

Guild Notes

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Guildies gear up for annual Law for the People Convention in Oakland, CA (p. 12)

New column, "Beyond Bars": Voices from NLG Jailhouse Lawyers (p. 10)

NATIONAL COMMITTEES, PROJECTS AND TASK FORCES

<i>Amicus Committee</i> Zachary Wolfe amicus@nlg.org	<i>Drug Policy Committee</i> Jesse Stout David Frank drugpolicy@nlg.org	<i>Mass Incarceration Committee</i> Nora Carroll massincarceration@nlg.org	<i>The United People Of Color Caucus (TUPOCC)</i> Oren Nimni Militza Pagán tupocc@gmail.com
<i>Animal Rights Activism Committee</i> animalrights@nlg.org	<i>Environmental Justice Committee</i> Joel Kupferman environmentaljustice@nlg.org	<i>Military Law Task Force</i> Kathy Gilberd mltf@nlg.org	<i>National Immigration Project</i> Dan Kesselbrenner 14 Beacon St., Ste. 602 Boston, MA 02108 (617) 227-9727 dan@nationalimmigrationproject.org
<i>Anti-Racism Committee</i> Hannah Adams Alana Roth antiracism@nlg.org	<i>International Committee</i> Jeanne Mirer Natasha Bannan Suzanne Adely international@nlg.org	<i>Next Generation Committee</i> Samantha Godwin Lindsey Schromen-Wawrin nextgen@nlg.org	<i>National Police Accountability Project</i> Brigitt Keller 499 7th Ave., Ste. 12 N New York, NY 10018 (212) 630-9939 phone (212) 659-0695 fax npap@nlg.org
<i>Anti-Sexism Committee</i> Kerry McLean antisexism@nlg.org	<i>Labor & Employment Committee</i> Anthony Prince anthonyd.princelaw@yahoo.com	<i>Prison Law Project</i> Ian Head plp@nlg.org	
<i>Committee for Democratic Communications</i> Michael Lee cdc@nlg.org	<i>Legal Workers Committee</i> Kris Hermes legalworkervp@nlg.org	<i>Queer Caucus</i> kt crossman queercaucus@nlg.org	
	<i>Mass Defense Committee</i> Joshua Norkin massdefensechair@nlg.org		

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Far West

Kelly Lou Densmore
Colleen Flynn
farwestvp@nlg.org

Mideast

Rachel Rosnick
Jessica Hoyer
mideastvp@nlg.org

Mid-Atlantic

Curtis Cooper
Michele Grant
midatlanticvp@nlg.org

Midwest

Molly Armour
midwestvp@nlg.org

Northeast

Benjamin Evans
northeastvp@nlg.org

Northwest

Neil Fox
Charlie Flewelling
northwestvp@nlg.org

Southern

southernvp@nlg.org
Miriam Haskell

Tex-Oma

texomarvp@nlg.org
Daphne Silverman

National Office Staff

Executive Director

Pooja Gehi
director@nlg.org

Membership Administrator

Rosemarie Stupel
membership@nlg.org

Director of Education and Research

Traci Yoder
traci@nlg.org

Mass Defense Coordinator

Kris Hermes
kris@nlg.org

Director of Communications

Tasha Moro
communications@nlg.org

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Note: The views expressed in *Guild Notes* are those of the authors. They do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the NLG as a whole.

People's Tribunals Deliver Justice for Victims of Human Rights Violations

By Azadeh Shahshahani, NLG President

For three powerful days, July 16-18, I had the honor of participating as a member of the jury in the International Peoples Tribunal (IPT) on crimes against the Filipino people by President Benigno S. Aquino and the U.S. Government, as represented by President Barack Obama. Convened by human rights defenders, lawyers, jurists, academics, people of faith, political activists, and several organizations including the NLG, the goal of the IPT was to shine a light on these crimes and hold the Philippine and U.S. governments accountable. It was held at the behest of victims of human rights violations and other crimes committed under Aquino's presidency.

The NLG has had a longstanding relationship with our counterpart in the Philippines, the National Union of People's Lawyers (NUPL), and has acted in solidarity with NUPL, especially during the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos. The NLG Philippines Subcommittee has maintained close contact with NUPL, with several of us visiting Quezon City in July 2013 for the International Conference on Human Rights and Peace in the Philippines.

The IPT further strengthened our partnership. We learned how the Aquino regime, with support from the U.S. through military intervention, economic and environmental exploitation and imposition of neoliberal globalization, committed systematic violations of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights of the Filipino people.

The three counts of the complaint were:

1. Violations of civil and political rights, including extrajudicial killings, disappearances, massacres, torture, arbitrary arrests and detention as well as other brutal, systematic attacks on basic democratic rights through the U.S.-inspired counter-insurgency program Oplan Bayanihan.
2. Violations of economic, social, and cultural rights through the imposition of neoliberal policies, transgression of economic sovereignty, and various forms of economic plunder and attacks on the livelihoods of the people and destruction of the environment.
3. Violations of the right to national self-determination and liberation through the imposition of the U.S. war of terror, US military intervention, as well as the perpetration of crimes against humanity and war crimes; misrepresentations of the people's right to national liberation and self-determination as "terrorism" and "terrorist" listing of individuals, organizations, and other entities by the U.S. and other governments.

We heard harrowing testimony from several victims present in D.C. and in the Philippines. One of the most moving was that of Melissa Roxas, a U.S. citizen of Filipino descent, who was kidnapped by Philippines military forces, tortured, and disappeared for several days in 2009 while conducting a medical



Tribunal participants celebrate following the verdict. (Photo: internationalpeopletribunal.org)

survey in La Paz, Tarlac. Despite the U.S. embassy's knowledge of the situation, it refused to intervene. No one has been held accountable for this crime.

After extensive deliberations, the jury reached a verdict of guilty on all counts.

The Tribunal also condemned the defendants' abandonment of the peace process and their failure to address the roots of the conflict in order to achieve a just and lasting peace.

The Tribunal called on defendants to stop the commission or continuance of criminal acts, repair damages done to Filipinos and their environment, compensate victims and their families, and rehabilitate these communities—especially the indigenous communities that were particularly affected.

The Tribunal also called for these to be brought before international bodies including the Prosecutor's Office of the International Criminal Court (ICC) as well as the Inter-American, European, African, and Asian regional courts to expose these crimes and push these international bodies to enjoin the illegal acts of the defendants and stop their impunity.

Upon announcement of the verdict, the room broke into applause. Victims and family members stood with raised fists. Observers gave a standing ovation for their courageous presence and testimony. They closed chanting, "Makibaka, Huwag Matakot!" (Struggle onward, have no fear!).

My most memorable moment was when a Filipino activist approached me and said: "Thank you. When you announced the guilty verdict, I could not hold my tears back. Thank you." I look forward to participating in another people's tribunal in September in NYC, this one focused on the crimes of the Mexican government, particularly the disappearance of the 43 Ayotzinapa students, in complicity with the U.S. Government. Both the NLG and the NLG-NYC Chapter are co-sponsoring.

To learn more about the International People's Tribunal on the Philippines, visit internationalpeopletribunal.org ■

Chicago Activists Obtain Reparations for Chicago Police Torture Survivors

By Joey Mogul, NLG Chicago

The City of Chicago made history on Wednesday May 6 when it passed legislation providing reparations to survivors of racially motivated police torture committed by infamous former Chicago Police Commander Jon Burge and detectives under his command from 1972 to 1991. It represents a bold break with the status quo, representing the first time that a municipality in the US will provide reparations to those harmed by law enforcement violence.

Chicago's reparations package was driven by the inadequacy of traditional legal remedies to compensate individuals and communities for systemic harm. After decades of litigation, activism, and investigative journalism, the truth about systemic torture of African Americans by white detectives to secure confessions—involving electric shock, suffocation, and mock execution—was exposed. Yet full accountability proved elusive. The statute of limitations precluded Burge and his men from being held criminally or civilly responsible for their crimes of torture (although Burge was ultimately convicted in 2010 for perjury and obstruction of justice for lying about the torture he and others committed). They enjoyed decades of torturing with impunity, courtesy of a cover up by the CPDs chain of command and governmental officials, including former Mayor Richard M. Daley. Moreover, the limited remedies offered by civil litigation—financial settlements that were often meager and practically unavailable to the vast majority of survivors—were inadequate to address the trauma and material needs of the torture survivors, their family members and communities.

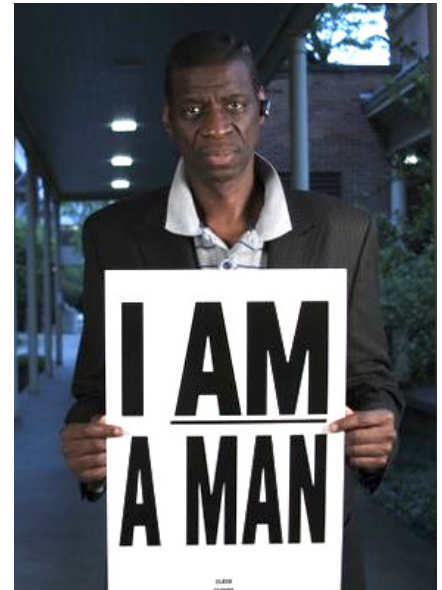
Burge's legacy of torture left festering wounds that remain open to this day. Many survivors continue to suffer from nightmares and flashbacks, grappling with PTSD that has gone untreated for decades. They live under a shroud of shame, guilt, and anguish that undermines their ability to form relationships. Survivors' family members were also left to contend with their secondary trauma in isolation, after their family members were ripped from them. As whispers of the torture spread, entire communities lived in fear that they or their loved ones would be disappeared from street corners or homes into the bowels of the police stations. The torture, like lynchings, served to terrorize entire African American communities.

Recognizing the lack of redress for these systemic harms, Standish Willis, founder of Black People Against Police Torture, and 2014 NLG Law for the People Awardee, made the initial call for reparations. Chicago Torture Justice Memorials (CTJM), a grassroots group of artists, activists, attorneys and survivors, amplified this call by asking police torture survivors and the larger community to imagine how they would propose to publicly memorialize these cases. Through art charrettes, teach-ins, and community dialogue, CTJM sought to spark the collective imagination of the community to conceptualize what was necessary for the City to provide in order for individuals and communities to heal from torture. This call served to redirect everyone's attention beyond the usual cries for accountability for

police brutality and to focus on holistic means of meeting the needs of impacted communities, and offering positive visions for healing and repair.

Given the glaring lack of precedent in the U.S., CTJM looked to the U.N. Convention Against Torture's principles of restitution, rehabilitation, compensation and public acknowledgment and relied on the expansive scope of reparations provided for atrocities committed under the Pinochet regime in Chile when drafting the essential elements of the original legislation.

Ultimately, the reparations package, brought to fruition by an inspiring multi-racial and intergenerational campaign led by CTJM, Amnesty International, Project NIA and We Charge Genocide, within the larger context of the #BlackLivesMatter movement, achieved far more than any individual criminal prosecution or lawsuit could afford. In addition to financial compensation to all living survivors, it includes an apology by the City of Chicago for the



Darrell Cannon, activist and Burge torture survivor. (Photo: School of the Art Institute of Chicago/Tamms Year Ten)

torture committed, settling the historical record and placing this systemic practice of torture beyond dispute. The reparations package includes the creation of a center on Chicago's Southside where survivors can access specialized trauma counseling services. It also includes benefits like free tuition at City Colleges for the torture survivors and their families.

Further, as part of this process of narrating and commemorating what Burge torture survivors endured, Chicago will create a permanent, public memorial and teach about the cases to all 8th and 10th grades in Chicago Public schools. By inscribing these cases both figuratively and literally into the collective memory, generations to come will ensure torture is never again committed in our name.

Darrell Cannon, a key activist in the campaign for reparations and a Chicago Police torture survivor noted on May 6th, "We made history today. We are doing something that no other U.S. city has done. It is the right thing to do." ■

Joey Mogul is a co-founder of Chicago Torture Justice Memorials, drafter of the original reparation ordinance, a partner at the People's Law Office, and a member of NLG Chicago Chapter

NLG Legal Observers Monitor Toledo Nazi Counter-Protest

By Shanna Merola, Legal Observer Coordinator for NLG Michigan and Detroit Chapter

On April 18, a group of Detroit Guild attorneys and Legal Observers met with Ohio Guild members for a counter-Nazi rally in downtown Toledo, OH. Ten years earlier in 2005, the neo-Nazi National Socialist Movement (NSM) held a similar rally, which resulted in clashes between residents and police, a citywide curfew, injuries and arrests. In preparation for NSM's return, authorities urged people to stay out of downtown altogether, especially after the city of Toledo repeatedly failed to persuade a Lucas County judge to ban guns and other weapons from the event.

When we arrived around 3:00 PM businesses were closed and streets barricaded. We walked with a few demonstrators toward the "free speech zone" entrance, a tent with two lines surrounded by Ohio PD and Sheriff's in



Legal Observers Michael Sabbagh and Blair Anderson of the Detroit Chapter at "Nazis out of Toledo" rally. (Photo: Shanna Merola)



Toledo Police create barrier between neo-Nazi NSM and counter demonstrators at One Government Center. (Photo: Shanna Merola)

tactical gear. At the end of the line were metal detectors and a photo ID checkpoint where officers instructed people to remove their hats and glasses and look at the camera. Beyond this was the demonstration area where about 80 protestors stood, surrounded on three sides by hundreds of officers from

different agencies, some mounted. Directly in front of the protestors stood a barricade and two rows of police in full riot gear, who created a wall between the demonstration and about 25 Nazis.

For the next hour, the National Socialist Movement took turns speaking and waving flags with swastikas as protestors chanted "Black Lives Matter" in opposition. The crowd was very vocal that they felt threatened, not only by the Nazis, but by a startling police presence that seemed to prioritize the NSM's safety over local residents. This tension was heightened by clusters of Highway Patrol and Sheriffs who gathered on the perimeters of the rally conducting surveillance. The officers recorded counter-protest activity with cameras on tripods that were clearly pointed at the "free speech zone".

At 4:30 PM, about an hour after the rally began, police announced that the demonstration was over and ordered the crowd to disperse. Mounted officers moved in and police lines advanced. They moved quickly, pushing crowds out of the demonstration area and past the barricades. People took to the streets in response, filling both sides, marching and chanting "Hands Up, Don't Shoot". They were followed to an intersection by officers in riot gear and were met by three K-9 units and a military vehicle with SWAT on the front.

The tense but brief situation led to the only arrest of the day, a protestor who was charged with disorderly conduct. Guild attorneys went to advocate for the arrestee at the jail and he was out on bond by the end of the day. ■

The NLG Goes to Cuba

By Susan Scott, Task Force on the Americas Co-Chair

Not one, not two, but FOUR delegations from the NLG have made their way to Havana in the first half of 2015!

The annual NLG Labor and Employment Committee trip to the International Labor Conference went down in March (see Matthew Rinaldi's [article](#) in the NLG-SF Chapter's *Guild Notes*), and another Guild group, led by Mark Burton, went to Havana in May to meet with negotiators for the Colombian Peace process. The Colombian negotiations have been proceeding for over two and a half years in Havana and have made great progress on the first three of five negotiating points (see www.nlginternational.org). The NLG-NYC Chapter also just visited Cuba on a delegation in early September.

Early in June, three Guild members—Marjorie Cohn, Susan Scott and Natasha Lycia Ora Bannan—attended and spoke at the 7th *International “Escuela de Verano” legal conference on International Humanitarian and International Public Law*, organized by the Union Nacional de Juristas de Cuba (UNJC).

The conference was packed with analyses of the history and jurisprudence of international public and humanitarian law and its application to current events from the perspective of a socialist island nation in Latin America that has been under constant attack by the most powerful country in the world for over half a century.

The UNJC invited Guild members to attend and present papers at the conference. Marjorie Cohn spoke about the pitfalls and legal parameters of R2P (Responsibility to Protect), used by NATO as an excuse to invade Libya in 2011 and promoted by the U.S. Ambassador to the UN, Samantha Powers. I spoke about the Universal Periodic Review of the U.S. at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva this past Spring and the political, economic and legal framework behind the United States' longstanding refusal to recognize economic, social and cultural rights, specifically as it relates to housing and the criminalization of homelessness. Natasha Lycia Ora Bannan gave an overview of contemporary social and political movements in the U.S. and the use and challenges of a human rights framework as a legal and organizing strategy.

This was an international law conference unlike any you would find in the U.S., even at a Guild Convention.

When we talk about decolonization, we usually talk about Puerto Rico. The Cuban lawyers' focus was on the Malvinas. When we talk about regional human rights courts, we talk about the Inter-American Commission and Court of Human Rights.

In Cuba, we heard from two members of the Central American Court of Justice, a twenty-year old body that focuses on “derecho comunitario” or community rights. Several speakers, including the Cuban Ambassador from Guatemala, discussed the judicial challenges facing indigenous peoples and a proposal for a transnational, Latin American and Caribbean citizenship. We heard critiques of the United Nations, ranging

from so-called “robust peace-keeping” to the problematic structure, role and veto of the Security Council. The use of drones and “autonomous” weapons and their relation to humanitarian law was also a prominent topic.

There was much discussion of the U.S. “opening” to Cuba and analysis of the illegal U.S. blockade—as well as the U.S. occupation of Guantanamo (including a new theory to recover the territory, called “*rebus sic stantibus*”).

After panels on migration, “free trade”, and the application of



Marjorie Cohn with René González and his wife, Olga. (Photo courtesy of Marjorie Cohn.)

the Vienna and Lisbon treaties, there was an entire day set aside to discuss international armed conflicts and humanitarian law. Speakers covered the Colombian conflict (being mediated now in Havana), Syria (including the destruction of “bienes culturales”), and Palestine's statehood and relationship with the International Criminal Court. The Ukraine conflict is of particular concern to Cubans, partly because of the migration of thousands of Ukrainians to Cuba after the Chernobyl disaster.

Marjorie Cohn was interviewed on Cubavision. She also interviewed Rene Gonzalez and Antonio Gonzalez, two of the Cuban Five for [an article](#) in *Truthout*, *Next Steps in the Normalization of US-Cuban Relations: Thoughts From the Cuban Five*.

An ongoing relationship between the Guild and the Union Nacional de Juristas de Cuba will bring new perspectives to both organizations. ¡Seguimos adelante! ■

NLG-NYC Parole Prep Project Sees Successful Results

By Michelle Lewin, NLG-NYC Parole Preparation Project

The Parole Preparation Project of the Mass Incarceration Committee continues to work in collaboration with people serving life sentences across New York State who seek parole release. In May, Michelle Lewin, one of the members of the Project's coordinating committee, was given the Law Student Recognition Award at the NYC Chapter's annual Spring Fling.

Here is an excerpt from her acceptance speech:

"A year after working with our very first applicant, we have almost 80 active volunteers who are working alongside 30 people inside, all of whom are serving life sentences. So far, five people have been granted parole out of the twelve who have gone before the Board.

As proud as I am of the work we and our volunteers have done, and the work we will continue to do, I don't want to overemphasize our role as advocates. One of the most sacred principles of the project is that people on the inside are the experts. Their experiences, their discoveries and their struggle make them so, and it is our job and our responsibility as people on the outside to listen. It is also our job to lift up their voices and amplify them, in whatever ways we can.

It is also our job as advocates to recognize that we have so much to learn. As a project, we imagine that this learning takes place through relationships based on collaboration and solidarity. It happens by getting to know people in real ways, by spending time in the visiting room, on the phone and with people's families. It happens by working alongside and not for or on behalf of someone. It happens when you begin to develop relationships of care, communication, trust and sometimes even love.

Ultimately, fighting for the release of people incarcerated is deeply important work for so many reasons. At its root it is

about freeing people from institutions that devastate the minds and bodies of those it imprisons, because regardless of the harm someone has caused, no one deserves to be subjected to such abuse and isolation.

"It is my deepest hope that this project can be a small part of building a mass movement to abolish prisons."

It is also about initiating the long process of restoring families and communities that have been devastated by the system. It is about challenging the racism, classism, transphobia, and other oppressive structures that got us here.

Finally, this fight is deeply important because it is about bringing people home who are ultimately the leaders of this movement to end mass incarceration. We need the brilliant jailhouse lawyers, activists and organizers who are at the forefront of this struggle out here with us, so they can direct us and show us the way.

It is my deepest hope that this project can be a small part of building a mass movement to abolish prisons. To end incarceration altogether. To end the inhumane and racist practices of the state. To end the stigmatization of people inside and out. To bring people home.

It is also my hope that this project will be a small part of a movement that is based in love, generosity of spirit, collaboration and most of all, lifting up the voices of those behind bars. The voices of people inside are loud and clear and it's our job to listen."

Questions about the Project? Email nlgnycppp@gmail.com ■

Remembering Detroit Newspaper Strike 20 Years Later

By NLG Michigan and Detroit Chapter

During the historic Detroit newspaper strike that began on July 13, 1995, hundreds of strikers and supporters were arrested on various criminal charges during demonstrations, picket lines, and other protests during the strike. The Detroit and Michigan Chapter of the NLG took on the responsibility of organizing dozens of local attorneys to provide pro bono representation for many of the arrested strikers, and for the vast majority of their supporters. Our NLG chapter was glad to play this essential role in supporting the newspaper strikers, and we are proud to have been able to provide, in most cases, successful legal defense for arrestees.

The strike was an historic event in the U.S. labor movement. What we call the "one percent" accelerated its assault on the rights of working people during the Reagan administration, with the decision to fire all PATCO union members and bring in "replacement workers" (i.e. "scabs"). This continued in the early 1990s with numerous other strikes, including the UAW strike against Caterpillar in Illinois. In 1995, the corporate

power structure decided to back Gannett and Knight-Ridder in a strong effort to break the Detroit newspaper workers' unions. They believed if they could break the unions in a labor center such as Detroit, they would demonstrate the power to break unions anywhere in the country. The valiant Detroit newspaper workers took up this challenge, and fought mightily defending their right to organize and bargain collectively. Ultimately, the Detroit newspaper unions survived; the power structure's effort to destroy them failed.

This struggle to defend the right to organize has continued across the country since the Detroit newspaper strike ended. The Chapter considers the strike to have been an historic victory for working people all over the U. S. On the 20th Anniversary of the beginning of this historic strike, we salute the newspaper strikers of Detroit in their struggle; and we remain proud of the contribution our organization made in support of their fight.

This piece was adapted from a statement released by the NLG Michigan and Detroit Chapter on July 15, 2015. ■

NLG Stands in Solidarity with Haitian Human Rights Defenders

By the Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti



Walter Riley and Mildred Aristide lead a seminar for law students at the Université de la Fondation Dr. Aristide (UNIFA) in Port-au-Prince, Haiti on May 20, 2015. (Photo: IJDH)

In May 2015, National Lawyers Guild member Mario Joseph invited San Francisco Chapter Executive Board member Walter Riley to monitor a politically charged, high profile trial involving a mayor in southern Haiti who terrorized and killed political protestors and civilians. Riley is a long-time advocate for civil rights around the world, and will be honored for his recent work against police misconduct with the Black Lives Matter movement at the NLG's national convention this fall.

Riley had prepared to participate in a joint trial monitoring delegation with the NLG and International Association of Democratic Lawyers, which included eight lawyers from the United States, Canada and Haiti. However, Riley was reminded of the difficulties of the Haitian justice system firsthand even before he arrived, when the trial was abruptly suspended – with scant reasoning – one week before the trial date.

Undeterred, Riley still ventured to Haiti to offer his support to Haitian human rights defenders and learn about the political situation as Haiti prepares for long over-due elections. As a long-time civil rights advocate who has been jailed for participating in anti-racism sit-ins and demonstrations, Riley is certainly no

stranger to government attempts to obstruct justice.

Riley spoke of the parallel histories in Haiti and the U.S., and the racist institutions that have oppressed blacks in both countries. The imperialism that impedes Haiti's progress today is not so different than that which hinders racial equality in the U.S. Riley described his long career as a civil rights defender to Haitian lawyers and interns as part of the Young Lawyers Program at the Bureau des Avocats Internationaux (BAI), where Mario Joseph serves as Managing Attorney.

Riley also spoke at the Université de la Fondation Dr. Aristide (UNIFA) with former First Lady Mildred Aristide. He

addressed a crowd of several hundred medical and law students about the responsibility of doctors and lawyers to challenge existing power structures and bring justice to the poor.

Riley concluded his visit by meeting with BAI lawyers and Haitian public officials on elections. Haiti is set to elect over 5,000 public officials this year, including a new President and 129 out of 139 members of Parliament. Given the problems that plagued Haiti's last elections, the groundwork must be laid now in order to promote fair elections. In that regard, Riley met with electoral officials and candidates to determine whether the elections rollout was following the letter of the law.

With the first round of elections scheduled for August 9 and two more rounds set to follow on October 25 and December 27, there is much work to be done to ensure that the voices of the Haitian electorate are heard. If you are interested in contributing to voting rights work in Haiti in any way, such as participating in an electoral monitoring delegation or offering legal analysis of the current issues, please contact Brian@ijdh.org or Nicole@ijdh.org and visit www.haitielection2015.blogspot.com for more updates. ■

NLG Members Help Block Anti-Homeless Legislation in Miami

By Leah Weston, NLG-South Florida

On March 12th, the South Florida NLG Chapter joined the Miami Coalition for the Homeless, the ACLU, and other homeless advocacy groups to block an “anti-camping” ordinance up for vote at the Miami City Commission. This ordinance would have made it a misdemeanor to “camp” in the public right-of-way, or to possess camping equipment. “Camping equipment” was broadly defined to encompass essential comforts for surviving outdoors, including blankets and pillows. After numerous NLG members and coalition partners spoke out forcefully against the measure at the Commission meeting, the Commission voted to defer the ordinance.

This isn’t the first time the City of Miami has attempted to “clean up” downtown by threatening to criminalize thousands of individuals who experience homelessness. In 1988, a group of homeless individuals represented by the ACLU brought suit against the City, entering into a landmark consent decree in *City of Miami v. Pottinger*. This agreement prohibits arrests of homeless people for engaging in “essential, life-sustaining activities,” unless there is available shelter to provide.

As the City of Miami redevelops and revives its urban core, housing affordability and homelessness have been at the forefront of local politics. Downtown Miami residents and business owners are frustrated with trash and waste left behind by some homeless individuals. Service providers are frustrated by inadequate funding and a shortage of affordable housing options for low-income individuals and families.

All of these varied interests packed the commissioner chambers of City Hall on March 12th, to speak on the “anti-camping” ordinance, which had previously passed unanimously through

SHUT DOWN THE ‘SHELTER BAN’!



Handmade flyers circulated before the City of Miami Commission met to consider an “anti-camping” law. (Photo Credit: Soleil Rodrigue)

committee meetings. The South Florida NLG Chapter helped coordinate a strong advocacy and social media effort against this legislation in the weeks leading up to the meeting, flooding Commissioner Marc Sarnoff’s office with phone calls and e-mails and spreading the word through social media. Several NLG lawyers made public comments at City Hall against the “anti-camping” ordinance.

Thanks to the many advocates who wrote, called, and spoke, the Commission broke its unanimity and elected to defer a vote, pending further negotiation with the ACLU and other stakeholders. The South Florida Chapter of the NLG will continue to advocate on behalf of homeless and other

marginalized communities as local elections in November will surely bring homelessness and housing affordability into the spotlight of debate. ■



City of Miami Commissioner Keon Hardemon, third from the left on the dais, asked staff members to pitch a tent in City Hall to demonstrate their obstructiveness in the street. (Photo Credit: Leah Weston)

BEYOND BARS

Voices of NLG Jailhouse Lawyers

As the only bar association in the country with Jailhouse Lawyer membership, we're excited to announce "Beyond Bars," a new series of articles, poetry and artwork appearing in each issue of Guild Notes by people in prison. "Beyond Bars" aims to provide people in prison with an outlet for political and artistic expression while shedding light on the country's broken, inhumane, and racist criminal (in)justice system.

Racism and Corruption Plague Connecticut's Legal System

By **Abdul Mukhtaar**, NLG Jailhouse Lawyer

#245778

Mac Dougall-Walker C.I.

1153 East Street South

Suffield, CT 06080

In Connecticut we have judges appointed to the bench by what is known as the Judicial Selection Committee. This twelve-person panel is put together by the Governor, the President Pro Tempore, state Senate minority and majority leaders, and the State Representatives' minority and majority leaders. Of these twelve members, six are attorneys and six are non-attorneys. None of these people get paid, they serve a three-year term and three of the attorneys are selected by the Governor himself. The Committee then vets a list of private attorneys, states attorneys and public defenders whose names are submitted by the Connecticut Bar Association for the work they have done.

I want readers to realize that here in Connecticut, numerous cases that are challenged and brought before the State habeas and appellate courts are about ineffective assistance of counsel, whether it is trial, appellate or habeas counsel. And most of these cases are lost. When prisoners file grievances against their attorney with the statewide grievance committee, prisoners automatically lose. Grievances are not even investigated. The problem is the corruption and racism in the state of Connecticut

among state politicians, along with the cowardice of the minority politicians.

Connecticut Judges are beholden to the state's political power structure, as well as the judicial branch of the state government; therefore, exposing corrupt attorneys, judges and politicians must be done at the federal level. Being a victim of this racist, corrupt system, I know and recognize that no matter what two-party system is in place, this violation of the people of Connecticut's constitutional rights must stop. You wonder why in this climate that police are brutalizing people and murdering them, and politicians like President Obama do not care and do not really do anything about these actions of hatred and murder but blame the victims. Politics is why this racist and corrupt system is able to continue for so long.

In Connecticut, African Americans and Latinos together make up a minority of the overall population. Yet, as in many other states, they are severely overrepresented in the state's prison population. I want the people to remember this, when you travel or do business in the state of Connecticut. Especially if you are of African and Latin descent. We have a slogan here: "Come to Connecticut on vacation, and leave on probation." So remember, though Connecticut claims to be the "Constitution State" it really is the Slavery State, where the citizens are slaves to the state political power structure and the court lawyers and judges are their executioners/enforcers. ■

"Beyond Bars" Submission Guidelines & Instructions

- Submissions must relate to the issue of prison, prisoners' rights, or mass incarceration in some way. While we will not publish writing detailing the writer's own legal case, drawing upon personal experience as an illustration of a broader topic is encouraged.
- Hand-written submissions must be printed clearly and sent to: Guild Notes Submissions, 132 Nassau St. Rm 922, New York, NY 10038. Writings submitted via email may be sent to communications@nlg.org with the subject line: "Guild Notes Submission."
- Please keep your articles to the word limit of 500 words, or 450 words if you plan to include images or artwork.
- Always include a suggested title for your writing or artwork. Submissions may be written anonymously, or under a pseudonym.
- In addition to publication in *Guild Notes*, submissions may be considered for online publication (e.g. NLG blog, social media).
- If desired, biographical and contact information may be included to be published alongside articles and/or artwork (this is optional).
- While all submissions will be considered for publication, there is no guarantee of publication. Articles may be edited for grammatical accuracy and readability, but no substantive changes to content will be made.
- Anyone in prison, regardless of NLG membership status, may submit writing and/or artwork for publication consideration.

Is a Social Justice Law School Experience Possible?

By Traci Yoder, NLG Director of Education & Research

“The first thing I lost in law school was the reason that I came.”
–Anonymous law student

This quote comes from an essay by Loyola law professor and former National Lawyers Guild President [William Quigley](#) in which he describes the difficulties that social justice-oriented students experience when they begin their legal education. Many law students can recognize this dilemma: They come to law school with the intention of learning the law in order to assist marginalized groups and individuals, change current oppressive political and economic systems, and use legal strategies to advance social justice. However, very quickly they realize that the entire experience of legal education is structured to push them away from these values. The current structure of law school is much better equipped to produce corporate lawyers than attorneys who want to dedicate themselves to law in the service of the people.

The most common reason cited for this is economic. [The average law student graduates with around \\$140,000 in debt, and law school tuition continues to increase due to the U.S. News rankings-driven “arms race.”](#) In a declining job market, the threat of massive debt is enough to keep many students from pursuing public interest work. Yet rising tuition and debt are not the only factors. In most universities, the culture and pedagogy of legal education emphasize commercial law over public interest fields and the intellectual pressure of law school undermines student’s commitment to their ideals. Students often feel unsupported within the institution, and a subtle pressure to abandon the political and moral values that informed their decision to become social justice lawyers.

Less often discussed—but just as damaging—are the ways that law school environments produce intense anxiety, stress, competition, and isolation among students. Considering the high rates of substance abuse and depression in the legal field, the negative influences of law school need more attention: [“Lawyers are among the most depressed and distressed professionals; the law school environment trains students to maintain lives that promote depression and anxiety...Pressures include student debt, fear of rejection, lack of feedback, emphasis put on grades, ineffectiveness of feedback regarding grades and intellectual progress in general, lack of guidance, lack of practical skills, competitive atmosphere, and isolation.”](#)² Because of these psychological pressures, many law students end up feeling overwhelmed, alienated, and incapable of maintaining their original plans.

In order to combat these trends, the National Lawyers Guild has created the Radical Law Student Project, a student-led

initiative to ensure that law students are able to maintain their ideals despite the many pressures of law school. The idea for this project emerged at the 2012 NLG National Convention in Pasadena, when the Guild’s Student Caucus decided to make it an organizational priority to challenge the status quo of legal education. The result is the [Radical Law Student Manual](#), a series of articles exploring these issues and offering practical resources for students and faculty.

“A radical legal education can help produce more people’s lawyers”

In the *Radical Law Student Manual*, members of [NLG law school chapters](#) drew on their own expertise and experiences to offer timely analyses and real-life case studies in which students and faculty organized to change specific aspects of law school. For example, law students at UC Davis School of Law wrote a chapter about the reasons why [law school tuition has been escalating](#) since the mid-1980s. They also [shared their experiences organizing](#) on their campus to push back

download the entire (FREE!)

Radical Law Student Manual

[**nlg.org/RLSM**](http://nlg.org/RLSM)

against another round of tuition increases proposed by the administration, including practical step-by-step instructions and advice for students at other institutions who want to initiate similar campaigns.

The intention of this project is to offer ways to both cope with the stressful and hierarchical nature of law school as well as to change as many of its deleterious aspects as possible. A radical legal education can help to produce more people’s lawyers, which is the first step to reshaping the legal profession along the lines of social justice. ■

This article originally appeared at the Law at the Margins blog, lawatthemargins.com.

To learn more about the NLG’s legal education initiatives, or to join the Guild, please email traci@nlg.org.

CONVENTION SCHEDULE

OCTOBER 21 - 25, 2015

OAKLAND MARRIOTT CITY CENTER

Visit nlg.org/convention for info about registration, the hotel, honorees, special events, and more!



WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21

9:00 AM	5:00 PM	National Immigration Project (NIP-NLG) CLE: Immigration Court Technique & Strategy: A One Day Skills Seminar Featuring Mock Hearings
6:00 PM	8:00 PM	National Police Accountability Project (NPAP) Board Meeting
6:00 PM	10:00 PM	National Immigration Project (NIP-NLG) Board Meeting
8:30 PM	9:30 PM	National Executive Committee (NEC) Meeting
(late)		NLG-San Francisco Bay Area Chapter Reception (off-site)

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22

9:00 AM	5:00 PM	National Immigration Project (NLG-NIP) Membership Meeting
9:00 AM	5:00 PM	National Police Accountability Project (NPAP) CLE: Forensic Epidemiology and Exposing Deceptive Experts
8:30 AM	12:00 PM	International Committee Meeting
1:00 PM	3:00 PM	International Committee CLE: Challenging Colonialism
3:00 PM	5:00 PM	International Committee CLE: UN Charter
1:00 PM	4:00 PM	Military Law Task Force (MLTF) Meeting
12:00 PM	3:00 PM	Berkeley South Asian Radical History Walking Tour
3:30 PM	5:45 PM	San Francisco Murals Walking Tour
5:00 PM	6:15 PM	Task Force on the Americas Meeting
5:00 PM	6:45 PM	Mass Defense Committee Meeting
5:00 PM	6:45 PM	National Immigration Project (NLG-NIP) Reception, Daniel Levy Award
6:15 PM	7:00 PM	Cuba Subcommittee Meeting
7:00 PM	8:45 PM	*Keynote Address - Speaker: Alicia Garza

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23

8:00 AM	8:55 AM	NLG Union Management Training
8:00 AM	8:55 AM	Indigenous Peoples' Rights Committee Meeting
9:00 AM	5:00 PM	National Police Accountability Project (NPAP) CLE: Conducting Effective Focus Groups at a Bargain (off -site: Connexion@JLP, 520 3rd St, Ste 109, Oakland, CA; Transformation Room)
9:00 AM	10:15 AM	WORKSHOPS I <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Waging a Battle for Immigrant Rights in the South• Dismantling the Cash Bail System: How Lawyers and Activists are Changing the

Cash for Freedom Business

- The Corporate University: Justice, Anti-Racism and Free Speech in the Age of Neo-Liberal Schools
- Building Economy from the Left: Community Models based on Participatory Democracy and Solidarity
- Black Lives Matter: Legal and Political Strategies for Resisting Police and State Violence in the US and Internationally
- Hot Topic: Palestine and the ICC: An Opportunity for Justice and Accountability?

10:30 AM 11:45 AM

WORKSHOPS II

- Challenging Immigrant Detention: Creative Representation Strategies for Hard Cases
- Freeing Our Political Prisoners!
- Wade in the Water: Detroit, Neoliberalism, and the Future of Cities
- Put Your Money Where Your Mouth Is: Law Collectives and Radical Law Practice
- Strategies for Abolition: Fighting Transphobia, Racism and Economic Oppression
- Street Vending: Challenging the Criminalization of Workers
- Transitioning to Justice: Post-Conflict Countries, State Violence and US Interventionism

12:30 PM 2:00 PM

Friday Luncheon: Art, Culture, Resistance (ticket required)

2:15 PM 3:15 PM

TUPOCC Business Meeting

2:15 PM 3:15 PM

Anti-Racism Committee (ARC) Business Meeting

2:00 PM 3:00 PM

Lyda Pro Bono Committee - Detroit Water Rights Meeting

2:15 PM 3:15 PM

Palestine Subcommittee Meeting

3:30 PM 5:30 PM

PLENARY I

5:45 PM 7:00 PM

Student Caucus

5:45 PM 7:00 PM

Legal Worker Caucus

5:45 PM 7:00 PM

Next Generation Caucus

5:45 PM 7:00 PM

Housing Committee Meeting

5:45 PM 7:00 PM

Anti-Sexism Committee Meeting

5:45 PM 7:15 PM

International Committee Reception & Debra Evenson Award Presentation

7:00 PM 8:30 PM

NLG Union Meeting

7:15 PM 8:30 PM

Play: *Mariposa & the Saint*

7:15 PM 8:30 PM

Queer Caucus

7:15 PM 8:30 PM

Solo Caucus

7:15 PM 8:30 PM

Marxism & the Law Caucus

7:15 PM 8:30 PM

Africa Subcommittee Meeting

8:00 PM 9:00 PM

Mass Incarceration Committee (MIC) Meeting

8:30 PM 10:00 PM

Animal Rights Activism Committee (ARAC) Meeting & Dinner (off-site: Souley Vegan, 301 Broadway, Oakland, CA)

9:00 PM Late

NLG Student Party

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24

8:00 AM	8:55 PM	MENA Action Committee Meeting
8:00 AM	8:55 PM	<i>NLG Review</i> Editorial Board Meeting
9:00 AM	10:30 AM	MAJOR PANELS I <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Black Power! from Ferguson to Oakland: From Service Model to a Model of Self Liberation• From 'Right to Work' to 'Fight for 15': Labor at the Crossroads, Learning Lessons, Going Forward• #SayHerName: Women of Color, Police Violence and Criminalization
10:45 AM	12:15 PM	MAJOR PANELS II <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Violence Against Women Under State Control• America Needs Safe, Resourced Neighborhoods It Can Afford: The Politics of Housing, Identity and Class and the Evasive American Dream• Advocating for Economic and Social Rights throughout the Americas: A Transnational Dialogue
12:45 PM	2:45 PM	PLENARY II (National Elections, Resolutions, Amendments)
3:00 PM	6:00 PM	Anti-Racism Committee (ARC) Anti-Oppression Training
3:00 PM	6:00 PM	TUPOCC Anti-Oppression Training
6:45 PM	7:30 PM	Pre-Banquet Reception (no cost, open to all!)
7:30 PM	10:00 PM	Saturday Night Banquet: Award Presentations & Fundraiser (ticket req'd)

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25

8:15 AM	9:15 PM	Joint Environmental Committee Meeting (EJ & EHRC Committees)
9:30 AM	10:45 AM	Regional Meetings
11:00 AM	12:15 PM	WORKSHOPS III <ul style="list-style-type: none">• SHUTTING the SHU: Movement Strategies for Ending Solitary Confinement• U.S. Empire After the Age of Obama: Africa, Asia and the Caribbean• A Tale of Three Cities: Fighting Gentrification and Displacement in the Bay Area and Chicago• Local Hire Policies and Job Creation for Environmental Justice Communities• Hot Topic: Fighting the Neoliberal Corporate Agenda by Defeating the TPP and TTIP• From the Courthouse to the Mosque: Resisting Repression and Surveillance Targeting Arab and Muslim-Americans
12:15 AM	2:30 PM	National Executive Committee (NEC) Meeting
1:00 PM	2:30 PM	WORKSHOPS IV <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 50 Shades of Green: The Conflict between Federal and State Marijuana

Laws and its Impact on Immigrants

- Lawfare: The Legal Attack on Palestinian Communities and Movements
- The Problem of Speaking for Others: Advocating for Juveniles, Animals, Persons with Disabilities, and Terror Detainees
- Law School Tuition Crisis: Causes and Strategies for Change

3:00 PM 5:00 PM Mass Defense Committee CLE: Protecting Dissent Before and After Arrest
 3:00 PM 6:00 PM Black Radical Oakland Walking Tour

- This schedule is subject to change-

TOURS

San Francisco Murals Walking Tour (Thursday, 3:30-5:45 PM)

Come see the famous murals of San Francisco, from Balmy Alley to the Women's Building! The tour will be led by Miranda Bergman, long time muralist, artist educator, and activist. She is one of the creators of the monumental MaestraPeace mural on the Women's Building, the largest mural in the city. Miranda is also one of the original artists in Balmy Alley and has just restored her mural there. Her murals stretch between Central America and Palestine, and many places in between.

Meet: Lobby of the Oakland Marriot City Center (at 3:30 PM sharp!) to ride BART to San Francisco. Cost: \$15-20 (sliding scale - no one will be turned away). Register at <http://crm.nlgsf.org/civcrm/event/register?reset=1&id=26>

Berkeley South Asian Radical Walking Tour (Thursday, 12:30-3 PM)

Discover over 100 years of radical South Asian American history in the streets of Berkeley, California! South Asians have been living in California since at least 1854, but their stories are still little known. Join community historians Barnali Ghosh and Anirvan Chatterjee as South Asian American history comes to life on an engaging 2-mile walking tour (wheelchair/stroller accessible). You'll visit original sites, hear stories, and come away inspired by secret histories of immigrant freedom fighters, feminists, and beyond. Learn more about the tour, its guides, and read reviews here.

Meet: 2712 Telegraph Avenue (on the 1/1R bus AC Transit line from downtown Oakland, or a 10 min cab ride. The tour will end at the Downtown Berkeley BART station. Cost: \$15-20. Register at <http://crm.nlgsf.org/>

civcrm/event/register?reset=1&id=27

Black Radical Oakland Walking Tour (Sunday 3-6 PM)

Travel with members of the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement and the NLG through Oakland, visiting key sites of struggle for the Black Panther Party and other Black radical movements in the historic Town. From the site of Huey P. Newton's trial and Bobby Hutton's murder to the location of major demonstrations against the Vietnam War and the killing of Oscar Grant, you'll see the history of Black radical movements in Oakland from the 1960s to the present. The tour is wheelchair and stroller accessible.

Meet: Lobby of Oakland Marriott City Center to walk to Alameda County Courthouse. Cost: \$15 - 20 (no one turned away for lack of funds). Register at <http://crm.nlgsf.org/civcrm/event/register?reset=1&id=28>

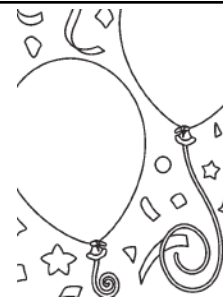
Black History and Hiking on San Francisco's Coast (Sunday, 10 AM-12:30 PM)

Please join us for a special Black History event on San Francisco's coast!

We will learn about Sutro Bath's importance in San Francisco's civil rights history, the Buffalo Soldiers' storied history in the Presidio, Maya Angelou's route to Ocean Beach as the first African American cable car driver, and Captain William P. Shorey's whaling boat adventures. The tour will be led by Zoe Polk, NLGSF Bay member. Register at <http://crm.nlgsf.org/civcrm/event/register?reset=1&id=29>.

Meet: Land's End Visitor's Center: 680 Point Lobos Ave
 Cost: Sliding scale donation of \$15-20, to benefit the Convention Childcare fund.

FRIDAY LUNCHEON: ART, CULTURE, AND RESISTANCE Join us October 23, from 12:30 PM - 2 PM for our annual Friday Luncheon! This year, attendees will enjoy a delicious meal over performances by two local artists: Naima Shalhoub, a first-generation Lebanese American singer and advocate for women in prison and Lubna Morrar, a Palestinian poet and activist with the Arab Youth Organization and member of the Arab Resource and Organizing Center. Don't miss it! *Luncheon ticket required (\$50). Available on-site or upon online registration at nlg.org/convention.*



STUDENT PARTY Every Friday night of the NLG convention is reserved for the NLG Student Party. Join us for music, drinks, and fun! Lawyers, legal workers, and friends are also all welcome!

PRE-CELEBRATION RECEPTION An hour before the Banquet, we'll hold a gathering open to all Convention attendees with music and a cash bar. Join us! (*No ticket required. No cost.*)

SATURDAY NIGHT BANQUET This annual event is full of food, drinks, music, and fun. We'll hear from friends old and new, recognize the outstanding work of our members, and share our favorite Guild stories. *Ticket is required (\$75/Students \$35). Available on-site or upon online registration at nlg.org/convention.*

2015 HONOREES

Every year, we honor exceptional members who exemplify the Guild's revolutionary spirit of 77 years of legal activism for the people. Please join us in celebrating this year's honorees! All of the awards will be presented at the Saturday Night Banquet with the exception of the Carol Weiss King award, to be presented at Thursday evening's Keynote. Learn more about our honorees at nlg.org/convention!



Walter Riley
Law for the People Award



Alice B. Jennings
Ernie Goodman Award



Sarah Coffey
Legal Worker Award



Jill Humphries
Legal Worker Award



Art Heitzer
Debra Evenson Award



Danielle Alvarado
C.B. King Award



Deborah Willis
Arthur Kinoy Award



Ahilan Arulanantham
Carol Weiss King Award

CONVENTION CHILDCARE Fill out the online childcare request form at nlg.org/convention by October 10.

ALTERNATIVE HOUSING The Alternative Housing & Childcare Committee is committed to helping make this year's Convention as accessible as possible by helping people find accommodations so that the hotel is not a cost-prohibitive factor. Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee alternative housing to anyone. To request shared space offered by local members, please fill out the online childcare request form at nlg.org/convention by October 10.



PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

According to the NLG Constitution, the Plenary at the Annual Convention is the highest decision-making body in the organization. Every year, proposed resolutions are presented before membership prior to voting. All current members up-to-date on their dues are eligible to vote. We strongly encourage all members to carefully review the proposed resolutions (there is one this year, printed here as submitted), *prior* to voting at the Convention. Past resolutions, the NLG Constitution and Bylaws are available at nlg.org/member/bylaws-resolutions.

SUPPORTING THE ABOLITION OF PRISONS

We define the term “prison” to mean any institution where people are held against their will through coercion, force, or threat of force, including but not limited to: prisons; jails; police lock-ups; juvenile detention facilities; immigration detention facilities; and hospitals or nursing homes where people are held against their will for civil commitment, psychiatric treatment, or quarantine.

WHEREAS, the United States has the world's largest prison population, with more than 2.2 million people are currently incarcerated in the United States, composing fully one quarter of all prisoners on Earth; and in 2014, nearly 7 million people were under “correctional control”, the sorts of criminal legal system surveillance that include probation, parole, supervision, electronic monitoring and other increasingly common forms of “community” monitoring, including that conducted by private companies contracting with governments; and

WHEREAS, the United States spends an estimated \$80 billion on incarceration per a year, more than six times what the U.S. spends on education; states spend an average of 3 to 6 times more incarcerating an adult than they spend educating a young person; fewer than 20% of incarcerated people have a high school diploma; money dedicated to funding incarceration is money that could be spent on prevention and support of opportunities for those currently trapped in the criminal legal system; and

WHEREAS, prisons are used to criminalize and repress dissent and movements for liberation; many NLG members have been or currently are in prison for the expression of their political beliefs; the Guild has long supported many political prisoners such as Puerto Rican independence fighters (*see Puerto Rico resolutions 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2014*), the Cuban 5 (*see Cuban 5 resolutions, 2007, 2014*), Palestinian

prisoners (*see resolutions to support Palestinian prisoners, 2007, 2011*), Black Panther Party and Black Liberation Army veterans, Leonard Peltier of the American Indian Movement, and current NLG Jailhouse Lawyer Vice-President Mumia Abu-Jamal; establishment of the NLG Political Prisoner Support Committee was approved in August 2015; and

WHEREAS, prisons further racism and classism, and people of color make up approximately 70% of the prisoners despite composing only 22% of the national population; Black women are the fastest growing group of prisoners, and Native American prisoners are the largest group per capita; prisoners are often subject to non-consensual eugenics practices and other medical experimentation; prisons punish poverty and crimes of survival, making individuals suffer for social conditions such as poverty, homelessness, and lack of access to mental healthcare and other resources; the proliferation of “quality of life offenses” associated with existence in public spaces disproportionately criminalizes homeless, precariously housed, and low-income people and transgender people of color; and

WHEREAS, prisons hurt workers; those who have been imprisoned are by law exempt from the Constitutional prohibition on human slavery; incarcerated members of our community are forced to work without pay and without the option to quit; prisoners create many of the country's most profitable consumer goods and do some of the most dangerous and physically demanding labor including fighting wildfires (in California) and being forced to do agricultural work on plantations (in Louisiana); incarceration is used to disrupt labor organizing and intimidate workers; companies use prison labor in order to avoid complying with labor and employment laws; construction of new prisons is been used to distract from the impact of post-industrialization in impoverished rural places; prison guard unions receive special treatment by the state to the detriment of other workers and building a mass workers movement; and

Whereas, prisons are designed to maintain economic and racial inequality, legitimize capitalism, and feed corporate wealth; prisons are the state's primary tool for punishing the very people targeted by inequality developed and actively maintained by state and federal policy; blaming individuals for the conditions inflicted upon them by social policy denies appropriate social responsibility and enables both policy and popular rhetoric falsely claiming the existence of equal opportunity for success in the United States; prisons exploit inequality for profit and transfer resources from public use to private entities, including generating hundreds of millions of dollars per year to just two of the largest private prison companies; and

WHEREAS, prisons further ableism; people living with disabilities are more likely to be incarcerated than people without disabilities, and incarceration creates additional disabilities; people with disabilities are further punished while in prison and receive inadequate treatment; state prisoners report mental health conditions at five times the rate of the general adult population: 56.2% versus 11%; across the country, and 40% of individuals with a severe mental illness will spend time in jail, prison, or community corrections at some point; currently, 32 states and 2 territories explicitly criminalize even unintentional HIV exposure, perpetuating the stigma that people living with HIV are toxic and dangerous; and

WHEREAS, prisons further sexism, transphobia, and homophobia and women and LCBTQ-GNC people face unique forms of criminalization, are imprisoned disproportionately, and face undue harm once incarcerated; nearly 50% of Black transgender respondents reported some incarceration; women face criminalization and other punishment for drinking or using drugs while pregnant and for defending themselves against abusive partners; transgender women of color forced to fight back against transphobic violence are routinely punished in lieu of their attackers; women prisoners have experienced forced sterilization; prisons prohibit even consensual relationships between prisoners, using denial of sexuality as an additional element of punishment while permitting high rates of non-consensual sexual violence; transgender people in particular face extraordinarily high rates of violence while incarcerated, punishment for refusal to comply with gender norms, and denial of gender-affirming healthcare; and

WHEREAS, prisons further ageism and criminalize normal youthful behavior; the school-to-prison pipeline includes "zero tolerance" discipline policies, harsh suspensions and expulsions, and court involvement that pushes young people—especially youth of color and youth with disabilities—out of classrooms and into the juvenile and criminal justice systems; this pipeline reflects the prioritization of incarceration over education, decreases long-term access to employment, and increases the likelihood of later criminal legal system involvement; and

WHEREAS, prisons further marginalization of those with non-Christian religions; "anti-terrorism" legislation has been used to unfairly target, surveil, criminalize, and imprison non-Christians and particularly Muslims; many Muslim prisoners are subjected to solitary confinement for extended periods without explanation or justification; the operation of the Guantanamo Bay facility is in violation of international criminal law and has been the site of the extended imprisonment and cruel torture of non-Christian prisoners of the state; non-Christian defendants

are less likely to receive fair trials, civilian jurisdiction, or shorter sentences than their Christian counterparts; and

WHEREAS, prisons have not stopped violence such as rape, war, child abuse, intimate partner abuse, murder, bombings, torture, and other atrocities; in fact, prisons sometimes worsen such violence by further traumatizing prisoners, disrupting their relationships with families and communities, and decreasing prisoners' ability to function socially; prisons do not support survivors or their agency and instead legitimize state violence in the name of victims and survivors; prisons do not make the individual or societal changes necessary for accountability and prevention of further violence; prisons detract from grassroots anti-violence strategies such as community accountability processes, restorative and transformative justice practices, and other survivor-centered efforts; and

WHEREAS, prisons actually cause violence; whether through solitary confinement, strip searches, overcrowding, denial of needed health care, beatings, rape, humiliation, or other tactics, prisons routinely use violence to control and dominate prisoners; prisons are the sites of countless daily human rights violations; the total state control and violence against human beings in prison violates all standards of human decency and, in many cases, international law; violence in prisons is not equally distributed and disproportionately affects youth, LGTBQ-GNC prisoners, and those with mental illness; transgender prisoners, for example, are sexually abused at nearly 10x the rate of prisoners in general: 39% versus 4%; and

WHEREAS, prison abolition is a strategy developed by radical (cis and trans) Black women, current and former prisoners, and trans and queer people of color; abolition is a demand of Ferguson Action and many other organizations; for example, Critical Resistance, INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence, Black and Pink, Justice Now, the Audre Lorde Project, the Sylvia Rivera Law Project, Philly Stands Up, Transformative Justice Law Project of Illinois, Communities United Against Violence, Transgender Gender Variant Intersex Justice Project, and California Coalition for Women Prisoners have all supported prison abolition and used prison abolitionist strategies in their work.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the National Lawyers Guild at its 2015 Law for the People Convention calls for the dismantling and abolition of all prisons, and of all aspects of systems and institutions that support, condone, create, fill, or protect prisons. The NLG commits itself to supporting grassroots organizing efforts, policy initiatives, and litigation that promotes or moves toward abolition, including: the rights and organizing of prisoners, the defunding and closure of prisons and redirection of prison and policing budgets into social and human services as well as re-entry support; legalization of drug use and sex work; release of prisoners serving life without parole and other inhumane sentences, decreased use of solitary confinement, and efforts to prevent construction of new prisons.

Implementation

This resolution is to be implemented by the committees and individuals listed in support below, and in coordination with the NLG National Office. The individuals listed below will contact and coordinate with committees, chapters, and other NLG entities to assist them in educating their members and the public about this issue.

The National Office was consulted and has agreed to assist in implementation. Individuals active in the supporting committees agreed to assist in implementation within their committees and beyond.

Submitted by:

The Anti-Racism Committee of the National Lawyers Guild
The Mass Incarceration Committee of the National Lawyers Guild

Pooja Gehi, Executive Director of the National Lawyers Guild
Oren Nimni, Co-Chair, The United People of Color Caucus of the National Lawyers Guild

Bina Ahmad, Co-National Vice President of the National Lawyers Guild

Sharlyn Grace, Co-National Vice President of the National Lawyers Guild

Hannah Adams, Co-Chair, Anti-Racism Committee of the National Lawyers Guild

kt crossman, Co-chair, Queer Caucus of the National Lawyers Guild

Sara Kershner, Member, NLG Bay Area Police and Prisons Committee

Caitlin Kelly Henry, Member, NLG Bay Area Police and Prisons

Committee

Nora Carroll, Co-Founder, Mass Incarceration Committee of the National Lawyers Guild

Jesse Stout, Co-Chair, Drug Policy Committee of the National Lawyers Guild

Miriam Haskell, Southern Regional Vice-President of the National Lawyers Guild

Kelly Lou Densmore, Co-Far West Regional Vice-President of the National Lawyers Guild

Heidi Ann Cerneka, Member, Loyola University Chicago School of Law NLG Chapter

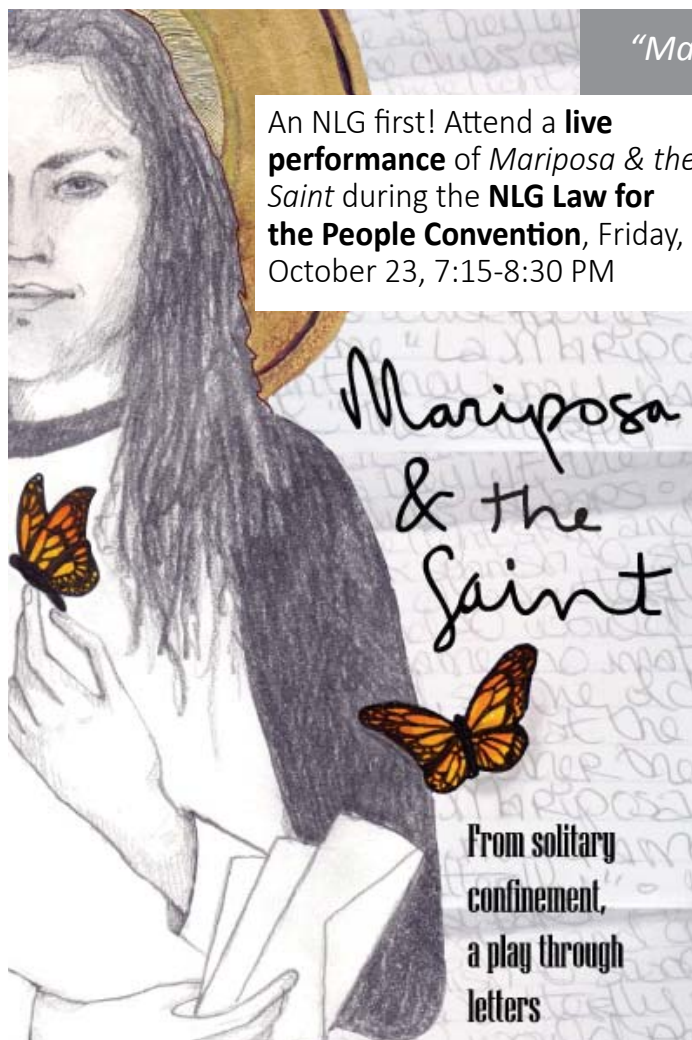
Maggie Ellinger-Locke, Member at Large, National Lawyers Guild

Additional Resources:

<http://www.blackandpink.org/wp-content/uploads/Transforming-Carceral-Logic.pdf>

http://www.actionicopa.org/items/155-Coyle_Reasons_for_Penal_Abolition.pdf

<http://www.incite-national.org/page/incite-critical-resistance-statement>



"Mariposa & the Saint is an incredibly powerful advocacy tool in the movement to end solitary confinement."

- Andrea Bible, Staff Attorney,
The Legal Aid Society

Longtime friends, and current collaborators, Sara (Mariposa) Fonseca and Julia Steele Allen have written a play through the prison wall.

Over the course of three years, crafted only by letters, they smuggled out a story that is urgent, emotional and profound.

Now, from inside the isolation of solitary confinement, Mariposa speaks directly to an audience.

Her words will change you.

national lawyers guild foundation

132 Nassau Street, Rm. 922
New York, NY 10038
www.nlg.org

Join the NLG Online Referral Directory and get FOUND!

Do you want to reach clients looking for **forward-thinking, movement-driven** representation? Join the **NLG Referral Directory**!

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