

People's Tribunal on Police Brutality

12-4, Saturday, April 11
Rm. 201, Main Classroom Bldg.,
Cleveland State University

People's Tribunals have historically been called to allow for the voices of those who have suffered abuses to be heard by respected members of the community. This is fundamentally different from the "listening tours" or hearings conducted by those in authority. A People's Tribunal allows those seeking justice to decide what to do with the testimony. It also shows people that there is a movement that wants to hear their stories and use them to advance the struggle for justice.

In a recent conversation with Efia Nwangaza, veteran civil rights activist, of the Malcolm X Center for Self-Determination in Greensboro, NC, she liked the idea of symbolically taking the testimony/verdict from the Tribunal to an action on April 14 at a seat of authority like City Hall, demanding justice around the police killings. She also suggested we might want to submit the report to the Human Rights Commission of the UN and the Olympic Commission, giving evidence that, like most cities across the U.S., Cleveland is unsafe for Black athletes. Amnesty International is another option.

Puncture the Silence-Stop Mass Incarceration has decided to go forward with this event as a powerful part of building up to shutting down business as usual on April 14 and the growing movement against the New Jim Crow.

A committee will meet soon to take up the tasks required. There will need to be outreach into the neighborhoods, churches, community and activist organizations and events to obtain people to give testimony. Respected panelists will be enlisted to receive the testimony, ask for clarification and compile a report of the findings. Many logistical questions will need to be addressed, including getting a palm card designed, printed and distributed; developing a template for testimony and consent form for use of testimony, and videography and transcription of the event.