcke last year.

Kate Lynn Blatt, a Pottsville, PA transgender woman, has received a favorable finding from the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission concerning the workplace antibodies complaint she filed in 2007 against Cabela's, a store that specializes in outdoor sports items.

The EEOC concluded that Cabela's probably violated the law when denying Blatt access to the women's restroom and issued Blatt a right-to-sue letter.

U.S. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel stated on network TV news that the Department of Defense should review the military's policy that prohibits open transgender military service.

JUNE 2014

San Francisco Pride Grand Marshals this year included TGJIP's founder, Miss Major, as well as Jewlyes Gutierrez, a transgender teen from Hercules, CA, who made headlines when she defended herself against schoolyard bullies and ended up being the only one charged. The charges were later dropped.



TGJIP at the SF Trans March

2014 marked the 11th anniversary of the San Francisco Trans March. It started in 2004 as a protest march in response to the murder of Gwen Araujo. This year, around 7,000 people participated.

As proof of the changing views toward trans issues and people, Orange is the New Black's trans actress Laverne Cox was featured on the cover of the June 9 issue of Time magazine next to the headline: "The Transgender Tipping Point: America's next civil rights frontier." Cox the first transgender person to ever appear on the magazine's cover.

JULY 2014

President Barack Obama signed an executive order extending workplace protections for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people working for federal contractors.

With California, New York and Oregon implementing new legislation this year, seven states and the District of Columbia now allow transgender people to change the sex designation on their birth certificate without undergoing surgery, but most states still require it. Ohio, Tennessee and Idaho still prohibit reissuing or amending birth certificates for transgender people under any circumstance.

Medicaid programs will now cover transgender healthcare following SRLP's twelve-year campaign

BY ELANA REDFIELD, SYLVIA RIVERA LAW PROJECT, REPRINTED FROM SRLP WEBSITE

Yesterday, Governor Cuomo and the New York State Department of Health announced that our Medicaid programs will now cover transgender healthcare. This is a momentous victory for SRLP community members and all transgender New Yorkers.

The proposed regulation will allow transgender people to access hormones and surgeries under Medicaid. Introduced on December 17th, the regulation is open for 45 days of public comment. The announcement comes in response to Cruz v. Zucker – a lawsuit the Sylvia Rivera Law Project brought in partnership with the Legal Aid Society and the law firm Willkie, Farr and Gallagher – and to the incredible persistence of our communities in demanding this care.

It may be useful to share a little history of this regulation. Passed in 1998, the regulation banned access to hormones and all surgeries commonly sought by transgender people. The impact was quick and deep, as thousands of low income transgender people and transgender people of color were cut off from life-saving care and denied much-needed treatments.

Since SRLP opened our doors in 2002, one of our primary goals has been to bring down this discriminatory ban. Here is a brief history of this incredible campaign:

- In collaboration with other transgender and queer groups, such as Queers for Economic Justice, Audre Lorde Project and the Gender Identity Project of the NY LGBT Center, we began organizing and strategizing to take down the regulation.
- Working with the New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG) and Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP, we filed the first lawsuit to challenge the ban, Casillas v. Daines.
- When the court was unwilling to overturn the regulation, we partnered with the Legal Aid Society to bring a challenge to Governor Patterson.

- We held health care focus groups for trans people of color and developed a Cost-Benefit Memo gathering all available data on transgender health care
- When Governor Patterson was unwilling to overturn the regulation, we partnered with Housing Works and the Empire State Pride Agenda to bring it to Governor Cuomo's Medicaid Redesign Team, with 500 signed petitions. Assembly Member Richard Gottfried and Senator Brad Hoylman declared their support.
- When the Redesign Team refused to overturn the regulation, we started our healthcare media campaign with GLAAD and Callen Lorde this time with videos, infographics, and thousands of signed petitions.
- Working with Make the Road NY, GLOBE, and the Audre Lorde Project, we then used direct action to keep transgender healthcare on the agenda for the

Department of Health. We met with the Health Care for All New York Coalition (HCFANY) to join forces.

- May 30, 2014 – U.S. Department of Health repealed transgender healthcare ban under federal Medicare program after Denee Mallon case and advocacy by organizations including GLAD, ACLU, and NCLR.
- In June 2014 we filed Cruz v. Zucker – the same week TIME Magazine hailed "The Transgender Tipping Point."
- December 10, 2014 – As a result of our lawsuit and advocacy by HCFANY, Governor Cuomo released a bulletin clarifying that private insurance that covers mental health care must cover transgender health care
- December 17, 2014 – New Medicaid Regulation introduced for 45 days of public comment.



St. Louis Trans Liberation March

Organizers Speak Out Against Police Brutality & Violence

"There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives."

— AUDRE LORDE

From January 1st, 2014 to today, 226 Trans women have been murdered. Just let that number soak in—that's almost one life lost every day this year. The Transgender Day of Remembrance is a time to grieve as a community. But on this day, we will not be silent. On the eve of "Thanksgiving," the busiest night for bars and clubs, we will take to the streets of The Grove and demand justice for our sisters. This is the time to bring your fire and passion and prepare to be visible in a huge way.

This is a formal complaint! We will cry aloud! This a large expression, a declaration of objection. Reservations are for restaurants—our disapproval will be heard. We will be peacefully uproarious. We will utter, articulate, sing, chant.

The voices of transgender people, our beloved trans sisters and unfostered people of color are at the vanguard of our movement! We are shouting on behalf of those who do not have a worldwide platform. We are tired of fleshly human beings being shoved to the margins of our political, social and emotional consciousness.

We will meet in the parking lot of Commerce

Bank, on the corner of Sarah St. and Chouteau Ave. We will have a guest speaker at 9:30pm, and begin marching together around 10:15pm. Dress warm, bring a sign or flag to carry, and prepare to be make a statement. 226 lives lost. We remember and we will never forget. The street is our medium for change!!!

#blacklivesmatter #blacktranslivesmatter
#nojusticeopeace



Photo from the march. Ferguson is just a few miles outside of St. Louis. Photo © Mike Sport

To those in solitary confinement in California

Critical Resistance has been heavily involved in supporting efforts by those in solitary confinement through our work to amplify the messages and demands of past peaceful actions. Currently we are working to identify a campaign that will most effectively succeed in meeting those demands. As a part of this process, we are asking people in solitary to correspond with members of our Solitary Project workgroup in

order to create better inside-outside working relationships, and to learn about your ideas for how to move forward. We also want to increase our contacts with family members and loved ones in order to deepen our collaboration and support their needs.

We would love to have your thoughts, experiences, and ideas included in this project to help inform our work. Would you be willing

to answer some questions? If so, please reply to this letter at the below address, and we will send you follow up questions. Please send your response to:

ATTN: Solitary Project
Critical Resistance Oakland
1904 Franklin Street, Suite 504
Oakland, CA 94612

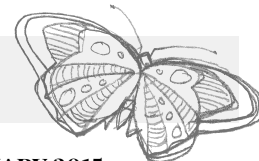
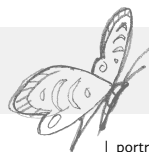
With respect,
Critical Resistance Oakland

Outreach to Trans Men and Intersex People

TGI Justice Projects centers and has traditionally focused on trans women's leadership, particularly, currently and formerly incarcerated trans women's, and most frequently Black trans women's leadership. Trans Women of Color's leadership will always drive TGJIP and at TGJIP we recognize that any movement for liberation of trans people will include all TGI people. In relationship with California Coalition for Women Prisoners and Justice Now, in 2015 TGJIP will be expanding our organizing work to include more trans men and intersex people to most broadly and accurately work to better

the conditions for our people inside and outside of the prison industrial complex. We feel that centering trans women of color's leadership is strategically necessary and we want to build power in our community in the broadest sense. As we work to identify interventions and solutions to the massive violence targeting TGI people, especially TGI people inside of prisons, jails and detention centers, we want to keep a focus on trans women while ensuring that our scope advances towards freedom and justice for all TGI people. TGJIP will be doing education

about issues impacting intersex people and will continue to be thinking about the impacts of institutionalized gender binary and control systems. In addition to building relationships with more of our people, we also are trying to find out more about the conditions of folks inside and the current context for our people, all of our people. Please be in touch if you are trans masculine or an intersex person and would like to engage with us in the endeavors to see a radically different system of justice. Thank you for your resilience and leadership!



OCTOBER 2014



Laverne Cox's TV show, *The T-Word*, debuted on MTV. *The T-Word* follows seven transgender youths (between the ages of 12 and 24) who tell their stories. "For many of us, the 'T' in LGBT means more than transgender, it also means truth," said Cox. "The cast members in this documentary are fearlessly living their truths and in sharing their stories will send the message to other trans youth that it's OK to be who you are."

NOVEMBER 2014

Janet Mock launched a Trans Book Drive on IndieGoGo that's raised \$10,000 to send reading materials and care packages to trans inmates through her organization partner LGBT Books For Prisoners.

In the world of online dating, OKCupid responded to mounting pressure to expand gender and sexuality options by rolling out nine new sexual orientation and 19 new gender choices. Google+ recently announced that they will accommodate "infinite" genders by allowing users to type in their own gender.

DECEMBER 2014



Transparent was honored with two Golden Globe nominations: for Best Comedy and Best Actor in a Comedy (Jeffrey Tambor). Transparent, created by Jill Soloway (of *Six Feet Under* and *United States of Tara*), has garnered acclaim for its humanistic, layered

portrayal of a late-life transitioner, Maura, and her decades-long struggle to come out to her very complicated family. The show is partially based on Soloway's own experiences after her parent came out as transgender in 2011.

Attorney General Eric Holder announced in December that the Department of Justice will no longer argue that transgender people are not covered by Title VII, the federal law that prohibits sex discrimination in employment.



Left to Right: Joe Biden, Barack Obama, and Eric Holder

Initial Victory in Trans Prisoner Case - Michelle Norsworthy, a transgender woman held in a California men's prison, was denied gender-affirming surgery, even though her treating psychologist had repeatedly concluded that it was medically necessary to treat her gender dysphoria. She was also denied a legal name change because the name she would like to use is a traditionally feminine name. Her lawyers argued that the prison system's discriminatory actions violate fundamental constitutional guarantees, including the Eighth Amendment prohibition of cruel and unusual punishment and the Equal Protection Clause. In a recent ruling, the federal judge hearing the case rejected the defendants' motion to dismiss the case. The judge held that the facts asserted in the complaint were sufficient to allege a violation of the Eighth Amendment based upon the denial of surgery, because the denial may have constituted "deliberate indifference" to her "serious medical needs." The judge also held that discrimination against transgender people is a form of sex discrimination and thus that Michelle's claims alleging discrimination based upon the denial of surgery and the denial of a legal name change are entitled to a heightened level of scrutiny under the Equal Protection Clause. The case will now proceed to the discovery phase.

JANUARY 2015



Portrait of Monica Jones, by Micah Bazant

Activists across the U.S. celebrated a victory when Monica Jones, who was arrested in May 2013 in Phoenix under a local law targeted at sex workers, won an appeal of her conviction. The ACLU tells the story: "When an undercover officer saw Monica Jones, a black transgender woman, walking down the street, it was enough to convince him that she intended to engage in prostitution. It was on that basis that he approached, stopped, and arrested her." On the news of her acquittal, Jones had this to say: "I am so grateful to my legal team and all of my supporters across the country and world. My conviction being vacated is important but it is a small win in our larger fight for justice."

For the first time in United States history, the President of the United States has acknowledged the importance of legal protections for transgender people during his State of the Union address to the American people. In his speech President Barack Obama stated, "As Americans, we respect human dignity... That's why we defend free speech, and advocate for political prisoners, and condemn the persecution of women, or religious minorities, or people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. We do these things not only because they're right, but because they make us safer." Masen Davis, Executive Director of Transgender Law Center, commented, "President Obama's public recognition of transgender people in his State of the Union address was historic. While it seems like a simple thing — saying the word 'transgender' in a speech — President Obama's statement represents significant progress for transgender people and the movement towards equality for all."

FEBRUARY 2015

Tennessee holds first trans visibility march, attended by over 100 trans people and allies.

Justice for Jennifer Laude!

U.S. Out of the Philippines!

BY GABRIELA USA

We are deeply saddened by the murder of Jennifer Laude, a 26-year old transgender woman from the Philippines, and express our deepest condolences to Jennifer's family and friends. On October 11, 2014, Jennifer was found dead, clearly the result of a violent hate crime towards transgender people. Her murder also underscores the ongoing inequality of joint US-RP agreements like the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) and the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) are military pacts that govern the entry and presence of American troops in Philippine territory, basically giving US military personnel impunity.

U.S. Marine PFC Joseph Scott Pemberton accused of killing Jennifer Laude in the Philippines, is now detained in Camp Aguinaldo under the "joint-custody" of both U.S. and Philippine authorities. We believe that both governments are making it appear that Pemberton is under Philippine authority

because of the overwhelming pressure from the people. However, the U.S. still is not fully surrendering jurisdiction to the Philippine government and proper detention, investigation and justice has yet to be served. The VFA is an obstruction to justice and enforces unequal relations

The extent of U.S. deployment in the Philippines costs an annual \$30 million allotted by the U.S. Congress and hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars in other assistance.

Such a practice, however, becomes unconscionable when U.S. funding is used by a regime that – to borrow words from President Barack Obama- "clings to power through corruption and deceit and the silencing of dissent," by using extrajudicial-killing, enforced disappearances, forced evacuation of rural communities, illegal detentions, and torture.

The VFA, despite the military exercises and aid, provides absolutely no short-term nor



Jennifer Laude. Photo via Facebook

long-term benefits to the people of either the U.S. or the Philippines. Filipino citizens have staged an escalating number of protests to voice their opposition to the Agreement and its violation of Philippine sovereignty.

In October, GABRIELA USA and BAYAN organized and led protests across the USA to protest transphobia and imperialism. In SF a hundred people, mostly cis-gender came together with leaders of El/La Para TransLatinas and TGJP to advance towards justice and liberation.

First transgender mayor elected in central India

EDITING BY ALISA TANG, REPRINTED FROM REUTERS | JANUARY 5, 2015

NEW DELHI (Thomson Reuters Foundation) - A city in central India has elected the country's first transgender mayor, nine months after a court ruled that transgender be recognized as a legal third gender, local media reported.

Madhu Kinnar, 35, won the mayoral election in Raigarh in the mineral-rich state of Chhattisgarh on Sunday, beating her opponent from the governing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) by more than 4,500 votes, the Press Trust of India reported in a story published on the news web site Firstpost.com.

Television images showed a sari-clad Kinnar, with a large red bindi on her forehead, greeting supporters who placed marigold garlands around her neck.

Kinnar - who is from the Dalit or "low caste" community and used to earn a living singing

and dancing in trains - said that she was overwhelmed by her election.

"People have shown faith in me. I consider this win as love and blessings of people for me. I'll put in my best efforts to accomplish their dreams," Kinnar was quoted as saying.

"It was the public support that encouraged me to enter the poll fray for the first time and because of their support only, I emerged as the winner."

Activists say there are hundreds of thousands of transgender people in India, but because they were not legally recognized, they faced ostracism, discrimination, abuse and forced prostitution.

Last April, India's Supreme Court recognized transgender as a legal third gender and called on the government to ensure their equal treatment.

While the landmark judgment was welcomed by human rights campaigners, many say it contradicts the court's reinstatement of a gay sex ban that has resulted in an increase in the persecution of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people, forcing many to conceal their sexual identity.



Madhu Kinnar, India's first transgender mayor



Left-to-right: Nala Simone Toussaint, Katrina Goodlett

that the mainstream media reports on trans women of color?

KG: So for me these stories don't get it right. The reporting is often times shabby and sensationalized and is focused more on victim shaming and blaming than actually reporting facts. The fact is trans women of color are being viciously attacked and murdered. In most cases the attacker was a longtime lover or friend who knew about her truth (so that old meme of "the guy didn't know she was trans" is bull crap). Every time I hear another story it's like a dagger to my gut. I have stopped reading the articles due to all the misgendering and transphobic comments that people bring up. Just look at the recent murder of Mia Henderson, for example. The murders will get reported in the news spin cycle and then forgotten about a day or two later. The fact is society and the media sees the lives of Trans women of color as disposable and invisible. Folks have to educate themselves; we live in a digital age for crying out loud. Willful ignorance is not an excuse.

TCF: How can we raise awareness of violence against trans women of color and move towards eradicating the violence altogether?

NST: Education is key to the process of creating change. We must broaden our understanding of 'violence' against trans folks. Violence is not just a stranger holding a knife; it can come from intimate partners, friends, family, and can be as simple as someone kicking one out of a bathroom, calling a trans woman a 'man', or certain states not allowing the change of gender markers on state IDs. We must acknowledge that it usually starts at an institutional level. For this reason, there is a call for action from trans folks and allies to unite, rally, and lobby until justice is served for the countless murders of trans women of color.

TCF: Violence and criminalization are issues that affect our society as a whole (particularly people of color), but far too often people

outside of the LGBTQ community feel violence against trans people is "not my issue," which further contributes to the silencing of trans women of color's experiences and to a lack of political mobilization by people who should be allies. What does it mean to be a good ally?

KG: Thank you for asking this question. This is one of those issues that rarely gets talked about! I don't get folk who follow that mantra of "this is not my issue." Um, actually it is a Human Rights issue, so we all need to be involved. The fact is at the root cause of all this violence against trans women of color is racial injustice, and until we eradicate that, we will most likely continue to be attacked. The facts are my white trans sisters are not being attacked as frequently as my trans sisters of color; this is not a coincidence! It all comes back to race, class and privilege, and that is what I wish our allies in the black community would understand. Allyship is not a retweet; it's not a Facebook "like." Allyship is actually doing the work to help elevate the lived experiences of transfolk. It is providing a platform for trans women of color to tell their stories, providing resources or guiding them to resources that help them, holding other folks accountable who misgender, victim shame, or use transphobic language in daily conversation. Allies can also donate to trans-affirming organizations like the Trans Women of Color Collective, the Audre Lorde Project, the Sylvia Rivera Law Project, or Trans Tech Social.

NST: People outside the LGBTQ community who feel it's "not my issue" are allowing world destruction. Have we not witnessed and/or learned about the historical legacies of segregation, discrimination, racism, imperialism, capitalism, classism, sexism, and other kinds of oppressive hierarchies that lead to wars and death? The lack of involvement also is a reflection of internalized phobias and self-oppression for those who have allowed the 'system' to drive their thoughts and actions. What if those murdered were someone in your family: sisters, daughters, cousins, etc.? Being an ally means supporting trans women, speaking out against the violence on trans women of color when you see it, placing them in leadership roles, and funding works/organizations that are for trans women of color and lead by trans women of color.

TCF: Katrina, you were invited to The White House last month for the signing of President

Obama's Executive Order to protect LGBT government employees from workplace discrimination. What was that experience like for you?

KG: Yes, I was asked to go The White House for the Executive Order signing. It was an amazing experience to be in the same room as the POTUS and to walk the corridors of The White House. However, I have to be completely transparent. I was disappointed in the lack of persons of color represented at the event. I was the only (to my knowledge) "out" trans woman of color at that event, and that is unacceptable. D.C has plenty of amazing folk doing the work, including Ruby Corado, who founded Casa De Ruby. But it's like I said on my radio show this week: trans women of color are often an afterthought in this society.

Goddess Queen sister Katrina Goodlett is an African American Transgender Woman of Color who is also the Producer/Host of The Kitty Bella Show on Blog Talk Radio. Katrina, who was born and raised in NYC, faced many struggles growing up including Transphobic attacks and violence. Katrina overcame some of her oppression and graduated college in 2005 and has worked as a government employee for 10 years. Katrina brings her past experience as a journalist and writer into her new show. She strongly believes the voices and actual lived experiences of transfolk need to be heard!! Katrina loves watching basketball and traveling. Katrina created the empowerment campaign #tgirlsrock in 2013 to raise the visibility and empower transfolk thru clothing.

Nala Simone Toussaint works with the Center For HIV Educational Studies and Training (CHEST) as a Peer Health Navigator working with trans women to support their health goals and wellbeing. In May 2012, She earned her BFA in Fashion Design (cum laude) from the Fashion Institute of Technology. Although her concentration and degree were centered on fashion design, she also has extensive experience working with at-risk youth as a youth mentor and outreach liaison. Toussaint plans to start an organization that helps trans women and youth receive professional makeovers, attend educational workshops, and develop strategies that will guide them as they enter the job market.

Trans Women of Color Speaking Truth to Power

A Conversation with Activists Katrina Goodlett and Nala Simone Toussaint

BY TANISHA C. FORD, REPRINTED FROM THE FEMINIST WIRE WITH PERMISSION

Trans women of color are fighting to gain greater visibility for trans issues while also creating safe spaces for themselves. Prominent figures such as Janet Mock and Laverne Cox have brilliantly used their public platforms to address the criminalization and social "othering" of trans women of color in popular media and culture. But far too often the voices of the other women at the vanguard of the movement—those who do not have a global platform—are pushed to the margins of our social and political consciousness. This creates a dangerous silence that muffles the diverse narratives and experiences of trans women of color as well as their radical political perspectives and strategies.

I had the opportunity to speak with two women committed to grassroots activism for trans sisters of color. Katrina Goodlett and Nala Simone Toussaint are co-founding members of the New York-based Trans Women of Color Collective (TWOCC). The TWOCC is devoted to "creating revolutionary change by uplifting the narratives, leadership and lived experiences of trans women of color." Goodlett is the host/producer of Blog Talk Radio's "The Kitty Bella Show," a weekly radio show dedicated to highlighting trans people of color in various industries and trans-centered social justice issues. Toussaint is a fashion designer and youth advocate for the Center for HIV Educational Studies and Training. Together, they offered insight on the most pressing issues facing trans women of color, what it means to be a good ally, and President Obama's LGBT non-discrimination Executive Order.

TCF: Katrina, why is radio such a powerful medium through which to share the narratives and perspectives of trans women of color? Who have you had on your show?

KG: Radio is a great medium to tell our stories. Radio takes the emphasis off what the person looks like and makes the "audience" focus more on what is being said. Transfolks' looks and bodies are often objectified in the media, and

that shifts the focus off the *real* issues. Also, for me, radio is just a safer platform for my guest as well as myself. When I say safe, I mean the interview can be done from their home or bedroom via a telephone or computer; there's no need to meet in public or at a studio. Online radio also allows me to podcast every single show I've done, and that is recorded history, something we lack in the Trans Community (a historical record of our lived experiences). Whew, I have had some amazing guests, Tanisha! *New York Times* best selling author Janet Mock, awarding winning filmmaker and visual artist Dr. Kortney Ziegler, activist-educator Lourdes Ashley Hunter, youth activist Nala Simone, blogger Monica Roberts, and psychic healer Noah Alvarez have all been on my show. The beauty of my show is the diversity in not just content but in the actual lived experiences of my guest.

TCF: Nala, what do you feel are the most pressing issues trans youth of color face today?

NST: Trans youth of color face a variety of barriers just for living nonopologically in their truth. Trans and gender nonconforming youth need love, compassion, and justice. They also need proper health care, financial stability, housing, and environments that are conducive for them to learn while living their authentic

truth. Youths of all experiences should have classes dealing with topics like gender identity. In order to dismantle the dehumanization of Trans folks, we *all* need to educate our youths at an early age; allowing Trans youth that are basking in their journey of living in their truth to live comfortably. This process can happen once the adults open their minds and hearts, continue to educate each other, and create a popular language that recognizes the fact that gender never stands alone.

TCF: You're both active in the TWOCC. How was the organization founded, and what are its major goals?

KG: The TWOCC was founded in the wake of Islan Nettles's death last August 2013. Several amazing leaders in the community including: Lourdes Hunter, Koko Jones, Nala Simone, Vanessa Victoria, Kiara St. James, Janet Mock, Octavia St. Lewis, Laverne Cox, and a few others took the pain and hurt that we experienced at the Islan Nettles vigil and said, "ENOUGH is ENOUGH," "NOT ONE MORE." During the vigil, Islan was misgendered and called out of her name by the event leaders who were not inclusive of any input from trans women of color. We are the ones that are being killed everyday, so we need to be the ones leading the memorials for our sisters. We decided to form our own collective to have our own voice and to hold folks, including ourselves, accountable. The collective is also about fostering sisterhood and love amongst each other in order to pull each other up when we are down and to always "check-in". I'm a co-founding Board member and Chair of Membership. We can be found on Twitter.

TCF: Several trans women of color have been murdered this year (and most murders go unreported). How were you were affected by these murders and the often problematic ways

Prisons Are Not Sexy

TGIJP leads in community response to Pride At The Armory's prison theme party

On June 28, 2014, the world's largest Pride after party took a strong step towards injustice by throwing a prison themed play party called "Prison of Love." At a time when public discussion and media finally had an eye toward the daily systemic violence against trans and queer people, this party theme and promotions were especially harmful and trivializing. Miss Major, TGI Justice Project, Janet Mock, El/La Para TransLatinas, Community United Against Violence, Trans March, and many other organizations and individuals organized against and sent an open letter to Pride At The Armory promoters letting them know why prisons are not sexy and demanding that they change their theme. Organizers with Gay Shame and LAGAL organized a protest at the party.

**From our open letter:
Prisons Are Not Sexy**

This year at least three SF Pride grand marshals are trans women who have been directly affected by the prison industrial complex. Chelsea Manning is currently incarcerated, Miss Major is previously incarcerated and was politicized at Attica just after the 1971 uprising, and Jewelys Gutierrez was arrested for defending herself from bullies in her high school. The prison industrial complex and the

incarceration of generations of people of color, gender variant, trans people, and queer people is not a sexy trope to throw a play party around. It's not that we don't love sex, sex parties, sex workers, and kink. It's that we love it as much as we love justice, and are appalled by the casual use of the Prison Industrial Complex, which destroys the lives of millions of people and kills thousands every year, as a party theme. The United States has the highest incarceration rate in the world. In our own LGBTQI communities, incarceration and significant abuses perpetrated by the Prison Industrial Complex constitutes no less than a crisis. According to the National Center for Transgender Equality, nearly 1 in 6 transgender people have been incarcerated at some point in their lives. Among Black transgender people, 47% have been incarcerated at some point in their lives. These rates overwhelmingly reflect the experiences of transgender women and especially trans women of color, who are housed in men's prisons and face catastrophic rates of physical abuse, psychological terror, rape and sexual assault, and death. According to Just Detention International, 67% of LGBT prisoners reported being assaulted while in prison. Not only is our queer community being harmed, the War on Drugs and the increasing

privatization of prisons has created a phenomenon of mass incarceration of young Black and Latino men, and increasingly women too, which has economically, socially, and politically devastated these communities. We are not interested in yucking anyone's yum or shaming anyone who has fantasies or fetishes about ideas of this real-life violence. We are not interested in censorship or policing anyone's sex life. We are interested in public space and party themes that get us closer to liberation from systemic and administrative violence and do not recreate a culture that normalizes or continues our oppression. Our push back is about navigating the legal and extra-legal targeting and criminalization of our communities.

The party promoters did not respond by meeting our demands to change the theme nor to donate proceeds to trans and queer community anti-violence organizing projects, but lots of community power and collaborative relationships was built. Not the total victory we wanted, but momentum was built for justice, and when our communities come away stronger, clearer, and more able to push back, then the movement wins! Onwards towards a day without prisons, jails or detention centers!

Southern Poverty Law Center Case

SPLC demands Georgia Department of Corrections provide transgender prisoner with necessary hormone treatment

When Ashley Diamond was sentenced to prison, she didn't realize the state of Georgia would force her to change her gender as well. But since entering prison in 2012, the transgender woman has been denied the female hormones she has been receiving since age 17, roughly half her life.

"I am only asking for respect," said Diamond, who is currently held at Valdosta State Prison. "No one would deny a diabetic prisoner insulin. No one would sentence a person to a gender change."

The Georgia Department of Corrections' (GDC) actions violate the Eighth Amendment's ban on cruel and unusual punishment as well as the prison system's own policies.

The need for transgender inmates to continue such hormone therapy has been recognized by the National Commission on Correctional Health Care and the National Institute of Corrections. Federal Bureau of Prison standards require that inmates in Diamond's situation receive hormone treatment and access to mental health providers familiar with transgender care.

TGIJP salutes Ashley Diamond for continuing to pursue appropriate medical access and an end to cruel and unusual punishment and appreciates Southern Poverty Law Center for representing Ashley. Thank you all for your leadership! Be safe and stay strong!



San Francisco Organizations form TAJA's Coalition in the Spirit of Taja de Jesus

TAJA's Coalition organized *Trans Liberation Tuesday* on Tuesday, February 10, 2015



Michelle P. West
Trans women of color participate in a die-in at Trans Liberation Tuesday, February 10, 2015

The Trans Activists for Justice and Accountability Coalition ("TAJA's Coalition") is united in anger and outrage over the murder of Taja de Jesus. Taja Gabrielle de Jesus was stabbed to death on the streets of San Francisco's Bayview neighborhood on February 1, 2015. Taja was only 36 years old and friends and family describe her as a sweet, light-hearted and caring woman with a passion for music and a love for fashion. She was deeply involved in her community and her faith, volunteered at her local food bank, always had a smile and a story to share and constantly lit up a room. Taja was close to her family in San Jose and found acceptance and community in San Francisco. She remained positive and resilient in the face of many struggles and was relentless in pursuing her wellness.

We recognize this epidemic of violence against and murder of trans women, particularly trans women of color, as being deeply rooted in systemic racism, trans misogyny, class inequity, and lack of access to affordable housing for trans communities. This is a national crisis in which the most vulnerable members of our community are fighting for their lives. In Taja's memory, we will not relent in demanding justice.

Our communities are chronically underserved, over-policed and criminalized, and subject to violence at every turn. Trans women of color are up to 7 times more likely to feel

unsafe in their daily lives than cisgender people, and experience pervasive safety concerns about where to live, socialize, and receive basic services according to a just-released LGBTQ Violence Prevention Needs Assessment compiled by the SF LGBT Center and the San Francisco Human Rights Commission.

A call to action issued for **Trans Liberation Tuesday** demanded an end to the systemic violence targeting trans communities. The agenda for the action included a powerful demonstration on the steps of SF City Hall, including speeches from local movement leadership who are trans women of color, a symbolic "die in" and a very passionate testimonial session at the City Board of Supervisors meeting.

TAJA's Coalition has issued the following demands in advance of Tuesday's action:

1. **We demand that cisgender people end violence against trans communities**, and particularly transgender women of color. Transphobia and violence against trans people is not a trans problem. It is a problem rooted in and created by cisgender people, and there is a call to see active support of and participation in local and national efforts to create resources, access and justice for our trans communities.

2. Trans communities need safety and access to resources, not jails. **We demand that all plans for a new jail in San Francisco be ceased**, and that no new jail construction is included in any City planning or budget **with funds being**

routed instead to trans community programming, especially re-entry support and anti-violence work, with respect for the depth of work not the quantity.

3. **We demand safe, affordable, and accessible housing for trans people.** The rising cost of living in San Francisco, fueled by municipal protections for corporate interests at the expense of our most vulnerable residents, has forced countless trans people into unsafe living situations. Additionally, the massive gentrification of the Mission, Tenderloin, and SOMA neighborhoods in the past two years has displaced countless residents. San Francisco must shift its priorities away from protecting corporations and toward providing affordable housing for all who need it and particularly creating affordable housing services, safe housing programs and more safe spaces for trans people.

4. **We demand that San Francisco form a transgender commission.**



Poster from the event

TGI Justice and #BlackLivesMatter

Transgender Gender Variant Intersex Justice Project is in Solidarity With the People of Ferguson

AUGUST 22, 2014

The leadership team of TGI Justice holds solidarity with the family of Mike Brown and the people of Ferguson, who have endured unspeakable human rights abuses at the hands of law enforcement including and following the police murder of Mr. Brown on August 9th. TGI Justice Project is a group of transgender people—inside and outside of prison—creating a united family in the struggle for survival and



Woods Ervin and dann i west

freedom. We work in collaboration with others to forge a culture of resistance and resilience to strengthen us for the fight against imprisonment, police violence, racism, poverty, and societal pressures. We seek to create a world rooted in self determination, freedom of expression, and gender justice.

We share your pain and outrage at the loss of yet another young Black man's life and the subsequent assault on your community by police, and call these assaults out as clear and irrefutable examples of the deep, systemic racism that informs the Prison Industrial Complex in this country. This is a system that leaves our brothers, sisters, and loved ones dying in the streets or locked up in unconscionable numbers in a dehumanizing network of jails, deportation centers, and prisons. This is a system deeply rooted in a long and consistent history of gendered racial injustice in the United States. This is a system that seeks to rob us of our most

essential dignities as humans, and we are here to say that we join you in the struggle against the racist police state and towards a future of self-determination for our communities.

As an organization led by formerly incarcerated Black transgender women, we are certainly no strangers to police profiling, systemic criminalization, and brutality at the hands of law enforcement. We are with you in heart, spirit, and action as you push back against those in power who would try to kill, harm, degrade, and silence you. The revolutionary work you are doing in the streets of Ferguson, standing tall in the face of what must be unbearable grief, empowers and emboldens us.

We want you to know that the eyes of the world are on Ferguson, and that your sisters, brothers, and loved ones in the San Francisco Bay Area join you in demanding justice.

Be safe and stay strong,
TGI Justice Project Leadership Team

DECEMBER 24, 2014

To our beloved members, supporters, friends, and allies: Genderific greetings from the [work] in the SF Bay Area! TGI Justice Project salutes the militant, focused, non-violent and popular actions in Ferguson and across the world rising up against policing and state violence while affirming that #BlackLivesMatter. We are proud of TGI Justice Project's participation in the response to police violence and the non-indictment of the murderers of Michael Brown and Eric Garner. Our staff and members have been out in the streets, in coalition meetings, at actions, in each-one-teach-one conversations with people as we move through the world. We have been alongside other TGI people showing up to demonstrate that no business as usual will be tolerated, that this ends today. TGI Justice Project appreciates the consideration and solidarity being extended to TGI people who are putting their bodies into the action of resistance and survival; appreciates the care from community in police vans, the attention

and unity as binary jail housing is enforced on protestors, the looking out for each other as tear gas is shot, and all the ways we are holding, loving and supporting one another in this struggle as we make sure no is left behind. Amidst the uprisings, we have endured the continued violence against trans women of color that was so present in 2014. Early in December, our siblings in the trans liberation struggle down in L.A. lost a wonderful community leader to gun violence. Rest In Power Deshawnda Sanchez. Days later, our community in Georgia had a sister torn from them when Keymori Shatoya Johnson was murdered. In this moment of anguish and anger, in a year of heightened violence against Black trans women and trans women of color, TGI Justice Project has been heartened and grounded by the truth that the fierce queer women's leadership behind #BlackLivesMatter is building a movement that understands that Black Lives means all Black Lives: Black

Trans Lives, Black Women's Lives, Black Queer Lives, Black Poor Lives, Black People-with-Disabilities' Lives, Black Survivors' Lives. While policing and criminalization disproportionately affect the Black Trans community, it is the entire reach of our family that is endangered by the devaluing of Black and Brown lives. TGI Justice Project celebrates this moment as a movement moment, a time when we are part of a collective process of changing the course of everyone's lives by strategically focusing on changing the conditions of Black life in this country. We are here among and with you all in the Bay Area and across the country. We at TGI Justice Project believe that we will win! **#TransPeopleInTheStruggle #Solidarity #BlackLivesMatter**

Be Safe and Stay Strong!

Love,
The TGI Justice Family

movements, our communities and our families.

For centuries, the devastating consequences of U.S. imperialism have been the order of the day for third world people from Vietnam to Korea, from the Dakotas to Haiti, from the Philippines to Palestine to Pakistan, from Hawaii to Mexico, and from Ferguson to Staten Island. We stand together today in the name of Dr. King, Malcolm X, the Black Panthers, Brown Berets, Red Guard, and American Indian Movement who took on the state-sanctioned attacks on our communities directly, elevating the struggle against state violence and for an end to the capitalist system that deploys killer

cops and militarized repression against our people.

In the words of Malcolm X: *"It is incorrect to classify the revolt of the Negro as simply a racial conflict of Black against White, or as a purely American problem. Rather, we are today seeing a global rebellion of the oppressed against the oppressor, the exploited against the exploiter."*

Justice for Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Tamir Rice and all victims of police: End State Violence!

**From Palestine to Ferguson to Haiti to the Philippines: Fight Back!
Long Live International Solidarity!**

"THIRD WORLD RESISTANCE" Participating Organizations and Allies: Anakbayan-USA, AROC: Arab Resource & Organizing Center, Asians4BlackLives, AYPAL, BAYAN-USA, BASAT: Bay Area Solidarity Action Team, BLIS: Black/BrownLatin@s in Solidarity, Catalyst Project, Critical Resistance, Freedom Archives, Gabriela-USA, Haiti Action Committee, HOBAK: Hella Organized BayArea Koreans, IJAN: International Jewish Anti Zionist Network, the International League of People's Struggles, Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, Ruckus Society, VietUnity, Xican@Moratorium

Black Liberation is for All of Us

BY ANNIE DANGER

Black lives matter? Oh yes, please. As a white woman (as a person with a heart!), but also particularly as a white woman), I am avidly in support of anything and everything black people are doing to get free. I am not worried about how to get mine, I am only concerned with how I can best support this new expansion of the Black Liberation Movement of the 50s, 60s, and 70s.

For me, it goes like this: I see anti-black racism somewhere near the center of every issue of oppression in this country. Be it outright anti-blackness or the pervasive bias based on relative darkness of skin color, the prison system or the job market, the ongoing legacy of the enslavement of black Africans during the first few centuries of colonialism in North America touches everything we do and are. The legacy of slavery forms the foundation of every institution and taints every social interaction in ways that daily attack the lives of black people in this country.

When you start counting up the ways that anti-black racism impacts the daily lives of black people in this country (rates of imprisonment, police murders, economic imbalances and biases, lack of access to housing/food/healthcare/education/jobs...) you count quickly past "hard times", "racism is bad", and "oppression is harsh on all of us" all the way up to genocide. Genocide is being enacted on black people in this country.

And as a low-income, white, trans woman I have it easier than black trans women in my position. If I look deeper into every part of my life where I have access or safety or a trust that I'll be okay, it is built on the legacy of white people enacting violence on black, brown, and native bodies and very much on the legacy of white people lifting ourselves through the subjugation of black people. My comfort is tied to this genocide.

As a person conscious of these issues, I view it as my responsibility to take part in liberation struggles which seek to right this horrible imbalance power. Accordingly, I have nothing but love and support for this new blossoming of black liberation struggle in the US. What a privilege to get to fight for the liberation of other people! What a scary challenge to try and do it well and in ways that use the resources I have to add to the struggle, not make it about myself.

When I hear people correct "Black Lives Matter" to "All lives matter", I hear people trying to get theirs instead of supporting this moment of liberation for black people. So many lives matter. But bringing justice into our society is a lifetime of work to be done. We will have to work together every step of the way if we want to truly get liberation. And that story won't get told all at once. It happens a sentence at a time. Which means the sentence we're on right now is just that: the next step.

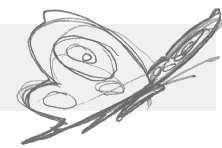
We will make all lives matter and right now our job (our current sentence in the story of liberation) is to bring a halt to the genocide being enacted on black people in this country still.

And when we win—when all black people are free to flourish—we will have fundamentally changed the whole system. The same one that oppresses me as a low-income person, as a trans woman, as a woman. Because this whole system which is enacting genocide on black people in the US is all one big knot of oppression and profit. Racist police violence enforces gentrification. Prisons make money off of each inmate and offer the only jobs in some communities to COs willing to enact their racist policies. Giant corporations make money exploiting the needs and job insecurity of poor people with few options, many of whom are people of color and immigrants. It's all tied together. You can't pull one strand without pulling the whole ball of yarn. So if we get freedom for black people, we will have had to get it for everyone.

There are many inroads to the better world we all wish we lived in. Picking and choosing which one is right won't get us anywhere fast. If we respect the fact that black people need freedom and trust that there is room for everyone at the table of liberation, we'll fight hard to make this moment into a movement.

Centering the liberation of black people right now means lunging toward liberation for all of us together.

Letters from the Inside



If you want to know me

BY FATIMA SHAYLA PEARL, CALIFORNIA

If you want to know me then you need to know how I flow, because there's more to me than looking pretty and the way my hips sashay to and fro, more to me than my fashion forward clothes or how I stand tall like an African queen in my four-inch stilettos.

If you really wanna know about me, then you need to know about all those dark nights, and all those dark years I spent crying for redemption, shedding buckets of tears. The soul searing pain I suffered trying to conquer my fears. You need to know about how looking like a boy but living like a girl damn near killed me, being judged and mis-judged by a hateful jury of my hateful peers, you wanna know me you need to know about those tears.

You wanna know me, you need to know about my life on the street accumulating millions of emotional scars, and girl I got some stories to tell about jumping in and out of random cars, and the backseat fights for my life that gave me physical scars. Let me tell you the story of how my best friend had his best friends gang rape me. How the thought taking turns fucking me would only hurt me like all I did was scrape my knee, I'll tell you all that, since you want to know me.

Knowing me means knowing I've seen just as many of my sisters die in dark alleys on cold nights as I have my brothers die on dark streets in gun fights, truth is in all these high profile rainbow fights no one really gives a damn about a "tranny whore's" gay rights, or her drug addiction, or her HIV condition, and believe me that dude with his dick in my mouth ain't hittin' on me with a better job proposition, all he's offering me is another \$50.00 to put me in the face down ass up position so his friend can fuck me too, the way these cops and judges do.

See, you seem to think it's easy being me but shit like gang rape can change your perception of reality, but, you said you want to get to know me... you wanna know me you need to know that this hard look in my eyes comes from too many years of selling my ass in unfair back alley deals to people who don't care about my bills, only how good my head game feels.

So you can spare me the I want to get to know you better bull—because I won't be doing any interviews for any of your sensationalist puff piece talk shows, cheesing for the camera while your disrespectful producers try to disrespect my femininity with dumb ass before and after photos.

A Place I'll Never Call Home

BY D. NELSON

The pain and hurt always endured Shame and blame I knew that could, Could continue its path with no regret Nightmare and hatred posed with a threat, Wish I could move dozens of mountains, Pursue a dream with love and confidence, All I do is home and hope to no avail, A place on earth I'll always call hell, What's the measure of wrong or right, Death creepin' within my sight, I don't know whether to run, or give, It's gonna always take over and win, Where are the things I can do, So messed up on old and new, Places I can't go can abolish me, Hell in home it could never be, A place I'll never call home!

The Person Inside Me...

BY PUNKIN SCOVIL

It's a different world than where I come from And so I must adjust. I find it hard to be myself But yet, I know I must. I do not hide my feelings Or who I chose to be Because I want this world to know The person inside me. And so I just oblige I give them all I've got. I do not hold back nothing I teach what I've been taught. I answer every question That is thrown my way I tell this world about myself I have so much to say. Although there may be times In which I must refrain The person who's inside me Rejects the inner pain Her will is very strong A credit to this race You can see that life's been hard on her By the look upon her face But yet she still stands strong With dignity, with pride And love and understanding From the person who's inside...

Unconquered

BY B. "SHYLA" THOMPSON

Veins run with women's blood which burns within of hatred discrimination Born into the world of oppression They seek to suppress our ways To deteriorate my spirit-n-minds The native woman is worthy of the ancestor's ways Their legacy been handed down through many generations My blood flows freely through which society tries to diminish my own very being Constructing concrete With twisted metal, sharp-n-shiny Enforcing made-up laws Trying to contain and break me My image does not conformed But makes my desire—everlasting Goals of mine ever expanding The skin I'm into woven Derive from this beautiful land Yet I'm outcast into a Misfit My crimson red color bleeds for Bravery and Honor consumes my being Our people ways outright rejected Defined by my afflictions I knocked down repeatedly Though, still standing strongly Torn through—fully compromised Despite all my afflictions These chains can't bind my worthy red woman's spirit Their lies don't hold me down nor does these walls That restrict my sight Because why... I am an unconquered woman!

Untitled

BY STEVEN THOMAS

The walls and stones of every prison are imbued with the memories and folklore of the convicts who made their lives therein—steeped with all their many sorrows and fears—laughter and tears—who if could speak—would whisper of them across the passage of years.

Those within the free world are amazed by the innumerable anecdotes of events and experiences which abound and circulate within prison cultures—some of which achieve the status of legend among the convicts—the details of most are lost within a generation or two—for rarely are they given written form—shared orally among only the prisoners and their families.

LETTERS FROM THE INSIDE (CONTINUED)



Give This Day A Goal

BY AL CUNNINGHAM

Give this day a goal, or two or three or a dozen. Then set about one by one, to make them happen. You can accomplish just about anything you ask of yourself. Yet in order to accomplish, you do need to ask. Make your goals specific and clear. When you know exactly what you intend to do, You're well on your way to getting it done. Make your goals meaningful and memorable. The more they mean to you, the less likely you are to become sidetracked by all the distractions that will come your way. You now have this day which to work. Give yourself something meaningful to make of it. Give this day a goal, With your energy focused on accomplishment. And this day, in return will give you great value that lasts for a long long time.

Remember Stonewall of 1969

BY REV. DR. KIMBERLY JADE MCBRIDE

Our people have a great and rich history that is as old as time. We are making huge advances in our civil rights which are granted by God and by the U.S. Constitution. Yet, our people in the penal system are still denied basic human rights. We cannot even get married to the one we love unless one of us is not behind these walls.

We are still being harassed and mistreated, and yet how long shall it go on? I will answer this question: as long as we do nothing as a family then we will continue to suffer. But, this means from within and without.

When HIV/AIDS hit the prison system and people were dying the outside community Acted Up. But, what has happened? I believe since the LGBT Outside Family has gotten what the wanted, i.e.: gays in open military service, right to marry, etc.; then us inside are lost because CDCR (and other stat prison systems) encourage discrimination. How?

LGBT custody staff and free staff are the hardest on us. They believe they need to show they are not "punks" and thus we get the worst treatment from our own.

I will close this by simply saying: unless we stand as one we all fall separately.

May God direct the path we walk. May we all join as one and remember our roots. We are family, we are community, we are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and more than anything PROUD!

Remember Stonewall of 1969!

Dear Society

BY OKEY

Strong in my Resolve
to Dissolve
The labels
"You" Place
To Disgrace my
Wo-man-Hood
"You" call me
Transvestite!
Faggot!
Homo!
Queer!
Because "You" fear
my Individuality?
I can't understand
Your Demands
For me to Fit In
"You" can not define me

In Hue's of
Pink or Blue
I dare to be Different!!!
I color outside of the Lines
I live outside of the Proverbial Box
I can't understand
Your Demands
For me to
Fit in...

We Are "Colors of Our Rainbow"...

BY NINA MCQUEEN

Wondering souls of the rainbow, Self-navigating through the fog of gender bias. Hollow hearths filled with jaded love, but unwilling to darken, motivated by the truth of our man and womanhood. Unbowed by societies shattered reflection of who we are. We walk beside our rainbow colors of red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple. They comfort us in our journey for equality. Who are we, we are your sisters and brothers, mothers and fathers. We are your friends and co-workers, we are LGBT. Feel our colors and then you will know our hearths, see our colors and respect our journey. Being LGBT isn't a flaw, we are the glitter of the world. So even when bigotry and hatred rains down on us there will always be the colors of our rainbow shining through with righteousness.

All My Lovers Ways To Me

BY SOLERIC GULBRONSON

It's what I feel in your arms that makes me who I am
This one of a kind love when we're walking hand in hand
I'm standing on the edge and I could fall forever
Baby you're the only one who makes me feel this way
Everything about you and every single day
I just wanna hold you until this pain goes away
And I know this is a once in a lifetime thing
To be your lover and know the joy you bring
When we're together I begin to see
Baby how much you really mean to me
Free... to be myself with you
There's nothing I wouldn't do—for you
You'll never realize and never have a clue
Just what it is your love can truly do.

Free

BY B. "SHYLA" THOMPSON

As I've laid down quietly
Thinking of what could of been,
Instead, trapped within these walls,
Wishing I was in your arms.
Holding close to my heart
Wishing I could be with you
Instead of this living hell!
Miss the kisses, caresses so softly
Holding tenderly with warm embrace
Oh I wish I was free...
Free! To be with my darling so sweet
Pain and regrets we've shared
It's hard to remember
When it was, to be with you
That I've become like these walls
Trapped... forever it seems
I wish, that I was set free
Free! To be with you
Where I can feel your breath
Just one last time. I only wish for
To feel you, to be free
Oh! The pain we've shared
The darkness that engulfs my spirit
Makes my heart ache...just to be free...
Free. Forever!
Sorry love... It seems the only way
You know that I've always loved you
To my last dying breath
I'm free finally...
I love you forever. You're my darling...
...my freedom!

OFFICIAL STATEMENT: THIRD WORLD RESISTANCE FOR BLACK POWER

Reclaiming MLK's Legacy of Militant Internationalism

Linking Third World Struggle With Black Resistance

"Before long they must know that their government has sent them into a struggle among Vietnamese, and the more sophisticated surely realize that we are on the side of the wealthy, and the secure, while we create a hell for the poor. Somehow this madness must cease. We must stop now. I speak as a child of God and brother to the suffering poor of Vietnam. I speak for those whose land is being laid waste, whose homes are being destroyed, whose culture is being subverted. I speak for the poor of America who are paying the double price of smashed hopes at home, and death and corruption in Vietnam. I speak as a citizen of the world, for the world as it stands aghast at the path we have taken."

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. IN *BEYOND VIETNAM – A TIME TO BREAK SILENCE*, 1967

To kick off Martin Luther King Jr. weekend, thirdworld people and allies have shut down the Oakland Federal Building to demonstrate our support for the heightened struggle for Blackliberation, power, self-defense and self-determination in the U.S. The verdicts in the cases of Michael Brown, Eric Garner and Tamir Rice, have drawn renewed attention to the ways that policing and the "justice system" are used to wage war on Black communities in service of imperialism and white supremacy that continues to undergird this country. For MLK weekend, we are reclaiming the militancy and internationalism that was the hallmark of the last phase of Dr. King's life.

We join international movements for the liberation of Palestine, Haiti, and the Philippines, for indigenous sovereignty in Hawaii, for native peoples in the U.S. and Mexico, and for immigrant, worker, queer/transgender, and youth justice in communities in solidarity with the resurging calls to build "Black Power" and "Black Resistance" alongside the original nationwide galvanizing statement that "BlackLives Matter!"

Today's action targets the Oakland Federal Building because of its role in promoting a war on Black people and people's struggles for self-determination in the U.S. and around the world. Protecting their imperialist economic

interests, the U.S. and its collaborators like Israel and its puppet states like the Philippines are co-developing and deploying military and policing tactics in an attempt to perfect techniques of counter-insurgency, crowd and population control, surveillance, and the militarization of local police forces. In the Bay Area, people struggling against surveillance, policing, detention, forced displacement,

deportation, and militarization of their schools and communities, both here and in their homelands, are connecting the dots and linking these issues with the systemic problem of settler colonialism in places like Palestine.

As the state attempts to tamp down the rising fists of dissent, people's movements in Ferguson, Haiti, Palestine, the Philippines, and across the globe are only intensifying. And as an extension, today in the Bay Area, we are organizing together and deepening our collective commitment to the increasingly militant struggle for Black liberation and self-determination. We know that we cannot fight imperialism abroad unless we fight its domestic manifestation - violent racist policing - in our own streets.

The West has built and structured this world on Black death, while systematically-waging attacks on third world people in their struggle for self-determination. By exposing and confronting these systems, we seek to weaken their foundations, and strengthen our



#3rdWorld4BlackPower activists shut down the federal building in Oakland, CA, 1/16/15. Many of the leaders were trans and gender non-conforming.

bear the burden of state-sponsored Darwinian experiments that attempt to squeeze us into boxes of normality defined by White supremacy is state violence. And the fact is that the lives of Black people—not ALL people—exist within these conditions is consequence of state violence.

When Black people get free, everybody gets free

#BlackLivesMatter doesn't mean your life isn't important—it means that Black lives, which are seen as without value within White supremacy, are important to your liberation. Given the disproportionate impact state violence has on Black lives, we understand that when Black people in this country get free, the benefits will be wide reaching and transformative for society as a whole. When we are able to end hyper-criminalization and sexualization of Black people and end the poverty, control, and surveillance of Black people, every single person in this world has a better shot at getting and staying free. When Black people get free, everybody gets free. This is why we call on Black people and our allies to take up the call that Black lives matter. We're not saying Black lives are more important than other lives, or that other lives are not criminalized and oppressed in various ways. We remain in active solidarity with all oppressed people who are fighting for their liberation and we know that our destinies are intertwined.

And, to keep it real—it is appropriate and necessary to have strategy and action centered around Blackness without other non-Black communities of color, or White folks for that matter, needing to find a place and a way to center themselves within it. It is appropriate and necessary for us to acknowledge the critical role that Black lives and struggles for Black liberation have played in inspiring and anchoring, through practice and theory, social movements for the liberation of all people. The women's movement, the Chicano liberation movement, queer movements, and many more have adopted the strategies, tactics and theory of the Black liberation movement. And if we are committed to a world where all lives matter, we are called to support the very movement that inspired and activated so many more. That means supporting and acknowledging Black lives.

Progressive movements in the United States have made some unfortunate errors when they push for unity at the expense of really understanding the concrete differences in context, experience and oppression. In other words, some want unity without struggle. As people

who have our minds stayed on freedom, we can learn to fight anti-Black racism by examining the ways in which we participate in it, even unintentionally, instead of the worn out and sloppy practice of drawing lazy parallels of unity between peoples with vastly different experiences and histories.

When we deploy "All Lives Matter" as to correct an intervention specifically created to address anti-blackness, we lose the ways in which the state apparatus has built a program of genocide and repression mostly on the backs of Black people—beginning with the theft of millions of people for free labor—and then adapted it to control, murder, and profit off of other communities of color and immigrant communities. We perpetuate a level of White supremacist domination by reproducing a tired trope that we are all the same, rather than acknowledging that non-Black oppressed people in this country are both impacted by racism and domination, and simultaneously, BENEFIT from anti-black racism.

When you drop "Black" from the equation of whose lives matter, and then fail to acknowledge it came from somewhere, you further a legacy of erasing Black lives and Black contributions from our movement legacy. And consider whether or not when dropping the Black you are, intentionally or unintentionally, erasing Black folks from the conversation or homogenizing very different experiences. The legacy and prevalence of anti-Black racism and hetero-patriarchy is a lynch pin holding together this unsustainable economy. And that's not an accidental analogy.

In 2014, hetero-patriarchy and anti-Black racism within our movement is real and felt. It's killing us and it's killing our potential to build power for transformative social change. When you adopt the work of queer women of color, don't name or recognize it, and promote it as if it has no history of its own such actions are problematic. When I use Assata's powerful demand in my organizing work, I always begin by sharing where it comes from, sharing about Assata's significance to the Black Liberation Movement, what it's political purpose and message is, and why it's important in our context.

When you adopt Black Lives Matter and transform it into something else (if you feel you really need to do that—see above for the arguments not to), it's appropriate politically to credit the lineage from which you adapted work derived. It's important that we work together to build and acknowledge the legacy of Black contributions to the struggle for human rights. If you adapt Black Lives Matter, use the opportunity to talk about its inception

and political framing. Lift up Black lives as an opportunity to connect struggles across race, class, gender, nationality, sexuality and disability.

And, perhaps more importantly, when Black people cry out in defense of our lives, which are uniquely, systematically, and savagely targeted by the state, we are asking you, our family, to stand with us in affirming Black lives. Not just all lives. Black lives. Please do not change the conversation by talking about how your life matters, too. It does, but we need less watered down unity and a more active solidarities with us, Black people, unwaveringly, in defense of our humanity. Our collective futures depend on it.

Alicia Garza is the Special Projects Director for the National Domestic Workers Alliance. She has been the recipient of multiple awards for her organizing work in Black and Latino communities, receiving the Local Hero award from the San Francisco Bay Guardian and the Jeanne Gauna Communicate Justice award from the Center for Media Justice in 2008. She has twice been honored by the Harvey Milk Democratic Club with the Bayard Rustin Community Activist award for her work fighting gentrification and environmental racism in San Francisco's largest remaining Black community.

Alicia comes to NDWA after serving as Executive Director of People Organized to Win Employment Rights (POWER) in San Francisco since 2009. Under her leadership, POWER won free local public transportation for youth; fought for a seat at the table in some of the most important land use decisions affecting working-class families; beat back regressive local policies targeting undocumented people; organized against the chronic police violence in Black neighborhoods; and shed light on the ongoing wave of profit-driven development that contribute to a changing San Francisco.

In 2013, Alicia co-founded #BlackLivesMatter, an online platform developed after the murder of Trayvon Martin, designed to connect people interested in learning more about and fighting back against anti-Black racism.

Alicia currently serves on the Board of Directors for the School of Unity and Liberation (SOUL) in Oakland, CA, and is a contributing writer for WarTimes magazine. She serves as trusted counsel for organizations across the country looking to build their capacity to lead and win organizing campaigns. When she's not scheming on freedom, Alicia enjoys dancing, reading and writing—and scheming some more.



Transgenders and Some Educational Thoughts on Genders/Gays

Some Events We Face as Girls in Prison

BY R. "SHILOH" QUINE

Within the "Standards of Care" first and foremost studies on G.I.D. transgender resource, it is notably clear "gay inmates" are totally a different type than "transgenders." One has absolutely nothing to do with the other. Being transgender is only about gender, nothing to do with sexual orientation. In reality it's a common mistake, not confusing once you realize we are women "not gay" even if some transgender girls have a libido drive for both men/women activity they are transgenders first not gay, neither are wrong. Under the Harry Benjamin treatment of transsexuality it is a "TG" community population that knowledge is set forth (adequate per based data) but surprisingly, we have an ongoing stigma of the same as "gay inmates" and here at (SVSP) we are not allowed the same privileges of a support group [mac rep](#) that would include our peers within the population as other inmates are allowed this position. No transgender inmates obtain Inmate Advisory Committee ([I.A.C.](#)) or LGBT practices to resolve issue(s) for these inmates. There is "no employee sensitivity training association clearly implemented for an equal comprehensive standard criteria for CDCR". Significantly, to label this facility "transgender friendly" the homophobic practices of a "de facto policies" of misconduct, gender based harms/abuses of unnecessary pronunciation addressing us as "he" instead of "she", necessary "gender medical association" practices that deprive us of the valid extensions of this hormone treatment. Support groups/psych services was implemented. I appeared at two groups and recognize there is little knowledge in regards to transgenders associated to our keepers. Not a very valid support group. Significantly, I was addressed as a man, third meeting felt this was a fictitious group as the labels of "transgender friendly" yards. Nothing is consistent to reflect this. The staff at the door talked to me as if I was something he would walk over. I apologize for the negativity to the group. Also I'm happy for the knowledge (even though sad) of Lacy,

a tranny who transferred to Donovan that was killed by her cellie shortly after. My tears fell only for the positive joys she had provided as a person. I recognize that when each of us fight and push forward we push forward for all of us transgenders. The history and knowledge in regards to us transies is little and I feel sometimes not adequate in regards to "Gender Identity Disorder" (GID). We sometimes suffer from our keepers that have control over us. I don't feel I have a "disorder" at all. Gays are born gay men or bi, tranny girls "even though deemed men" are not. Gays fit in easier than we do within the population. We should be distinct obviously as "real female" without the biases, even without the completed surgery we are completely women with personality feminine in an unaccepted world and environment. I do not consider the prescribed current standard appropriate in respects to updated knowledge even under the old Harry Benjamin 1885-1986 related to TG issues. I don't consider myself to be a person with GID or labeled as a TG. Some people are born as women. There is need for updated research and valid policies related to the fact that we should be accepted as women. This is only an ideological viewpoint instead of the label GID why not "Distinguish Woman Kind" (DWK) with the continuation of the hormone treatment, calling us transies, sir or Mr. is disrespectful and used as a weapon as other forms of abuse inflicted on us over the fact that we get hormone therapy in prison. Training should be provided to our keepers. Being denied rights isn't "friendly" not allowing I.A.C. or other medical items is unjust to our "medical needs". Retaliation will come by form of manipulation by the staff, denial of medical care labelled as troublemakers even a snitch consequences for fighting for you human rights fulfillment that is supported by forms of international standards framework to which is a powerful concept to apply when pushing for social political changes recognized in the global world struggles for justice of the violations of our human rights. It is said that this facility will provide adequate means soon etc... SVSP has no motivation within its objectives to deny privileges/rights, induce conflicts with others (staff and inmates), bogus denial of 602 appeals coercions of inmates "agent provocateur protocols" over other inmates that file grievances etc., or just deny appeals unfairly and privileges...

Dear TGI,

My name is Aaliyah L. Straite, I'm incarcerated at Lanesboro Correctional Institution in North Carolina. I'm the first person in the state of North Carolina prison out of male and female to obtain hormonal therapy, then transition, to the strong powerful black woman I am.

I had to be transferred to another prison because of discrimination by a female correction officer. She grabbed her breast and smacked her butt and said in from of the other inmates that I want what she got and that God gave it to her and her body is natural. So I like to tell all my transgender sisters; know Ms. Aaliyah is not the one to bite her tongue for anyone. So I told Ms. Thing what I thought of her and then place a grievance on her.

I am still fighting for my treatment but I'm still about to make history in N.C. prison system. To all my sisters I say fight for who you are and what you believe in and never ever give up! I'm 25 years old and still fighting mentally, physically, and emotionally for I will not be pushed around by anyone. You may not like me for who I am but you will respect me and give me space so stay strong sisters.

P.S. Thank you TGI and North Carolina ACLU and to my sisters, keep your hearth warm and your eyes dry and know we're the future. We can't be stopped. I will keep everyone posted on my treatment. I love all of you sisters.

Always love,
Aaliyah Straite

Phenomenal Trans

BY OKEY

You call me an Abomination,
I call me Unique.
You call me Confused,
I call me Defined.
You call me a Freak.
I call me a Human Being.
You call me Disgusting,
I CALL ME...
Beautiful, Smart, Strong
Phenomenal Trans—
Your words cannot
Confine me
Your words cannot
Bind me to the Chains of Restriction, and
Constriction you demand I wear; to
Make you feel Superior? Safe?
There's nothing here to fear!
I'm a Phenomenal Trans!!!

FEATURED ARTICLES

#BLACK LIVES MATTER

The theme for this issue of Stiletto is “Black Lives Matter! Black Trans Lives Matter! Black Imprisoned People’s Lives Matter!” Below you will find three articles speaking to this theme from a few different identity perspectives. From what we have heard, the political activity outside has been impacting some discussions and work inside, and vice versa. TGJIP is very interested in the conversations y’all are having inside, what the vibe is like inside about the movement against police brutality, reflections on how fighting for Black Lives to really matter is fighting for everyone’s well being, as well as poetry and art about this movement and moment. TGJIP, Trans Women of Color Collective, and other trans liberation organizations have been working with #BlackLivesMatter organizers to expand the inclusion of trans, gender variant and intersex lives in this framework and movement for Black Liberation. We hope that these articles can be thought provoking, engaging and useful to supporting your resilience and solidarity. We hope to hear from you about what resonates and what you think.

A Herstory of the #BlackLivesMatter Movement

BY ALICIA GARZA, REPRINTED FROM THE FEMINIST WIRE WITH PERMISSION

I created #BlackLivesMatter with Patrisse Cullors and Opal Tometi, two of my sisters, as a call to action for Black people after 17-year-old Trayvon Martin was post-humously placed on trial for his own murder and the killer, George Zimmerman, was not held accountable for the crime he committed. It was a response to the anti-Black racism that permeates our society and also, unfortunately, our movements.

Black Lives Matter is an ideological and political intervention in a world where Black lives

are systematically and intentionally targeted for demise. It is an affirmation of Black folks’ contributions to this society, our humanity, and our resilience in the face of deadly oppression.

We were humbled when cultural workers, artists, designers and techies offered their labor and love to expand #BlackLivesMatter beyond a social media hashtag. Opal, Patrisse, and I created the infrastructure for this movement project—moving the hashtag from social media to the streets. Our team grew through

a very successful Black Lives Matter ride, led and designed by Patrisse Cullors and Darnell L. Moore, organized to support the movement that is growing in St. Louis, MO, after 18-year old Mike Brown was killed at the hands of Ferguson Police Officer Darren Wilson. We’ve hosted national conference calls focused on issues of critical importance to Black people working hard for the liberation of our people. We’ve connected people across the country working to end the various forms of injustice

impacting our people. We’ve created space for the celebration and humanization of Black lives.

The Theft of Black Queer Women’s Work

As people took the #BlackLivesMatter demand into the streets, mainstream media and corporations also took up the call, #BlackLivesMatter appeared in an episode of *Law & Order: SVU* in a mash up containing the Paula Deen racism scandal and the tragedy of the murder of Trayvon Martin.

Suddenly, we began to come across varied adaptations of our work—all lives matter, brown lives matter, migrant lives matter, women’s lives matter, and on and on. While imitation is said to be the highest form of flattery, I was surprised when an organization called to ask if they could use “Black Lives Matter” in one of their campaigns. We agreed to it, with the caveat that a) as a team, we preferred that we not use the meme to celebrate the imprisonment of any individual and b) that it was important to us they acknowledged the genesis of #BlackLivesMatter. I was surprised when they did exactly the opposite and then justified their actions by saying they hadn’t used the “exact” slogan and, therefore, they deemed it okay to take our work, use it as their own, fail to credit where it came from, and then use it to applaud incarceration.

I was surprised when a community institution wrote asking us to provide materials and action steps for an art show they were curating, entitled “Our Lives Matter.” When questioned about who was involved and why they felt the need to change the very specific call and demand around Black lives to “our lives,” I was told the artists decided it needed to be more inclusive of all people of color. I was

even more surprised when, in the promotion of their event, one of the artists conducted an interview that completely erased the origins of their work—rooted in the labor and love of queer Black women.

Pause.

When you design an event / campaign / et cetera based on the work of queer Black women, don’t invite them to participate in shaping it, but ask them to provide materials and ideas for next steps for said event, that is racism in practice. It’s also hetero-patriarchal. Straight men, unintentionally or intentionally, have taken the work of queer Black women and erased our contributions. Perhaps if we were the charismatic Black men many are rallying around these days, it would have been a different story, but being Black queer women in this society (and apparently within these movements) tends to equal invisibility and non-relevancy.

We completely expect those who benefit directly and improperly from White supremacy to try and erase our existence. We fight that every day. But when it happens amongst our allies, we are baffled, we are saddened, and we are enraged. And it’s time to have the political conversation about why that’s not okay.

We are grateful to our allies who have stepped up to the call that Black lives matter, and taken it as an opportunity to not just stand in solidarity with us, but to investigate the ways in which anti-Black racism is perpetuated in their own communities. We are also grateful to those allies who were willing to engage in critical dialogue with us about this unfortunate and problematic dynamic. And for those who we have not yet had the opportunity to engage with around the adaptations of the Black Lives Matter call, please consider the following points.

Broadening the Conversation to Include Black Life

Black Lives Matter is a unique contribution that goes beyond extrajudicial killings of Black people by police and vigilantes. It goes beyond the narrow nationalism that can be prevalent within some Black communities, which merely call on Black people to love Black, live Black and buy Black, keeping straight cis Black men in the front of the movement while our sisters, queer and trans and disabled folk take up roles in the background or not at all. Black Lives Matter affirms the lives of Black queer and trans folks, disabled folks, Black-undocumented folks, folks with records, women and all Black lives along the gender spectrum. It centers those that have been marginalized within Black liberation movements. It is a tactic to (re)build the Black liberation movement.

When we say Black Lives Matter, we are talking about the ways in which Black people are deprived of our basic human rights and dignity. It is an acknowledgement Black poverty and genocide is state violence. It is an acknowledgement that 1 million Black people are locked in cages in this country—one half of all people in prisons or jails—is an act of state violence. It is an acknowledgement that Black women continue to bear the burden of a relentless assault on our children and our families and that assault is an act of state violence. Black queer and trans folks bearing a unique burden in a hetero-patriarchal society that disposes of us like garbage and simultaneously fetishizes us and profits off of us is state violence; the fact that 500,000 Black people in the US are undocumented immigrants and relegated to the shadows is state violence; the fact that Black girls are used as negotiating chips during times of conflict and war is state violence; Black folks living with disabilities and different abilities

