Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Troy Davis: Killing Him Would Not be Right

Adam · Thursday, September 22nd, 2011

This poster was originally produced to stop the execution of James Dupree Henry, for the 1974 murder of 81-year-old Orlando civil rights leader Zellie L. Riley. The poster uses a quote from Riley's son arguing for clemency. Henry, whose final words were "I am innocent," was evaluated as mentally retarded before his execution on September 20, 1984. In 2002, the Supreme Court decision in Atkins v. Virginia declared that "executions of mentally retarded criminals are 'cruel and unusual punishments'."

CSPG's Poster of the Week calls our attention to the execution of Troy Davis on Wednesday, September 21 in Georgia. Davis had been on Georgia's death row for close to 20 years after being convicted of killing off-duty police officer Mark MacPhail in Savannah. Since his conviction, seven of the nine non police witnesses had recanted their testimony, alleging police coercion and intimidation in obtaining the testimony. There was no physical evidence linking Davis to the murder.

Last March, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that Davis should receive an evidentiary hearing, to make his case for innocence. Several witnesses had identified one of the remaining witnesses who has not recanted, Sylvester "Redd" Coles, as the shooter. People throughout the world asked for clemency or a new trial for Davis, including former President Jimmy Carter, Pope Benedict XVI, Nobel Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Congressmen Hank Johnson and John Lewis, former FBI Director and Judge William Sessions.

One of the jurors, Brenda Forrest, told CNN in 2009, "All of the witnesses — they were able to ID him as the person who actually did it." Since the seven witnesses recanted, she said: "If I knew then what I know now, Troy Davis would not be on death row. The verdict would be not guilty."

Troy Davis has three major strikes against him. First, he is an African-American man. Second, he was charged with killing a white police officer. And third, he is in Georgia.

Re-posted with permission.

This entry was posted on Thursday, September 22nd, 2011 at 6:38 am and is filed under Discourse, Visual Art
You can follow any responses to this entry through the Comments (RSS) feed. You can leave a response, or trackback from your own site.