

The Nor'Easter

Issue #3, Fall 2008

THE OFFICIAL QUARTERLY OF THE
NORTHEAST ANARCHIST NETWORK.

Panda-monium in the Streets of New York

By A. PANDA

We are a gang of Giant Pandas (*Ailuropoda melanoleuca*) of all different sexes and sizes. We made our break from captivity into the dingy streets of New York City and found that this metropolis is not much different from our previous cages. Although pandas are often loners, we decided to go against our solitary nature and become more social creatures with hopes that we can work together to convert every inch of this Gotham into the largest panda playground.

New York City – and for that matter, every city in this zoo we call the planet Earth – is designed for the endless consumption of commodities. After leaving our cages for the city, we realized that humans subsisted on commodity in the same way we were given bamboo and water. The outside world turned out to be one large penitentiary crammed

with dazzling but worthless goods that momentarily save humans from yawning to death. We pandas saw the glitter for what it is, the plastic shrubs that lined our cages in the zoo. We desired more from our newfound freedom. *Pandamonium*, a costumed, roving, street party, apocalyptic, dance, rock, battle was the only means we saw fit to combat an earthly existence dominated by capital.

Once the panda flags were hoisted at Union Square Park, the festivities began on that warm August Saturday night. Pandas of every sort began to congregate. A middle-aged male panda arrived on rollerblades donning a fiendish grin, knowing that trouble would soon ensue. A group of young female pandas approached arm in arm and greeted the growing crowd with toothy smiles.

Continued on page 18

The Northeast Anarchist Network

is: a regional, horizontal, organizing network in the Northeast, striving to link those committed to anti-authoritarian, anti-capitalist, and anti-oppressive struggles.

We recognize that the anarchist movement has a diversity of perspectives and priorities. We seek to nurture solidarity and mutual aid amongst all participants of the Network, especially in the face of repression.

Started in February 2007 by anarchists from across the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic, NEAN has grown through many subsequent meetings around the region. The process of creating this Network has connected many groups and individuals and has been a catalyst for the formation of new groups and projects. We have reason to be optimistic about the future of this Network and region, and we welcome anyone sympathetic to our goals to be a part of it. www.NeAnarchist.net

The *Nor'Easter* aims to provide an outlet for anarchist-related news and events while simultaneously introducing non-anarchists to anarchism and plugging them into the movement. ✱



Photos from the Pandamonium

<http://flickr.com/photos/noneck/sets/72157606794350074/>

Inside Issue 3 • Group Reports • APOC Regional Gatherings • Remembering Sally and Kirsten
• Report from the Republican National Convention • Solidarity Without Borders in Zapatista Territory

In Memory of Sally and Kirsten

We are deeply disturbed to hear of two recent deaths of our comrades Marcella "Sally" Grace Eiler and Kirsten Brydum. Some of us involved in the *Nor'Easter* and NEAN knew both Sally and Kirsten, whether as close friends or only brief encounters. Please read the article "Hasta Siempre Sally Grace" on page 16 of this issue of the *Nor'Easter*. Kirsten's article, "Collective Autonomy on the Move", is printed on page 5 in this issue.

Kirsten Brydum died on Friday, September 26, in New Orleans, LA. She had been traveling since August, researching for the Collective Autonomy project. She was shot multiple times in the head, and no one knows why. She was 25 years old.

Kirsten visited me in Buffalo mere weeks before her death, just as she had visited so many others on her tour. While she had met a good deal of new friends along the way, she still made time to see the old ones. I was an old one.

I met Kirsten at New College of California in 2006. She also volunteered with Food Not Bombs in San Francisco. Kirsten always wanted to share, whether it was meals, stuff or ideas. She organized all the Really Really Free Markets in the city, and when she still wanted to share more, she bottom-lined the donations-based Access Café in the Mission earlier this year.

Kirsten had big ideas that, after graduation, were bursting from the seams of the Bay Area. Unable to contain her, California let Kirsten go in search of the rest of the country, with dreams of a network that would transcend geography to connect all of us working for a better world. California didn't know it would be a last goodbye.

Traveling by train, her last stop was New Orleans. Kirsten and some friends went out to a club together on Friday night, but her friends didn't see her again until 8 a.m. Saturday morning. They saw her body, but Kirsten was nowhere to be found.

Our lives are a sort of wiki; everyone you meet contributes something. Kirsten made a physical wiki for her life's work, centered on the Collective Autonomy Network. And lucky for us, even though people can be extinguished like candles, ideas never die. I urge you to keep Kirsten and the Collective Autonomy Network alive by contributing to the CAN Wiki. www.collectiveautonomy.net

The project wasn't just about Kirsten; it was about all of us. And we'll all miss her very much.

—Hannah E. Dobbz, *Nor'Easter* editing team

Contents

POG Spends Summer Turning Up the Heat on Oppression	·	·	·	p03
Reportback from ABC Boston	·	·	·	p03
APOCs Build It From Below	·	·	·	p04
Collective Autonomy on the Move	·	·	·	p05
The Ground Noise and the Static	·	·	·	p06
Caravan to Zapatista Communities	·	·	·	p14
Hasta Siempre Sally Grace	·	·	·	p16
Pandamonium in the Streets of New York (continued)	·	·	·	p18

Write · Edit · Design · Distribute

If you have some know-how you'd like to put to use for the *Nor'Easter*, or if you'd like to learn and help out in any way, e-mail us! If you can help us distribute the *Nor'Easter* in the Northeast and beyond, please contact noreaster@neanarchist.net

Send all submissions to:

noreaster-submissions@neanarchist.net

Please include pictures with captions, credits and author information.

Nor'Easter editors are likely to edit articles for basic grammar, punctuation and length.

For more information, visit www.neanarchist.net/?q=noreaster

POINTS OF UNITY:

1. A very clear rejection of capitalism, imperialism, and authoritarianism.
2. A rejection of all forms and systems of domination. Embracing the full dignity of all.
3. An attitude of active resistance towards all state, corporate, and other oppressive institutions.
4. A call to direct action, support for emancipatory social movements, advocating for the liberation of all, as well as the construction of local alternatives.
5. An organizational philosophy based on decentralization and autonomy. This network is specifically inclusive of all Anarchist struggles and supports all of them so long as they adhere to these Points of Unity, even though not everyone in the Network might consider a particular struggle a priority. Anarchists must show solidarity with each other's struggles as a principle of revolutionary necessity.

In order to embody these values, we see the need for an Anarchist social revolution.

ISSUE VOLUNTEERS

Hannah E. Dobbz
Marie Skoczylas
Richard Vallejo

Views expressed in the *Nor'Easter* or on the Northeast Anarchist Network Web site do not necessarily represent the ideas or opinions of the *Nor'Easter* Collective, Northeast Anarchist Network or affiliated groups. Articles represent the opinions of the author or other persons cited within the text.

Due to space constraints, not all content could be included in the print version. For additional online content, visit our web site at www.neanarchist.net and click on *Nor'Easter*



POG SPENDS SUMMER TURNING UP THE HEAT ON OPPRESSION

A mid-afternoon sun was shining, children played on the swings, and a giant black flag flew in the breeze. On July 5, approximately 85 people gathered throughout the day in Schenley Park in Pittsburgh to celebrate anarchism and American traditions of resistance.

This annual alternative July Fourth celebration is organized by Pittsburgh Organizing Group (POG) to bring together local anarchists and activists to share good conversation, tasty food, acoustic music, outdoor games, inspiring literature, and collective dreams for liberation. In addition to the candy-filled cop car piñata enjoyed by folks of all ages, many of this year's attendees participated in an "Adopt an Anarchist" activity, choosing one of 20 different anarchist biographies and sharing these histories of resistance with others gathered inside the pavilion for a midday go-around.

POG spent the spring and summer of 2008 planning for protests against the Republican National Convention (the group adopted Sector 1: "Direct Against for Direct Democracy" as part of the RNC Welcoming Committee's direct action strategy – see page 6 for more) and lending solidarity to a local labor struggle.

Members of United Steelworkers Local 5032 at Calgon Carbon had been locked out of their jobs since late February. The company was demanding that workers submit to drastic cuts to their family healthcare coverage and pensions before allowing them to return to work. POG members showed support at union actions and helped to put on a benefit show and picnic, raising money to help locked out workers and their families weather the work stoppage. POG members were working directly with union leaders to plan a confrontational action at the company's headquarters when the company finally offered workers a fair contract that secured workers' pension plans and family health benefits.



POG's annual anarchist picnic. Cop car piñata fun. Photo by Marie Skoczylas

POG has also been working hard on internal group matters. After an early summer retreat, the group eased into a due-paying membership structure, solidifying a treasurer role and financial management process. POG re-committed to working on an anti-oppression initiative, after an internal conflict brought out some group members' concerns about issues of respect and a desire to more strongly oppose machismo within the movement. Members held gender caucuses and male-identified members of the group created an internal Men Against Patriarchy project and have been meeting regularly. POG members are also quite excited about the upcoming launch of a quarterly Pittsburgh anarchist journal – *The Steel City Revolt!* – hitting the streets this October. #

For more information, visit www.organizepittsburgh.org or e-mail pog@mutualaid.org.

REPORTBACK FROM ABC BOSTON

Here at ABC Boston, we've continued holding prisoner support events twice a month, sending letters and literature and doing research for the prisoners who write to us.

We've received an alarming number of letters from prisoners in Eddyville State Penitentiary in Kentucky describing unusually horrendous conditions. Boston ABC has been trying to raise awareness around the plight of these inmates and draw the attention of people with law degrees and proximity to Kentucky. So far, little success has been had in dealings with non-profits.

In addition to holding another benefit show, we gave a Know Your Rights presentation at T.J. Scallywaggle's, our local vegan pizza workers' collective, and passed a hat for funds.

In late May, we held a massive two-day skillshare event on legal, medical, tactical and practical activist information, which was successful not only as a skillshare, but also as a fundraiser.

In June, Boston's Radical Arts Troupe (RAT) took two arrests while sidewalk chalking outside of the site of Boston University's proposed BSL4 biolab. The lab would bring deadly incurable pathogens to be developed as bioweapons in a densely populated low-income area. It continues to be built with



POG's annual anarchist picnic. Group photo. Photo by Marie Skoczylas

federal funding, despite the six-year opposition of the residents of the area.

Four members of the Boston RAT were using sidewalk chalk to make known the purposes of the construction when police swarmed them. Two were encouraged by their comrades to leave and the remaining two were arrested on property destruction and disturbing the peace charges. Boston ABC bailed out the two and provided court solidarity at the arraignment the next morning.

We've also been working more closely with Jericho Boston, an organization fighting for political prisoners. In addition to helping with planning Jericho's 1010 Freedom For All Political Prisoners March, we've begun monthly contributions to Jericho's commissary fund, which provides monetary resources for imprisoned activists.

Several ABC members were in Providence to support IWW victims of police brutality. Money from our defense fund went to offset the effects of ICE raids in Rhode Island. We also contributed to the defense funds of our comrades, the I-69 resisters and Ohio Earth First!

While we were hosting the entirely productive annual ABCN gathering, less positive things were transpiring in our community.

T.J. Scallywaggle's was shut down due to a lack of licensure just as the former financial follies of the long-gone boss came back to haunt them. A \$1000 initial tax payment was demanded of the shop, which would have been doable, had they not lost an entire weekend's income by being shut down.

An emergency benefit and the kindness of friends and customers raised enough for the initial payment and all of the necessary steps were taken to reopen the shop and keep it open, but the establishment is still financially vulnerable. Contributions to the efforts of the workers' collective are still being requested.

Paypal payments can be sent to naylor.a@neu.edu and checks can be mailed to T.J.'s Vegan House of Pizza, 487 Cambridge Street, Allston, MA 02134 #

APOCs Build It From Below

Anarchist people of color host regional gatherings

By MARLENA GANGI

Philadelphia, Pa. and Portland, Ore. were the sites of the Northeast and Northwest Regional Gatherings for Anarchist People of Color (APOC) that occurred this August.

The Philadelphia Conference took place at the Rotunda on August 8 and 9. Portland's Gathering was held on August 16 and 17 at Liberty Hall in North Portland. Other APOC gatherings are scheduled to take place later this fall in Los Angeles and the Bay Area. A national conference is scheduled to take place sometime next year.

The Northeast shout-out called on APOC activists to "build a new vision for the future and a new plan of action for today. We want to expand our understanding of race, class, gender, autonomy and freedom — while attacking white supremacy, imperialism, colonialism and ALL borders, boundaries and barriers."

Northwest APOCs narrowed their goal to focus on building connections in the region and to begin conversations toward building a national anti-authoritarian/autonomous movement of people of color. The Portland gathering fluctuated between 20 to 30 people for the weekend while the Northeast's fluctuated between 30 to 50.

APOC roots run deep

What is now known as APOC began in 2001 as an anarchist-poc e-mail list and Web site created by Ernesto Aguilar. Now defunct, the www.illegalvoices.org site was the first broad collection of writings and dialogue by anarchists of color, and pivotal in increasing focus on issues of race in the anarchist movement, as well as increasing political space for people of color. At present, "<http://illvox.org>" is the only active APOC Web site.

The first national APOC conference was held in Detroit in 2003. Thereafter, collectives sprouted up all over the country. After Detroit, came regional conferences in Washington, DC in 2004 and Asheville, NC, Berkeley, CA and Houston, Texas in 2005. The Second National conference was called for in New Orleans in 2005 but was canceled because of Hurricane Katrina.

APOC is not a centrally organized organization, but rather a loosely organized network of groups and individuals. While the current APOC movement is relatively

new, its roots can be traced back to Mexican anarchist Ricardo Flores Magon and the Baja Magonista Revolt of 1911, the revolutionary Chicana/Native/Black American Lucy Parsons Gonzalez (1853-1942) and later to Afro Rican anarchist/activist Martin Sostre (framed on drug possession charges and unjustly imprisoned for nearly a decade in the early '60s), the late anarchist and former member of the Black Liberation Army Kuwasi Balagoon, and former Black Panthers Ashanti Alston and Lorenzo Komboa Ervin.

Alston was on hand at the Northeast Regional Gathering to deliver the workshop "The Ballot is a Bullet," with a focus on discussion of utilizing grassroots energy during the 2008 election to counter white supremacist Republican and Democratic politics-as-usual.

Some other workshops included: "APOC-Alypse Now...And Later, At War: Taking Stock on the 500-Year War on Blackness," "Class Barriers," "The City is Killing Me: Strategies for the Revolutionary Act of Keeping Ourselves Healthy" and "Buy Black: Economic Freedom and Controlling the Conditions of Our Labor."

The Portland gathering's workshops addressed the questions:

*What is APOC? How do we define it?

*What should an APOC politic encompass?

*What might an APOC organization look like? Strategy? Structure? Politics?

*What workshops/discussions would we want to see happen at the 2009 National APOC Conference?

Both gatherings concluded with resolutions to put talk into action in their respective communities. Specifically, a Northeast resolution called for stronger support of APOC prisoners. From the Northwest regional came a resolution for a twice-yearly publication that will include interviews, essays, artwork and calendar section with a focus on APOC activism, ideology and culture.

APOC Ideology Not Monolithic

Dialogue occurred at both gatherings regarding ethnic and political identity, working with white allies and accountability within APOC.

In attendance at the Northeast conference was an older Black woman active in prisoner support who had never heard the

word anarchist applied to people of color. Concerned by mainstream media images of black-clad white anarchist youth rioting in the streets, she was surprised and somewhat relieved to learn that not all APOCs mirror the ideology or actions of white anarchists. She later spoke of finding it enlightening to see in attendance APOCs ranging in age from late teens to late adulthood, who were also quite eloquent and impassioned when speaking of their personal experiences and how those experiences led to self-identify as anarchists.

Voices at both the Northeast and Northwest gatherings spoke to Native and Indigenous identity and how this intertwines with anarchist ideology, as original Native culture is one of sovereignty, autonomy, self-determination, land-based economy over capitalist economy, and non-hierarchical structure without exploitation of the Earth or its human or animal life.

Native tribalism also carries warrior societies, and this conversation included observations drawing from these societies in ways manifested by APOCs today. With this, observations were made to conclude that anarchist warrior activism could range from militant direct action to lifestyle anarchism, with these and areas in between qualifying as revolutionary acts simply because the very nature of these acts by APOCs counter white supremacist ideology.

There was much to say on the subject of working with white allies and the failures and successes contained therein. Criticism has been leveled at APOC because much of its organization calls for POCs only. With the conversation about white allies sliding into opinions about ethnic identity and use of the term "people of color," the variety of statements made included:

"[We] have to build up a thick skin when entering into their [white majority] spaces in trying to get your voice out and educate white allies at the same time."

"Part of what draws me to APOC is not having to do Racism 101 with white folks, having a place to do work that does not involve that task."

"I have encountered so much cultural and racist assumption in the radical white community. To be honest, I am just tired of having to deal with it and mostly have no interest in organizing with white people. It can be exhausting."

Continued on page 20

Collective Autonomy on the Move

By KIRSTEN BRYDUM

After years of working on projects in San Francisco (SF Really Really Free Market, DirtyDoveInfoshop, AccessCafe), I decided to travel the States to study how others are arranging anarchist economic models. The idea to travel turned into a project called the Collective Autonomy Network (CAN).

Collective Autonomy refers to a strategy: Collectivizing our energy and resources in order to approach autonomy from forces of oppression. It is self-sufficiency achieved through cooperation.

This project has taken me through the Pacific Northwest, the Northeast and the Midwest in search of counter-institutions such as infoshops, free schools, really really free markets, guerrilla gardens, radical health collectives and other projects that are creating a post-capitalist world today. By networking, I hope to show a movement that is more extensive than we realize, and to facilitate research and resource-sharing across distances.

Counter-institutions challenge existing social institutions by directly building alternatives to them. Free schools defy the dominant mode of education by demonstrating that people can come together and share knowledge in a non-competitive and non-commodified environment. Counter-institutions also establish the infrastructural framework for a project to survive beyond its founding members.

The San Francisco Really Really Free Market, for example, happens the

last Saturday of every month in Dolores Park, regardless of whether an organizer attends.

Although I do not dismiss the importance of insurrectionary action, this project focuses on the ways we prefigure a world without capitalism. Utopian by design, yes, but conversations and practices that embody how we would arrange space, resources and methods of exchange in a free society are vital if we are truly seeking social change.

Anarchist economics involve sharing resources in order to become autonomous from the dominant system (see: The Dirt Palace, artist-owned collective in Providence), collectivizing energy to better meet the needs of our communities (see: Philadelphia Childcare Collective), and de-commodifying those needs (see: Divine Bicycle Church, Philadelphia). Anarchist economics move us from competition to cooperation, from selling to giving, and from expecting the government to care for us to doing it ourselves.

In describing our major social institutions and alternatives to them, I have been using the categories of food, housing, healthcare, education and markets/resource exchange systems.

The Collective Autonomy movement responds to the dominant institutions by building institutions informally based on a gift economy in which people form collectives or projects in order to facilitate free or low-cost access to resources in a certain community.

For example, radical health collectives

formulate to provide (generally alternative) medicine to people with lack of funds. Food not Bombs volunteers salvage wasted food and serve free vegetarian meals to hungry people. Guerrilla gardens and urban farms transform abandoned lots into vital, food-producing land (see: Mill Creek Farm, Philadelphia). Free schools utilize the already-existing wisdom in each community to provide free education to whoever wants to learn (see: Albany Free School). Really really free markets emphasize the joy of giving without the expectation of return (see: Alton Brighton Really Really Free Market).

These types of projects thrive on a local level. These are community-building projects that arise out of people self-organizing to better meet the needs of their own community. The CAN seeks to connect an intentionally decentralized movement. Autonomy is important, but if we were more connected then we wouldn't constantly reinvent the same strategies with which to thwart capital.

If we could maintain this decentralization while communicating and sharing knowledge with each other, then will we start to see our efforts as part of something happening all over the country, and we will begin to understand our strength.

Descriptions and contact information for projects in the Northwest, Northeast and Midwest (Southeast coming soon) can be found at www.collectiveautonomy.net. The site is a wiki, so contribute your own projects to the network. ✱

Group contact list on page 20



The Lounge at the Pink Palace, an all-woman art collective, owned by two of the women. It used to be a library. It used to be church. Now it is a shared creative space: silkscreening, animation, sewing, music and (sometimes) events. Providence, RI



An opening speech at GRUB, a bi-monthly donation-and-dumpster-based community dinner. Food not Bombs/A New World In Our Hearts at Rubulad, Brooklyn, NY

THE GROUND NOISE AND THE STATIC:

A Chronicle of the Battle of St. Paul, RNC 2008

By MIKE GW & JAMES K (NYC INDYMEDIA)

"Please, please, my friends, my dear friends, please, please don't be diverted by the ground noise and the static."— John McCain, on being interrupted just before he could accept the GOP's nomination, 9/4/08

Part 1: PRELUDE: WELCOME TO ST. PAUL.

August 28-31, 2008. Countdown to the Republican National Convention.

The View from the Fortress Xcel:

The Xcel Energy Center, also known as "The X," sits comfortably within the No Go Zone – a security perimeter spanning 28 blocks of the city of St. Paul. Politicians and their best subjects are to be secured within Fortress Xcel, heart of Fortress America, behind double rows of black steel fence.

The fence, built on a foundation of fear and rising 10 feet into the air, is a movable fence. It goes wherever Power and Property must face the people.

This fence is only the latest in a long line of fences and walls – The Border fence. The picket fence. The Berlin Wall. The Wall Street. The plantation wall. The prison wall. Over the fence, hanging from the convention center, is the image of an elephant dancing.

Facing the elephant, Fox News reports to America, "fair and balanced," from within a fenced-in security compound of its own.

That is what you saw on your TV screen. This is what we saw, with our eyes, in the streets.

The View from Indymedia:
RAIDS, REPRESSION, RESILIENCE

Thursday, August 28.
Daylight.

Members and supporters of The Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign haul mattresses, couches, tarps and tents into "Bushville," a tent city modeled after the Hoovervilles of the Great Depression. This tent city, being built on Harriet Island, which overlooks the Mississippi River in St. Paul, is to be a

home for the poor and homeless arriving in the Twin Cities to protest the Republican National Convention.

Nightfall.

Police arrive to dismantle the camp and kick out those intending to stay the night in Bushville. The officers are able to push all but two protesters from the camp. Cheri Honkala, organizer with the Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign, and supporter Tim Dowlin of Philadelphia refuse to leave and are arrested.

Cheri Honkala, who had been sitting with an American flag across her lap, states, "It's a sad day when you have this much money spent on police officers, and the poor only have their voice, and we can't allow that to be taken from us."

"It was a good exercise for us," says Senior Commander Joe Neuberger of the St. Paul Police.

Friday, August 29.

The mid-day sun approaches dusk, and the task of fortifying the Xcel Energy Center from protesters has begun. By nightfall, interlocking steel fences will zigzag maze-like for blocks around the perimeter of the Convention Space, denying access to all those without explicit invitation.

Night.

Ramsey County Sheriff's Department and St. Paul Police officers, armed with a search warrant, kick in the door of the RNC Welcoming Center, a former theater in St. Paul now used as a convergence space for those protesting the RNC. Forced to the floor by shouts and drawn guns, the 50 people inside are ordered to lay face down on the ground. They are handcuffed, photographed and searched. Laptops and political literature are confiscated.

Among those detained is a five-year old boy named Gabe. He asks his mother, "Mommy, why did they break in the door? Mommy, what did we do wrong?"

The RNC Convergence Center is closed on police orders. No one is permitted to enter the premises.

Saturday, August 30.
Morning.

Four homes are raided. Five members of the RNC Welcoming Committee are arrested. The justification: "Suspicion of conspiracy to riot, conspiracy to commit civil disorder, and conspiracy to damage property."

The five members of the RNC Welcoming Committee are taken to Ramsey County Jail and held through the Convention.

In the coming days, this will become business as usual. More houses and offices will be raided. I-Witness Video, an organization of journalists that has documented police brutality, will be visited three times, relocated and accused of holding hostages.

Afternoon.

With the Convergence Center shuttered, organizers rally the troops, assemble on a hill in Powderhorn Park with stories, speeches and free food. It is here that the crowd is informed that, thanks to the pressure put on the City by local and visiting activists, the doors of the RNC welcoming space are to be reopened.

Evening.

In the doorway of the newly reopened RNC Welcoming Space, a press conference – featuring a cross-section of activists and families of arrestees – is being held to denounce the "terrorist-like" actions of the Ramsey County Sheriff's Department and other law enforcement officials. The forces of law and order, they say, are executing raids on people's homes, silencing free speech by confiscating cameras and media materials, and exercising excessive displays of force.

Sunday, August 31.
Morning.

"We remember," say the Veterans For Peace, as they march on the Xcel Center reading out the names of US soldiers and Iraqi civilians killed in the war. Nine will be arrested for breaching the security perimeter.

Across town, riot police are deployed to defend the Mall of America from workers.

Afternoon.

Starbucks workers and their supporters converge for a rally at the light rail station. The crowd comes to stand in solidarity with Starbucks workers in their fight to organize the Starbucks Workers Union (SWU) with the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) and to escort Erik Forman – fired for organizing at his workplace – back to work at the Mall of America.

Upon arriving by train, Forman and his fellow workers are met by riot police, called in to protect the Mall of America. The riot police announce that anyone exiting the train will be arrested and charged with trespassing. They force the train to turn around. Forman is late for his first day back to work.

Happy Labor Day – from the Mall of America.

MEANWHILE, 1200 MILES DOWN THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER, the people of New Orleans and beyond look up into the menacing eye of Hurricane Gustav, now bound for the Gulf Coast on the anniversary of Hurricane Katrina.

Once again, in spite of a mandatory evacuation order, many of New Orleans' Black, Brown, and poor people will be left behind as the white and the wealthy head for the hills.

President Bush announces that he will not be making it to St. Paul, after all. Even John McCain's appearance is up in the air. Day 1 of the Convention will be rescheduled from 7 hours to 2 hours.

Some wonder why the Republican Party is suddenly concerned with the people of New Orleans.

Others note that the decision comes on the eve of what some fear will be the most disruptive protests the USA has seen in many years.

Part 2: THE BATTLE FOR THE STREETS.

Monday, September 1. Day 1 of the Republican National Convention.

Gallery 1: <http://nyc.indymedia.org/en/2008/09/99581.html>

Today's RNC has been deemed a National Special Security Event. Today, public order will be kept by 3,700 police from across Minnesota, with the help of thousands more from over 30 agencies – FBI, Secret Service, Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and the US Military, among others. Approximately 1,200 of the National Guard will be on call, in case things get

out of control.

Americans have paid \$50 million for the elephants' security; \$34 million for more police on the beat; \$3.4 million for spy-in-the-sky CCTV cameras; \$3 million for chemical weapons, a taser for every officer.

On top of that \$50 million, the Republican National Committee has bought a \$10 million insurance policy from the St. Paul police, pledging to spend its own money to stop any civil rights lawsuits.

"VICTORY OVER TERRORISM."

A handful of patriots show up early with the mass-produced signs. There are more signs than there are people to hold them. The police stand aside as the patriots walk right up to the fence.

The people, now known as enemy, assemble by the tens of thousands before the State Capitol.

They are here today, says Jess Sundin of Minneapolis, speaking for the Coalition to March on the RNC, "because we refused to be scared away. Because what we are marching for is too important to be silenced. Because this is the only way we can answer the Republican agenda and demand an end to policies that wage war, deepen poverty and fuel racism."

Snapshots.

A diversity of dissent is on display here.

Here, the red and black flags of the anti-capitalist bloc wave beside the massive puppets of Code Pink. The red and black flags say **SOLIDARITY. STOP THE RAIDS. DIRECT ACTION AGAINST CAPITALISM.** The pink puppets say **I MISS AMERICA. I MISS JUSTICE. MAKE OUT NOT WAR.**

Here, on the Capitol steps, black banners are unfurled with the names of the war dead.

Here, the voices of the Immigrant Rights Contingent echo beside those of the Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign. **MONEY FOR HUMAN NEEDS NOT FOR WAR**, say the signs raised high.

Here, across the lawn, a merry band of youth with mobile sound system on hand, prepare to Funk the War. Here, the music is heard by all, from Iraq veterans holding flags upside down, to students and teachers fighting for free education, to families demanding health care for all.

Here, giant hands implore, **STOP THE WAR!** Here, a sculpture shows **DEMOCRACY** on ice.

Here lies a son of America, his casket and boots guarded by a father clutching a folded stars-and-stripes. Here, this sign says, **In Memory of My Son.** And this one, **Justice for My Daughter.**

In a moment they will all be marching together to the Xcel Energy Center in peaceful protest against the Republican National Convention and its agenda.

"Massive anti-war march successful despite police repression. Protest organizers estimate 30,000 joined the rally and march" – Coalition to March on the RNC and Stop the War, September 1

"An otherwise peaceful throng estimated at 10,000 people...far fewer than the 50,000 some had predicted – chanting and peacefully waving signs" – *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*, September 1

"Almost 5,000 protesters marched peacefully outside the site of the convention" – CNN, September 1

But wait. There is more to come.

"SEIZE, SWARM, and STAY."

The RNC Welcoming Committee, an anarchist/anti-authoritarian organizing body that has been preparing for the 2008 Republican National Convention protests in St. Paul, Minn., has issued the following call:

"The RNC Welcoming Committee calls for anyone and everyone who cares about a better world than the politicians claim to offer to **"Swarm, Seize, and Stay,"** on September 1st. Our goal for Day One is to blockade Downtown St. Paul."

By blockading Downtown St. Paul, they hope to deny Republican delegates entrance into the Xcel Energy Center – and effectively shut down the RNC.

"Swarm Seize, Stay (3S) means:

1. Move into/around Downtown St. Paul via swarms of varying sizes...
2. Seize space through both hard and soft, fixed and mobile, blockading methods.
3. Stay engaged with the situation in downtown St. Paul as long as necessary. Regroup. Reinforce."

The RNC-WC has divided St. Paul into 7 sectors, so that organizing bodies throughout the country can coordinate their actions and blockade as many access points as possible.

Feature Article

THEY SHALL NOT PASS: High Noon at the Blockades

Gallery 2: <http://nyc.indymedia.org/en/2008/09/99603.html>

In just about every sector, affinity groups are moving into position with chains, locks and “sleeping dragons.” Here, another affinity group is pulling out barricades to be strewn across the streets. Here, another is preparing to lock arms and blockade buses packed with convention delegates, staff, police.

Downtown, a dance party is breaking out in the streets. “Bulls on Parade” is pounding out of a mobile sound system carted by hand into the middle of the road.

The War is being funk'd. The youthful rabble is being roused. The dance dance revolution is being wrought. United in a moving mass behind the booming bass beating hip-hop and punk and funk, hundreds of youth are breaking away – no, boogeying away, busting a move away – out of the permitted rally, onto Wabasha Ave., winding their way toward the Xcel Center.

The people of St. Paul look on from their windows and balconies. A family waves. Another joins in the singing.

The men from the government are watching it all on closed-circuit television. Others are watching it from street corners, rooftops, helicopters – or from inside the action.

The storm troopers are ready for their big debut. The chemical weapons are coming out. The gas masks are coming on. They move in to break the blockades. The pepper spray is filling the air, eyes and lungs.

But the blockades are holding, moving, holding, moving. FREEDOM OR DEATH, some say. DIRECT ACTION FOR DIRECT DEMOCRACY, say others.

Now a car full of delegates is surrounded. Now a whole bus is halted. Somewhere, delegations from Alabama and Connecticut are trapped on their buses, shaking in their newly shined shoes.

Standing in their path are the rebel children of another America. Most are armed with nothing more than their bodies as they go into battle. Now they are linking arms. Now they are sitting down in the street. Now they are chaining themselves together.

A young man runs behind police lines, jumps on the hood of a squad car, runs back into the crowd.

Now the bloc is improvising barricades out of dumpsters, street signs, road closures, vandalized squad cars, police pens turned against the police, newspaper bins filled with the latest headlines...

The latest headline from Fox 9 News: “At every turn, the peaceful protesters were overshadowed by the anarchists, who left a trail of vandalism in their wake, without cause or ideology, leaving police to wonder, ‘What’s still to come?’”

Meanwhile, the other media are moving other messages through the streets, the mobs, the Internets.

Every minute, Twitter alerts are going out from scouts on the ground. Every minute, Indymedia dispatches are coming in from the field, following the story – a story of many stories, each with its own telling – through the eyes of the people living it, fighting it, seeing it and writing it.

BRINGING THE TROOPS HOME:

Battle Rages, Repression Reigns for Nine Hours through Downtown St. Paul

Gallery 3: <http://nyc.indymedia.org/en/2008/09/99625.html>

“Bring the Troops Home Now!” The sounds of the antiwar march echo in the distance, penned in and divided from all “unlawful” protesters by lines of riot police.

And the troops are home, it seems, as the Minnesota National Guard is called in to back up overrun police units. Hundreds of uniformed Guard, some just back from Iraq and Afghanistan, roll into town down Kellogg Ave. in blue buses and green military trucks. Fanning out across the street, they don riot gear and gas masks

and shields. They wield their batons and their guns, and they prepare for war.

The forces of order advance on the dancing masses in three rows: First riot police, dressed as stormtroopers, banging on their shields – MOVE! BACK! MOVE! BACK! Behind them, the National Guard. Behind the National Guard, the Cossacks on their horses.

A lone, masked woman steps forward, crosses a painted line on the road, steps up to the mounted police. She starts dancing. Others join in getting down to the beat emanating from the boombox.

Chemical weapons are again deployed against those who resist – and those who did not know resistance until today. Clouds of tear gas waft over everyone. Journalists, spectators, delegates, everyone.

Amid exploding canisters of gas, silly string is deployed against the riot police. Arms are linked. Hands clasp each other tight. Bodies burning, coughing, shaking, still moving together to the same beat.

Elsewhere, protesters are forced to lie face down, hands bound, on the pavement of a parking lot.

Elsewhere, a woman lifts up a fresh picked daisy to the riot police. In return for her gift, she is pepper sprayed point blank in the eyes. She, like many others, is crying uncontrollably.

Elsewhere, the Anti-Capitalist Bloc, which brought up the rear of the peace march, is chased by riot police firing more tear gas, “less lethal” bullets, smoke bombs, concussion grenades.

“Hard to tell what that was, but it blew up. Wow. Holy shit. That is a freaking grenade. Oh my god. That just blew up on these kids” – so reports a journalist from *The Uptake* before she is arrested along with the kids.



National Guard line up for war on the streets of Saint Paul. Photo by Mike GW

Sunset.

Across the Mississippi River, 10,000 workers and youth come out for SEIU's Take Back Labor Day Festival, featuring Mos Def and Tom Morello, almost canceled thanks to RNC security plans.

Scores of youth who came to hear a free concert are swept up in the mass arrest along the way.

The massive group of protesters that had defied police orders to disperse from Kellogg Ave. have now been pushed two miles across the bridge, along the riverside, and into Upper Landing Park by the advancing authorities.

There, pinned against a wall of National Guard and riot police, and with the Coast Guard stationed behind them on the Mississippi River, the protesters have no choice but to face arrest.

As the sun goes down on the streets of downtown St. Paul, a report arrives that riot police have surrounded the women of Code Pink. They, too, are refusing to disperse.

And as the sun sets on the streets of downtown St. Paul, the National Guard goes on a parade.

THE BATTLE OF THE STORY

Journalists who seek to tell these stories – journalists from *Democracy Now*, *The Uptake*, even the Associated Press – will be rounded up and charged with felony riot, unlawful assembly or “interference with a peace officer.”

Secret Service agents will later approach Goodman and Kouddous of *Democracy Now* and take their press badges from them, informing them, “You won’t be needing these.”

Most directly in the line of fire are the warrior journalists of the Independent Media.

The only journalists who are sure to be spared are the journalists embedded with the police force, according to the St. Paul Chief of Police.

Among them is Fox 9 News: “First Day Wraps Up Early, All the Action on the Outside,” Fox reports tonight. “Police used pepper spray and rubber bullets to subdue violent and vandalizing protesters.”

And WCCO CBS News: “It was really the action outside that claimed the news coverage, where self-proclaimed anarchists disrupted an otherwise peaceful march. Protesters would not back down, as police in riot gear moved in.”

Says riot victim Sheriff Bob Fletcher on the Nightly News: “You know, we’ve been pushed, but we’re not broken.”

According to reliable sources, neither are the 285 protesters and others who have been rounded up and arrested today in the streets of the Occupied Twin Cities – or the thousands of others determined to march for their lives tomorrow.

Part 3: MARCHING FOR OUR LIVES. Tuesday, September 2. Day 2 of the Republican National Convention.

Gallery 1: <http://nyc.indymedia.org/en/2008/09/99688.html>

Gallery 2: <http://nyc.indymedia.org/en/2008/09/99712.html>

Today, America’s invisible poor and their allies – Black people, White people, Latino people, Asian people, First Nations peoples – plan to march on the Republican National Convention, a March for Our Lives, under the banner of the Poor People’s Economic Human Rights Campaign (PPEHRC).

“PPEHRC calls for you to join us as we fill the streets of St. Paul, Minn. in a powerful, peaceful demonstration for the right to health care, housing and all economic human rights.

“We will march because as poverty, hunger, unemployment and homelessness grow throughout this country, political leaders from both major parties have abandoned us. We cannot afford to be silent. We cannot afford to be disappeared from the public eye and the political debates as our families suffer...”

Early in the day, the Seven Council Fires (Oceti Sakowin) of the Dakota Oyate people reclaim Coldwater Spring,



Poor People's March for Our Lives. Photo by Mike GW

a sacred part of the tribe’s homeland B’Dote. Once property of the Bureau of Mines, now surrounded by Highway 55, the sacred spring flows on, and with it, the resistance of the Dakota people here. The land reclamation comes with ceremonies celebrating the turning of summer to fall.

The Dakota people are surrounded by the Department of Homeland Security, Hennepin County Sheriff’s Department and riot police from other agencies. Unbowed, they will hold their ground for four days.

Across town, in downtown St. Paul, the police are spoiling for another fight. They stand guard at landmarks, hotels, banks, big businesses, luxury condos. Mears Park, site of the PPEHRC rally, is encircled by battalions of riot police, mounted police, bike police, SWAT Teams, FBI and ICE agents.

The Poor People’s Economic Human Rights Campaign is filled with those who face police violence every day. These people are undeterred.

Today, the poor will be heard. They raise their voices, lift their fists, carry handmade signs, stand proudly beside families, friends, co-workers, co-warriors.

They are here from groups like the Kensington Welfare Rights Union, the Coalition to Protect Public Housing, Women in Transition, the Hip Hop

“...political leaders from both major parties have abandoned us. We cannot afford to be silent. We cannot afford to be disappeared from the public eye and the political debates as our families suffer...”

—poor people’s economic human rights campaign

Feature Article

Congress, the Rural Coalition, the American Indian Movement. Allies are here, too, from the Anti-Capitalist Bloc and Industrial Workers of the World.

Aztec dancers ascend the stage, dressed in face paint and feathers. An incense smoke billows across the crowd. A dance begins. When finished, the dancers speak to the crowd:

"We bring this medicine to you. This is the medicine of the indigenous people of Mexico. All of us have a love of the human being, a desire for a better life."

As the Poor People's Economic Human Rights Rally echoes in the center of Mears Park, the police assemble at the south corner of the square. Suddenly an officer grabs an Indymedia reporter and pulls her from the park into the street. He arrests her, seemingly without cause. Hundreds of protesters, noticing the commotion, swarm around the police, shouting, GIVE HER BACK! GIVE HER BACK!

Panicked, the police spray chemical weapons into the crowd. Two more protesters are arrested. One is pinned between two mounted police officers and knocked to the ground; the other is forced face-first into the street and tased.

THIS IS WHAT A POLICE STATE LOOKS LIKE, the crowd wails.

The March for Our Lives begins despite the police repression. It stretches across the streets and traffic bridges for blocks upon blocks. Thousands of poor people and their allies are set to march on

Fortress Xcel.

Families are at the frontlines: Mothers and fathers pushing children, children pushing grandparents and handicapped people. Behind them comes a teeming crowd of those forgotten, unseen, unheard at the political conventions – until now.

"We are the unemployed, the working poor, the downsized, the homeless, the victims of welfare reform and NAFTA, the cast-asides of the new economy; we are social workers, religious leaders, labor leaders, artists, lawyers and other people of conscience; we are young and old... PPEHRC is building a movement that unites the poor across color lines."

Along the entire march route – Mears Park to the State Capitol all the way to the fence at the Xcel – St. Paul's Finest line the streets in full riot gear, standing shoulder to shoulder, baton to raised baton.

Young kids who know the police all too well look right up at them, question them, talk back to them. An old man holding a sign that states "Housing is a Human Right" approaches a line of riot police. "Join us," he says. "Why don't you join us?" The police issue an uneasy silence.

The March for Our Lives winds its way off the permitted route, across I-94 and down the streets of Northeast St. Paul. There it is: The Ramsey County Jail. The march comes to a halt. A moment of silence is observed for all prisoners in the jail.

The enforcers guard the jail with guns and dogs behind 10-foot-high fences. National Guard stand in formation behind the riot police, or watch from the rooftops through binoculars and rifle sights.

Willie J.R. Fleming steps from the march to stand before a line of riot police. He turns his back to them. He raises his fist into the air.

"Put your fist in the air for our brothers and sisters incarcerated," he says.

Fists reach into the sky.

Next stop: A children's hospital, where poor children of Minnesota have been denied decent medical care.

Interlude: BULLS ON PARADE

Rage Against the Machine, set to play a show for some young people on the lawn of the State Capitol, is physically barred from playing music. State Troopers and security teams block their way to the stage.

So instead, Zach de la Rocha screams some lyrics acapella through a bullhorn, leading the crowd in rowdy song and mass movement.

"Are they afraid of us?" asks de la Rocha of the crowd, after the concert has been shut down. "No – they're not afraid of four musicians. They're afraid of you!"

Nightfall.

The sun has gone down, but the lights of downtown St. Paul still illuminate the March For Our Lives. The march, which has now grown by the thousands, moves as close to the doorstep of the Xcel Energy Center as is possible.

Cheri Honkala, of the Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign, climbs atop the shoulders of a fellow marcher and faces the massive crowd. She holds a bullhorn and informs the crowd that the PPEHRC is going to issue a citizens' arrest to the Republican National Convention for crimes against humanity. However, before she does this she insists that the crowd raise their right hand and repeat after her:

"I promise to...do nothing violent because this is a non-violent movement."

She informs them that there are babies and wheelchairs at the front of the march, and people who could easily be hurt if things turn violent.

They cheer as she climbs down from the shoulders of her comrade and marches to the towering fences surrounding the Xcel. She addresses the riot guard behind. She asks permission to enter:

"I am non-violent, I just want to practice my first amendment right. I can't do that behind a cage."

The riot police deny her entry. The letter of citizen's arrest is placed on the ground, wrapped in an American flag, at the foot of the towering fences.

As the crowd disperses, white men wearing shiny shoes and brand new bandanas across their faces approach the riot police and begin taunting them. Wary of police provocateurs members of the crowd plead for peace.

The police issue a warning of dispersal.

They open fire. Gas canisters hiss. Concussion grenades explode. Many in the crowd panic and run.

Tonight, the soldiers are out for blood. Tonight, the streets are on fire. Once more, tonight, clouds of tear gas are wafting through St. Paul, curling high into the evening sky above the Xcel.



Poor People's March for Our Lives. Photo by Mike GW

As Laura Bush introduces the President's speech by satellite, Channel 13 reports, "the Xcel Energy Center is locked down because of protesters outside." No one is allowed in or out of the Fortress.

Fox News reports: "A group of about 4,000 protesters are trying to break down the security fences at 5th and 7th, near the northwest entrance to the Xcel Energy Center in St. Paul." Fox reports: "Protesters exploded three homemade bombs near police. Officers responded with tear gas and smoke bombs."

As it turns out, no evidence could be found of protesters "trying to break down the security fences." As it also happens, the anarchists' "homemade bombs" turned out to be grenades thrown by police.

This fact will be verified by all media except Fox.

Says George Bush to the nation tonight: "If the Hanoi Hilton could not break John McCain's resolve to do what is best for his country, you can be sure the angry Left never will."

The angry Left replies: If George Bush could not break the angry Left's resolve to do what is best for this country, you can be sure John McCain and his police never will.

Part 4: THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK.

Wednesday, September 3. Day 3 of the Republican National Convention.

Breaking: Eight alleged "leaders" of the anarchist/anti-authoritarian RNC Welcoming Committee are formally charged with "Conspiracy to Riot in Furtherance of Terrorism" – the first criminal use of the Minnesota version of the USA PATRIOT Act. They have been held as political prisoners within Ramsey County Jail since being rounded up in armed raids leading up to the Convention.

Their names: Monica Bicking, Eryn Trimmer, Luce Guillen Givins, Erik Oseland, Nathanael Secor, Robert Czernik, Garrett Fitzgerald and Max Spector.

Their crime: Organizing with the RNC Welcoming Committee, allegedly an "organized criminal enterprise who have conspired with affinity groups throughout the United States to come to St. Paul, Minn. and utilize criminal activities to disrupt and stop the RNC."

Their maximum sentence: Up to seven years in prison under the "terrorism enhancement" charge.

The only evidence against them: The testimony of unnamed Undercover Investigators and "Confidential Reliable Informants" who have infiltrated the RNC WC for over a year.

The last use of such charges in Minnesota was in 1918, when organizers with the IWW on the Iron Range were charged with "criminal syndicalism" for organizing unions.

The National Lawyers Guild and the Friends of the RNC 8 mobilize to support the defendants in their fight for freedom.

Says NLG lawyer Jordan Kushner as he comes out of the courtroom: "This is a political prosecution in its purest form, because no one is actually accused of physically doing anything that would be violent...They're being prosecuted specifically for their political activities and what they advocated."

The RNC WC calls an emergency press conference, together with the National Lawyers Guild and the PPEHRC, where it "unmasks" before the media.

The world hears from an older woman named Betsy Raasch-Gilman, a member of the WC:

"There are no terrorists up here. There are no terrorists in the Ramsey County Jail. There are terrorists in the Xcel Center. There are terrorists in the White House. And that's why we organized these protests."

And the world hears from Willie Fleming of the Poor People's Campaign

and the Hip Hop Congress:

"We, like most Americans, are against terrorism. Be it Al Qaeda – or the police... who, for the last couple of days, have employed terrorist tactics, inflicting fear into nonviolent Americans seeking to protest...So I have a question for you, the American public: What is violence? Is there a difference between violence and civil disobedience?"

Who, then, are the terrorists at the RNC?

Says the State to the people: "You're either with us or you're with the terrorists." Thus, to stand against the State is to stand for terrorism.

Say the people in the streets: To stand against the State is to stand against terrorism.

RAGE VS. THE MACHINE

Night of Wednesday, September 3.

Rage Against the Machine is finally allowed to play a show in the Twin Cities. They make their appearance in the orange jumpsuits of the Guantanamo detainee.

As the show closes, thousands of Rage fans, with a smattering of protesters and Veterans against the War, are spilling out of Minneapolis' Target Center and into the streets.

At the same time, delegates are making their way back to their hotels from Governor Pit Bull Sarah Palin's vice presidential acceptance speech at the Xcel Center.



Protestors blockade streets leading to the Xcel Center. Photo by Mike GW



National Guard watch from the roof tops. Photo by Mike GW

Palin has stated that her job is “sort of like a community organizer – except that you have actual responsibilities.” Community organizers nationwide are not amused.

WHOSE STREETS? OUR STREETS!

A group of 200 Ragers against the Machine, most of them local youth, spontaneously take over the intersection of First Ave. and Seventh St. Traffic is stopped. Riot police are called in to downtown Minneapolis. They come by foot, bicycle, horseback.

Delegates watch through the windows of their taxis, charter buses and private cars.

In what has become routine in these Twin Cities, the storm troopers drive the youth down Seventh St. At least 102 people will be surrounded, corralled and forced to sit with their hands on their heads and to wait to be carried away by city bus to the County Jail.

Says James Gilligan of Iraq Veterans Against the War to the *Pioneer Press*: “The level of intensity I’ve seen from police officers, it’s not even on this planet. These guys are treating civilians like you would Iraqis.”

The troops are coming home now. So is the War.

NO PEACE FOR THE WAR-MAKERS, NO JUSTICE FOR THE PEACE-MAKERS

Thursday, September 4. Final day of the Republican National Convention.

Early in the day, lawyers for demonstrators show up outside Mayor Coleman’s office and ask to speak to officials about the civil rights of their clients. The lawyers are confronted by eight police in riot gear and escorted out of the building.

In the afternoon, thousands of Twin Cities youth walk out of their high schools and colleges in a citywide student strike against the Republican Convention, organized by Youth Against War and Racism. They march to a Peace Island Picnic at Harriet Island, where they put politicians and Big Oilmen on trial for war crimes, then on to the State Capitol, where the Anti-War Committee has a permit to rally and march.

Across downtown St. Paul, businesses and government buildings start closing their doors at 3 p.m. The president of the Greater St. Paul Building Owners and Managers Association tells members, “There may be streets closed that may make it difficult to leave.” He compares the coming protest to a “tornado or severe weather.”

Darkness falls. The protesters regroup on the Capitol grounds. Then the pepper spray comes out. Then the tear gas. Now-familiar explosions fill the streets. A familiar stench fills the air. Concussion grenades and smoke bombs are hurled at the crowd as “peace officers” push the peace marchers back.

Inside the Convention Center, John McCain has taken the stage.

Some of the protesters have made it inside the Fortress. They make good on the pledge to crash the spectacle. Just before John McCain can accept his presidential nomination, the “war hero” is confronted from across the Xcel by an Iraq Veteran Against the War – a young man by the name of Adam Kokesh.

YOU CAN’T WIN AN OCCUPATION – reads his sign. MCCAIN VOTES AGAINST VETS – reads the flipside. Security gets to him and rips away the sign, but not before McCain – and the whole world – can see them. Kokesh lifts up both his hands in a peace sign.

The crowd goes wild, attacks the protester, attempts to drown out dissent with an old standard. But there is more to come – the Iraq War veteran’s protest will be followed by two more disruptions, anti-

war and pro-choice, from the women of Code Pink.

Outside the Convention Center, the police are opening fire on peaceful protesters. They are herding hundreds onto the Marion Street Bridge. They will be arresting 396 people tonight – more than any other mass arrest, at least since the last RNC in New York City.

Even the mainstream media takes notice, after 19 of their own are rounded up and arrested on the bridge.

Says Minnesota Public Radio reporter Michael Caputo: “The police had their version of events...They said protesters not only moved forward, but they hurled rocks, chunks of blacktop, fireworks, plastic bottles, fecal matter. That’s not what I saw from where I stood...I saw no rocks. No fireworks. No bottles or bags filled with feces. The way I saw it, the police fired the first shot, and I never heard a warning.”

Says Fox News Editor John P. Wise, who is arrested with everyone else on Marion Street Bridge tonight: “What I saw was just another peaceful protest that only grew troublesome when officers tried to prevent the marchers from crossing a bridge to the side of town that runs into the Xcel Center.”

Eight-hundred and eighteen people have been arrested over the course of these four days in September.

Hundreds are hit with felony charges. Hundreds are held beyond the 36-hour legal limit as they refuse to give their names to authorities in solidarity with all the people in jail.

Name? Jane Doe.

Name? John Doe.

Name? Jesse Sparkles.

Who is Jesse Sparkles?

We are all Jesse Sparkles.

Two minors practicing jail solidarity are charged with contempt of court and hit with a 30-day jail sentence without trial. Others are being locked up indefinitely, some in solitary confinement.

ICE agents question other prisoners, including a minor named Jane Doe, threatening her with deportation. Where were you born?” – he demands.

I’m going to remain silent and uphold my Fifth Amendment rights – she replies.

Alright, then you’re going to go to federal prison – he informs her.

Reports of torture, beatings, tastings, harassment and systematic denial of medical treatment are filtering out of Ramsey County Jail:

“Male beaten over the head with baton and then tased for at least 15 minutes for participating in singing ‘Solidarity Forever’ with other cellmates after being singled out and told to shut up.”

At least one report of a person being anally raped with a baton.

Many reports of people clubbed and repeatedly pepper-sprayed in their cells.

At least a couple reports of people being kicked repeatedly in the face.

Excessive use of pain compliance maneuvers and pressure points on just about everyone.

Water denied to most for at least 24 hours.

Many, many reports of full-body first and second-degree pepper-spray burns being denied decontamination/medical treatment.

Male hand split apart by either tear gas canister or concussion grenade explosion. Denied medical attention for at least 36 hours.”

(—All reports from Coldsnap Legal Collective and Indymedia)

“My name is Elliot Hughes...six or seven officers came into my cell...grabbed me by the head, slammed my head on the ground...They put a bag over my head that had a gag on it. And they used pain compliance tactics on me for about an hour and a half. They separated my jaw as hard as they could...I was screaming for god and like screaming for mercy, crying,

asking them why they were doing this...”

“I think we did a great job, to be honest with you,” Ramsey County Sheriff Bob Fletcher tells the media, when confronted with allegations of abuse. “We haven’t received one complaint of the 750 arrests.”

Part 5: SEPTEMBER 5: LOOKING BACKWARD — AND FORWARD

“We must see the threats to peace and liberty in our time clearly — and face them.”

— John McCain in his acceptance speech at the Fortress Xcel

Letter from St. Paul:

“Thank you to the thousands of people who courageously faced 10-ton buses, concussion grenades, tear gas, pepper spray, batons, charging horses, gas masks, rubber bullets and all of the tools of repression and intimidation that were used yesterday to repress the public in this supposed democracy. Your direct actions stand in stark contrast to the conventioners inside the Xcel Energy Center, passively dragging the party line and the rest of this world down with it. We are inspired by the extraordinary people who stopped buses, blocked highway ramps and breached concrete barriers to reclaim the streets and recapture the space of downtown St. Paul.”

—RNC Welcoming Committee

For four days in September, in the Twin Cities of Minnesota, thousands of dissidents — across generations, across geographies, across lines of race, class, gender, sexuality, ability, legal status — came together to shut down the Republican National Convention and the system it stands for.

The RNC, though disrupted, delayed, inconvenienced, was not stopped. Today, the spectacle of American politics, though crashed, has seemingly returned in all its glory.

The tear gas has cleared. The streets are empty, swept clean of protesters and debris.

The jails are filled to capacity. The police are back on the beat, beating down the usual suspects, the poor, Black, Brown and indigenous youth.

For four days in September, the people felt their power, together, in the streets. And Power, under siege, exposed the violence inherent within it.

Was a spark lit within the empire? Was this fire combustible?

Was a signal sent, through the smoke, to a watching world?

Has this fire been extinguished?

It did not begin here. It will not end here. But for four days in September, it happened here.

The rest of this story is yet to be written. ✱

Read the full report on the web. Visit www.neanarchist.net and click on Nor'Easter

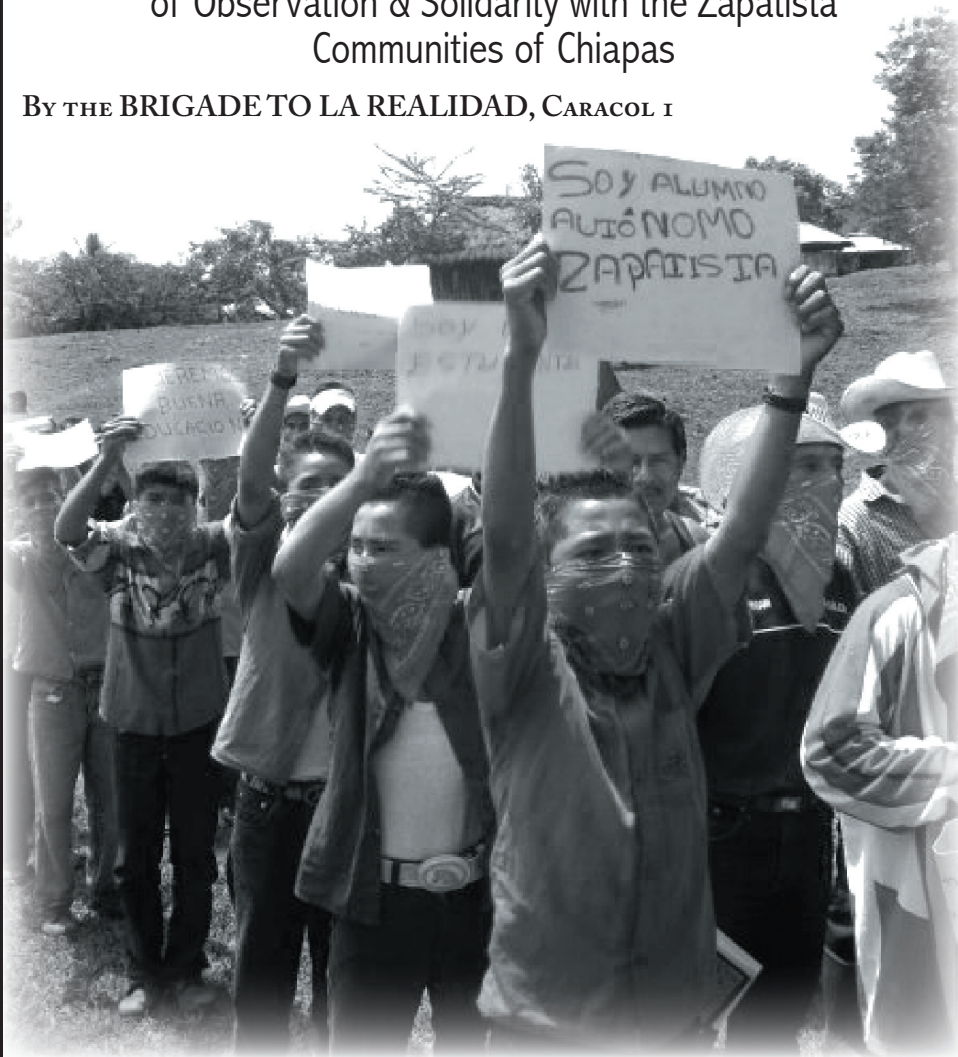


Riot Police attempt to clear the streets using gas. Photo by Mike GW

CARAVAN TO ZAPATISTA COMMUNITIES

Report from the National & International Caravan
of Observation & Solidarity with the Zapatista
Communities of Chiapas

BY THE BRIGADE TO LA REALIDAD, CARACOL I



The Brigade of the Caravan destined for the *Zona Selva Fronteriza* (Zone of the Border Jungle), with participants from the US, Germany, France, Iberian Peninsula, Iran, Oaxaca, Chiapas and Mexico City, left on July 30 from San Cristóbal de las Casas for the *Caracol* “Mother of All the *Caracoles* of the Sea of Our Dreams.” Following a six-hour journey, we were received by the *compas* (the *compañeras* and *compañeros* collectively).

After accommodating us in the buildings of the school, the first meeting took place with the *Junta de Buen Gobierno* (JBG), or Good Governance Council, in which they revealed the objectives of the Caravan. There we showed our intention to stand in solidarity with their struggle and to observe the situation of the communities.

The JBG noted that it would be interesting to come to know the achievements of Zapatista autonomy through interviews and visits to communities. At the next presentation to the JBG, we asked if there was some work we could do, and they informed us that if we wanted to help by making banners and painting murals, it would be welcome.

On July 31, some caravanistas decided on the questions to bring to the Zapatista *compas*. These were divided into four themes: autonomy, health, education and women.

The following day, the interview was celebrated with the Good Governance Council, the *promotoras* and *promotores* of education and health (from now on, referred to as “promoters”) and the *compañeras*. All made a great effort to bring themselves from the different communities to the *Caracol* to bring us their word and experience. The discussion lasted over five hours and addressed the four themes plus others that arose during the conversation, like the organizing of the young people.

On August 2, we transferred to the community of Santa Rosa del Copán, in the municipality of Libertad de los Pueblos Mayas (Freedom of the Maya Peoples), to visit the health clinic and interview the local health promoters. The reception was very warm, and the whole community was present.

First, a discussion took place with the education promoters from the community. Later, the health promoters took us on a guided tour of the community clinic, in which they showed us the various spaces that they provide. We also interviewed them and were able to go into more depth. Next, the students of the school performed a cultural event with poems, stories, riddles and a little parade. At night there was a dance in which all the community participated.

The next day, we returned to La Realidad, and for two days continued the work with the murals and the banners, along with discussions among the caravanistas, with the goal of presenting our realities and knowing one another's struggles.

On August 5, we traveled to the Zapatista hospital of San José del Río and then arrived at 24 de Diciembre (December 24), a community of the municipality of San Pedro Michoacán with a particular problem: The lands were recuperated by the Zapatista *compas* just one year ago. There we were received by the community and planned interviews and tours of the nearby military installations.

After two days, we returned to La Realidad to enjoy the anniversary celebration of the *Caracoles* and to present our report to the JBG, with which we ended the Caravan.

To reveal all that has been discussed in these days in the different communities and in the *Caracol*, we have decided to divide the report into the following parts: autonomy, women, education, health, and harassment of the Zapatistas. (For the

purposes of this article, only autonomy and health will be covered.)

Autonomy

In the interview with the Good Governance Council (JBG), the autonomous councilors and the promoters of health and education, they said that autonomy is a legitimate right of the indigenous peoples, but that the government has never recognized it. They remarked that autonomy is that which they exercise every day in their communities, in that their ancestors had their own way of organizing themselves and making agreements, their *usos y costumbres* (practices and customs).

After the Zapatista uprising, when the Dialogues of San Andrés were initiated, the recognition of indigenous rights and indigenous culture was demanded of the government. Although agreements were signed between the representatives of the EZLN (*Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional* or Zapatista Army for National Liberation) and the federal government, these were not reflected in the constitutional reform of 2001.

From then on, the Zapatista communities unilaterally reinitiated the exercise of autonomy, creating Good Governance Councils. With them, they seek to coordinate the existing relations between the various autonomous municipalities, thus creating a balance among them.

The JBG of the *Caracol* of La Realidad is made up of four autonomous municipalities, each of which has its own municipal council. The representatives of the autonomous municipalities are elected by the communities that form them, and each community also has its own local *autoridades*, or council members.

According to the JBG, "The structure of autonomy begins with the people, because from the people comes the organization of work." The positions are rotating. The communities elect 12-16 *autoridades* for three years, and the JBG of this zone varies every 15 days. The *autoridades* do not receive a salary, but rather are supported by the community according to the community's means.

The *autoridades* of various levels – community, municipal, JBG – exercise what they define as "*Mandar Obedeciendo*," or command by obeying: "The peoples choose us according to our activities and understandings. In the communities and

municipalities, they make their own laws, which we apply. It is not discussed, it is just fulfilled. The people commands. It is autonomy."

They also spoke to us of the respect and the coordination among Zapatista and non-Zapatista communities and families, commenting, "We maintain solidarity between communities and respect for agreements, and those that are not Zapatista are also respected." There are people who are not Zapatista who go to the JBG looking for a different form of justice, since in the unjust apparatus of the government, the one who has more money always wins...

Health

In *Caracol 1*, they provide microclinics of health in the four municipalities, a central clinic and health promoters in all of the communities. The Caravan was able to see the microclinic in the municipality of Santa Rosa del Copán and interview the health promoters in La Realidad and the community of 24 de Diciembre.

Before 1994, there were already health promoters, but many people died of diseases like dengue, tuberculosis, malaria or even more preventable diseases like diarrhea. Many children died under five years of age, and deaths during childbirth were also very common.

After 1994, the system of health care came to be more organized, together with the construction of Zapatista autonomy. With the recovered knowledge of their traditional medicine, the system of education of promoters and the collective construction of clinics, the cases of mortality have diminished drastically.

Today, in all the communities, the health promoters use herbal medicine as the first recourse to curing illness. For example, in La Realidad there is a center of herbal medicine with its own creams, tinctures, teas, ointments, etc. made from local plants.

In the microclinic of Santa Rosa, they treat the people of the municipality who cannot be attended to by the promoters of their communities. They provide various spaces – like a doctor's office, pharmacy and dental care room – though they cannot currently use them due to a lack of materials.

The hospital of San José – for more serious health problems that cannot be cured in the microclinics – is equipped with an emergency room, doctor's office,

surgeon's room, delivery room, dental care room, ultrasound, laboratory for analysis and pharmacy. We found "conventional" medicines and natural medicines they produce.

The promoters are also trained in areas of analysis and water quality. For example, in La Realidad, the promoters developed a system of producing biodegradable chlorine, and they train in areas they deem necessary from courses given by other promoters or by solidarity doctors.

They seek equality between *promotores* and *promotoras*, male and female promoters. In the municipality of Santa Rosa, 15 *promotores* and seven *promotoras* are now working, but they are training 15 *promotoras* and seven *promotores* so they will be equal.

The autonomous health system is collective community work, since all the communities of a municipality decide where to install the microclinics, and all the municipalities decide where to install the central hospital. We see this community work also in the construction of the clinics, in which members of all the communities participate. The Santa Rosa clinic took two years to complete, and the materials for its construction – like stones and sand – were brought by hand from many kilometers away.

Autonomous health is not exclusively for Zapatistas; those who are not Zapatistas can also go to these clinics. The difference is that, since the Zapatistas contributed to the construction of the clinics and the training of the promoters, they do not have to pay anything for health assistance. *

Read the full report or get info about SWB reports in the Northeast at www.neanarchist.net/?q=sinfronteras



Mural in the community 24 de Diciembre. Photo by Mike GW
Translation: Globalizing the Struggle

Hasta Siempre Sally Grace

Another US Activist Murdered in Oaxaca

By KRISTIN BRICKER
FROM HER BLOG *MY WORD IS MY WEAPON*

Friday, September 26, Mexican police transferred Omar Yoguez Singu, 32, to the Oaxacan attorney general's custody for murdering 20-year-old Marcella "Sally" Grace Eiler. The Associated Press reports that he claims he had consensual sex with Sally, then killed her with a machete during an argument.

Yoguez Singu was captured thanks to the quick action of Oaxacan activists who publicized her murder internationally.

Yoguez Singu raised his friends' suspicions when he returned to Mexico City from a recent trip to San Jose del Pacifico, where locals discovered Sally's decaying and mutilated body in a cabin. They noticed that he was injured and that his two dogs were missing, so they asked him what happened. Yoguez Singu reportedly told them that one of his dogs bit a child in the community, so locals tried to kill the dog with a machete. He allegedly told them that he was injured attempting to save the dog.

Thanks to the widely disseminated statement signed by Oaxacan organizations that Sally worked with, people in Yoguez Singu's circle of friends knew that a woman was murdered in San Jose del Pacifico while Yoguez Singu was there. They called activists in Oaxaca to confirm Yoguez Singu's story about his dogs.

Townpeople from San Jose del Pacifico denied Yoguez Singu's story. They said both of the dogs were still with them because Yoguez Singu had left without them. They also reportedly said he was the last person they saw with Sally before she disappeared.

When Yoguez Singu's friends confronted him about his lies, he reportedly confessed to them. His friends kept an eye on him while Oaxacan activists made the trip to Mexico City to obtain an arrest warrant.

When the arrest warrant was finalized, activists reportedly arranged to meet police in a supermarket to hand over Yoguez Singu. The AP reports that he was arrested on Wednesday, September 24.

Activists were quick to place Sally's murder in the context of rampant unchecked violence against women in Oaxaca. They note that aggressors are hardly ever punished for their crimes. "There is no justice in Oaxaca," said a spokesperson for the Popular Indigenous Council of Oaxaca – Ricardo Flores Magon (CIPO-RFM).

In my memories of Sally Grace, she looks just like the photograph of her that her friends published along with the communique denouncing that she was raped and murdered – laughing and smiling with a camera in her hand.

Sally told me she was a wanderer who had her strongest ties to Arizona. When she arrived in Oaxaca in the summer 2007 to help out local organizations in the popular struggle against Gov. Ulises Ruiz Ortiz, she published her photos, updates, and translations from the Popular Indigenous Council of Oaxaca and the APPO on Arizona Indymedia. When she went back to Arizona for a visit in March, she organized fundraising events and report-backs at which she showed photos and videos from the streets of Oaxaca and sold artisanry woven by CIPO women.

Sally's friends in numerous organizations say that she helped out wherever needed, be it painting banners or murals, performing Arabic dances, organizing punk shows to raise money for the organizations she supported, teaching women's self-defense classes, or translating and teaching English. She also served as an international human rights observer, accompanying activists who felt threatened by the government or paramilitaries in Oaxaca.

Most recently, Sally accompanied family members of a witness in the case of murdered Indymedia journalist Brad Will. She lived in their home and accompanied them as they went about their daily lives. However, a family member decided that the situation put Sally's life in danger, too. For example, the mysterious people following the family didn't leave them alone, even if Sally was around. So the woman encouraged Sally to go off with some friends who were uninvolved in the movement.

Sally and I met in Oaxaca during the November 2007 commemorations and protests that marked the anniversary of Brad Will's murder. We woke up early on the morning of the gathering that aimed to re-erect the barricades in the place where government agents shot Brad to death. Someone went out to check out the meeting spot. He came back pale.

"There's police there. They're masked and they're grabbing everyone who shows up. We can't go."

So we stayed hidden where we were, and Sally and I chatted about who we were and what we did. She talked about the neighborhood where she lived; she said it was dangerous because it was teeming with PRI members, supporters of the despised Gov. Ulises Ruiz Ortiz.

Hours later, Sally left with other compañeros and compañeras to participate in and take photos of a huge march called by the Section 22 teachers union and other APPO members. I stayed behind, using the excuse of other work that had to be done behind the

scenes. Sally came back hours later and got to work uploading her photos of the march to Arizona Indymedia and her Flickr album. She worked all night while we slept.

We stayed holed up where we were for a few days. When a friend and I decided that the situation on the streets had sufficiently cooled down, we decided to venture outside to run errands downtown and find a new place to stay. Knowing that tattoos, dark clothing and anything else "suspicious" would be more than enough reason to snatch us, we borrowed light clothing that covered our tattoos and bade farewell to Sally and the rest of the compañeros there. Then my friend and I walked out into the streets for the first time in days.

I knew that being a reporter in Mexico entailed risks. Mexico is, after all, the most dangerous country in the hemisphere to be a reporter, and second in the world only to Iraq.

This point was driven home when I was working in Sonora in late October 2006. I was covering a Day of the Dead celebration with Subcomandante Marcos when everyone's cell phones began to ring. Those of us who answered got the bad news: They'd killed a gringo Indymedia reporter in Oaxaca. His name was Brad Will.

Sally's raped and decaying body turned up in a cabin 20 minutes outside of San Jose del Pacifico. A neighbor noticed the smell and called the police.

According to the friend who identified the body, her face was unrecognizable: It was black as if it had been burned, and all of her hair was gone as if it had been ripped out. But Julieta Cruz recognized Sally's tattoos.

Sally's murder may have passed as yet another case of sexual violence, completely unrelated to her political work with some of the most persecuted organizations in Oaxaca. But Sally's friends in Oaxaca City know that she was being followed as a result of her human rights work and her associations with CIPO and other Oaxacan organizations for whom political violence is a daily fact of life.

While Sally's friends can't say for sure that her murder was politically motivated, they are certain that the government is not doing enough to seek justice in her case. A CIPO spokesperson says CIPO simply doesn't have the resources to thoroughly investigate the case, and the government won't share information with anybody who isn't family. Therefore, they have to resort to pressuring the government to do its job and investigate the murder of Sally Grace.

Sally was not by any means a central figure in Oaxacan activism. She was not an organizer. On the contrary, she did the only thing a foreign activist can do: She helped out here and there as she could. And through her translations and report-backs, she kept the lines of communication between the US and Oaxaca open. Long after international attention and outrage had fizzled in Oaxaca, Sally stayed and accompanied activists whose safety no longer mattered to the international community. She didn't protect them and she didn't get involved – she just watched and listened.

So why would someone take the trouble to follow and then brutally murder someone like Sally?

My friend Sister Dianna Ortiz was disappeared and tortured in Guatemala in 1989. Sister Dianna taught Spanish to indigenous children – hardly a revolutionary or insurgent undertaking. She hadn't been in Guatemala long before she was disappeared. But they chose her.

Years later in her memoirs, Sister Dianna notes that torture and political violence aren't just intended for the individuals who physically suffer a violent act. Torture and political violence are meant to terrorize an entire population. When the attackers grabbed Sister Dianna – probably one of the least prominent or powerful people in her mission, and one without any connection whatsoever to the resistance – they sent a message to everyone: No one is safe.

If they'd grabbed a priest, a bishop, a social leader, or an insurgent, everyone else would

have been able to explain it away, "Well, he was an insurgent, and she was a leader. I'm neither. I'm safe."

But when they grab someone who operates on the periphery, like Sister Dianna or Sally, they succeed in terrorizing everyone: foreigners, locals, leaders, rank and file, neighbors, activists, punks, journalists, women... No one is safe.

Brad Will died a martyr. He died on the job. He died in the streets during an uprising. He filmed his own murder. He died surrounded by compañeros and witnesses. Despite this and other damning evidence, the Mexican government still tries to explain away his murder. As if using his murder as justification for a violent police invasion of Oaxaca City weren't enough, the day Sally's body turned up the government announced that it will yet again seek arrest warrants for APPO members and supporters in relation to Brad Will's murder.

Sally, on the other hand, died in the worst way: scared, tormented and alone. There's no video or photographic evidence. There was no uprising providing an obvious motivation for murdering her. On the contrary, her murder leaves open the question of whether it was politically motivated or a random act of sexual violence. This could have been intentional on the part of her attacker or attackers to hide their true aims.

Shortly after publishing my article exposing the identities of the private contractors who led torture trainings for police in Leon, Guanajato, people followed me. It happened at least twice. The first time I was with a friend and the person drove off after a few blocks.

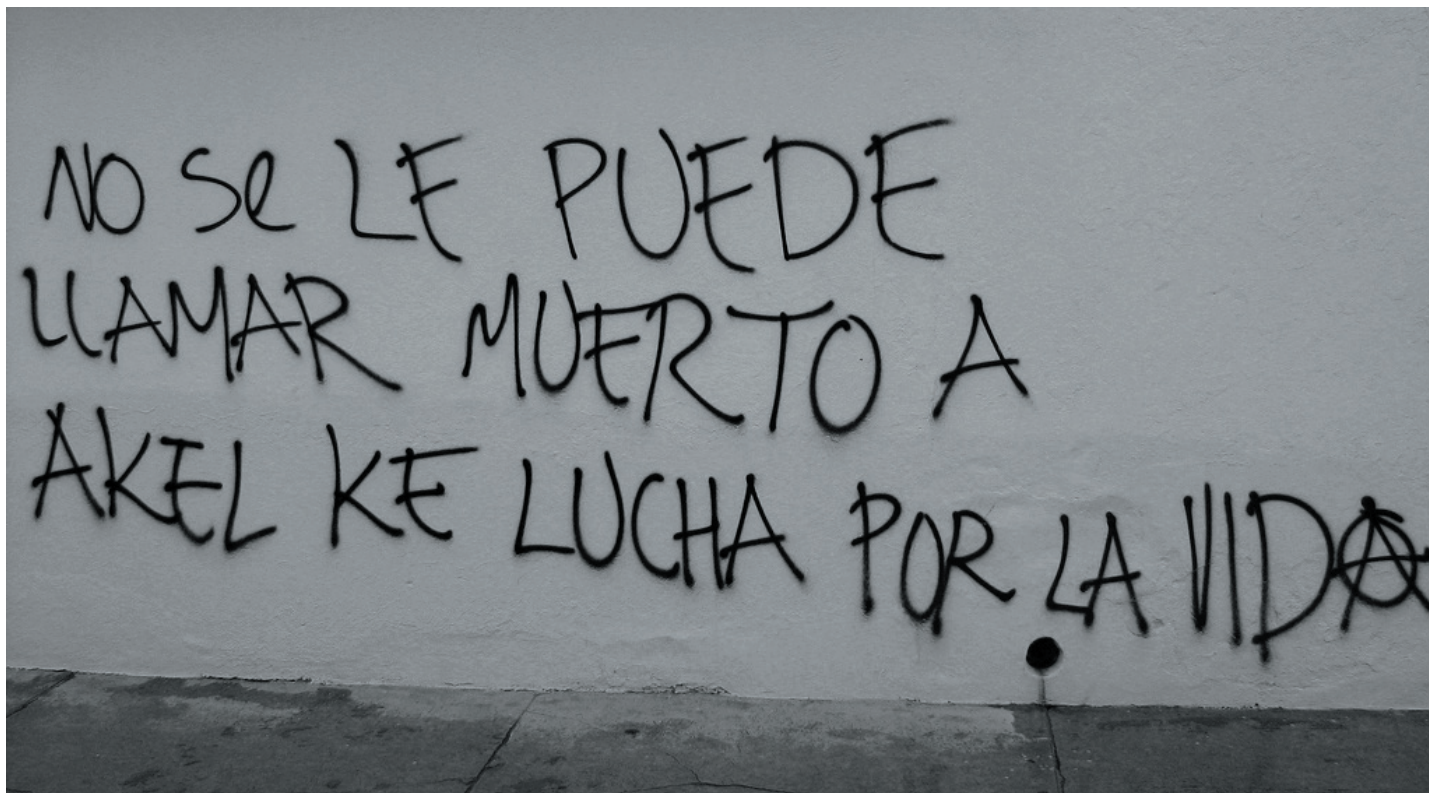
The second time I was alone. A gray pick-up started following me very slowly, keeping pace behind me as I walked. I stopped and asked him what he wanted. He didn't respond. He just stared. I kept walking.

After what seemed like forever, I stopped a second time. "What do you want?" I yelled in Spanish. He rolled down his window a bit. "Tell me what you want or leave me alone!" He just stared. "WHAT DO YOU WANT!" He stared.

I stomped off. He kept following. I called someone for help. My friend came out into the street. The gray pick-up drove off.

I never denounced it because I still don't know if the motivations behind it were political or perverted. That's the double-bind of being a female social fighter. We suffer violence as activists, and we suffer violence as women. The violence is almost always linked. But political violence can be used as a cover for sexual violence, and sexual violence is used as a cover for political violence. *

Sally had several friends in the Northeast, including members of the Nor'Easter collective. Members of Solidarity Without Borders also recently met Sally while in Oaxaca.



Graffiti in Oaxaca - "You cannot call those who struggle for life dead" Photo by Sally

Pandas on the Loose...

Continued from front

Costumes, masks, noise-makers and other popping panda paraphernalia were passed around. Also distributed were slips that instruct everyone to tune their stereos to 88.7 WPND, our panda pirate radio. Within seconds, dozens of pandas were doing the robot and breakdancing to the sound of dozens of concerted boomboxes in the same park where Emma Goldman rallied angry workers from a soapbox. Instead of a thunderous speech, Rick Ross's "Everyday I'm Hustling" incited the partying pandas' riotous dancing.

Hundreds of pandas dashed down the subway steps and over turn-styles onto the subway platform. Humans glared at us, both puzzled and afraid of the furry black-and-white creatures invading their territory. A lone subway rat asked us if we were planning a revolt. We exchanged nods with the rodent and commenced dancing to WPND after boarding a train headed to Brooklyn. For the first time, warm, perspiration-soaked bodies colliding is a celebrated event on a New York subway.

We leaked out of the subway terminal like vanilla/chocolate yogurt escaping from a Ziploc bag. The hipster haven of Williamsburg was flooded with at least three hundred joyous black-and-white mammals, pouring into the trafficked intersection of Bedford and N7.

We chose Williamsburg because it's presented as a young, vibrant and exciting neighborhood, but, in reality, it is a glorified prison-mall. Pandamonium upset the boring buying, selling and drinking rituals practiced every Saturday in the hipster shopping pen.

As we clogged the intersection, surprised patrons stumbled out of the manufactured dive bars to stare at the huge images of panda porn that we projected on the chic boutique walls. If they weren't immediately excited by the larger than life movies of panda sex, then the four hundred beers in tubs of ice strategically placed in middle of the street definitely sent everyone into a tizzy.

Pandas piled on each other to grab Miller Hi-Life as a PA attached to a bike cart circled the melee, playing the pirate radio station. A panda twirled ropes of fire around his body, and another panda climbed up stilts and waved down at onlookers.



Pandas prepare. Photo by Noel Hidalgo <http://flickr.com/photos/noneck/sets/72157606794350074/>

Sights, sounds, tastes – the street party smuggled the sensual back into the lives of those robbed by capitalism. The rhythmic rubbing of panda reproductive organs was the only gesture that could appropriately accompany the barrage of sensations. Jealous scientists were astounded that Pandamonium isolated the conditions necessary to excite pandas into finally mating outside of the wild.

The cops, behaving much like the zookeepers that policed our previous confines, arrived with hopes of stopping the rowdy pandas humping in the streets. The police arrested the panda riding the sound bike and a screaming into a megaphone. The pigs – the panda's only known prey – noticing only our cute and cuddly facade, failed to realize ferocity that lays dormant within us.

Beer cans were hurled at the piggies. Pandas built barricades with road blocks. The party snaked through Williamsburg, leaving newspaper boxes and trashcans sprawled in the street.

You can thank Pandas for turning Williamsburg into Paris '68. You're welcome. But, instead of "Never Work" scrawled on walls, simply "Panda" was spray painted in the Brooklyn streets. The furry animals threw everything their paws could grasp at police – everything from our stereos' DD batteries to Fourth of July sparklers became Parisian cobblestones to lob at the police.

Pandamonium's greatest success was that the dancing and partying continued for hours while simultaneously other Panda's clashed with police. The wholesome fun of the party seamlessly intertwined with the street skirmishes, making it a fine example of armed joy.

In New York City, where gentrification is making the city less and less hospitable for pandas and non-pandas alike, we forcefully took back the city from capitalist interest to suit our own desires, even if only for a few hours. Pandamonium marked the first time in a number of years in which collective conflict with the NYPD had a positive outcome.

Unlike the Reclaim the Streets street-party model, Pandamonium lacked overtly political messaging, and we think that attracted pandas of all kinds to join the festivities. More importantly, calming the political jargon confused police, who were dumbfounded as to why pandas were attacking them with protest tactics.

Throughout the night, their radios buzzed calls like "What the fuck is happening? Why the fuck are pandas building barricades on Kent Street?" Only toward the end did we distribute leaflets that explained aims for the street party. Although it took a lot of work, not many resources are needed to launch a similar party. To make your own Pandamonium with your friends, what's mostly needed is the element of surprise and a penchant for panda mayhem. #

Our hearts are full of sadness and rage because our sister Sali was brutally raped and murdered 20 minutes from San Jose del Pacifico and up to this moment the Oaxacan Attorney General's Office, as is its custom, is not doing anything regarding the fact that there exist witnesses who have information to identify those responsible.

In the face of these lamentable events,
WE DEMAND:

The immediate speeding up of the investigations.

The immediate clarification of the facts.

Punishment for the intellectual and material murderers.

Justice for our sister Marcella Sali Grace!

Enough is enough with of the murders, violence and hate against women who fight for justice!

We ask you to sign on to this demand for justice and to become a part of the urgent activities to demand the clarification of these cowardly acts. Email rebeldiasentrelazadas@yahoo.com

<http://www.sali-ratty.weebly.com/>

Marcella "Sally" Grace Eiler

9.30.87-9.15.08



Kirsten Brydum

San Francisco Bay
Area Independent Media
Center September 30, 2008

1.22.83-9.27.08

Close friends report that the body of San Francisco activist Kirsten Brydum was found Saturday in New Orleans, where Kirsten had traveled as part of a popular education tour. Kirsten was known locally as an organizer of the Really Really Free Market in Dolores Park, a monthly gathering to freely exchange goods and services with no money, trade or barter.

According to press reports, Kirsten was fatally shot several times in the head. New Orleans police say they are awaiting a report from the coroner, who has not yet released information about the death.

<http://kirstenbrydum.virtual-memorials.com/>

<http://ryanishungry.com/2008/10/01/kirsten-brydum-rest-in-peace/>



APOC cont'd from page 4

"We have to find connections with other folks, and white people, because we can do things in our community but to deal with larger issues we have to unite with others."

"We all probably have different ideas of what the 'A' in APOC is. Saying people of color also generalizes and erases differences and individual identities."

"It's interesting that some POCs see the 'A' as a symbol for autonomy or anti-authoritarian."

"I don't like the term 'people of color' and think we should move away from that. I don't think we should identify as POC only because of our relationship to white supremacy. We should find strategic alliances, find issues to unite around."

"Another difference is the issue of national liberation struggles and the history with that. White anarchism dismisses and turns their back on this".

"We can try to change the 'APOC' term, but it has been a flashpoint; people are drawn to it, and we can have the discussions trying to change it, but it is drawing folks to it. It's not just about folks coming from the white movement or punk movement,

people come into it from the community."

This discussion closed with the commitment that, while points of view vary on building solidarity with white comrades and also vary with the use of the term "APOC," these varying opinions are to be respected and should never be allowed as a tool for the oppressor to use in creating splits or fractures within the APOC movement.

Other conversations at the gatherings addressed accountability within APOC as far as calling out negative behaviors such as homophobia, male body privilege and sexism, as well as classist and elitist behavior. All told, both gatherings have created a new energy in a time when it is most needed in regard to the creeping fascism and police state that we exist in here in the US. Other regional conferences scheduled to take place throughout the country before the 2009 National APOC Conference are sure to throw a monkey wrench in the works where and when it is most needed: Right here, right now. ✱

Marlena Gangi is an anarchist educator, activist and photojournalist. She is currently the editor of The Portland Alliance.

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Collective Autonomy

Groups & Contacts

Some highlights from the Northeast region
(more at www.collectiveautonomy.net):

I. New York City

A. 123 Community Space – Bed Stuy, Brooklyn. Community center and infoshop. Formed by four grassroots organizations: In Our Hearts, Freegan Bike Workshop, Misled Youth Network and Anarchist Black Cross. Programs: Garden work parties, silkscreening printshop, letter writing to prisoners, bike repair, Picture This! (Kid's photography project).

B. Rock Dove Collective – radical health, access to healthcare and accountability. Developing an Alternative Provider Network.

C. Freegan.info – Web site and collective describing "freegan" theory and encouraging "freegan" practice. Aims at providing food, bikes and clothes to the activist community. Hosts a full calendar of events every month.

II. Philadelphia

A. Borrowed Time – Sober, smoke-free arts and events space. Free store, movies, meetings, art shows, potlucks, board games, costume parties, skillshares and more.

B. Philadelphia Childcare Collective – Providing free childcare, as a political act, to parents at ongoing meetings and events

C. The Divine Bicycle Church – Bike repair co-op. Tools, advice and recycled parts available.

D. Mill Creek Farm – Volunteer-run urban farm. Makes fresh, local, organic produce available to low-income and senior residents of the neighborhood by keeping their prices competitive and through programs like EBT and other welfare-like coupons.

III. Providence

A. South Side Community Land Trust City Farm

B. The Dirt Palace – All-women artist collective, owned by two collective members; located in Olneyville. Only public facility is the silkscreening lab. Film animation studio, music room, sewing room, library, beautiful kitchen. Hosts Books Through Bars.

C. FoodNotBombs – Serves Sundays 1-4 in Armory Park, in need of more volunteers.

IV. Boston

A. Lucy Parsons Center – Radical Bookstore, Infoshop and Meeting space. Hosts a calendar of events.

B. Alton Brighton Neighborhood Assembly – Local community self-governing; organizing Really Really Free Markets.