



USW Local 8751 - District 4
Boston School Bus Drivers' Union
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City Attorney David R. Fine
Office of the City Attorney
1437 Bannock Street, Room 353
Denver, CO 80202

RE: JUSTICE FOR ACTIVIST LARRY HALES! DROP ALL CHARGES!

Dear City Attorney Fine:

Word has reached our Union, representing 800 school bus drivers in Boston, that your office is prosecuting Mr. Larry Hales. We in the Union movement are very familiar with the misuse and abuse of the court system against our members – from the hanging of our brothers from Haymarket Square in 1887 to the current politically motivated, anti-union prosecutions of our brother Longshore workers by Homeland Security in Oakland, CA. As the tide of racist police brutality against youth of color and politically motivated denials of civil rights and civil liberties is on the rise across the country, we write to demand that you immediately drop the charges against Mr. Hales.

On Nov. 30, 2007 African-American police brutality and anti-war activist Larry Hales was arrested after 10 cops illegally busted into his home without a warrant and without permission, physically attacked him and handcuffed his partner to a chair.

Hales is a well-known and highly respected activist in the Denver, Colo. area, and a leader in the struggle against police brutality there. Hales has been a primary organizer of a number of anti-imperialist and anti-racist events in Denver. He is a leader of the youth group FIST--Fight Imperialism, Stand Together; and a founder of Colorado United Communities Against Police Brutality.

Hales is also a principal organizer in the Recreate 68 Committee, which is planning protests to counter the Democratic National Convention to be held in Denver in August.

At the time of the police attack, Hales and his partner Melissa Kleinman were housing a survivor of police brutality who was on parole. The man had been shot in the back by police and had filed a civil case against the Aurora police department. Hales had previously agreed to visits by the man's parole officer, but only when the man was home.

However, when Hales told the police officers at his door on Nov. 30 that the parolee wasn't home, and asked to see the business cards that because of a city ordinance Denver police must carry and surrender upon request, he had badges stuck in his face and told that they didn't have to give him their cards. Hales told them that they didn't have permission to come in, that the parolee was not home and that he wanted their cards. One of them scoffed and pushed the door open, and pushed Mr. Hales out of the way.

Unity! Unidad!



Inité! Unidade!

The cops charged into his apartment and ransacked his house. When Hales expressed concern that his cats would escape, he was shoved. When he asserted his rights, the police told him to shut up and violently attacked him, twisting his arm, grabbing him by the back of the neck, ripping out several of his dreadlocks, throwing him against the wall, and tearing off his shirt. He was pushed down the stairs of his apartment building, against the wall and railings and out into the cold night with a half-ripped shirt, socks and thin sweat pants. One officer squeezed his cuffs and the two had an exchange, where the officer remarked that more could be done and that Hales could end up face down on the ground. Then the cop hit Mr. Hales in the stomach and threw him into the car.

The officers rolled the front windows down, left Hales in the car, told him he looked like he might hurt himself and that he would be booked as a "John Doe" and have to spend 72 hours in jail before anyone could find him. He spent the night in a freezing jail cell.

Police brutality is rampant in Denver, and this attack is part of the ongoing attacks on Black youth, from the Jena 6 to Sean Bell and countless cases of police brutality and repression throughout the country.

In addition, the police violence against such a well-known activist can only be seen as part of a continuing attempt to stifle political dissent. At a press conference in the days following the attack, Denver police brutality activist and survivor Shareef Aleem noted that police were attempting to neutralize activists related to the DNC protests. He stated: "In the last couple of years many of us involved in police accountability work have been attacked by the police and we know that when it happens we all have to stand up."

Hales now faces a pretrial hearing on February 29 and trial on March 12 on police "interference" charges. During the arraignment, the states' attorney suggested that more charges from the incident may be pending. For the City Attorney to continue to prosecute these charges would constitute a serious miscarriage of justice and state harassment, standing justice on its head by blaming the victim of police misconduct and brutality. It constitutes an illegal, politically motivated abuse of process designed to chill political protest both against police brutality and at the upcoming DNC.

The prosecution of Mr. Hales is nothing more than a blatant racist frame up. We in the labor movement believe and live the time tested union motto that AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL! We stand in 100% solidarity with brother Hales and will be with him until justice is done. In the interest of justice, We call on you to immediately drop all the charges against Mr. Hales and initiate charges against those Denver police and parole officials responsible for illegal misconduct in this matter.


Frantz Mendes
President, USW Local 8751


Steve Gillis
Vice President


Steve Kirschbaum
Grievance Committee Chair

cc: Judge Larry Bohning
Mayor John Hickenlooper