

Prosecuting Rikers Protesters Is a Crime on Top of a Crime Rally to the Defense of Clark Kissinger and Miles Solay!

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On October 23, 2015, a defiant, determined protest—including nonviolent civil disobedience—took place at the entrance to Rikers Island jail in New York City. The demand: that Rikers be SHUT DOWN! This was part of three days of national protest—Rise Up October, Stop Police Terror, Which Side Are You On? - challenging society to act, demanding an end to police terror and mass incarceration.

The system struck back. C. Clark Kissinger and Miles Solay, two revolutionaries, were singled out and charged with a criminal misdemeanor—Obstructing Governmental Administration (OGA)—along with lesser charges.

Clark Kissinger helps manage Revolution Books, New York City. He's been a prominent opponent of U.S. capitalism-imperialism since the 1960s, heading Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), and became a supporter of the Revolutionary Communist Party. Miles Solay is the founder of the revolutionary rock band Outernational, which has toured Europe, Latin America, and the U.S.

Since then, the prosecution has adamantly refused to drop or reduce the charges. Clark Kissinger and Miles Solay face up to a year in jail, and are scheduled for trial on July 12.

The question is posed again: Which side are you on?

Rikers Island prison is a crime. Persecuting Clark Kissinger and Miles Solay for demanding it be shut down is a crime on top of a crime – and a direct challenge to anyone who won't accept the crimes at Rikers.

Rikers Island Prison IS a Crime—Drop the Charges against Clark Kissinger and Miles Solay

The horrors inflicted on the eight to ten thousand people locked down in Rikers every night are have mostly been hidden, but have begun to emerge over the past year or two.

In June, a high-ranking supervisor and seven guards were convicted of viciously beating 28-year-old Jahmal Lightfoot nearly to death in 2012. The beating fractured his eye sockets and broke his nose, but Jahmal was given no medical treatment and was thrown into a cell nearly dead.

Crime by guards are almost never exposed or prosecuted, but they aren't isolated incidents. One 2012 study revealed that 43.7 percent of 16-, 17-, and 18-year-olds in Rikers had been subjected to violence by the authorities.

It is obscene, outrageous, and ILLEGITIMATE that Clark Kissinger and Miles Solay face a year in prison—possibly in Rikers—for demanding an end to these crimes!

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Kalief Browder is but one example. He was arrested in 2010 at the age of 16, falsely accused of stealing a backpack, then held for two years, often in solitary. Why? Because he was innocent and wouldn't plead guilty and couldn't make \$3,000 bail. He came out so traumatized that he took his own life. A 2013 survey revealed that 80 percent of people arrested in New York who had bail set at \$500 or less could not make bail and were sent to Rikers.

The extended solitary confinement that prisoners at Rikers are subjected to is criminal torture by any objective definition, and defined as such by international law.

Clark Kissinger and Miles Solay are heroes for putting their bodies on the line to STOP these crimes. Bringing criminal charges against them is intolerable!



People at the entrance to Rikers Island jail demanding Rikers be shut down, Oct 23, 2015. Photo: Special to revcom.us/Revolution

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Barbaric and depraved rape of women prisoners by guards at Rikers is common place. In one case of many, a guard refused to wear a condom while he repeatedly raped a developmentally disabled woman, then went to her home to terrorize her family into silence.

A commissioner overseeing the prison acted as an apologist for guard rapes and abuse: "As long as we are going to have prisons we are going to have sexual abuse in prisons," he said.

NO CRIMINAL CHARGES have been brought against these rapist Rikers guards or the administrators and

authorities who justify and oversee these crimes.

INSTEAD the system is targeting Clark Kissinger and Miles Solay. By persecuting them, the system is trying to intimidate anyone who would protest against Rikers.

This must not go down! Everyone with a conscience needs to take a stand!

A Critical Battle in the Fight to STOP Mass Incarceration

Rikers is typical of city and county jails across the U.S. It's also a focal point in the battle to stop mass incarceration. Millions of eyes have been opened to crimes being committed against prisoners in Rikers by searing exposures by activists and journalists. These have the potential to call into question the legitimacy of the whole system.

More than two million people are in U.S. jails and prisons. This mass incarceration mainly targeting Black, Latino, and Native American peoples flows from the system of capitalism-imperialism. The oppression of Black people is interwoven in the history of this country, the fabric of this society, and the workings of this system. Getting beyond this will take an actual revolution, overthrowing this system and bringing about a radically different and far better economy and political and social system. We encourage everyone to dig deeply into works on revcom.us that go into this, especially the work of Bob Avakian.

The system is scrambling to blunt the exposure and outrage around Rikers, including with minor reforms. And there are fights among the rulers over how to do this, while maintaining their barbaric system of mass incarceration.

Rise Up October, the Shut Down Rikers protest, and the arrest and singling out of Miles Solay and Clark Kissinger took place in this context. A lot of people are outraged about Rikers. But few have taken the stand Miles Solay and Clark Kissinger did.

But that's the stand that needs to be taken – and defended, now!

The Stakes—And What Is Needed Now

The reality—right now—is that whether or not people rally behind them will have a great deal to do with whether or not Clark Kissinger and Miles Solay are convicted. The system's prosecutors have made their determination to pursue serious charges clear. The stakes include whether the system will get away with delivering their message: those who seriously challenge the system's crimes will pay a high price.

Right now, everyone who refuses to turn aside from the crimes against humanity that is Rikers Island jail needs to stand with Clark Kissinger and Miles Solay.

If people DO rally behind them, there's a chance to defeat this attack, propel the battle to shut down Rikers, and strengthen the battle to STOP Genocidal Persecution, Mass Incarceration, Police Brutality, and Murder of Black and Brown People!

There's also a bigger dimension. Clark Kissinger and Miles Solay's stand challenges people to fully confront what they come to understand, and acting on it—and to STOP these crimes as part of bringing in a whole new world without these horrors. Miles Solay told Revolution: "We were saying Rikers should be shut down! And the people's struggle to shut Rikers down is important not just in its own right, but also by getting connected to a movement transforming people's thinking for revolution."

There are great stakes here for the most fundamental need to get to a world without exploitation and oppression of any kind. The system at the root of mass incarceration, wars and environmental devastation, the oppression of Black people, immigrants, and women is striking back by prosecuting Clark Kissinger and Miles Solay. And people need to rally to their defense, to push back and fight back, as part of making revolution.

If people DO rally behind them and fight this outrage, then the illegitimacy of the system behind the horror that is Rikers—and its prosecution of those protesting it—is further revealed and exposed. It gives backing to those who put themselves on the line to righteously fight the power, and not be confined and constrained by the boundaries on what the system has deemed acceptable and desirable opposition.

There are great stakes here for anyone of conscience.

Are you going to stand with these resisters, or are you going to be silent and let them be potentially sent to what all agree is a torture chamber?

Which side are you on? The question continues to be posed.

Drop the Charges... Shut Down Rikers!

**Be with Clark and Miles –
Pack the Courtroom!**

Tuesday, July 12, 9 am

**Queens Criminal Court, 12501 Queens Blvd.
(E/F train to Kew Gardens)**

Sign the petition at stoppoliceterror.org

**Email letters of support to
nyc@stopmassincarceration.net**

This Must Not Go Down In Silence!

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