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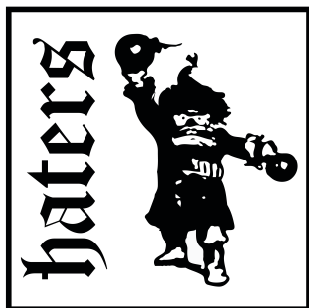
BENEATH THE PRAIRIE, THE CONCRETE

*an (updated) report on the dfw metroplex
and the prairieland defendants from haters cafe*

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On July 4, 2025, nine people were arrested following a protest outside the Prairieland Detention Center in Alvarado, Texas. Over the next two weeks, 10 more were arrested in relation to events that night. Federal prosecutors and the Trump administration have alleged that the group constituted a “North Texas Antifa Cell,” the first instance of the government moving on terrorism charges against the phantasmic “antifa,” a rough proxy for the broad and inchoate “left” in the United States. The various charges leveled include riot, discharging a firearm, attempted murder, material support for terrorism, and conspiracy to conceal documents. The case of the Prairieland Defendants has been called a “landmark” demonstration of state repression of dissent, particularly for the government’s clear criminalization of otherwise “constitutionally-protected” activity—treating anything from possessing anarchist literature to carrying firearms as evidence of domestic terrorism.

We have been down this road before. It is fitting that this case should be representative of the so-called “Antifa Scare,”¹ the latest in a sequence of heavy-handed repressive waves extending from the First Red Scares at the height of the global communist movement from 1917-1923 to the various Green Scare cases in the 2000s. More recently, since the George Floyd Uprising, these valences have been combining and recombining as the rubric of domestic terrorism adjusts to match the character of contemporary struggle. So, we see cases such as the Stop Cop City 61 RICO and domestic terrorism case invoking the specters “antifa,” “ecoterrorism,” and the figure of the black militant in a single conspiracy.² Folding together racialized border hysteria, anti-trans panic, socialist gun violence, anarchist insurrection, and the ever-present catch-all “antifa,” the case of Prairieland is its own chimera adequate to the times. It is the first case of its kind following the assassination of Charlie Kirk, which provided the pretext for the Trump administration’s escalated campaign against whatever scapegoat is most convenient to the conflicting and competing interests that make up his voting base and tenuous class coalition.³

Despite the continuities, the terrain has clearly shifted. The ratcheting effect of ecological, social, and political crisis makes it difficult to compare any immediate horror with any prior “status quo”—such a state of normality has never existed. But that creeping inertia also makes it difficult to grasp just how bad things have gotten in virtually every imaginable respect. Perhaps this is why so many have invested in the case of the Prairieland defendants in the midst of

1. Steven Monacelli, “The ‘Antifa Scare’ Goes on Trial in North Texas,” *Texas Observer*, February 17, 2026, <https://www.texasobserver.org/antifa-scare-prairieland-19-trial-ice-detention/>

2. See “Fire to the Prisons” in Heatwave 2.

3. For a good survey of these forces, see Lake Effect Collective, “A Conspiracy of Dunces,” April 15, 2025, <https://lakeeffect.noblogs.org/post/2025/04/15/a-conspiracy-of-dunces/>

police and paramilitary occupations throughout the country. Many partisans want to draw a line in North Texas, effectively proclaiming “not one inch” be ceded to the fascists and white supremacists in the DOJ. Whatever the outcome, it should be clear that any appeal to “normal” standards of liberal and democratic rights and institutions is dead in the water. A détente here would surely free friends and comrades from the clutches of police and prison guards, but it would be just that—a brief respite suspending the naked violence and social and ecological unraveling.

For us, the import of the Prairieland Case extends beyond it being yet another “canary in the coal mine” in the sequence of state repression. While its localization in North Texas may seem obvious to some—with Texas functioning as a cartoonish avatar of the American far-right—the Prairieland Case has exposed much about the uneven geography of class and race and the sanguine radical subcultures of the left in the US. Below is a sobering report from friends at haters cafe that outlines both the facts and the stakes of the Prairieland Case,⁴ and critiques the cloistered self-understanding of radicals emanating from the coasts or upper Midwest, subcultures underwritten—whether they like it or not—by economic clustering, urban geographies, and demographic histories that made these regions liberal democratic strongholds.

The Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) metroplex is anchored economically by business and financial services—an artifact of the region’s 20th century oil boom and, prior to that, cotton. Dallas bankers were the first to accept oil reserves as collateral for financing oil company operations. Both the engineering requirements of oil exploration and the developed business services clustered in the region attracted the technical and financial suites necessary to seed semiconductor and defense manufacturing, Texas Instruments and Lockheed Martin being flagship firms in these sectors.⁵ The presence of major firms means the economic activity of the region is characterized by many midsize subsidiaries and suppliers, which together compose an interconnected supply-manufacturing-services “ecosystem” sprawling its labyrinth of concrete across the blackland prairies of North Texas. Today, this history is reflected in the composition of DFW’s leading firms, which are clustered in business services, construction and the Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate (FIRE) sector, high-tech manufacturing, aerospace and defense, and transportation and logistics.⁶ This in turn is reflected in the geography of the metroplex, composed of many dispersed affluent satellite “bedroom communities,” that spatially and socially fragment

4. “Beneath the Prairie, the Concrete” was first published in December 2025. Here, the report has been substantially updated to reflect developments in the case and background conditions that gave rise to it. See the original: <https://haters.noblogs.org/post/2025/12/11/beneath-the-prairie-the-concrete/>

5. Texas Instruments emerged from a reorganization of Geophysical Service Incorporated, a company that manufactured seismic devices for exploration of petroleum deposits, but whose R&D arm received contracts for defense technology in the early stages of the Cold War.

6. “Dallas–Plano–Irving: Texas’ business and financial services hub,” Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, <https://www.dallasfed.org/research/heart/dallas>

any proletarian class cohesion and drive local, state, and national politics. The resulting composition of forces is explored below in an attempt to at least partially explain the severity of the Prairieland Case and situation facing North Texas proletarians, anarchists, and communists more generally. If, as the authors argue, it is not the coastal cities but DFW that represents America “crystallized in space and ideology,” then it is imperative that we grasp the passions and interests that the situation there has laid bare.

Beneath the Prairie, the Concrete

What follows is a report on the organizing context in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex in light of the political repression surrounding, but not exclusive to, the Prairieland Defendants. This comes after we were asked to present on anti-ICE organizing in Chicago and DFW by comrades in the Zizania feminist squat in Athens.⁷ At the end we offer the best ways to provide solidarity to Prairieland Defendants, but you can find the most up-to-date support website via prairielanddefendants.com. We also highly encourage you to share the zine version of this report available on the haters cafe website in both US letter and A4 sizes.⁸

Located just south of the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex, Prairieland Detention Center is one of ICE’s newer detention facilities. Holding kidnapped migrants and facilitating their deportations allows ICE to carry out the repression of the state’s internal political enemies. For example, the Prairieland facility detained Ángel Espinosa Villegas,⁹ an anarchist participant of the George Floyd Uprising who was deported to Chile in 2025. For over a year Prairieland detained Leqaa Kordia,¹⁰ a Palestinian participant of the Columbia encampment protests, despite multiple court orders mandating her release. She suffered through multiple seizures from the facility’s poor conditions.

The US government is touting the heavy repression and, unfortunate, convictions of 9 of the Prairieland Defendants as its first successful legal case against “antifa.” The convictions range from rioting, providing material support to terrorists, using and carrying explosives among others.¹¹ All of this from a simple noise demo with some fireworks on July 4th. To make matters worse, all the federal defendants also face individual state cases along with the rest of the Prairieland defendants.

7. “Event/Discussion: ICE & Military Policing in the USA,” *Kinimatorama*, <https://www.kinimatorama.net/event/182402>

8. <https://haters.noblogs.org/zines/>

9. “Former Uprising Defendant from ICE Detention (Ángel Espinosa-Villegas),” *Final Straw Radio*, May 4, 2025, <https://thefinalstrawradio.noblogs.org/post/2025/05/04/former-uprising-defendant-from-ice-detention-angel-espinosa-villegas/>

10. “Radio Diaries: Columbia protester Leqaa Kordia is still detained,” *All Things Considered*, November 3, 2025, <https://www.npr.org/2025/11/03/nx-s1-5591478/radio-diaries-columbia-protester-leqaa-kordia-is-still-detained>

11. <https://prairielanddefendants.com/court-notes/federal-trial-verdict/>

After their arrests, a wave of FBI-led raids descended all across the DFW metroplex. Multiple raids hit the home of Prairieland Defendants Liz and Ines Soto, with authorities blackbagging and interrogating one of their sons and the second raid conducted specifically to seize a printshop printer. The FBI justified the seizure by claiming their home printshop was used to publish and distribute “antifa” and related “subversive” materials. Repression of anarchist publishing is nothing new of course, but this attack on speech in conjunction with the Oct 7th detainment of a local Filipino Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipient, Ya’akub Ira,¹² specifically for his advocacy of Palestinian liberation, portend concerning headwinds in the currently unfolding repressive environment.

Setting aside the annoying and misinformed discourse of “antifa” in US social media, the significance of this legal maneuver should not be understated. Texas is located in the most conservative federal court circuit, the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals. This is the same court circuit responsible for bringing the case that overturned *Roe v. Wade* to the Supreme Court, in addition to attempting to bring a case to fully ban mifepristone (aka the abortion pill) in the US. On a bureaucratic level, this court bucks standards of clearing its court dockets; its cases are heard at a much more rapid pace than other federal courts in the country. Lawyers have expressed shock at the speed of the indictments and court hearings and the unprecedented behavior of U.S. District Court Judge Mark Pittman, who had not only barred access and transparency of the proceedings, but also limited the time allotted for the defense to a mere 35 hours for all nine of the defendants.¹³ To make matters worse, local Fort Worth courts felt emboldened to re-prosecute organized leftist drag show defenders like Chris “Big Tex” G after their first failed attempts.¹⁴ The neighboring city of Arlington (the real host city of the FIFA World Cup Semifinals in the Dallas Cowboy Stadium) has become one of the first cities to roll back LGBTQ anti-discrimination protections.¹⁵ While cities like Chicago or Minneapolis face outright kidnappings from ICE, the legal justification for these activities, alongside heavier repression, may well come from this region.

Any legal opposition in this environment is dead in the water. To put it plainly, there are no movement lawyers and few sympathetic lawyers in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, with most refusing to take the Texas state cases in Johnson County due to the county’s reputation for corruption or the severity of the charges. The

12. Priscilla Rice, “North Texas activist arrested by ICE for social media posts transferred to Georgia,” *KERA News*, October 30, 2025, <https://www.keranews.org/news/2025-10-30/north-texas-yaakub-vijandrice-transfer-georgia>

13. For documentation of these matters, please refer to recent updates and press releases on the Support the Prairieland Defendants website: <https://prairielanddefendants.com/>

14. “A letter to the free world,” *Free Big Tex*, <https://freetex.noblogs.org/post/2025/08/13/tothefreeeworld/>

15. Carlos Noguera Ramos, “Arlington upholds suspension of protections for LGBTQ+ people,” *The Texas Tribune*, December 9, 2025, <https://www.texastribune.org/2025/12/09/arlington-texas-lgbtq-discrimination-protections/>

DFW National Lawyers Guild (NLG) chapter started about five years ago, but has proven itself less than useless by dragging its feet when providing support for non-org affiliated protest arrestees and waiting more than half a year to host its first public event on the case. This is in stark contrast to the national organization based out of North Carolina, which has proven itself indispensable with its solidarity. Out-of-state legal support however is very limited when faced with the litany of Texas state cases and local counsel limitations imposed by Federal Judge Pittman in the lead up to the trial.

All of this, of course, comes from a broader context. Texas is famously a bulwark for right-wing politics and policy experimentation. In Johnson County alone, where the noise demo took place, Flock network surveillance cameras were used to collect evidence and prosecute a woman for allegedly self-administering an abortion. During the initial detention of Prairieland Defendants in Johnson County Jail, a fellow inmate (unrelated to this case) was forced to give birth in her cell and only afterwards was transferred to a hospital.¹⁶ The sheriff of the county has been arrested, and released on bond, on unrelated sexual harassment, witness tampering, and aggravated perjury charges. In good ol' Texas fashion, a rally was held in the town in support of the sheriff after this news broke and a judge allowed him to continue working as sheriff.¹⁷

This last anecdote reflects the socio-political dynamics of the Dallas-Fort Worth area, and Texas more broadly. Everyone knows about the stereotype of the rambunctious gun-toting and freedom-loving Texan cowboy, but this imagination of freedom in Texas was conceived under the dual world-constitutive violences of the slave plantation and frontier settler-colonialism. On a more granular level, social life is heavily influenced by evangelical churches and their thinly-veiled political allegiances. Social interaction is determined by whatever church one decides to attend or not attend. The counterculture doesn't fare much better.

What often passes for "radical" is merely open support for the Democratic Party or its tepid social democratic critics. While not a novel dynamic, the impotence of radical subculture nevertheless thoroughly limits the political imagination. For example, a punk benefit show was organized to raise funds for the Prairieland Defendants. Growl Records, the venue that initially booked the show and regularly hosts punk shows, backed out of hosting the show three days before the event was supposed to take place in the interest of keeping the venue a "safe space" for both sides of the political spectrum—i.e., safe for Trump supporters. In addition, the owner of Growl is allegedly friends with police officers

16. Penelope Rivera, "'A traumatic ordeal:' Woman says she gave birth in Johnson County Jail and was denied proper care," *KERA News*, September 8, 2025, <https://www.keraneews.org/criminal-justice/2025-09-08/woman-gives-birth-johnson-county-jail>

17. Rachel Snyder and Adriana De Alba, "No decision in civil case to determine whether or not a North Texas sheriff accused of sexual harassment can remain on job," *WFAA*, December 4, 2025, <https://www.wfaa.com/article/news/local/no-decision-in-civil-case-to-determine-whether-johnson-county-texas-sheriff-accused-of-sexual-harassment-can-remain-sheriff/287-8eea9f54-e4d0-4d6d-b2b4-6fbca6aebbe5>

who informed him that the show would be surveilled and arrests made for any language used that would constitute “attempts” to incite a riot. Luckily, a different venue was secured at the last minute. This cowardice is not an isolated incident. To the shock of an anarcho-punk Pittsburgh comrade attempting to organize a squatted music venue, local crust bands have asked for noise permits when asked to perform at said venue. Such inane occurrences are emblematic of the stupidity and political cowardice of local punk and punk-adjacent communities, despite their ethnic diversity, working class composition, and most significantly, radical posturing.

To say the least, it's an uphill battle for the dozens of us that live in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex who actively seek and work towards the destruction of a settler-slaver conception of freedom that smothers us and is so readily valorized by people from all walks of life. Despite the grave legal implications from this case, there's very little local support for the defendants, due to pure ignorance or from being written off as “crazy extremists” or worse. Most “organizing” is relegated to digital spaces like Discord servers or Signal group chats. The low-density suburban development of the entire metroplex, which makes car trips for simple errands last upwards of 30 minutes, precludes much more than these digital interfaces. Offline projects do exist of course and are important oases of radical relief, but if we are honest with ourselves, rarely do they become anything bigger than survival groups or glorified study groups with fluctuating attendance. It's no surprise that five of the detained, three from the protest and two from the subsequent raids, decided to sign cooperating pleas and were key witnesses for the prosecution. We make no excuses for anyone that decides to snitch, but there was hardly a sense in DFW that one would be supported by a broader “community” once behind bars. Many were naive and unfamiliar with the repressive tactics and the lengths that law enforcement would go to coerce confessions and cooperation. This general ignorance isn't helped by a tendency in the community to operate under opaque understandings of “opsec,” which led to a significant amount of time wasted during the initial wave of repression to find basic information like people's names and birthdays. The decision to cooperate with law enforcement is always ultimately up to the individual, but the broader community or lack thereof is not blameless when it occurs at this scale. We can contrast the Prairieland Case with the recent inspirational anti-repression mobilization surrounding Sam Turnick's arrest in Atlanta which of course comes in the wake of the Stop Cop City moment and the more robust radical community which preceded it.¹⁸

There's sparse radical history or tradition for us to learn from, unless we want to consider Dallas' time as the de-facto capital of the KKK in the 1920s as a shining example of grassroots organization.¹⁹ Significantly, and despite existing

18. Matt Scott, “Federal agents arrest activist on evidence destruction charge,” *Atlanta Community Press Collective*, December 5, 2025, <https://atlpresscollective.com/2025/12/05/samuel-tunick-atlanta-activist-arrest/>

19. One third of eligible men in Dallas were members of the Klan during the height of its popularity

racial tensions, there was an absence of militant organizing and unrest in Dallas during the famous “long, hot summer of ‘67” and its afterlife in the 1970s.²⁰ Rallies and marches, especially from the left, are fairly uncommon and low in energy. When they do occur, rest assured they will be heavily policed by overzealous activists or groups like the Brown Berets and other state-communists like Party for Socialism and Liberation and Freedom Road Socialist Organization’s front groups.²¹ To date, if memory serves correctly, there have only been two small riots in the Dallas-Fort Worth area by those outside prison walls. The first after the murder of the 12-year-old Santos Rodriguez in 1973 and the second during the 2020 George Floyd rebellion. The latter really only amounted to some windows of gentrifying business getting smashed and graffitied—a low bar but better than nothing.

Whether due to Southern manners or genuine fear, open defiance against higher ups is rarely seen. Agree with the cop to his face and flip him off when he turns his back; truly the Texan spirit is rowdy! Local government collaboration with ICE is the norm and designations of “Sanctuary City” and the like are rightly met with eye rolls and skepticism. Shame and ostracization are poor deterrents for people, including children of migrants, against joining organizations like ICE and CBP, especially when they offer lucrative signing bonuses and student loan forgiveness. After all, in the end, we all have to get our bag and even better if it’s in the service of a country that “we” were raised to be patriotic and grateful for.

Any sustained resistance—maybe more aptly described as avoidance—against ICE or the state in general happens in the mundane. Undocumented communities already have a wealth of experience avoiding the state from their homelands and through previous migration crackdowns. Recently there’s been increased reporting of ICE activities in Latino-majority areas of Dallas, but previous activities of so-called “rapid response groups” are stymied by the distance between neighborhoods and inflexibility of work life. Instead, undocumented families and friends rely on each other by noting immigration checkpoints in WhatsApp groups, beginning their commutes earlier in the morning before the checkpoints are set up, and falsifying car registrations renewals or other bureaucratic necessities. Social ties, both genetic and chosen, are heavily relied on to bring amenities for those unable to travel outside their home or to raise funds via raffles or parties. Of course, we are not uncritical of the fraught dynamics of

in the 1920s. This early consolidation can explain the tight grip of the Dallas elite over city policy that continues to this day. <https://www.dmagazine.com/publications/d-magazine/2017/june/when-dallas-was-the-most-racist-city-in-america/>

20. In the spirit of the motto “what’s good for business is good for Dallas,” the elite decided to promote desegregation in spite of popular opinion to elide open racial conflict seen in the rest of the South. Of course, this doesn’t mean there was an absence of grassroots organizing to prevent its implementation. Jim Schutze, *The Accommodation: The Politics of Race in an American City*. (Deep Vellum/La Reunion, 2021)

21. You can read reportbacks from 2025 anti-ICE mobilizations on the haters cafe website for a more in-depth look into these dynamics. E.g., “Our Enemies in Yellow,” and “Reflection on January 26th, 2025 in Dallas,” on <https://hatters.noblogs.org/>

these support networks, nor do we conflate this with an underlying practice of a latent “brown anarchy,” as the direction of these actions often point towards an integration and even pride in the maintenance of broader capitalist American society. Still, in light of these practices, the recommendations in pieces like “States of Siege” from *III Will* seem asinine by those of us raised and embedded in undocumented communities. Do so-called revolutionaries have nothing else to offer us other than their white rediscoveries of offline community?²²

We write this report not just to complain about the state of radical politics in DFW, but to emphasize the odds we’re up against. We are not trying to undermine the work of DFW Support Committee, and other comrades and groups, but the “community” is small here in Texas and lacks connection to broader networks. Haters cafe is not blameless in this, we have so far failed to cultivate propulsive capacity to generalize an understanding of rebellion beyond the spectacular and recuperative (i.e. marches, activism, orgs, etc.) or a substantive counter-narrative to combat the deep acceptance and striving of suburban American ideals for most of the population. We often see the assumption that people of color, both immigrant and homegrown, are resistant to these values. This is not just patronizing, but quite plainly wrong. There are various causes for this failure of a counter-narrative on our end, from grave interpersonal failures to the constant demands of daily life, but instead of self-aggrandizing hopeful narratives that promote failed dead-end strategies, honest accountings of on the ground situations are needed. Dallas is not New York, it is not Seattle, it is not Portland, it is not LA, it is not Chicago. Dallas is the rest of America crystallized in space and ideology and we need your solidarity and support from the outside to come out on the other side of this wave of repression stronger and more prepared for the inevitable future ones.

Among some of the ways to show solidarity with the Prairieland Defendants are the tried-and-true letter writing, fundraising, and awareness events. We encourage you to be creative and decentralized in this. Take a look at how people in your neck of the woods are already organizing themselves. You don’t have seek permission from the DFW Support Committee, just let them know if you think the increased visibility will be useful. You can find contact and commissary information for the defendants at prairielanddefendants.com, along with a link to join the DFW Support Committee announcements Signal. To contact the support committee for additional questions, their email is dfwsupportcommittee@hacari.com

22. Much more can be written about this but we argue that the handling of cash and hiding at-risk people, among other practices mentioned in the “States of Siege,” are all common features in undocumented Mexican life, despite not normally being framed in this way. Promoting these practices isn’t wrong but it conflates the construction of ‘community’ with a revolutionary practice and elides the integration of “everyday criminality” into the reproduction of capitalist society. More harshly, we can say white people in their fantasies of anti-capitalist life want to be Mexican (or Black in other contexts).

