



COURAGE TO RESIST

Supporting the troops who refuse to fight!

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Bradley Manning proceedings to begin Dec. 16th near DC Join us outside the Fort Meade courtroom; International Day of Solidarity Dec. 17th

By Courage to Resist. December 1, 2011

After 555 days of pretrial confinement, including 250 days spent in solitary conditions, the Army has finally announced that PFC Bradley Manning's "Article 32" pre-trial hearing will begin on Friday, December 16th near Washington DC.

Bradley is accused of uncovering the facts behind a system of foreign policy that routinely hides abuse from public scrutiny. "If convicted of all charges, Manning would face a maximum punishment... of confinement for life" the Army declared last week.

If Bradley is the source of the WikiLeaks revelations, he is the most significant whistle-blower in a generation. According to journalists, his alleged actions helped fuel the democratic Arab Spring movements, shed light on secret corporate influence on our foreign policies of the sort the Occupy Movement opposes, and most recently contributed to the Obama Administration reluctantly agreeing to withdraw nearly all US troops from Iraq (see *story right*).

Bradley Manning turns 24 on December 17th, the date of our international solidarity actions on his behalf. He is a young soldier from a working-class background who believed that people should know the truth, "no matter who they are...because without information you cannot make informed decisions as a public."

Bradley now faces the wrath of embarrassed politicians and military officials. He has been charged with "Aiding the enemy through indirect means." Yet it appears that he was motivated only by a desire to expose questionable and illegal actions by our leaders. This information had been concealed—not to protect us—but in order to avoid accountability. According to several who served with Bradley, this information had already been made available to Iraqi Army recruits—but not to the American public. It is absurd for our government to suggest that the American people are somehow "the enemy."

As founding father Patrick Henry wrote, "The liberties of a people never were, nor ever will be, secure, when

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Courage to Resist organizes Bradley Manning solidarity rally 11/22/11 in San Francisco, the day after Army announces pre-trial. Photo: Jeff Paterson

WikiLeaks release helped end Iraq War

By the Bradley Manning Support Network. November 7, 2011

Troops are coming home from Iraq despite the best efforts of the Obama administration to keep them there. "We're relieved to know all the troops will be home at the end of the year. This would not have been possible without the courageous actions of WikiLeaks and the alleged participation of Bradley Manning" says Executive Director of Iraq Veterans Against the War, Jose Vasquez.

Until their abrupt reversal a few

weeks ago, the Obama administration had been working hard to maintain between 8,000 and 20,000 troops in Iraq after the current Status of Forces agreement was set to expire at the end of this year. Fortunately, the Iraqi government refused to renew the judicial immunity, under which the US Armed Forces had been operating.

Establishment news outlets have largely ignored the reason for this sudden change of plans. A few weeks before the negotiations between Washington and

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Objector Daniel Birmingham speaks out

By Daniel Birmingham. September 9, 2011

Daniel is a 21-year-old active-duty soldier with 1st Battalion, 377 Field Artillery Regiment at Fort Lewis-McChord, Washington. He deployed to Iraq in 2009-10.

My name is Daniel Birmingham. I am a specialist in the US Army and I am a conscientious objector. A lot of you may not know what that is. Neither did I six months ago. It is something the military does not want you to know about, something they will never tell you about, so I will. This may save your life and save you a lot of trouble and finally let you be proud of something you are doing.

I began to question my role while I was in Iraq in 2009-10. I was raised in a low income family, but never had witnessed living conditions like I saw in Iraq. I joined the military thinking I was doing a great thing that I would be proud of and that quickly changed.



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The Struggle for conscientious objection in Colombia

Michael Thurman, Courage to Resist.
November 16, 2011

I recently had the privilege to travel to Colombia to share my experiences as a conscientious objector in the US military with youth in a country that has been struggling for the right to object to obligatory military service for decades.

Colombia has been engaged in over 60 years of violent internal conflict heavily influenced and backed by the US. With seemingly no end to the fighting, many Colombians believe that militarism has only perpetuated the cycle of violence. Many believe that it not only contributes to the source of the conflict, but also perpetuates oppression felt throughout society.

In Colombia, military service is mandatory. Currently all men over 18 must serve unless they are determined exempt through certain criteria—or they can buy their way out. Without a military service card that proves that person has served, they cannot graduate from a university or even get a job. One of the most common

forms of “military recruitment” involves rounding-up young men at places where they gather, including schools, parks, dance and billiard halls. If they are unable to prove that they have served they are simply loaded into trucks and taken away to begin their service. These are the kinds of practices that over \$5 billion dollars in US military aid over the last decade have paid for.

The United Nations has long recognized the right of conscientious objection to military service, “as part of the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion enshrined in both the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the Int’l Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.”

The Colombian constitution states that “no one will be obligated to act against their conscience” and that conscientious objection is a fundamental right. Despite this, the Colombian government has yet to pass any law that allows its citizens to opt out of military service on these grounds.

I myself had the process of conscientious objection available to me



Michael Thurman addresses Occupy Oakland on Veterans Day after returning from Colombia.

when I was in the US Air Force and I applied that law to secure an honorable discharge in 2008. With the help of Courage to Resist, I was able to navigate that process successfully. However, today as a counselor to US military objectors, I know that as in Colombia, the law and reality of objection often doesn’t match up. We have a lot of work to do to better support the troops who refuse to fight here in the US, in Colombia, and everywhere in the world.

Continued: Objector Daniel Birmingham speaks out

We are told that we are helping people and fighting for our freedom. Instead innocent people are being killed, I have lost most of my freedom and we have done nothing but generated more hatred in the world. The people I have waved rifles at have never done anything to me or you. Some do choose to fight back, but you have to put yourself in their position. If another country invaded the United States of America, we would do the same. They beg for water, wash their bodies in water filled with chemicals and live in destroyed villages. They are far from a threat to the people of our country and need actual help, not war.

When I returned from Iraq I was not the same person I was when I first joined the military. I began to look at situations from a different perspective. All my motivation for being a soldier was gone and I knew I could not do it any longer. As I tried to find my way out I felt trapped as I contemplated going AWOL. I felt trapped just like a lot of others have before and still do.

Eventually I refused to work; I did not show up and when I was called I told my chain of command I was done working for the Army. I did agree to talk to my first sergeant later that day. I was very

surprised that he listened and understood. However I was still not told about being a conscientious objector (CO). I met with counselors and a psychiatrist, but still was not told. Then when I explained my beliefs to one of my NCOs from Iraq he asked why I had not applied to be a CO. After speaking to him and a chaplain I did my research on it and finally found what I had been looking for.

My beliefs are not based on religion; they are based on personal morals. I cannot kill a person who has a harder life than I do, who has never done anything to affect myself or my family. I cannot be morally happy with myself being a part of this organization. I had a conscience long before religion was ever introduced to me. I never had to read a Bible or Quran to know that killing another human being was wrong—especially in wars that we know the politicians are lying about, wars that the majority of the American people oppose. That is psychologically embedded into us from the beginning as

we all have emotions.

I explained my situation to anyone who was willing to listen because one day soon they could have views like mine. I want to let as many people know that they do have power and do not have to fight in these unethical wars if they do not want to. I want these new soldiers to ask themselves if their life is worth \$35,000 of deployment money. Ask themselves if they have any idea of why we are in these other countries because there is not a good answer to that question, nobody has one.

There are so many people who go AWOL, do drugs, or, even worse, choose to take their own lives because they cannot deal with that what they have seen or done and they know they cannot do it again. You do not have to resort to any of these drastic options, you just have to have the courage to stand up and say no. You can stand up for your beliefs and make a true impact, and that is your right. You still have a voice.



Daniel Birmingham during a 2009 deployment to Iraq

In solidarity with the Occupy Movement

Bradley Manning Support Network.
October 12, 2011

We share a common commitment to exposing the corruption of corporate power upon our democratic system. Organizers with the Bradley Manning Support Network have been on the ground at Occupy Wall Street, Oakland, DC, Boston, Chicago, SF and elsewhere.

We condemn the government's crackdown on our fellow citizens around the country. There is no excuse to silence those who speak freely, assemble peacefully, and seek to petition their government.

We also stand for the right of the press to operate free from government harassment. For over 16 months, the Obama administration has withheld the freedom of PFC Bradley Manning in retaliation for allegedly exposing evidence of abuse via WikiLeaks and other media outlets. The administration's unprecedented pursuit of whistle-blowers like Manning has created a severe chilling effect on those who seek to expose and correct wrongdoing.

The sustained campaign of civil liberties violations that began under the Bush administration continues to play a major role in undermining the public's trust in our government. The Occupy movement presents a powerful way for citizens to reclaim control of our government by engaging nonviolently in direct democracy.

Many Occupy participants have drawn inspiration from the Arab Spring. The ongoing democratic uprisings across



the Arab world have been fueled in part by access to previously-withheld evidence of abuse that has been released via WikiLeaks and other publishers supporting whistle-blowers. Countless anonymous activists have used their technical skills to relay this critical information to areas where governments have sought to cut off avenues of communication.

Now in the US, we rely on each other to preserve our freedom to communicate in the face of authoritarian crackdowns on our rights.

Similarly to the Arab Spring, the Occupy movement can draw from information revealed by WikiLeaks that exposes corporate manipulation of our foreign policy. An October 2009 diplomatic cable shows how US diplomatic officials shared sensitive intelligence with Shell to give the oil corporation unfair economic leverage in Nigeria. Shell executives privately boasted to US diplomats that its agents had managed to infiltrate all of the major Nigerian government ministries. Another series of cables illustrate how diplomatic officials successfully squashed a proposed

increase in the Haitian minimum wage. Pressure from US diplomats on Haitian officials enabled major American clothing companies like Levi's and Hanes to continue exploiting sweatshop labor in Haiti. Other cables show that Chevron executives worked in tandem with US officials to avoid paying \$18.2 billion in court-ordered damages after the energy giant acquired Texaco, which had dumped billions of gallons of waste in indigenous areas.

Taken as a whole, the material allegedly revealed by PFC Manning shows that an unjust accumulation of informational power runs parallel to widespread economic and political inequalities. In both the United States and abroad, 99% of the people are kept in the dark, while corporate elites use restricted information to manipulate government policies for their personal profit.

Our struggle for Bradley Manning's freedom is a struggle for everyone's freedom. The Occupy movement's fight for true democracy is everyone's fight. That is why we're standing in solidarity, in person, as we Occupy everywhere.

31 MARCH 2012 | FOXHOLE ATHEISTS NEED YOU TO
#OCCUPYFORTBRAGG



Last year Fort Bragg military commanders hosted a conservative religious concert by Billy Graham Ministries. When atheist soldier Sgt. Justin Griffith complained about the official support granted to the evangelistic concert, base officials denied

Fort Bragg soldiers resist evangelization

favoritism. Sgt. Griffith has already overcome huge obstacles placed in his way and is well on his way to making Fort Bragg officials live up to their promise of hosting a comparable atheist event. The Rock Beyond Belief concert and rally is set for March 31, 2012.

By Sgt. Justin Griffith, Rock Beyond Belief
Foxhole Atheists are on the cusp of real change. We need your help.

We are the 20+%. We've been silenced, threatened, intimidated, and treated as 'un-American' for too long. The non-religious military community is the DoD's second largest religious demographic, outnumbering the next

largest group by two orders of magnitude.

Across the globe, non-theists in uniform are starting to seek each other out and shed the fear of discovery. The epicenter of the changing atmosphere is at Fort Bragg, NC. We've already been fighting for this to happen for a year now, and now the commanders are really listening.

Please—simply show up and stand with us at the Fort Bragg Main Post Parade Field next Spring. This is an incredibly unique opportunity, and one that was unthinkable a few years ago. It may only happen this one time, but you're all invited.

Continued: Bradley Manning proceedings to begin Dec. 16th near DC

the transactions of their rulers may be concealed from them.”

“The charges against Bradley Manning are an indictment of our government’s obsession with secrecy,” explains Daniel Ellsberg, who released the Pentagon Papers and accelerated the end of hostilities in Vietnam forty years ago. “Bradley is accused of revealing illegal activities by our government and its corporate partners that must be brought to the attention of the American people. The Obama administration lacks the courage to confront the crimes and injustices that now stand exposed.”

Now that Bradley’s pre-trial hearing date has been announced, it is time to take our support for Bradley into the streets. Bradley was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize last month, and topped the *UK Guardian’s* Readers Poll as to who

should win. Now the world watches the proceedings of this case while judging our country as a whole.

Protests in March of this year outside of the White House and the Quantico Marine Base brig where Bradley was being held successfully ended the brutal mistreatment he had endured. For ten months at Quantico, Bradley was subjected to extreme conditions in which he was forced to stand naked and in isolation. These conditions drew strong reactions and protests from legal scholars, politicians, and human rights advocates from around the world. PJ Crowley,

then-spokesperson for Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, was forced to resign after he called Bradley’s treatment “ridiculous, counterproductive and stupid.” Juan

Mendez, the United Nations’ rapporteur on torture, still seeks to meet with Bradley, unmonitored, as part of an official investigation into the illegal abuse.

December 17th will be an International Day of Solidarity with the largest protest taking place outside the gates of Fort Meade!

For people outside of the DC/Baltimore area, we welcome your creative solidarity actions in your community. Please visit bradleymanning.org to register your event.



Bradley Manning prior to his May 2010 arrest while stationed in Iraq.

Continued: WikiLeaks release helped end Iraq War

Baghdad reached an impasse, WikiLeaks released a cable providing clear evidence that US forces had been engaged in a cover up of the heinous execution of civilian non-combatants following a raid of a suspected insurgent stronghold.

“A US diplomatic cable made public by WikiLeaks provides evidence that US troops executed at least 10 Iraqi civilians, including a woman in her 70s and a 5-month-old infant, then called in an airstrike to destroy the evidence, during a controversial 2006 incident in the central Iraqi town of Ishaqi.”

There were disagreements between reports from the Iraq government, the American government, and those of a UN special rapporteur, whose unclassified report and questions to the US embassy in Baghdad were published through WikiLeaks. The embassy cable supported stories told by villagers who witnessed the attack.

US military spokesmen said that an al Qaida suspect in Iraq had been seized from a first-floor room after a fierce fight that had left the house he was hiding in a pile of rubble. But the diplomatic cable

provides a different sequence of events and lends credence to townspeople’s claims that American forces destroyed the house after its residents had been shot.

All of the executed, the article reports, had been handcuffed and shot in the head prior to the building coming down. The cable contradicted the US government’s position, and exposed an unwillingness to investigate documented war crimes. This information created a political crisis in Iraqi politics that made it unacceptable for the Iraqi regime to continue allowing US forces to operate outside of any accountability to human rights law. The Iraqi government was forced to draw a line in the sand that the Department of Defense would not cross.

That is why the war is coming to a close. Our government’s well-crafted, amply-financed public relations spin campaign was ultimately no match for the stark reality of what is actually happening on the ground to the people of Iraq. This decision can be celebrated by Iraqis and Americans alike.

Our government has a duty to

act openly. Insisting on legal immunity for all troops does nothing to sustain respect for ethical soldiers, but instead helps shield irresponsible leaders. Truth and transparency are essential to public debate and decision making. In an analysis of the cable’s impact on the negotiations over whether to extend the U.S. military presence in Iraq, Salon reporter Glenn Greenwald writes, “whoever leaked those cables is responsible for one of the most consequential, beneficial and noble acts of this generation.”

We have to know what people in power are doing in order for us to have any chance of holding them accountable. Stand up for those who have had the courage to inform the public of information that they have a right to know.

Join the struggle to free Bradley Manning—not only to secure his freedom, but for the freedom of us all.



Artwork by Maëlle Doliveux



Legacy giving

As you are making out your will, please consider a bequest to the “Alliance for Global Justice project Courage to Resist”, 484 Lake Park Ave #41, Oakland CA 94610. For more information about bequest language in your estate plans, please give us a call at 510-488-3559.