

PRISONERS' STRUGGLES

"Terrorist" Invention - Western Government's Latest Scam in the Destruction of the Political Dissident

Lise Olsen

In 1970, a Soviet political dissident, poet and civil rights activist was discredited as a "schizophrenic" in a mock trial, convicted of violations of the Soviet criminal code and sentenced to a prison mental hospital. Few Western readers would probably hesitate to question the authenticity of the "diagnosis" or the legitimacy of the subsequent prison sentence. Thus labelled, Natalya Gorbanevskaya spent two years in prison, while the government maintained that her mental condition rendered her irresponsible for her own behavior and accounted for her commitment to working for social justice. Her sentence was mercifully short; those of many other Soviet dissidents, likewise discredited as psychiatric cases, were much longer.

In 1994, an American political dissident, artist and animal rights activist was discredited as a "terrorist" in a mock trial, convicted of Attempted Arson, Possession of Incendiary Devices and Unlawful Use of a Weapon and sentenced to prison. Because of the fear and stigma attached to the word "terrorist", probably few Western readers would question the government's criminalization of Lise Olsen, but would accept the prosecution's libel as legitimate. Lise Olsen is myself. I bonded out of prison three days before my release date, having completed the entire prison portion of my four year sentence. I was rearrested on the same charges after an Appellate Court decision that determined I had been illegally convicted when the trial judge allowed the prosecution to prejudice the jury against me solely because of my political beliefs.

The Appellate Court made a distinction between being an "activist" and being a "terrorist". However, the mainstream media, the mouthpiece of the state did not make this distinction. Articles written about me, taken directly from the fertile invention of the arresting detective, described a fearsome scenario involving "Molotov cocktails" and "firebombs". While in prison, "Possession of Explosives" was the IDOC computer charge describing me. Yet I have never been accused of, convicted of, nor imprisoned for that charge. IDOC refused to comply with an Appellate Court order to erase the scurrilous nomenclature, and justified its refusal of electronic home monitoring or work release for me based upon the "serious nature of the offense".

The "terrorist" label is as popular in USA 1995 as the "witch" label was in 1692. In a country obsessed by a political agenda of criminalizing the innocent and felonizing misdemeanors by the routine police methodologies of invented confession, perjury, fabrication of evidence and withholding of evidence that would have proved innocence, imprisonment for profit is a foregone conclusion when the word "terrorist" is introduced. Juries, completely unaware of the "imprisonment for profit" growth industry and shielded by the media from knowledge of the same, are manipulated by impressive judicial instructions and unscrupulous and deliberate prosecutorial distortions to render convictions.

In 1992, on the Fourth of July, I attempted to illuminate a huge pro-fur anti-environmental ad leased on a steel railway viaduct with 21 home-made gas-fueled lanterns. The latter were styled after a cross between the Coleman gas camping lantern and a candle, suspended in metal sconces and designed to flame in a Spirit of 1776 festive style for five minutes, melt down and extinguish. Out of the 21, only one worked. No damage was done, nor injury sustained. None was intended. The protest project was to advertise the public's right to know (freedom of information) regarding the environmentally harmful realities of the fur industry.

The action was not covert. Many holiday-makers were about with real explosives; M-80s, Cherry Bombs and the like. Police drove past, not bothering to stop. The billboard was 1½ blocks from a police station. Certainly, they perceived nothing suspicious there. Yet four months later I was arrested for "attempted arson", my fingerprints having been matched to those supposedly expunged from a misdemeanor arrest the previous year when I attempted to rescue cats being experimented on by my employer, Cook County Hospital, and take them to a veterinarian. Only the court order to expunge had not been carried out and the prints remained in police files. Moreover, the FBI had kept a record of the expunged misdemeanor and notified the Chicago police that I might be the infamous lantern culprit.

After 20 months free on bond, I was convicted at a jury trial in which the jury was prejudiced to convict: by having the lanterns presented to them labelled BOMBS in big red letters; judicial instruction to believe the arresting detective as a "credible witness" so that his self-written "confession to making Molotov cocktails" would be perceived as a genuine confession; and by being shown large photos of the lanterns removed by the police from the billboard and placed atop train tracks with a passenger train coming towards them. Both defense and prosecution explosives experts testified that the "devices" were "non-explosives", a fact noted by the Appellate Court in reversing and remanding my conviction. This did not stop the prosecution from denouncing me as a "terrorist" to the jury, although the perjury of the arresting detective was definitely exposed when he stated that in addition to me "confessing" to making "firebombs" I had also "signed a confession to arson" (something I was never even accused of), and then being unable to produce this non-existent "confession".

The words "terrorist" and "bomb" possess tremendous power for conviction, every bit as much as "schizophrenic" did in the Soviet Union in the 1970s. Jealous of the New York City and Oklahoma City bombings, Chicago wishes to claim "terrorist" fame by inventing me as one. This is popular with the public and politicians, unlike the persecution of American political dissidents. One month after the conviction, the FBI, sad to lose a "terrorist" opportunity, decided that I could be their pet scapegoat in a second case that involved some "smokebombs" discovered in some Chicago department stores nine months before, and allegedly "claimed" as the doing of animal rights activists. My fingerprints were not those on the smokebombs. So the FBI tried to criminalize people known to me by obtaining their fingerprints by illegal means - including printing at gunpoint on the

hood of their car and pretending to be investigating a murder. They tried to indict me at two Grand Juries while I was in prison. They tried to bribe my catsitter to enter my apartment, clearly attempting to plant something "incendiary" inside it.

To obviate this case fabrication, my attorney invited (in writing) the FBI to search my apartment under his supervision, tap my phone and give me a polygraph test. Needless to say, they have not availed themselves of this openness since their terrorist invention scam is not a legitimate investigation.

I now face a second "legal" trial on the same case. I have been rearrested and have paid a second bond on it, with this difference: I have now received, as a grant by the Appellate judge, the electronic monitor (house arrest) denied me in prison when it would have counted as part of my sentence. My attorney, a venerable eighty-one with fifty-seven years experience, states he has never seen such a vendetta before, and that the States' Attorney's office "hates" me. He has never before seen them retry a "class two non-violent offender", indeed, they never retry cases less than murder; neither armed robbery nor rape. I live in virtual isolation, unable to even go to the grocery store, an American political prisoner defending my life from the fabrication of being a "terrorist". As if to confirm that States' agenda against me, when I voluntarily entered Chicago's Cook County jail to receive the monitor that verifies my whereabouts at all times and precludes case invention against me, the "arresting offense" was no longer "attempted arson" as it had been in 1992. No. On my ID card, in big printed letters was a single four-lettered word, BOMB.

Thus are terrorists invented as targets of political conspiracy agendas by the time-honoured method of defamation and name-calling. Terrorist or schizophrenic; what's the difference, if it justifies sending a person to prison as a discredited political dissident?