

## The state 'terror raids' of October 15th...

On Monday, October 15th 2007, more than 300 police raided over 60 houses across Aotearoa New Zealand. They arrested 17 people at gunpoint and ransacked their homes. Armed police also blockaded the entire Rūātoki Valley, home to several thousand Tūhoe Māori, and interrogated anyone entering or exiting the area. Sixteen of the arrestees were detained in prisons across the country facing minor charges for unlawful possession of firearms or unlawful weapons. Ordinarily, if the Police were concerned about breaches of the Arms Act involving simple possession, they could issue a warning to the people involved. Instead, police threatened to lay terrorism charges with penalties of up to 14 years imprisonment.

Many of the arrestees were well-known anti-war, environmental, worker and indigenous rights activists. They were a mix of pākēha and Māori (from Tūhoe, Taranaki, Maniapoto, Ngā Puhī and more). Mass protests sprung up across the country and even around the world in support of the arrestees' release and for justice for those who were affected by the police 'state terror' raids. After 26 days the Solicitor General announced he could find "insufficient evidence" to lay the terrorism charges and all arrestees were finally released on bail. Over the next few months the police arrested four more people.

Police claim the raids were in response to 'concrete terrorist threats' from indigenous activists. After the events of '9-11' in the USA, the NZ state managed to justify massive increases in the budgets of the SIS and Police, and pass the Terrorism Suppression Act (TSA). They used the new laws in what was called 'Operation 8', to gain surveillance warrants on hundreds of activists and their associates for a period of at least two years.

Many of the Arms Act charges were thrown out in a 2008 depositions trial. Then the police, in a thinly veiled attempt to save face, laid new charges of 'participating in a criminal group' on five of the arrestees. A total of 18 arrestees now await trial and face prison terms of up to five years.

## You can get involved...

If the thousands of people who protested the raids had stayed silent, those arrested might still be in jail. They still face going back to prison for terms of up to five years. We need to keep protesting. There is much you can do...

- **Action:** We regularly hold demonstrations, protests and solidarity pickets in support of the accused and to further our common objectives.
- **Raising Awareness:** We hold meetings, public events, street stalls and send out a newsletter. For info and updates see our website or sign up to the announcements email list. If you would like to join our group or start your own we have resources available for you to use. We have leaflets, posters, articles, books, stickers, CDs and t-shirts available for free reproduction or purchase and distribution. There are also contacts for other groups throughout the country.
- **Donations:** The raids and arrests on 15 October took a huge toll on those involved and their communities. There are still on-going costs to cover massive legal fees and costs associated with travel and accommodation for court hearings. There are also costs involved with the political struggle against the raids. To make a donation, you can : Send a cheque or money order to: October 15th Solidarity, PO Box 9263 Wellington or Deposit money directly in the October 15th Solidarity account **Kiwibank: 38-9007-0239672-000**

## Contact Us!

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## Remember the State Terror Raids of October 15th

# Drop the Charges!

Get involved  
in the struggle  
for freedom  
&  
justice



## Why drop the charges?

These charges are politically motivated and have targeted those who question the authority and legitimacy of the State. Clearly, the State cannot be trusted to safeguard our rights, and neither can the justice system. Only people can assure that goal. Our right to organise politically is paramount; every other right depends on it. The October 15th Solidarity Group demands that the State drop the charges.



International day of action 30 August 2008

## But what about the guns?

New Zealand has one of the highest rates of gun ownership in the world. About 230,000 licensed firearms owners own and use New Zealand's estimated 1.1 million firearms. In the 2007-2008 year, the police recorded some 2987 offences under the Arms Act. In the police 'Operation 8' none of the defendants are accused of planning or using firearms in the commission of a crime. They are charged simply with unlawful possession of firearms at alleged 'camps'.

In New Zealand, the Arms Act uses 'reverse onus' – meaning that a person is presumed to be guilty of illegal possession unless they can prove otherwise. In fact, a person does not even have to have held a firearm to be charged. They can be charged if they are with someone who is in possession of a firearm even if the holder has a valid firearms licence. In rural New Zealand, many people have unlicensed firearms due simply to lapsed licences or to the expense of registration. In Operation 8, instead of talking to the people involved and issuing a warning for minor breaches of the Arms Act, the police spent millions of dollars prosecuting activists on a political witch hunt in their search for 'terrorists'.

## State harassment of activists

The State has a history of using 'national security' to justify targeting dissidents. But while the SIS and the Police were totally pre-occupied with surveilling activists groups, they completely missed the actual terrorists attacks on these groups. For example, in 1984, the Wellington Trades Hall was bombed, killing unionist and cleaner Ernie Abbot. The case remains unsolved. In 1985, the Greenpeace ship, the Rainbow Warrior, was bombed by two French government agents, killing Fernando Pereira, the ship's photographer, in an attempt to stop the campaign against nuclear testing in the South Pacific.

Intelligence services in all countries remain principally geared towards serving the interests of the State, not protecting citizens. The raids of October 15th were carried out on the basis of post-9/11 Terror Laws. Among other things, these laws granted greater powers of surveillance to authorities. However, the charges of terrorism were dropped. The NZ State is now attempting to charge arrestees with organised crime: the crime of sharing common politics based on freedom with social and economic justice. The nature of their 'crime' is immaterial, as the state is simply doing its job by targeting dissidents.

Although 9/11 brought a new raft of legislation and excuses, it has not fundamentally changed State harassment of political activists. Since its inception in 1956, the SIS has monitored, infiltrated and harassed groups ranging from those opposing the Vietnam War, to unions, political parties, and environmental groups and continues to do so today.



## Don't believe the hype...(or the cops)

**Myth:** The Police found evidence of a terrorist plan, napalm and bombs in Te Urewera

**Fact:** Police found NO evidence of a terrorism plan, napalm or bombs anywhere in the country

**Myth:** People arrested on Arms charges did not hold valid firearms licences

**Fact:** Police arrested people with valid firearms licences, and in possession of legal firearms

**Myth:** Police claimed they had to act pre-emptively to prevent a terrorist act occurring

**Fact:** The head of the NZ Law Commission, Warren Young, said that excerpts from intercepted conversations by the accused used in the police affidavit, and subsequently published by the *Dominion Post* were "sensational" "not credible" "implausible" and were laughable when put in context.

**Myth:** Police claim 'paramilitary-style' training camps were happening deep in the bush of Te Urewera National Park

**Fact:** The alleged "camps" were not "deep in Te Urewera" as suggested by Police, but picnic and tramping sites in view of houses and marae in the town of Rūātoki.

## About October 15th Solidarity

Solidarity groups formed throughout the country in the aftermath of the raids. Trade unions, environmental and social justice groups have also provided support and political solidarity with the arrestees.

We are called the Wellington October 15th Solidarity Group and our organising objectives are

- **drop the charges**
- **repeal the Terrorism Suppression Act**
- **justice for those affected by the raids**
- **support Tino Rangatiratanga and Te Mana Motuhake o Tūhoe.**

Solidarity is our weapon. *Let's use it.*