You Can't Tear Us Apart

Tear Gas, Militarism and Local/Global Solidarity

A workshop by *War Resisters League*, 2013

WAR RESISTERS LEAGUE

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This interactive workshop comes as the world witnesses both skyrocketing repression and resistance, incarceration and resilience. It is designed especially with US-based front-line communities in mind.

Sections:

1. Introductions (5—10 minutes)
2. "The World of Tear Gas"—Gallery Walk—(30—40 minutes)
3. Themes and Patterns—Small Group Conversations—(20 minutes)
4. The Big Picture of Militarism—Takeaways (20 minutes)
5. Evaluation (5 minutes)

*Appendix A

Goals:

Participants will

- collectively define "militarism"
- situate the history of domestic tear gas use within the broader history of the militarization of the police and mass incarceration in the US
- become familiar with some of the key companies responsible for the manufacture of so-called "nonlethal technologies" that are exported and used throughout the world—framing them as war profiteers or, more specifically, "repression profiteers."
- analyze and debunk the humanitarian myth that that tear gas manufacturers tell about chemical weapons like tear gas and pepper spray.
- learn more about the social movements and political organizing repressed through the use of tear gas.
- learn how the case studies we present in this workshop are connected with one another
- share the calls for global solidarity from movements in Egypt, Turkey, and Palestine and others that sparked the formation of the *Facing Tear Gas* campaign.
- explore how the *Facing Tear Gas* campaign may be able to support participants' political work and how people can participate in this campaign in solidarity with global movements.

Materials Needed:

- Easel sheets/butcher paper
- Markers
- Gallery Items from Appendix A (Part 2)
- Tape and/or glue
- Three easel sheets, each with one of the following written on them: “Big Takeaways,” one should be labeled “How to be Involved,” another should be labeled “Remaining Questions and How to Find Out More.” (Part 4)

Set-Up Needed: A bigger room would be ideal for this workshop.

Around the room, put up the easel sheets/butcher paper for Part 2 (Gallery Walk) at about eye level. You might want to use two easel sheets per gallery item. Each easel sheet should have one gallery item attached to it (glue/tape/etc.). The easel sheets should be spread around the room on the walls. Each item should have enough space between them that people can circulate around the room, and so that people aren’t too clustered together/cramming in against one another as they are walking around the room. (You can find an example here.)

Any tables should be set-up in the middle of the room, and not against the wall, so that people can freely navigate during the gallery walk. For Part 3 of the workshop, the tables will need to be setup to accommodate groups of 6—10, so plan accordingly when clustering them when preparing for the workshop.

Finally, make sure you have all of the documents printed out and ready—everything from the facilitator guides to the walk around sheets and thematic discussion guide handouts.

Part 1: Introductions (5-10 minutes)

The introduction section of the workshop should be used to introduce both the workshop itself and the facilitators. Take 5—10 minutes to introduce yourselves, and the goals and objectives of the workshop. After that, provide an overview of the workshop, giving a rough description of the different activities, and most importantly, inform participants of the time limits and time structure of the workshop. This really helps participants know how to approach each section, and how to manage their time. If there is additional time, go around the room and have participants introduce themselves and their group/ organization and/or their political work. They can also say briefly why they are interested in this workshop.

Facilitator Note: *When beginning a section in the workshop, make sure to let participants know how much time they will have for that section. Further, it helps to let them know that if Part 2 is 25-30 minutes long, that you will give them a time check at minute 10, 20, 25, and 28, for example. Finally, when transitioning between sections, it helps participants if you let them know that. For example: "We will now be moving out of the gallery walk section of the workshop and into the group discussions, which is a section that will draw heavily on what you learned and discussed during the gallery walk." This helps them make connections between sections and instill a sense of continuity to the workshop.*

Part 2: "The World of Tear Gas" - Gallery Walk (30-40 minutes)

Inform the participants that placed around the room is a "gallery walk" that features different pieces of the "world of tear gas" and supposed "non-lethal" weapons. Some of these items are stories from people who have resisted tear gas, some are prompt questions, some are timelines, and more. The participants will be circulating around the room in pairs or small groups of three while examining these prompts, stories, etc. At each gallery walk item, people will discuss the questions/stories/prompts in their pairs, and then they will be invited to add their own voices by writing on the easel sheets. There will be questions with each item that they can respond to, or they can generally add their immediate reactions to the gallery walk item. In addition, encourage people that they can respond and interact to what other people have already written on the easel sheets.

Facilitator's Note: *Make sure participants know they don't have to answer every single question on the easel sheets. In fact, they don't even have to write down anything on a gallery walk item if they don't want to. The questions are there to help prompt conversation points. And if they want to respond to something on an easel sheet, they can—but it is not mandatory.*

Ask people to form into pairs or small groups of three. Depending on the group, you can either do this for people, or ask people to self-select. Tell people they can start randomly at any place in the gallery walk in their pairs. Then tell them to begin!

Next, the facilitators should start circulating around the room. During this time, facilitators will encourage dialogue and spur conversations. This can be done in a few ways:

- Keep an eye out for pairs that seem to be struggling or do not appear engaged. Approach them and try to spur conversation with them in regards to the gallery walk item they are at.
- In general, just approach a group and ask them what their thoughts are about the gallery item they are at. You can also ask participants, “why did you write that? What led you to believe this?” You can also ask participants what they think about in regards to something else that was written on the gallery walk item by a different group.
- Pull two or three pairs together at a gallery walk item, and ask them a question that they can all spend a little time discussing. This could just be a reaction to the gallery item or could be something someone else has written.

The key here will be to circulating around the room and ensuring that there is a “buzz” of conversation in the atmosphere.

This gallery walk should go on for up to 40 minutes. If people finish early, ask them to circulate the easel sheets again and read other group’s responses.

Part 3: Themes and Patterns - Small Group Conversations (20 Minutes)

Once this time is up, bring people back together. Break them down into small groups. Ideally there will be 6—10 people per group with a facilitator assigned to each. These numbers may need to change depending on the number of facilitators.

For the next 10 minutes, the facilitators should lead their groups in a conversation that focuses on digesting everything they just read and explored in the gallery walk. Facilitators can use the following questions to help guide the conversation, and they should encourage participants to build off each others comments:

- What themes and patterns emerged from your conversations and the pieces you explored around the gallery walk?
- What’s one thing you learned or read that really struck you? Why?
- How are the case studies/gallery walk items connected with one another?—What does tear gas do? What conditions does it make possible and/or help to create?

Examples:
- Isolation
- “Full spectrum” dominance—leaving people feeling without choice or agency
- Intimidation and fear
- Indiscriminate force—everyone becomes an enemy

- Anonymity—lack of accountability (e.g. riot police all look the same)
- Austerity culture—attacking the poor for rising up against their conditions

- Now let's take a few minutes to talk about militarism. It's a tough term that often gets thrown around. On the gallery walk, what really stood out to you as a good way to explain what militarism is? How does this compare with this dictionary definition?

militarism *[ˈmɪlɪtəˌrɪzəm]*
noun
1. (Military) military spirit; pursuit of military ideals
2. (Government, Politics & Diplomacy) domination by the military in the formulation of policies, ideals, etc., esp on a political level
3. (Government, Politics & Diplomacy) a policy of maintaining a strong military organization in aggressive preparedness for war

- Governments and corporations like to refer to tear gas and other non-lethal weapons as "humanitarian weapons." What is your reaction to that characterization?
    - Do any stories that you read about in the gallery walk challenge that concept?
- What connections are there between domestic policing and repression and US foreign policy? What role does tear gas and other "non-lethal weapons" play in those connections?
- How is the "nonlethal weapons" industry currently being challenged? What are some ways you think the industry can be challenged further?

Part 4: The Big Picture of Militarism and Takeaways (20 Minutes)

After wrapping up section 4, the facilitators should bring everyone back into one large group. Tell the participants you will be leading a full-group discussion on recapping what was learned and discussed today, as well as how to move forward.

Have three easel sheet sets up in an easy to see location. One should be labeled: "Big Takeaways," one should be labeled "How to Get Involved," another should be labeled "Remaining Questions" Tell the participants that you will be keeping track of what arises from this conversation, though perhaps not every issue will be addressed.

Facilitator's Note: *Feel free to record pertinent points from the all group conversation on the easel sheets that have been put up. You don't have to record every single thing that people say, but certainly try to summarize as much as possible. It might be wise to have two facilitators recording on the easel sheets during this time.*

You can use any of the below questions (in no particular order) to help guide this final, big group conversation. Facilitators can feel free to interject to add on to what others have

said or to clarify questions or concerns. However, facilitators should not be the people primarily speaking.

- What are some of the major takeaways from your conversations that you want to share?
- What are some the different groups and organizations that we have represented today?
- How has the type of militarism we've been talking about today affected people in this room *in their daily lives* or people they know? What are some examples of US militarism at work within US?
- Why do people think that "riot control" weapons and the militarization of the police is an important issue to focus a campaign on?
- What are the challenges to embarking on the *Facing Tear Gas* campaign?
- What excites people in the room about connecting your work to global movements?
- What are the challenges of doing so?

Part 5: Evaluation (5 minutes)

Have participants write down their feedback on the workshop, or share it aloud, "popcorn-style," at the end. Collect any sheets that participants have written their evals on and/or write up people's responses on easel paper.

Possible Questions:

- How do you see working against US militarism as supporting and/or furthering your work?
- How might the *Facing Tear Gas* campaign support your local organizing?
- What questions do people still have about tear gas and the campaign?
- How has your perspective on tear gas changed since before you entered this workshop?

Thank you for using our workshop in your organizing work! Please send feedback and comments to: facingteargas@warresisters.org.

Appendix A—Gallery Walk Items Listed Below

1. Samah

"I was gassed with CS gas in Tahrir Square on November 23, 2011. Blindness, skin on fire, utter panic. Down with SCAF, Down with the Police State, Justice for the Martyrs of the Revolution."

- Samah, 2011, facingteargas.com

Question: Samah's story is not an exception—do you have any experiences with tear gas that this story reminded you of?

Question: Do you know how tear gas affects a person? Physically, mentally?

Question: Why do you think tear gas is so loved as a tool of internal repression by governments? How does it impact social movements?

2. Owen

"In the course of my job I spend a fair bit of time in a Philadelphia public high school, which takes its name from a frequently commodified and de-radicalized civil rights leader. The halls of this high school are patrolled by numerous guards in uniform and plain clothes, and the frequent Public Service announcements alternate between authoritarian threats and pleading bribes for "good behavior." In the short time I have spent there, I've seen three students taken away in handcuffs, often after a physical struggle with multiple adults. The relevant incident occurred less than a month ago while I was waiting with a cart for the elevator. There were loud noises and students came pouring out of a nearby door followed by a caustic smell. There was shouting while the students stood in the hall, then a uniformed officer followed them through the door and the students bolted down the hall away from her. There were sufficient numbers who were panicked that they knocked over my cart of books and fell on each other in an effort to get away. The officer was holding a student with one hand whose eyes were streaming. In the other hand she held a chemical spray container that she pointed at the students. I have been exposed to both tear gas and pepper spray in the past and could not tell you which this was, but even through peripheral contact I could feel my eyes begin to water and my throat burn. I have no idea what the student's alleged infraction was, nor do I care. Schools are where we young people go to learn. We should be ashamed that students caught in the school-to-prison pipeline are learning what it means to face chemical weapons. We should be many times more ashamed if we let that pipeline take them to a prison cell where they will face the same weapons in routine cell extractions."

- Owen, 2013, facingteargas.com

Question: What are the ramifications of using "non-lethal weapons" on students in schools? How does this relate to policing and repression in our communities?

3. Repression and Policing in Higher Education: The Institute of Non-Lethal Defense Technologies

"The Pennsylvania State University established The Institute for Non-Lethal Defense Technologies (INLDT) in November 1998 as part of its overall mission of teaching, research and public service. The Institute is dedicated to...development and responsible application of minimal force options for both the military and law enforcement. The Institute is administered by Penn State's Applied Research Laboratory under the direction and support of the Office of the Vice President for Research."

INLDT Mission:

"The mission of the Institute for Non-Lethal Defense Technologies is to promote, coordinate, and conduct interdisciplinary research and development of non-lethal concepts and technologies for conflict resolution and security. The institute will support Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security, and Department of Justice efforts to examine technologies, tactics, and public policies regarding the responsible application of these minimal force options."

- From the INLDT website: http://nldt2.arl.psu.edu

Question: The INDLT has a hand in creating the language around tear gas and "humanvitarian weapons"—what other types of rhetorical masking or whitewashing does their language remind you of?

Question: How does the existence of INDLT and the infiltration of militarism into the Academy/universities inform the way we should do our organizing in the *Facing Tear Gas* campaign?

4. Medhat

"I'm an anchor who works on Egyptian TV. I'm also from the city of Suez, the city of the first martyrs of the Egyptian revolution which has seen violent clashes between rebels and the police. Police have used expired tear gas to suppress and disperse the protests causing much harm among the demonstrators like burning eyes and facial injuries. Injuries did not stop at the face though. We've also seen neurological injuries, with demonstrators spending days in treatment centers and some even killed by exposure to these types of serious toxins. After last year's late November severe tear gas repression on Mohammed Mahmoud St. in Cairo, my wife, officer of customs at Adabiya port, received a shipment coming from a U.S. port carrying three containers carrying tons of US-made tear gas for the Ministry of Interior. But she refused to deal with this deadly cargo, especially after she heard that I and four of her colleagues were standing in solidarity with her, declining to process the shipment. Resistance still continues to prevent U.S. tear gas from killing Egyptians at the hands of their security forces."

- Medhat, 2012, facingteargas.com

Question: What concrete steps can we take in international solidarity with those trying to stop the distribution of tear gas?

Question: What role has tear gas played in Egypt—both as a negative force, and as a way to galvanize opposition (domestically and internationally)?

5. Police Militarization/ Prison Industrial Complex Timeline

1760: In the US there are 750,000 slaves, mostly in the South, and by 1860 there are more than 4.4 million Africans living in the US, 90% living in the South and 90% living as slaves. In total, 10-15 million who survived the forcible removal from their homes and trip across the ocean are enslaved thought the Americas.

1800: One of the nation's first penitentiaries opens in Virginia. According to the dictionary, a penitentiary is: a public institution in which offenders against the law are confined for detention or punishment; specifically: a state or federal prison in the United States.

1865: The US ratifies the 13th amendment to the Constitution, abolishing slavery, "except as a punishment for a crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted."

1874: Indiana constructs the first completely separate women's prison after a campaign led by two Quaker women to end the sexual abuse of women in detention.

1877: After the repeal of the Black Codes that immediately followed the abolition of slavery, the Southern states enacted similar laws restricting the freedoms of Black people. Harsh contract laws penalized anyone who left a job before working off their debt. "Pig laws" criminalized poor people for stealing farm animals and vagrancy statutes made it a crime to be unemployed.

1885: The Major Crimes Act is passed, giving the US Federal government the "power to punish" Native Americans living on tribal land and under tribal jurisdiction for felony offenses under US law.

Late 1800's: Following the failure of Reconstruction after the Civil War and the Hayes-Tilden Compromise of 1877, states across the US South began passing Jim Crow constitutions. During this time, the "convict leasing" system is put in place, where prisoners' labor is leased from the state by plantation owners, companies, and private individuals. Georgia is the first state to institute the chain gang in the place of convict leasing. The chain gang lasts in the US until the 1950s.

1904: Parchman Farm founded in Parchman, MS. It quickly becomes known for forced labor, brutality, torture, and holding political prisoners. By 1905 it makes a profit of $185,000 and by 1918, that profit increases to $825,000, making it the most profitable prison farm in the country.

1930: The Federal Bureau of Narcotics was created. By 1931, 29 states has some form of drug law. Tear gas begins to be used as a weapon at Alcatraz, one of the first prisons to use tear gas as "riot control."

1951: Boggs Act strengthens the enforcement of the "Marihuana Tax Act" of 1937 and the Narcotic Drug Import and Export Act of 1922 by creating mandatory minimums and harsh penalties for possession of marijuana.

Number of people in prison in the US: 100,500

1956: The Narcotic Control Act passes, supported by the Federal Bureau of Narcotics. The act increases the penalties and mandatory minimum prison sentences outlined by the Boggs Act and introduces the death penalty for certain drug offenses.

Number of people in prison in the US: 200,000

1969: In a special message to Congress, President Richard Nixon identifies drug abuse as "a serious national threat," calling for a national anti-drug policy at the state and federal level.

1970: The Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act eliminates the mandatory minimum sentences imposed by the Narcotic Control Act.

1971: Nixon officially declares a "war on drugs," identifying drug abuse as "public enemy No. 1." Prisoners revolt at the Attica State Prison in NY because of poor treatment and living conditions. The governor of NY orders state troopers to attack. Over 20 prisoners are killed as well as 10 hostages by the gun fire that is shot into a cloud of tear gas.

1972: The term "control unit" is coined at the US penitentiary at Marion, Illinois, which has come to mean a prison or part of a prison that operates under a "super maximum security" regime.

1973: Nixon creates the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).

1976: The US Supreme Court overturns the ban on the death penalty.

Number of people in prison in the US: 300,000

1983: The US penitentiary at Marion, Illinois becomes the US's first "control unit." Control units keep prisoners under solitary confinement on a permanent basis.

1984: Nancy Reagan launches her "Just Say No" anti-drug campaign. The US Sentencing Commission is created by Congress to develop federal sentencing guidelines and reduce disparities in sentencing.

1986: President Ronald Reagan signs the Anti-Drug Abuse Act, which appropriates $1.7 billion to fight the drug war. The bill also creates mandatory minimum penalties for drug offenses, which are increasingly criticized for promoting significant racial disparities in the prison population because of the differences in sentencing for crack and powder cocaine. Possession of crack, which is cheaper, results in a harsher sentence; the majority of crack users are lower income.

1989: Pelican Bay state prison opens in California, at a cost of $277 million. Over capacity within two years of its opening, this is to be the model for current-day supermax prisons.

Number of people in prison in the US: 1,150,000

1993: Prisoners are barred from receiving Federal Pell grants for higher education.

1994: The Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act passes under President Clinton, which amounted to over six years of federal funding for “crime control” at a cost of $30.2 billion, the largest portion going towards the policing of communities. An $8.8 billion program adds 100,000 police officers nationwide for police patrols. The bill also gives $9.9 billion for the construction of new state prisons and for assistance with jailing undocumented immigrants to the US.

1995: The U.S. Sentencing Commission releases a report that acknowledges the racial disparities for prison sentencing for cocaine versus crack. The commission suggests reducing the discrepancy, but Congress overrides its recommendation for the first time in history.

Florida becomes the third state after Alabama and Arkansas to reintroduce chain gangs.

1996: Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act passes. Mandates the detention of undocumented immigrants and refugees in the US.

1998: People with felony drug convictions are banned from public housing.

Number of people in prison in the US: nearly 2 million

2001: After 9.11 President G.W. Bush declares the “War on Terror,” passing the PATRIOT Act, which gives sweeping search and surveillance powers to domestic law enforcement and federal intelligence agencies.

2002: The first detainees arrive at the US-run Guantanamo Bay prison. 240 people remain in imprisoned there today without charge or trial.

2003: The US government creates the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), absorbing 22 agencies under its purview and taking on the duties of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. During this time, two new agencies were created: Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Citizenship and Immigration Services. DHS and ICE ramp up border patrol efforts and collaborations with local law enforcement to detain and deport undocumented immigrants through programs like Secure Communities and 287(g).

2004: Photos are revealed about US military abuse of prisoners in Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq a year after the US invasion.

2005: Congress renews the Patriot Act. A study out of the University of Florida finds there are now 40 states operating supermax or control-unit prisons, which collectively hold more than 25,000 US prisoners.

2009: A panel of federal judges orders the state of California, the state with the highest prison population in the US to cap its prison population at 137.5% of capacity. The Supreme Court upholds this order in 2011, and California reduces the number of prisoners by 33,000 by sending people to county jails. 33,000 is larger than the entire 2010 prison population in 37 other states.

2011: Hunger strikes begin at Pelican Bay supermax prison protesting solitary confinement and poor conditions; protests spread throughout California and to other states, including Mississippi, Virginia, and Ohio. The rate of adults in the US who are on probation or parole is more than twice as high as the rate of adults incarcerated in state and federal prisons or local jails. 1.53 million people this year alone are arrested on nonviolent drug charges.

Number of people in prison in the US: 2,266,800—the highest incarceration rate in the world.

2013: Texas becomes the US state with the largest number of prisoners: 154,000.
A massive hunger strike is organized by prisoners at the Pelican Bay supermax prison—30,000 prisoners across the state of California participate in the hunger strike. The state of CA begins force-feeding prisoners. The US federal government does the same following a hunger strike by one-sixth of the detainees at US-run Guantanamo military prison.

Sources:

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http://www.policymic.com/articles/53495/why-these-30-000-california-prisoners-on-hunger-strike-deserve-your-support

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Question: What factors have contributed to the rise of mass incarceration and prisons in the US? How does the rise of the mass incarceration connect to the militarization of the police?

Question: What does this timeline tell you about US history when it comes to policing, prisons, and state repression?

6. Thematic Questions: Policing and Repression

» How has the rise of "non-lethal" weaponry been used to suppress anti-militarist and anti-imperialist movements, pro-democracy movements, and popular uprisings?

» How have we seen this play out in the US?

» How have we seen this play out internationally?

» How have we seen domestic and international movements organize against state repression?

» How have "non-lethal" weapons and police repression affected you, your political work, and/or the movments you've been part of?

7. Thematic Questions: Capitalism

» How has the rise of "nonlethal weapons" and the homeland security industry proven to be a financial boon to some individuals, corporations, and professions?

» How have governments, both internationally and domestically, provided the needed support to make tear gas a profitable business?

» Given the interplay between capitalism and the tear gas industry, how should we most effectively shape a campaign to end the use of tear gas and related chemical weapons?

8. Thematic Questions: Prison Industrial Complex (PIC)

» How has the rise in the tear gas industry mirrored the rise in prisons in the US?

» What are the watershed moments in the rise of mass incarceration (be specific)? Why?

» What are some strategies we have to challenge the use of tear gas and other torture practices (like solitary confinement) in prisons?

9. Dictionary Definition:

militarism ['mɪlɪtəˌrɪzəm]

noun

1. (Military) military spirit; pursuit of military ideals

2. (Government, Politics & Diplomacy) domination by the military in the formulation of policies, ideals, etc., esp on a political level

3. (Government, Politics & Diplomacy) a policy of maintaining a strong military organization in aggressive preparedness for war

Question: How does the militarization of the police, "riot control" weapons and state repression fit into this definition of militarism?

Question: What changes or additions would you make to this definition? Why?

Question: How have you or your communities been impacted by militarism?

10. Prisoner Testimonies

The Human Rights Coalition, a prisoner support group based in Pennsylvania, has kept an extensive log of prisoner testimony of their treatment behind bars. These statements include various accounts of mistreatment of prisoners involving tear gas and pepper spray:

» There are several accounts of prisoners being put in tear-gas contaminated rooms, including a prisoner who has asthma. These rooms are locked and prisoners trapped in a cell filled with tear gas, which is not only an irritant to the nose and throat (an especially uncomfortable and dangerous prospect for those with asthma) but also has been known to leave people in contact temporarily blind and nauseous; and overexposure has resulted in death.

» COs closed air vents and sprayed pepper spray in another man's cell, which spread throughout the RHU Block. Spray caused inmates to be exposed to coughing, running noses, and pain in eyes and noses for hours. A nurse tells them to "wait it out" & "this is normal."

» Another account includes not only the use of pepper spray, which caused choking, vomiting, and an asthma attack, but also continued harassment, including racial slurs, food deprivation, and being led from the psychiatric ward to his cell naked.

» Another prisoner was denied access to the law library, in violation of prison rules. When he reported the violation, he was assaulted by several guards, including the use of tear gas and pepper spray.

(http://hrcoalition.com)

Question: Given these accounts, and tactically speaking, how is tear gas being used in US prisons today? What patterns of repression do you see?

Question: What characterizes the guards' use of force in these scenarios? Does it remind you of anything you've witnessed, experienced, heard about?

11. Article Excerpt: “What Turkey Reminds me of Tear Gas”

“What we generally refer to as tear gas is actually not gas at all. Rather, the chemical compounds referred to as “tear gas” — including pepper spray, CS and mace — are tiny droplets of moisture released as a fog or a spray into the air. Classified by law enforcement officials as a “non-lethal weapon,” or even more euphemistically as a “riot-control agent,” tear gas causes choking, burning, vomiting and eye watering. Early tear gases were developed in World War I to diminish soldiers’ willpower and lure them out from the trenches, allowing for more aggressive forms of gassing and artillery fire. Today tear gases continue to serve these wartime functions, despite authorities’ claims to their “non-lethal” and even “gentler” nature.

A major cause of injuries from tear gas, as seen in Turkey, is when a canister strikes a person in the head. These casualties are usually deemed the result of “improper use.” But it is no accident that tear gas projectiles become targeted at people. They were originally designed and promoted for use as short-range firearms. Early models were called “tear gas guns” and there

was even a tear gas "machine gun" made by Manville Manufacturers, the company responsible for bringing the "street sweeping"_Manville machine gun to the market in the Prohibition-era United States. For the past 80 years, there have been steady reports of lost eyes, cranial damage and deaths due to the use of tear gas launchers as assault rifles."

-Anna Feigenbaum, June 4, 2013.
Waging Nonviolence: People Powered News & Analysis.

Question: Is there such a thing as a "non-lethal" or "humanitarian" weapon?

Question: Has the use of tear gas replaced the potential of dialogue? How can this be changed, so tear gas doesn't become a "natural" and "safe" response to protest or dissent?

12. Company Profile: Combined Systems Inc.

"Combined Systems Inc. (CSI) calls Jamestown, Pennsylvania home. Often marketed and produced under the brand name Combined Tactical Systems (CTS), they provide tear gas to the governments of Israel and Egypt as well as many others. In fact, until recently, Combined Systems used to fly the Israeli flag at its headquarters. According to its own advertising, its "OC Vapor System is ideal for forcing subjects from small rooms, attics, crawl spaces, prison cells," and is used against prisoners in the US. Point Lookout Capitol, which holds a controlling number of shares, says glowingly of CSI: "The company's CTS branded product line is the premiere less-lethal line in the industry today." Combined Systems tear gas was exported into Egypt via Israel during the January 2011 Egyptian uprising and is one of the largest suppliers of tear gas used to repress uprisings globally.

In the West Bank, many protesters have died or been seriously injured as a result of being shot at close range by Combined Systems tear gas canisters, including 28-year-old Mustafa Tamimi of Nabi Saleh, who died in 2011 after half of his face was shot off by a Combined Systems tear gas canister. In 2009, Bassem Abu Rahmah, from Bil'in, was killed by a Combined Systems canister and, in 2010, his sister Jawaher was as well. The number of deaths as well as serious injuries as a result of teargas cannisters has drastically increased since 2008, when Israel began using Combined Systems' "extended range" 40mm cartridges, sold under the brand name "Indoor Barricade Penetrator," which travel at a velocity of 122 meters per second and are designed to penetrate buildings... Combined Systems canisters have also been used to kill protesters in Guatemala." - facingteargas.com

Question: How does both CSI and their government partners rhetoric around "non-lethal" weapons compare to how they are being used?

Question: Given the tragedies resulting from the use of CSI products listed above, can their products be classified as "non-lethal"? What are the arguments for and against this?

13. Movement Profile: Chile

"The protest was for the re-nationalization of copper in support of education . . . I have asthma and [the tear gas] felt worse than the worst asthma attack I've ever had in my life." - Cora

The Chilean student uprising began to come together in May 2011 and was the result of various social tensions within Chile, among them low levels of public funding for higher education. As such, the movement has been led by Chilean students. The largest representation of students is the Confederation of Chilean Students, which is made up of various universities' student governments. Roots of this movement are often traced to the last year of the US-backed Pinochet regime, 1990, when the state's role in education was vastly reduced to "regulation" paving the way for a growing role of the business sector in determining state education policy.

During organized walk outs, marches, and protests, the students and their supporters have expressed their demands for increased state support for public universities and the call for justice in a society that is wrought with socio-economic inequality...The student movement has been met by severe state repression during marches and protests. Hundreds of students have been arrested in clashes between the police and demonstrators. The police have heavily used "crowd control" tactics such as water jets and tear gas. Such repression has also very commonly been deployed against indigenous peoples in Chile.

On May 18, 2011, the Chilean government announced— in the wake of a study by the University of Chile which demonstrated that tear gas exposure may lead to miscarriages— that they would temporarily suspend the use of tear gas throughout the country. Latin America News Dispatch quotes then-Interior Minister Rodrigo Hinzpeter as saying: "[I]t seems reasonable to suspend the use of tear gas until new medical reports dispel any doubts about the appropriateness of employing these gases to confront situations of public disorder and vandalism." Three days later, the Chilean government put together a report, citing US company Combined Systems Incorporated (supplier of tear gas to the Chilean police), arguing that tear gas was safe. The report, and the lifting of the ban on tear gas that soon followed, came just in time for the state to use tear gas against the next round of protests.

Question: In regards to "non-lethal weapons," what are the major take-aways of the Chile case study?

Question: How have tear gas companies been able to influence governments for the sake of their products?

14. Article Excerpt: “Nonlethal” Weapon Industry on the Rise

Federal defense efforts push ‘nonlethal’ weapons—Boston Business Journal

“Nonlethal military weapons — skin-heating rays, nausea-inducing “puke lights” and helicopter-launched nets, all being developed locally — could represent the future of defense and homeland security funding as the U.S. government prepares to scale back military spending.

With possible cuts in large-scale defense programs, such as the new DDG-1000 Zumwalt destroyer, later this month, according to local experts, the Department of Defense may be ready to emphasize innovations that include the development of nonlethal weapons.

‘As we scale back the amount of money available for new systems, these are the things that are going to attract dollars in the future,’ said Defense Technology Initiative director Don Quenneville.

While a DOD spending bump on nonlethal weapons may be speculative, local tech companies are already hard at work developing non-lethal defense technologies.

…Nonlethal weapons are a new, growing market for Waltham-based defense giant Raytheon Co., and a new area for the Department of Defense, according to John Finkenaur, Raytheon’s Active Denial System (ADS) project manager. The United States has been slower to adopt the technology than European countries. ‘It’s getting there,’ he said.”

(http://www.bizjournals.com/boston/blog/mass-high-tech/2009/03/federal-defense-efforts-push-nonlethal.html)

Question: Given this article’s content, “non-lethal” weapons production will be on the rise in the years to come. What do you think this means for the future of organizing and direct action?

Question: How can we organize at the intersection of capitalism and militarism (both at home and abroad) and push back on the rhetoric of “non,” and “less-lethal” weapons?

15. Tear Gas in Prisons: Protest and Punishment

"In April 2001, three-quarters of the 800 prisoners at New Mexico's Cibola County Correctional Center engaged in a non-violent protest against their treatment at the facility by refusing to return to their cells. Despite the peaceful nature of the protest, it ended with guards firing tear gas into the recreation yard where prisoners had gathered."

http://grassrootsleadership.org/cca-dirty-30#6

"A lawsuit filed on behalf of William P, a fourteen-year old boy, successfully demonstrated that the boy had not just been physically abused, but that such abuse was an outcome of a CCA corporate policy of using excessive force to control teens at the center. William, who was five feet tall and under 100 pounds, was maced, hog-tied, and placed in a cell with a much larger boy known to be a violent risk. His story was repeated by teens who alleged similar abuse, such as being dragged through urine, improperly shackled, and subjected to teargas."

http://grassrootsleadership.org/cca-dirty-30#13

-From Grassroots Leadership's "Dirty Thirty" report on CCA

Question: How is tear gas used against people for standing up to injustice within and outside of prisons?

Question: How is tear gas used in tandem with other weapons in prison? What does this mean for "non-lethal weapons" companies' "humanitarian" argument?

16. Company Profiles: Defense Technology and Federal Laboratories

Defense Technology and Federal Laboratories merged in 2001. They are owned by umbrella company Safariland. Safariland was owned by UK weapons conglomerate BAE systems, a large conglomerate which owns some 400 other companies, before it was bought by war profiteer Warren B. Kanders, (though the sale was held up by the sentencing of a former Safariland executive for bribing government officials in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East in order to secure business). Kanders was CEO of body armor manufacturer Armor Holdings (which owned Safariland) when Armor Holdings was sold to BAE Systems. Some of this complicated story is explained on Safariland's website.

Federal Laboratories canisters litter the streets in Bahrain

Pennsylvania-based Federal Laboratories has existed for at least the better part of a century, and manufactured the first police batons with tear gas in 1925. Safariland holds monthly trainings for cops, prison officers, private security personnel, and active-duty soldiers across the U.S. in how to use this chemical weapon. Both Federal Laboratories and Defense Technology sell to the Israeli military, although since Federal Laboratories' acquisition, the Defense Technology brand has become more common, found in Canada, and Oakland, California.

Question: US products are being used to suppress people and movements at home and abroad. What can we do to challenge this?

17. Calls to Action

EGYPT:

"Egyptian revolutionaries have asked for the movements in the US to shut down the manufacturing and shipment of weapons and we heed their call in solidarity. ***We are calling for a targeted campaign against the corporations that profit off the use of these chemical weapons...*** We must also hold our government accountable...We will not allow our tax dollars to be used in supporting corporations and dictators that profit from and facilitate state violence against our people in the US and abroad!"

—Endorsed by US Palestinian Community Network: http://uspcn.org/2011/11/30/stop-militarization-of-our-communities-in-the-us-and-abroad/

"This gas has a killing effect for us. Please help us STOP getting gas into our cities."

- Mohammed, Egypt: http://facingteargas.tumblr.com/post/43081733714/tahrir-square-jan-25th-2013-me-and-my-parents

"Tear gas is being used extensively, on a nearly daily basis, by the Egyptian police against anti-government protesters as well as groups fighting for labor rights. This is part of the persistence of the security forces in using unlawful lethal force with total impunity, whether by using teargas, firearms or systematic torture upon arrest. In only two weeks, following 25 January 2013, more than 50 citizens were killed at the hands of the police. Shipments [of tear gas from the US] like the one coming in April should be stopped."

- Magda Boutros, Criminal Justice Director at the Cairo-based Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights

http://wagingnonviolence.org/2013/03/140000-reasons-to-protest-in-egypt-and-the-us/

BAHRAIN:

"We conclude that the CS agent is being used as a lethal chemical weapon against the civilian population in Bahrain. As such, it is indiscriminate and constitutes a form of collective punishment of the population. We agree with and reiterate the previous call by Amnesty International to ban the export of CS gas to countries and regimes where it is being used as an offensive weapon and as a means of collective punishment."

- Pr. Damian McCormack, Pr. David Grayson and Tara O'Grady—Irish Medical Times—
http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/10336/global-ban-on-cs-gas-is-needed

Question: What are some of the themes and take-aways in this sampling of global calls to ban tear gas?

Question: These calls come from a number of people, from medical professionals to on the ground activists. What are some strategies you can think of for how we can effectively respond to and organize around these calls?

18. A Brief Timeline of Pepper Spray and Tear Gas—the "Domestic Market"

1910s: Post-WWI debate over US use of chemical warfare; the military faces strong opposition to chemical warfare from people in the US. The US Army Chemical Warfare Service, a US government department (US Gas) and a combination of government and company forces, begins seeking a new market for tear gas and begins to market the gas for "crowd control" purposes domestically. Other types of gas are marketed for use in death penalty cases, promoting the gas chamber as the humane way to kill someone"

1919: a former US Gas Officer, General Amos Fries, begins a mission to turn this wartime technology into an everyday policing tool. To accomplish this task, Fries needs a public relations strategy. As one of his accomplices advises, he must "arrange for a man who knows gas warfare to bring writers and others who might be used to spread the gospel."

Articles populate trade magazines advertising tear gas. One claim, "It is easier for man to maintain morale in the face of bullets than in the presence of invisible gas." Unlike bullets, tear gas would "isolate the individual from the mob spirit" and make the mob "a blind stampede to get away from the source of torture."

1920s: Following development for domestic markets, tear gas dispensers expand from World War I grenades to a series of other hand-held contraptions. Early industry leader, Lake Erie Chemical Company, promotes its gas as "an irresistible blast of blinding choking pain." These weapons quickly catch on, bought in bulk by police departments, colonial outposts and prison security guards.

1925: An initial global ban of tear gas in warfare becomes international law under the Geneva Protocol: the US insists on the exceptionality of the domestic use of tear gas and does not sign on. Having witnessed the ways tear gas was used as part of trench warfare, delegates in Geneva argue that it is inhumane. However, by the time the protocol is ratified, military and state officials are already busy promoting the benefits of such weapons for controlling the masses at home.

1928: Invention of CS gas, the most common form of tear gas currently used, discovered by and named after two US scientists, Ben Corson and Roger Stoughton at Middlebury College.

1960s: Mace sprays came on to the market following advancements in aerosol technologies. Lake Erie Co. again leads the way, packaging its product with holsters designed by Smith & Wesson.

1975: Controversy follows the US use of tear gas used extensively during the Vietnam War

1980s: Kamran Loghman works with the FBI to develop a portable weapons-grade pepper spray; this results in teargas & pepper spray catching on as an everyday control agent.

1982: Pepper spray is first developed. Pepper spray is Oleoresin Capsicum (OC), which is synthesized from capsaicin, a colorless, crystalline, bitter compound present in hot peppers.

By 1991: Kamran Loghman's invention is on the utility belts of police across the United States. Soon after, similar sprays reached Canada and the UK, with growing exports elsewhere.

By 1995: More than 60 deaths from this "non-lethal technology" have already been reported in the US alone.

1997: The Chemical Weapons Convention prohibits the use of chemical and biological weapons in warfare. Due to a lack of consensus, countries throughout the world agree to a domestic exception on the international ban of "non-lethal" chemical weapons in war so that *they are allowed for use by domestic police forces*

2000s: Tear gas is used in Iraq War due to a US government executive order allowing tear gas in warfare in "certain situations"; pepper spray and tear gas are used against protesters in Seattle and Miami: along with other use on the streets, in schools, and in prisons throughout the country.

2010s: Tear gas and pepper spray is used against protesters in across the US. Following the beginning of the Arab Spring in 2010, the Middle East's internal state security market increases 18%; The counter-terrorism industry is predicted to grow by 20% until 2020. The US emerges as a top manufacturer along with Brazil of "riot control" agents.

(http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/jun/07/teargas-booming-market-turkish-protests; http://www.commondreams.org/view/2013/06/04-9)

Question: Tear gas was initially a weapon of war, but later legitimized for "domestic use." What does tear gas's history as a weapon of war tell you about its use as a form of internal/domestic repression?

Question: What does this timeline make you think the future of tear gas and pepper spray will look like, unless we organize to stop it?

19. Cops and Companies Speak

"It's possible to use anything for torture," says a US manufacturer of electro-shock riot shields, "but it's a little easier to use our devices."

-John McDermit, president of Nova Products, Inc; quoted in interview with Anne-Marie Cusac, The Progressive, September 1997 (http://www.progressive.org/cusac9709.htm)

"On the other hand, law enforcement is also finding itself embroiled in military-like operations. During the 1992 riots, I was a watch and incident commander at Firestone Station. On the third day of the riots, I had nine 60-man platoons of deputies that worked for me, and I had two rifle companies from the National Guard and two rifle companies from the Marine Corps in an area of 4.4 square miles. It was unlike anything I'd ever experienced. It has some strategic implications. What happens is that the lack of justification to use lethal intervention provides an impetus for increased provocation, what we in law enforcement nicknamed the "barking dog" syndrome. Dogs are not intimidated by threats. A policeman can pull his gun at a dog, but because the dog doesn't know what the gun does, he has no idea what is going to happen. As a result, we're usually forced to shoot dogs. There is no intermediate option. We don't have an ability to intervene with nonlethal force."

- Lieutenant Charles "Sid" Heel, LA County Sherrif's Department, from *Nonlethal Options: Failing and Futures* 1998 (http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/conf_proceedings/CF148/CF148.appf.pdf)

Question: Other than countering popular uprisings and mass action, how and where have we seen "non-lethal" weapons used?

Question: In your opinion, what are the implications of "non-lethal" weaponry being used as tools for repression and torture?

20. Video: “2011 North American Technology Technology Demonstration (NATD)”

Please watch the first 30 seconds of the below video, and then answer the corresponding questions.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=l6cSXQA1JVQ

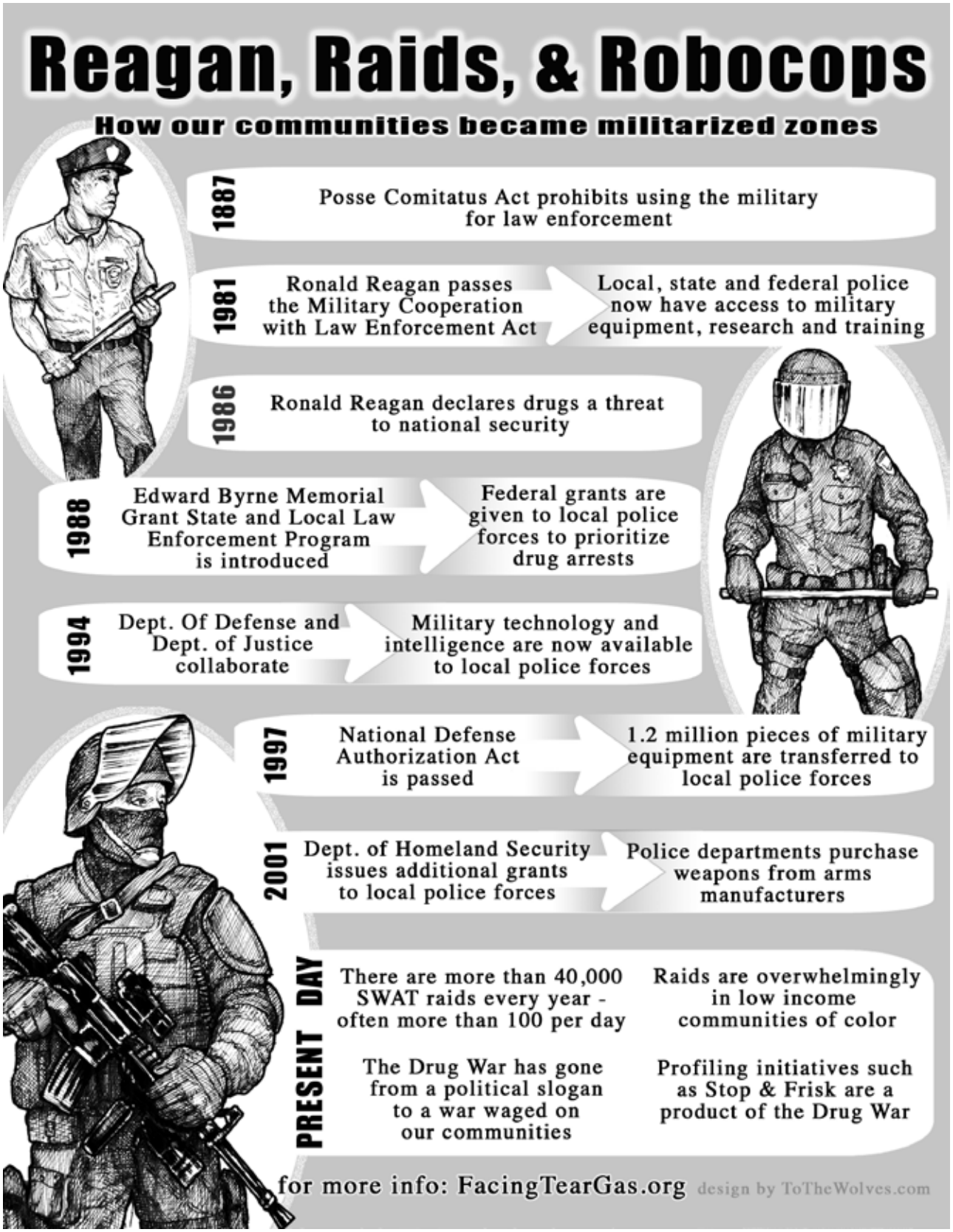
Question: What themes and take-aways emerged for you based on the kind of rhetoric used in this video?

Question: Who does the video present as the “beneficiaries” of the expansion of “non-lethal” weapons? Who you think will benefit?

Question: Who stands to lose from this technology, both in terms of the video’s presentation and your perception?

21. Infographic: “Reagan, Raids and Robocops”

After reviewing the infographic on this panel, please address the questions below.



Question: In what ways does this infographic portray important shifts in the rise in policing and state repression? Be specific.

Question: If the trends represented on this infographic continue, what are the biggest threats/issues that you think we need to address?

Question: How do "non-lethal" weapons fit into this timeline, and what does their corresponding rise tell us about policing and repression?