

Why We Support Political Prisoners

Deep Green Resistance

At face value, ‘Deep Green Resistance’ (DGR) does not sound like the name of an organization involved in prison solidarity work. As a radical environmental and social justice organization, such work would seem an obscure part of what we do to some.

DGR is often pegged or pigeon-holed as an environmental organization. While much of our focus revolves around defending the natural world, it would be wrong to leave it at that – we are a feminist organization, we are an anti-racism organization, we are anti-capitalists, anti-imperialists. The slow consumption of the earth, the swallowing up of ecosystems to churn out economic commodities, is rooted in the same sadistic power structures as patriarchy, white supremacy and colonialism. The violation imperative, the drive to dominate that hides behind every clear-cut of old growth forest is the same that is embodied in the concrete and razor wire of the prison industrial complex. We cannot fight oppression in some places and ignore it in others.

Hence our evolving solidarity and support for political prisoners and Prisoners of War (P.O.W.s.). Our P.O.W. Support programs are just getting off the ground, but there is an enthusiasm within the community for this work that would surprise some, and confuse others who ask why we do this work. We do this work to make connections and show solidarity with people who have been imprisoned for actively fighting back against oppression. Contrary to what often becomes the dominant narrative, those held by the state have not been removed from the movement or cast aside to be forgotten – they are unbroken, with much wisdom and guidance for us to learn from, and are only forgotten if we forget them.

Our support of political prisoners helps form our view point of revolutionary struggle, white privilege and solidarity beyond simple “environmentalist”. Their history further informs us of how the structures of power in this culture function against those who organize to resist. While we do support prisoners from the environmental movement, we realize that the resistance has to be, and is, much broader than that. Currently, we are supporting POWs from a variety of movements including Black Liberation/ New Afrikan, Chicano revolutionaries, Indigenous freedom fighters and Earth liberation prisoners. We also support women, people of colour, and LGBT people who are punished for exercising the basic right of all living beings to defend themselves. These are all people who have consciously

acted against the forces of genocide and destruction. These are also people who have acted with strong revolutionary principles based on justice and continued struggle. Without the protection of white and class privilege, they dared to give all for their communities and in doing so provide excellent examples for us to follow and learn from today.

Of course, while not all those incarcerated are held in cages for their political beliefs or activity, we see all those held captive behind bars as prisoners of this society's war against freedom, and of its insatiable and merciless desire for absolute control. We do this work to bring awareness to the fact that there is a war going on and that it is not just one sided. Wherever there has been oppression there has been resistance. That is true whether we are speaking of institutionalized white supremacy, the subjugation of women, the genocide of indigenous peoples around the world, the oppression and plunder of the Global South by imperialists and capitalists (in so far as there is a difference) or the dismemberment of our planet's most vital life support systems by the system we call civilization. Across the world and throughout history, women and men have always risen against their brutalization and fought for their lands and communities. This rich history and legacy of struggle and resistance continues today. People are fighting back. In fact, that is precisely why many of them are imprisoned. We remind ourselves that not only is resistance possible, it is already happening.

And if we are to decisively end the oppression, genocide, exploitation, and murder that characterize the dominant culture and industrial capitalism, we need resistance. Those of us with DGR believe that serious and effective resistance is rooted in a culture of resistance – a culture that embraces an ethos of fighting back. Among the many things a culture of resistance entails is unwavering support for those captured or taken by the State. We need to create collective networks of support for members of our movements who are taken from their families, communities and movements. We need to show, by our actions, that those who put themselves on the line for Earth and for justice will be supported, that their families will be supported, that they will be remembered.

It is that supportive culture, with a resistance imperative, where action is born and nurtured. Those who are imprisoned are not separated from the movement – they are not forgotten until we forget them. Deep Green Resistance will continue to support them and retell their stories, letting

their courage be a spark in the darkness of this culture, inspiring us to step forward from where their footsteps stop, to continue fighting for what we know is right. Until all the walls come crumbling down and lie forgotten as they turn to dust, onward!

CONTACT INFORMATION

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