

OMNI FBI NEWSLETTER #1, FEBRUARY 1, 2011, Compiled by Dick Bennett for a Culture of Peace

See: CIA, War on Terror, Patriot Act, COINTELPRO, Homeland Security Agency, Intelligence Agencies, National Security State, Surveillance, Militarism, Empire

The following entries glimpse some tensions during the fall and winter of 2010-2011 between world peace, justice, civil liberties, and nonviolence advocates and the US Military/Security State. The peace and justice movement, in contrast to the deceptions of the Warfare/Security State, should always be truthful, including the avoidance of exaggeration, so if you can correct anything that follows, send me the information for addition to the newsletter.

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PRESIDENT OBAMA

White House Seeks Greater Power to Wiretap Online Communications

In technology news, the Obama administration is pushing Congress to make it easier for federal authorities to wiretap online communications including emails, Facebook postings and internet phone calls. The *New York Times* reports officials want Congress to require all services that enable online communications to be technically capable of complying if served with a wiretap order in order to give the federal government the ability to intercept and unscramble any encrypted message sent over the internet. *Democracy Now* 9-28-10

[D: I begin with President Obama to remind us that local and national are connected, that local police behavior reflects attitudes and behavior at the top. If Pres. Obama has also defended civil liberties, I will be very happy to know it, so send me the report for inclusion here.]

“FBI Assembling a Database on Americans , Liz Goodwin, The Lookout/Y!News

Intro: "The FBI is assembling a massive database on thousands of Americans, many of whom have not been accused of any crime."

READ MORE <https://mail.google.com/mail/?hl=en&shva=1#inbox/12d079a82f661539>

THE RAIDS IN SEPTEMBER

FBI Raids Homes of Antiwar and Pro-Palestinian Activists in Chicago and Minneapolis

Antiwar activists are gearing up for protests outside FBI offices in cities across the country today and Tuesday after the FBI raided eight homes and offices of antiwar activists in Chicago and Minneapolis Friday [Sept. 2010].. The FBI's search warrants indicate agents were looking for connections between local antiwar activists and groups in Colombia and the Middle East. We speak to the targets of two of the raids and former FBI officer Coleen Rowley.

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Guests:

[Jess Sundin](#), longtime antiwar activist in Minneapolis. Her home was raided by the FBI early Friday morning. She's a member of the Anti-War Committee, whose offices were also raided.

Joe Iosbaker, employee of the University of Illinois in Chicago and a steward for SEIU Local 73. He helped coordinate buses from Chicago to the protests at the Republican National Convention in 2008. His home was one of two raided in Chicago Friday.

Coleen Rowley, former FBI special agent and whistleblower based in Minnesota. She was named *Time Magazine's* Person of the Year in 2002.

INCIDENT IN MEMPHIS JAN. 2011-02-01

FBI and SWAT teams show up at antiwar event

Memphis lawmen say high-profile visit to protest was to keep peace center peaceful

By Marc Perrusquia. Tuesday, January 25, 2011

http://www.commercialappeal.com/news/2011/jan/25/protest-earns-guarded-reaction/?partner=yahoo_feeds

When a police SWAT team and an FBI anti-terrorism squad showed up Tuesday at a Memphis church where peace activists were staging an event, a scene reminiscent of the turbulent 1960s ensued.

The activists, members of the Mid-South Peace and Justice Center who oppose the war in Afghanistan, characterized the encounter as police intimidation and a case of illegal surveillance.

FBI and Memphis Police Department representatives countered it was all a misunderstanding. They said they were there to protect the activists from potential harm by extremists who might oppose their views.

"We don't buy that at all," said Jacob Flowers, executive director of the nonprofit center.

"Never (before) have we encountered the situation where we've had eight to 10 marked and unmarked police cars, including tactical units, sitting there monitoring us. We find it too coincidental."

About 15 to 20 activists gathered Tuesday afternoon at First Congregational Church, where the Peace and Justice Center rents office space, to fill out Freedom of Information requests aimed at discovering if the FBI or MPD is keeping surveillance files on the activists. Flowers said 16 individuals filled out FOIA forms at the event.

Activists grew alarmed when three members of the FBI's local Joint Terrorism Task Force stopped by the church, followed by MPD patrol cars and unmarked, black SUVs manned by TACT unit officers. The police units surrounded the church on South Cooper, and the black SUVs slowly crept through the church parking lot.....

Marc Perrusquia: 529-2545

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www.Freedomarchives.org

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT MINNEAPOLIS AND CHICAGO.

FBI RAIDS ON PROTESTERS IN MINNEAPOLIS AND CHICAGO 2010

[The following came from FOR.]

[Also see: **<https://mail.google.com/mail/?hl=en&shva=1#inbox/12ba23ee2a731cfa>**]

This event represents an increasingly disturbing trend in our nation. As our government becomes more tightly bound to corporate interests, and less capable of dealing fairly with the needs of its people, it worries more about how to keep them from complaining effectively.

Several recent Supreme Court cases have shifted the definitions of "support for terrorism" in ways that allow peace, justice, environmental and charity organizations to fit the definition.

Activists in **Minnesota** point out that they have the most top-heavy anti-terrorist bureaucracy in the country. They have several thousand agents assigned to "anti-terrorism" and they need to keep them busy. That puts dissent in Minnesota under considerable threat.

Activists in the North and Northeast are also better organized than we are in the South. They may also be considered a greater threat to the status quo.

Any person or group who longs for a world that is more nonviolent, more just, and more sustainable should remain alert to these emerging situations, and prepare to raise the alarm wherever their voice can be heard. We all long for America to be America again.

Dear Dick,

You may have heard reports about raids conducted against anti-war activists in Minneapolis and Chicago last week... but then again you may not have, because mainstream news has been very quiet about it. Today major peace organizations such as the 100-year-old **Fellowship of Reconciliation and the A.J. Muste Institute** have issued a release that tells what they currently know about the raids, and a request to contact Attorney General Eric Holder to raise protest. His comment line number is 202-353-1555. Read more to decide what you might say when you call the line.

Protect Democracy from FBI Raids on Activist Homes

FOR - <http://forusa.org/blogs/john-lindsay-poland/protect-democracy-fbi-raids-activist-homes>

Submitted by John Lindsay-Poland on Tue, Sep 28, 2010, 3:17pm

Jessica Sundin of the Minneapolis Anti-War Committee speaks after her home was raided by FBI agents.

The FBI raided homes and confiscated papers, computers, phones and CDs of peace and rights activists in Minnesota and Chicago in the early morning of Friday, September 24, in what agents said was part of a counterterrorism investigation. The **Fellowship of Reconciliation** urges our members and other concerned citizens to contact Attorney General Eric Holder at 202-353-1555 to call for an end to actions targeting legitimate dissent, and to participate in protests of these actions in your area.

FOR Executive Director Mark Johnson was in Chicago this weekend, and participated in a Monday protest at the FBI headquarters there. "It has also actively alerted us all that our efforts to seek peace and justice through nonviolent means is being scrutinized by the government with what can only be seen as an effort to intimidate and chill speech and criticism," said Johnson in a report published today on FOR's web site.

The raids come in the context of the **Supreme Court decision in June on the Humanitarian Law**

Project, which broadly interprets assistance to terrorism to include nonviolent engagement with armed groups, such as conflict resolution training and legal advice. The federal law upheld by the court decision and cited in the search warrants prohibits, "providing material support or resources to designated foreign terrorist organizations." The Supreme Court rejected a free speech challenge to the material support law from humanitarian aid groups. Under the law, individuals can face up to 15 years in prison for providing "material support" to groups designated by the US government as terrorists, even if their work is intended to promote peaceful, lawful objectives. "Material support" is defined to include any "service," "training," "expert advice or assistance" or "personnel."

"Humanitarian and peace organizations say their direct interaction with violent or terrorist groups is vital to intervention efforts," the *Christian Science Monitor* reported. "The Supreme Court decision means they do it at their peril." Last week's raids are evidence of that. "Training groups to pursue peaceful resolution of their disputes should be encouraged, not made criminal," said Sharon Bradford Franklin, senior counsel with the Constitution Center.

The raids come on the heels of a Justice Department probe that found the FBI improperly monitored activist groups and individuals from 2001 to 2006. Among the groups investigated were Greenpeace, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), Catholic Worker and the Thomas Merton Center, a pacifist group based in Pittsburgh.

What do we know about these raids?

On **Friday, September 24**, the FBI raided at least six homes in Chicago and Minneapolis, with the explanation that the activists targeted were under investigation for providing "material support to foreign terrorist organizations," namely the FARC in Colombia, the Peoples Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and Hezbollah. The FBI also raided the office of the Anti-war Committee in Minneapolis, which had organized a demonstration during the 2008 Republican National Convention. Some of the peace activists whose houses were raided are members of the Anti-War Committee. The *New York Times* quotes an **FBI** spokesperson who said the raids were part of "an ongoing **Joint Terrorism Task**

Force investigation." While no arrests have been made so far, the activists have been served with grand jury subpoenas.

The raids appear to be '**fishing expeditions**' - attempts to gather as much personal information as possible from the activists' homes in the hopes of bringing some charges against them. Groups listed in the warrants are Hezbollah, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC. The warrants also authorized agents to seize items such as electronics, photographs, videos, address books and letters, and seeks information pertaining to the activists' work in a left group called Freedom Road Socialist Organization. [Click here to download a PDF of the search warrant.](#)

Several of the activists whose homes were raided and/or received grand jury summons have been active in the Colombia Action Network (based in Minnesota) and/or the Free Ricardo Palmera Committee. Ricardo Palmera (alias Simon Trinidad) is a leader of the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) who was tried for conspiracy in the kidnapping of the three US military contractors because of his membership in FARC, though he was not alleged to have taken part in the kidnapping itself, according to attorney Paul Wolf. Palmera was sentenced to 60 years in prison and is currently in solitary confinement at a SuperMax prison in Colorado.

FOR does not share the rhetoric of the Free Ricardo Palmera Committee in support of the FARC project in Colombia, as it goes against our core commitment to nonviolence. However, democratic process and First Amendment guarantees require that people in this country be able to express these points of view, and those who disagree to engage in debate with them, without fear of seizure of one's cell phone, computer, and other personal possessions, of being labelled a "terrorist suspect", or of being targeted by armed federal agencies.

What you can do:

Call the Attorney General's office at 202-353-1555 and demand an end to political intimidation of peace activists.

Call or write the "newspapers of record" such as the New York Times and Washington Post, asking them to give full and prominent coverage to this story.

Write a letter to the editor of your local paper, explaining why this kind of intimidation is a danger to democracy.

Call your local members of Congress to demand that the FBI stop harassing peace activists.

Participate in any local actions to protest these raids. Click here for a list of protest events around the country.....<https://mail.google.com/mail/?hl=en&shva=1#inbox/12b671ac59f8dccb>

SAMPLE PETITION

Submit Query

Petition Text:

To: President Barack Obama, U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder, U.S. Attorney Patrick J. Fitzgerald

cc: Vice President Biden, DOJ Inspector General Fine, the Senate and House Judiciary Committees, Congressional Leaders, the Congressional Black Caucus, U.N. Secy Gen Ban, and members of the media

**Stop the repression against anti-war and international solidarity activists.

**Immediately return all confiscated materials: computers, cell phones, papers, documents, etc.

**End the grand jury proceedings against anti-war activists.

I am writing to demand justice and an end to the FBI's continued harassment of antiwar and international solidarity activists, activists who are guilty of no crime but opposition to U.S. foreign policy. On Friday, September 24, 2010 the FBI raided seven houses and an office in Chicago and Minneapolis. The FBI served subpoenas to testify before a federal grand jury to 13 activists in Illinois, Minnesota, and Michigan. The FBI also attempted to intimidate activists in California, Wisconsin and North Carolina. This is not the action of a lone prosecutor. The raids were coordinated nationally, spanned several cities, and many other activists have been visited and personally threatened by the FBI.

The FBI confiscated computers, email and mailing lists, cell phones, cameras, videos, books, and passports. This is a dangerous attack on the constitutional rights of free speech of every social justice, antiwar and human rights activist and organization in the U.S. today. The right to speak, meet and write opinions is guaranteed under the constitution.

This suppression of civil rights is aimed at those who dedicate their time and energy to supporting the struggles of the Palestinian and Colombian peoples against U.S. funded occupation and war. Grand Jury subpoenas investigating material support of terrorism are being used to silence highly respected and well known human rights activists. This is a dangerous national effort to shut down growing opposition to U.S. wars. It cannot be allowed.

The FBI and the Grand Jury are threatening courageous individuals who have written and spoken publicly to broaden understanding of social justice issues of war and occupation. The activists are involved with many groups, including: the Twin Cities Anti-War Committee, the Palestine Solidarity Group, the Colombia Action Network, Students for a Democratic Society, and Freedom Road Socialist Organization. These activists came together with many others to organize the 2008 anti-war marches on the Republican National Convention in St. Paul.

The FBI and the U.S. government must end this campaign of intimidation against anti-war and international solidarity activists. I am outraged at this disrespect of democratic rights. I ask that you intervene immediately to:

****Stop the repression against anti-war and international solidarity activists.**

****Immediately return all confiscated materials: computers, cell phones, papers, documents, etc.**

****End the grand jury proceedings against anti-war activists.**

Sincerely,

TAKE ACTION

You can also call the U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder at 202-353-1555 and U.S. Attorney Patrick J. Fitzgerald at 312-353-5300 or write an email to: AskDOJ@usdoj.gov demanding an end to the FBI raids, return of all confiscated materials and an end to the Grand Jury witchhunt. Fitzgerald is in charge of the Northern District of Illinois and responsible for the FBI raids and Grand Jury investigation.

**Contact the Committee to Stop FBI Repression
at stopfbi.net
stopfbi@gmail.com**

posted September 28, 2010

Campaign to Stop FBI Repression of Anti-War Activists

Sponsored by:

Committee to Stop FBI Repression

stopfbi.net

stopfbi@gmail.com

International Action Center

www.iacenter.org

c/o Solidarity Center

55 West 17th St 5C

New York, NY 10011

For further information call: (212) 633-6646

A FEW INDIVIDUAL RESPONSES TO THE FBI RAIDS IN MINNEAPOLIS AND CHICAGO IN SEPTEMBER 2010

“Politically Active Americans Facing Searches and Surveillance” by Kevin Zeese

Since the the presidency of George W. Bush and continuing throughout the presidency of Barack Obama more and more Americans who are politically active are finding themselves monitored, harassed and searched. It is a trend that we must stand up to or we all my find ourselves on a government list merely for writing a letter, signing a petition or attending a protest.

“FBI Raids Activists' Homes in Sinister COINTELPRO Replay” by Tom Burghardt

With Friday's raids, the federal government under "change" huckster Barack Obama, has taken their repressive program to a whole new level, threatening activists with the specter of being charged with providing "material support of terrorism."

Hundreds Protest FBI Raids in Chicago and Minneapolis

Hundreds of protesters gathered in Minneapolis, Chicago and other cities Monday to condemn the FBI for raiding eight homes and offices of antiwar activists last week. Outside the FBI office in Chicago, protesters held signs reading "Freedom to Dissent" and "One Nation Under Surveillance." Targets of Friday's raids included Hatem Abudayyeh, the executive director of the Arab American Action Network in Chicago. *Democracy Now* 9-28-10

bird life depends on them, and so do we."

Protests Continue Against FBI Raids, Subpoenas of Anti-War Activists

And protests are continuing nationwide against the FBI for raiding eight homes and offices of antiwar activists in Minneapolis and Chicago last week. On Tuesday, hundreds of people rallied in at least a dozen cities including Philadelphia, Washington, DC, Los Angeles and San Francisco. Here in New York, anti-war activist Jose Martin took part in a demonstration outside a federal building.

Jose Martin: "I lived in Chicago for eight years. I know everyone who got raid or got contacted by the FBI this past Friday. They're all dear friends of mine—some of them have children in kindergarten, some of them have babies, and I remember them before they were married in some of these cases. They're wonderful people, hard-working anti-war activists and solidarity activists, and we need to make sure that no one in any movement turns their back on these folks. Because that's what the FBI wants to do. It wants to ruin their lives, and wants to make as many anti-war activists turn their back on people who are being harassed as it can."

Eleven activists have been handed subpoenas to appear before federal grand juries, with the first beginning next week. Democracy Now 9-29-10

RESISTANCE

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FILM ON FBI STING

News From Free Speech TV: April 16-April 22, 2010

Waiting For Mercy This Week on Free Speech TV

Showing this week on Free Speech TV: *Waiting for Mercy* tells the story of an FBI sting operation in Albany, N.Y., in 2004 designed to entrap Yassin Aref, 37 (a refugee from Kurdistan in northern Iraq, pictured) and Mohammed Mosharref Hossain, 51, a United States citizen and an immigrant from Bangladesh. Were they terrorists, or were they set up? *Waiting for Mercy* was recently selected as best documentary at the Ballston Spa Film Festival.

As always, thanks for your support of independent media. We don't take money from corporations or the government, and we aren't beholden to anyone except our viewers. Let us know how we can make your FSTV experience better.

Cheers, Leland Rucker, FSTVWeb Editor

END OF OMNI NEWSLETTER #1 ON FBI, FEB. 1, 2011