



## SOCIETY!

### Is The Internet Real? - an editorial

This month hasn't been a particularly eventful month. There were no major international events that mobilized anarchist forces from around the globe. There hasn't been a big conference or book fair where some scandal or revelation has occurred. There has been police repression across the globe but it has been mostly ignored. Instead there has been autogenerated controversy entirely on the Internet. This has been enabled by this site, especially as it reposts the outrages and asociality that happens other places. It has become an echo chamber and often times what it amplifies is embarrassing.

But is it real? If we were to categorize a range of real experiences—from those having the most impact on our life, health, sanity, and social well being—to those having the least impact, the Internet would sit somewhere between totally unreal and a little bit real. The web is a great place for getting information about events & groups, opinions from people who have a vested interest, and other either factual or specific purposes. I don't believe it is a great place for conversation.

Just like "reality" the word "conversation" can mean many things. Clearly every day there are dozens of posts happening on the site. I happen to find this type of conversation—anonymous, contextless, and flippant (without trust)—more or less a waste of time to participate in. I choose to participate in conversation that is rich in context, between personalities, and developing levels of trust. I recognize that many anarchists don't have that privilege. It is sad that we live in a time when sincere human relationships are considered a privilege and when what we have replaced them with

is hostile and alienating.

This month we have posted a number of blogs, editorials, and rants that were—strictly speaking—news but also mean-spirited and nearly textbook definitions of ad hominem and bad faith arguments. Real people were impacted by these farces and this reminds us that the question of the reality of the Internet is still open.

Publishing *has* changed since the dawn of the Internet. We are no longer corresponding via post nor are we writing letters to the editor (although we are actually doing both, but at a pace ten, one hundred, one thousand times that of the days of yore). When it is so much easier to spray out words that *can* get read by others, then any manner of material is liable to get shared, without much attention to its impact.

This has forced a lot of sites, in the name of community spirit, to require registration and terms of engagement. Some newspapers are requiring legal names (and credit card numbers to prove them) before you are allowed to post. Other sites require registration that at the very least requires mapping of a consistent identity to an email address. Anarchist news is such an active community because of the lack of these restrictions but the consequence is clear. The Internet is not (particularly) real, as far as I am concerned, but people's feelings really are hurt here and there are undeniable social consequences to some of the behavior on this site.

We are mostly comrades here and that is worth considering before we hit the Submit button.

### Speed Camera Torched in New Orleans

NEW ORLEANS – Police are trying to find determine who started a bonfire underneath a traffic camera in the Bywater.

Tuesday evening, someone allegedly doused a tire with gasoline and set it on fire under the traffic camera, knocking out the camera which is set up in the 3400 block of Chartres Street.

"Two nights ago, somebody rolled a tire up and lit it on fire underneath the camera," said Johnny Bavender, who lives across the street from the camera.

Neighbors say flames torched the camera and charred the controls.

Davender said the camera, which is used to enforce the 25 mph speed limit along Chartres Street, is not very popular. He said he sees "a lot of people, drivers giving that thing the finger on a daily basis."

Responding to the story, "Emergency stay in traffic camera ruling is extended," reader wbnolaguy commented:

"If the traffic cameras were an actual deterrent, then nobody would be issued tickets for these 'offenses'. If no tickets were issued, then no money would be collected. If no money is collected, then the 15 million would not be in the budget to be used. This would result in "essential city services being impacted and layoffs and closing of city facilities" anyway if these traffic cameras were actually the deterrent they claim them to be. They are, however, a deterrent to people coming to live in New Orleans. Who wants to live in a city that has so little going for it that it must depend on income from traffic violations to remain afloat? Doesn't bode well for the city. I think billboards should be put up stating that fact."

<http://anarchistnews.org/?q=node/12353>

## Activist Alex Hundert Re-arrested

From Toronto Mobilize

Community organizer Alex Hundert was arrested this morning at his surety's home. He has been arrested on an unfounded allegation, and one clearly designed to return Hundert to prison.

"I witnessed the alleged incident, and I'm confident that this charge is unfounded. It is a further attempt to silence and incarcerate my brother," said Jonah Hundert, who was with Alex at the time. "This most recent attempt to vilify him will not work, and support will continue."

This arrest is yet another attempt to intimidate and harass Alex and other anti-G20 organizers. The Crown is seeking his detention and attempting to have his bail revoked. This is the 4th time that the Crown has sought his detention in the past 5 months. This most recent attempt to imprison Alex, and intimidate activists and critics of the government, demonstrates the desperation and heavy handedness of the Crown and the police. The Crown is grasping at straws in an attempt to put Alex in jail for as long as possible.

"The Movement Defence Committee is deeply concerned that Alex Hundert continues to be targeted by the state, this is his third arrest under questionable circumstances," says Ryan White from the Committee.

He has been targeted by the police on a number of occasions and was arrested for speaking against the G20 in September at a panel discussion. Community organizations and individuals have rallied behind Hundert, in opposition to this blatant intimidation. This arrest was clearly an attempt to silence political dissent and impede public discussion about the G20 and the police abuses during the G20 protests. Following this arrest, he was jailed for over a month before being released.

more at:

<http://anarchistnews.org/?q=node/12477>

---

## G20 Defendant Rainville Still Jailed

Tuesday October 26, Mississauga New Credit

On Tuesday October 26, Ryan Rainville appeared in an Ontario Superior Court to argue for his release on bail. The Judge adjourned the application for Ryan to be released to a First Nations Bail Program citing 'inadequate supervision'. In considering Ryan's bail application, the judge also did not take into account Gladue factors, which forces the judicial system to consider the systemic marginalization and over-incarceration of Indigenous people as result of colonialism and poverty.

Ryan is a young Indigenous man from the Sakimay Nation and is charged with several unfounded charges stemming from June demonstrations against the G20 in Toronto. Ryan has been imprisoned since August 5 when he was arrested at his home in Waterloo, and has since been denied bail once before in September.

While targeting strong voices of dissent is part of the state's desired culture of fear, the repression and attempted silencing of Indigenous resistance is part of the ongoing legacy of criminalization and colonization for 500 years across Turtle Island.

According to Indigenous supporters of Ryan:

"Ryan has been strong in his denouncements of injustice and has spoken out without fear. He is honest, humble and respectful toward his family and people around him. He has also honoured his role as a man in the community by standing beside Indigenous women when we needed support.

As native people, our bodies and our minds are constantly under attack from the state. Their power rests on our degradation, and their violent exploitation of the land and water feeds and profits the colonization of every poor and oppressed person. There is nothing new or unusual about Indigenous people - whether Haudenoshonee or Mapuche, Anishinaabe or Palestinian - being targeted, violated and locked up under racist, classist and sexist guises of "law and order" or "justice".

more at:

<http://anarchistnews.org/?q=node/12477>

---

## Letter from Panayiotis Masouras

From Presxs A La Kalle!

On August 31, the final appeal hearing for comrades Panayiotis "Takis" Masouras and Harilaos "Haris" Hatzimichalakis was held in Athens. Their lawyers' request that our comrades be released on probation was unanimously rejected. About 50 people gathered in front of the courthouse to show solidarity. According to the lawyers' estimates, the trial of both comrades (imprisoned since September 2009), as well as that of Konstantina Karakatsani (at large since September 2009 and arrested in April 2010), will take place in November. All three are accused of participating in the Fire Cells Conspiracy.

Silence will be a thing of the past.

...

The goal of the systemic rule of the regime's prison policy is to subjugate each individual's spiritual, psychological, and physical desires and capabilities—individuals who, in accordance with the law, are isolated and marginalized by the regime's machinery like so many cancerous tumors awaiting therapy. In the cells of democracy, jailers who are an extension of the disciplinary mechanism devote themselves to a shameless war against human decency and dignity. The disciplinary structures of Authority want us on our knees, cut off from all social contact, and mentally stagnant. Their objective is to defuse the struggle for freedom by attempting to confine the fight against power.

The imprisoned subject experiences a long-term internal war. It is a war of disciplinary punishments (which constitute a punishment within a punishment), new sentences received while one is already inside, suspended leave, bigmouth prosecutors, the permanent degradation of human integrity itself, and miserable and inhumane prison conditions (regarding water, food, heat, overcrowding, and a lack of medical care and medicine). It doesn't require complex deduction to realize that someone who finally leaves the regime's crematoriums in one piece would mistake the misery on the outside for opulence.

much more at:

<http://anarchistnews.org/?q=node/12528>

---

## PRISONERS: GOOD NEWS & BAD (WRITE THEM!)

---

### From Nikos Malapanis (concerning the special appeals interrogator 30/10/10)

*From Act for Freedom Now*

And now solidarity is being persecuted...

On Monday 1st of November I am called to present myself in front of the special appeals interrogator K.Baltas, as an accused for "the punishable action of integration in a terrorist organisation called Revolutionary Struggle". Lately many individuals of the anarchist/anti-authoritarian movement, from the wider friendly and comrade circle of the arrested, have been called as witnesses for the same case.

...

For 15 years I belong in the part of those that fight against the intensifying oppression and terrorizing of society. What we named "coming treaty of totalitarianism" is the seediness as a term of everyday routine and fear as a term of existence. It is what in the middle of a crisis (I.M.F., austerity measures, new antiterrorist law) they try to apply now on me and my comrades.

I am known to the persecutory authorities, having been arrested in the past for my political action. Part of this action was always the solidarity to the imprisoned fighters, because of which I was also portrayed and targeted in the case of the arrested for Revolutionary Struggle. The message is clear. The comrades that deny the charges are in the underground cells with only evidence their political action and their comrades relations, which they never denied, with Pola Roupa, Nikos Maziotis and Kostas Gournas as well as with Lambros Foundas. The experiment is considered achieved, so that it can be applied on more people. My prosecution, therefore, is clearly political and vengeful. It is for knowledge and conformity of those who still choose to fight, those who are ready to take the decision to fight.

Today they clearly persecute solidarity, the comradeship, dignity. And the mechanisms smile at us ironically. With as my only weapon dignity, resistance and solidarity I walk and I will walk.

...

more at:

<http://anarchistnews.org/?q=node/12536>

---

### Solidarity with the Asheville 11: the 1st of Every Month

On May 1, 2010 eleven people were indiscriminately arrested in downtown Asheville, North Carolina and accused of breaking windows in a nearby tourist district. Their trial is scheduled for January 2011. In an effort to discredit radicals of all stripes, the eleven have been aggressively demonized by police and corporate media long before going to trial. To counteract this, we are calling for solidarity efforts supporting the 11 to take place on the first of every month.

Solidarity with the Asheville 11 can take many forms. You could cover your town with posters bringing their situation to the attention of the public, or hold a benefit event to help them pay their tremendous court costs, or set up an information table somewhere.

You could write a letter to the editor of the Asheville Citizen-Times, which printed a great deal of hostile invective about the 11 in the wake of their arrests and continues to frame the discourse about their court case.

You could print and mail out these postcards demanding that District Attorney Ron Moore drop the charges and cease publicly vilifying the defendants.

...

The possibilities are endless. Use your imagination! If you come up with something worth reporting, please make a statement about it on the internet, so others can see how many people care about the outcome of this case.

Above all, the 11 need visibility and public support. If these do not materialize, the authorities may be emboldened to bring similarly unfounded and inflated charges against other perceived political adversaries. Defending them is a way to protect everyone who may be targeted with this kind of repression.  
[www.asheville11defense.com](http://www.asheville11defense.com).

more at:

<http://anarchistnews.org/?q=node/12441>

---

### Erik Oseland: Goin' to Jail Update

*From supporterik.wordpress.com*

As many know by now, I was convicted of

"Conspiracy to Commit Criminal Damage to Property". In a mere 2 days I am turning myself into the Ramsey County Workhouse and serving my 91 day sentence.

I encourage most people to write me or visit me if they feel inclined to do so. For more information, visit my comic-sans-ridden support blog; <http://supporterik.wordpress.com>

...

With heart,  
Erik.

<http://anarchistnews.org/?q=node/12436>

---

### Pavel Delidon Released from Prison!

*From Avtonom*

*Anarchist and animal rights activist from Russia, Pavel Delidon was released from prison 27th of September, after doing 3.5 years in prison for an attempt to gather back wages his former boss owned him.*

Below a message Pavel passed to Anarchist Black Cross of Moscow:

No Pasaran!

Yesterday I was released from captivity. I did my 3.5 years, every single day, and was not considered to be entitled for an early release. I feel awesome, my head is going round and round, have to get used again to many things, I am behaving like a wild man who encountered civilization. It will take time until I will be again myself, get used to the new situation.

more at:

<http://anarchistnews.org/?q=node/12326>

---

### Briana Waters Released from Prison on Bail

*From Earth First News*

The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals reversed the conviction of Briana Waters on September 14th, 2010, based on their findings that her conviction was improper because important rulings by the trial court deprived her of a fair trial.

After serving 2.5 years, she was released from prison today, October 14, 2010, pending a re-trial.

<http://anarchistnews.org/?q=node/12418>

---



## France - The Cold Autumn Hots Up

From Libcom

Despite the colder weather, and the increasing lack of petrol, the social movement is hotting up, fueled by fun, fire and fury. "Operation Snails' Pace", strikes, mini-riots, schools blockades, General Assemblies, occupations, and today the 4th 24 hour "General" Strike since 7th September ...but where is it all going? What contradictions aren't being confronted? Read on...

Lorry drivers yesterday joined the movement, with the explicit aim of "blocking the economy". They have been launching "Operation Snails' Pace" (going slow on major roads and motorways) around Lille, Toulouse, Lyon, Bordeaux, south of Paris, Tours, Frontignan, Arras, various parts of Normandy and lots of other places - officially there were 30 "go-slows" around 15 different towns yesterday. This, on the day before the Union-called "General" Strike called for today, Tuesday October 18th: "General" is in inverted commas because clearly there've been loads of people who have worked in those sectors which have officially come out on strike. Some of these "go-slows" lasted only 20 minutes, but others for several hours. Ordinary cars go-slow in the fast lane, because big lorries aren't allowed there.

Various petrol depots have been blockaded. Despite the government claiming on Sunday that only 200 petrol stations have closed down, the organisation responsible for producing petrol station statistics said yesterday - Monday - that 1500 have closed; and the amount of petrol stations that have run out of Unleaded 95 or Unleaded 98 must be a great deal more than that. This shortage is as much to do with the refineries' strikes and blockades as with the dockers strike which has left at least 60 tankers stuck in the Mediterranean, unable to embark.

more at:  
<http://anarchistnews.org/?q=node/12445>

---

## France: the State & the Bosses Only Understand One Language

20

*The following is a communiqué that appeared on Paris Indymedia, written by comrades who briefly occupied the Opera in Bastille, Paris on Saturday. Since the appearance of this communiqué, mainstream media reports rising violent resistance across France on Tuesday, as once again up to three million people took to the streets and riots occurred from Lyon to the Paris suburbs. As the Guardian reports, the strikes have "appeared to be pushing France closer to crisis today as fuel shortages were felt across the country and violence erupted on the sidelines of protests by children." According to media, if fuel is not made available to cargo trucks in the next few days (due to blockades and strikes), the economy could become paralyzed when factories and workplaces run out of supplies. Translated from French:*

### **The state and the bosses only understand one language (Monday, October 18th, 2010)**

During the last days numerous initiatives have begun to flourish everywhere: secondary schools, train stations, refineries and highways have been blockaded, there have been occupations of public buildings, workplaces, commercial centers, directed cuts of electricity, and ransacking of electoral institutions and town halls... In each city, these actions are intensifying the power struggle and demonstrate that many are no longer satisfied with the forms of actions and words of order imposed by the union leaderships.

In the Paris region, amongst the blockades of train stations and secondary schools, the strikes in the primary schools, the workers pickets in front of the factories, people create inter-professional meetings and collectives of struggle are founded to destroy categorical isolation and separation. Their starting point: self-organization to meet the need to take ownership over our struggles without the mediation of those who claim to speak for workers.

more at:  
<http://anarchistnews.org/?q=node/12456>

---

## Address to the Wage-earners, Unemployed, and Precarious Workers

From Libcom

*English translation of a leaflet written by some participants to the current movement against pension reforms in France*

### **Address to the wage-earners, unemployed and precarious workers of all the countries in the European Union**

We are precarious workers, wage-earners, students or unemployed, currently taking part in the struggle against the pension reform by the Sarkozy government which plans to postpone the legal retirement age and to extend the number of years of contributions to be entitled to a full pension. This measure will lead to the worsening of the living conditions of the precarious sections of the population and a significant progress of the logic of capital valorisation. This is in line with the Thatcherite policies pursued by the French government over the last four years, as in most European countries for the last twenty years of the reign of neoliberal orthodoxy. This politics of social regression (privatisations, wage freezes, cuts in the public sector and in social spending) is all the more harshly felt because of the 2008-2009 recession (and its trail of mass redundancies) which, far from leading to a revision of the neoliberal dogmas, was able to justify a new round of austerity plans at the expense of the working class.

In many countries such as Greece and Britain, governments no longer hesitate to announce sharp cuts in wages and pensions while they spend tens of billions to save banks.

...

Everywhere, they try to divert popular discontent onto scape goats: the Roma, the Arabic, the Unemployed-who-do-not-want-a-job will be the perfect culprits.

more at:  
<http://anarchistnews.org/?q=node/12506>

---

## **Mouvement Communiste Report on Some Weeks in France**

From Libcom

*This is based on eye witness accounts, testimony of comrades and friends and cross checking with the media. It cannot pretend to be a complete account but it gives you an idea of how we understand things.*

The first month  
(starting from 7th September 2010)

### General overview

We have seen a growing number of demonstrators in many towns and cities of France in demonstrations called by the unions and supported by official left-wing parties. But on the side of working class strikes the figure is not so bright.

First of all, strikes have not hit "private" sector industry (with some exceptions detailed later). Our two Paris area big automotive assembly plants, Renault in Flins and Citroën in Aulnay saw only 100 strikers among a workforce of roughly 4000 (i.e. even not all the union delegates went on strike); as some workers said, "the mood is not there". Even in demonstrations there were very few banners relating to private companies.

In French state-owned railways the figures vary from one place to another, but general figures (unions and management) give an average from 25 to 35%. You have to know that among a workforce of 160,000, engineers (often the most militant sector) are only 18,000 and among them the strike figure is just round 50%. From the "user" point of view, in the Paris suburban service, management was able to keep 50% of trains running.

More annoying, the attendance at general assemblies was very scarce: on 7 and 23 September, in Paris Saint Lazare only 50 people attended. On October 12, newspapers report a growing number of attendees in Paris Montparnasse (100 people) but it was only half compared to the November-December 1995 movement.

much more at:  
<http://anarchistnews.org/?q=node/12502>

---

## **Another Communiqué from France**

From Void Network

*Here is a translation of the most recent communique from an assembly that has been occurring in Paris. This communique was distributed as a flyer at a demonstration in Paris today. There are more communiques to come as soon as they are translated.*

### First round: It continues!

For more than 3 weeks, a high scaled social movement is underway in the country. Pension reform has been its starting point.

We are well aware that everything is being done to make the weapon of striking less effective. The state uses the tools of law- legal obstacles and requisitions; and on the other hand, the atomization and segmentation resulting from the last thirty years of re-structuring of capital tends to neutralize the destructive capacity of the strike. The days of mass protest, to their limited effects, had the main interest of the base finding it's legitimacy to grow and go beyond the framework imposed by the unions. It is through the blockading, especially in strategic points of the petro-chemical and transportation sectors, that the movement gave itself the means to intensify the power struggle, despite attempts by the government and media to separate "good strikers" from blockaders, as they have done for a long time between demonstrators and rioters. But it is the very distinction between who has the legitimacy to fight and who doesn't which is necessary to break. Thus, it was the high schoolers, who, landing with a crash into the movement, practiced blockades of establishments or major roads, as well as riots to express anger against the state and commodities.

For all those who believe that reform is only part of a general deterioration of our living conditions; for all those who may not have direct means of blocking production but have refused to resign;

For those who think it is necessary to go beyond the categorical separations maintained by capital; For all these, the practice of flying picket (translators

## **Sabotage of 3 Nord Pas de Calais Disrupts Broadcasts**

From Angry News

Nord Eclair - 23/10/2010: Dunkirk - Broadcasting of programs of France 3 Nord Pas-de-Calais disrupted on Thursday due to vandalism.

A true upheaval in the corridors of France 3 Lille. For the fourth time in five months, the antenna de France 3 Nord Pas-de-Calais was an indirect victim of vandalism - the cutting of a bundle of fibre optics in the Lille region.

Awaiting repair of these fibres, the diffusion of the programmes of France 3 Nord Pas-de-Calais, including the mid-day edition, have been suspended. The disruption of the programmes has nothing to do with the strike on Thursday. A return to normal is expected later in the afternoon.

<http://anarchistnews.org/?q=node/12533>

---

note: a flying picket is a technique which has been used throughout France but particularly in Rennes-it is the practice of small groups who scatter throughout the city and block activities, transport, general circulation. These groups have been reported to be a mixed-make up of participants, such as unemployed with unionist, ect) can be effective. Re-inforce existing blockades as well as create new ones where we consider it useful; but also as a way to gather together to coordinate and organize.

If unions in agreement with the government and the media, seem now whistle the end of the game, the movement nevertheless continues.

Diffuse and persistent anger suggests the opposite of what they advertise: Not the end of the struggle but the beginning of their end!

We will find ourselves in a assemblies to discuss the following movement.

more at:  
<http://anarchistnews.org/?q=node/12518>

---

## Police Brawl with Squatting-Ban Protesters

From Sky News - by Katie Cassidy

More than 100 protesters have clashed with police in Amsterdam over new legislation outlawing the once-respected Dutch tradition of squatting in unused buildings.

Several people, including two officers, were injured and 11 people were arrested after bricks and bottles were thrown at police and cars.

Mounted police were called in and tear gas was used to control the crowd.

Shortly after the intervention, the demonstrators dispersed.

The squatting ban is thought to affect an estimated 1,500 people, down sharply from the 1980s when Amsterdam was home to about 20,000 squatters.

Amsterdam's local authorities have plans to clear some 200 buildings which squatters still use, as part of a general plan to enhance the city's image.

<http://anarchistnews.org/?q=node/12323>

---

## A Call for Disassembly

from Anti-Capital Projects

- No more General Assemblies
- No more Statewide Conferences
- No more Days of Inaction

The fiasco of the Oct. 7th "sit-in" demonstrates the utter bankruptcy of the General Assembly: a political form more effective than tear-gas or billy-clubs in bringing an action to a close. In our fight against the university administration, we have ceded our power to administrative mechanisms that are little better.

How is it that an institution widely regarded last year as farcical came to assume ownership over the university struggle, to assert yet again its supposed sovereign power to broker all meaningful decisions?

---

## Announcing The Swamp; 1st Anarchist Commune in Broward County, FL

From Infoshop

For people in South Florida, October is bringing the first signs of a cool and windy autumn. While this brings joy to many of us around here, it isn't exactly news. On the other hand, however, word around town is that this month also marks the birth of the first Anarchist commune in Broward County, Florida. While there are Marxist communes and collectives of activists and radicals in Broward county, never before has there been an activist centre for anti-authoritarians.

The activists who maintain (and live together in) the commune refer to it as 'The Swamp'. Already in the midst of establishing a radical lending library, they hope to use the space as an outlet and a source of assistance for many local struggles and movements.

If you are an activist or someone who lives in Broward (or somewhere else in Florida) and you wish to learn more/get involved, send an email to Food Not Bombs South Florida at [WDirect08@aol.com](mailto:WDirect08@aol.com).

<http://anarchistnews.org/?q=node/12360>

---

## Olympia Hackbloc Offering Free Security Analysis for Movement Websites

Olympia Hackbloc is working on a project to offer free basic penetration tests of websites and online services used by social justice, anarchist, and radical movements. What we will do is try and break into your website/services exploiting vulnerabilities in your software and then provide a customized report detailing what access we were able to gain (if any) and quick steps you can take to secure your online service and protect your users. These tests are extremely basic and rely on us knowing nothing about the system we are testing. We will only try internet-based attacks (as opposed to social engineering or real-world attacks) and will not be performing audits of custom web code etc.

This audit is part of an effort to test a large number of sites and services which are depended on by our movement. Open, accessible, authenticated communications are critical to social struggle and these services are the backbone of that within our movement.

more at:  
<http://anarchistnews.org/?q=node/12452>

---

Because of the very events last year — ones that were compelled to bypass the GA simply to proceed with planning — it is now impossible to hold a day of action that does not, in fact, feature action. The GA's call for a sit-in was an acknowledgment of this fact, and of last year's successes. But the organizers of the GA only conceived of the October 7 sit-in, it is now obvious, as a masquerade intent on borrowing the charisma of last year's events in order to shore up their failing political project.

much more at:  
<http://anarchistnews.org/?q=node/12395>

---



## Community, Solidarity, Resistance: The Conclusion of the RNC 8 Case and Some Lessons Learned

*From RNC 8*

More than two years after the 2008 Republican National Convention, it appears that the last legal and political defense work is finally reaching a conclusion. Two years of standing together, not always in agreement, but bound by our outrage against a state which systematically destroys our supposed rights. Two years of coming to understand that we are not exceptional and that these rights do not actually exist for anyone except the richest of the rich. Two years of standing and fighting together anyway, retaining our dignity and our strength in our own separate ways.

...

There are several factors that contributed to how things ultimately played out in this case. Not everyone is in agreement on these factors, but there are clearly some tensions we can identify.

Amongst the defendants there was a tension between solidarity and autonomy. This tension is not unique to the RNC 8 case and, while there were breakdowns in the feelings of solidarity at times, there were also things gained when co-defendants stood together and when the broader movement came together to support them. While the defendants can't claim full responsibility for the State dropping the charges against three of the eight, the majority of the defendants standing strong together certainly contributed to this outcome. But there were times when some of the co-defendants saw themselves as being in different positions based on numerous actual differences. Individual defendants' relationships to the RNC Welcoming Committee, their relationship to the State's evidence, and their differing political analyses and varying commitments to a trial made it even more difficult to navigate the already treacherous terrain with a sense of togetherness. In light of this, how can we ensure that an individual's autonomy is secure while building the strongest base of solidarity possible? When is it appropriate for an individual to remove themselves from a group? For some of us, these are lingering questions.

Our experiences also lead us to ask:

What is solidarity? How can we avoid "lip service solidarity" that covers up using the group to serve individual ends? How can we practice solidarity in a way that it supports both our revolutionary movement and the individual revolutionaries in our movement?

There were tensions pulling on the defendants from the outside as well. One of the most significant was the tension between political support and legal support. The political support around the RNC 8 case has been some of the most phenomenal in recent history. Part of this is because, with the hard work and at least small successes of the RNC Welcoming Committee, the RNC 8 seemed like the best anarchist pony in the race. Many, if not most of the 8 believed this case was going to go to trial. That's what the 8 and the Defense Committee told all of you, and part of the reason we received so much support was that people believed us. And many people dedicated a lot of their time and energy to making this political support as strong and effective as it has been. We are deeply sorry for those who feel deceived or as if their pony gave up the race.

There is another component, however, that is less visible--the legal support. The official stance of the United States judicial system is that all defendants have the right to trial and to have counsel represent them at trial. However, this is rarely the case. The use of trumped up charges, economic hardship, isolation of defendants, and fear are great tools used to bully and coerce defendants into plea deals. Part of what we have learned is that this coercion doesn't just come from the State. It's true that the State would rather folks take plea deals, but for many of the same reasons, defense lawyers also prefer them and work towards them. Lawyers at both tables are ultimately officers of the court. This situation creates a sort of Judicial-Industrial Complex, in which all the suits often have a vested interest in efficiency, expediency, and getting the most amount of money for the least amount of work.

...

much more at:

<http://anarchistnews.org/?q=node/12449>

## POG Statement on Recent News About Government Surveillance and Repression

*From Steel City Revolt*

Over the last two weeks, a number of media stories have appeared reporting the latest "revelations" in government surveillance and repression of political organizing.

We, Pittsburgh Organizing Group, are reporting on this in order to present some brief thoughts on the various state activities directed against us over the years. Our hope is that something might be relevant to others who have, or will, experience similar attention from law enforcement.

We provide one example of the various ways state actors have responded to the efforts of radical organizations and anarchist groups.

The first spying story to hit the news was disclosure that the Institute of Terrorism Research and Response was contracted by the Pennsylvania Department of Homeland Security office to produce reports on threats to critical infrastructure. The \$103,000 contract resulted in a slew of weekly bulletins warning law enforcement and corporate interests about a wide range of political activity and groups, from the Tea Party to Quakers to anarchists, even reports on a gay and lesbian festival.

In the 137 released bulletins, POG is mentioned a number of times for protest activity, such as a solidarity event with the FAU-B union in Germany, and in almost every case we were assigned a "medium" threat level with warnings the actions in question are likely to involve vandalism or increased risks of "attacks." The reports also contain coverage of Greek anarchist activity, the danger posed by CrimethInc's call for a month of anarchist activity, and the existence of the Northeast Anarchist Network.

In short, the "Institute" is a money-making scam perpetrated on ignorant government bodies desperate to appear they are taking action on terrorism matters.

...

much more at:

<http://anarchistnews.org/?q=node/12416>

---