

The Nor*eastern

THE OFFICIAL QUARTERLY OF THE
• NORTHEAST ANARCHIST NETWORK •

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 among 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.

A Close Look at the Greek Insurrection

By JAKE CARMAN

On Dec. 6, the murder of 15-year-old anarchist Alexandros Grigoropoulos by the Athens Police sparked a broad social uprising that has raged ever since.

Greece had already been a heavily polarized country, as Nick, a Greek anarchist, told the Boston Anti-Authoritarian Movement. On one side, anarchists strongly influence workers and youth, maintaining entire "free neighborhoods," such as Exarcheia in Athens, where Alexandros was shot. On the other side, there is the far right-wing government, and police – including the one who shot Alexandros – who are often members or supporters of fascist organizations like Golden Dawn. Decades of unrest, conflict and direct action set the stage for the drama that is now unfolding.

The incident that unleashed the insurgency occurred when Greek Special Forces entered the "free neighborhood" of

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Police on fire.

Oakland on Fire:

Anarchists, Solidarity and New Possibilities in the Oakland Rebellion

Originally published on Counterpunch.org

By KARA N. TINA

"I'm sorry my car was burned but the issue is very upsetting."

—Ken Epstein, assistant editor of the Oakland Post, who was finishing an article about Grant's death, watched from the 12th story of his office at 14th and Franklin streets as his 2002 Honda CR-V disintegrated in a roar of flames (Oakland Tribune).

The murder of Oscar Grant by Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) police officer Johannes Mehserle early New Year's morning sent a wave of grief throughout the Bay Area and reminded all that racism and police violence continue to be endemic components of US society. During the following days, that pain transformed into overflowing anger as multiple videos of the execution recorded by witnesses emerged on the Internet and in the media.

One week later on Jan. 7, over a thousand people from diverse communities across Oakland and the Bay Area gathered to show their anger and be in the presence of others feeling similar grief. This hastily planned rally shut down the Fruitvale BART station where the shooting took place, as speaker after speaker addressed the crowd. Without any plan or organization, the vast majority of those who patiently listened to speakers for over two hours took the demonstration into the streets with a spirited march that made its way toward downtown as the sun set.

As the march reached the Lake Merritt BART station and headquarters of BART police downtown, clashes immediately broke out, leaving one police cruiser destroyed alongside a burning dumpster. Marchers dispersed down side streets to the sounds of police weapons discharging and the sting of tear gas in the air. The following hours witnessed waves of rioting and demonstrations throughout downtown Oakland that even forced Mayor Ron Dellums to come out into the streets

and promise the opening of a homicide investigation in a failed attempt to subdue the angry crowds. Hundreds of businesses and cars were damaged or destroyed, and dumpsters were left burning. The next day, a BART board of directors meeting was filled beyond capacity and overwhelmed with community members expressing indignant rage, clearly feeling validated and empowered to speak up by the previous night's rebellion.

In the days since the unrest, rumors have begun to circulate that anarchists hijacked the otherwise peaceful event and were responsible for unleashing the "violence." A cover story in the *San Francisco Chronicle* two days after the rioting quoted an organizer of the Fruitvale rally as saying that he was led to tears when his work was "destroyed by a group of anarchists." This dangerous and misleading narrative obscures what actually transpired and why, on that evening, the streets of Oakland unleashed such a powerful show of resistance and solidarity that gave many an empowering glimpse of radical new possibilities.

It is true that anarchists were present from start to finish on Wednesday. Counter to some generalizations that assume all anarchists are white, those who were there on Wednesday come from diverse backgrounds. They participated in a wide variety of ways; from spreading the word about the rally beforehand in order to have a large turnout, to spending hours painting banners and signs, to engaging in militant street actions, to being rounded up and at times beaten and arrested. Anarchists are among the over 100 community members who now face charges ranging from misdemeanor rioting to different felonies.

African-American youth made up the majority of those involved in the actions along with sizable numbers of anarchists, as well as other youth of color and activist folk who were all there side by side. During the rioting, there was a sense

JUSTICE for Oscar Grant!
JUSTICE FOR Gaza!



End Government Sponsored
Murder in the Ghettos of
Oakland and Palestine

DignidadRebelde.com

of unity in the air and a defiant mood of solidarity among all who faced off against the police. Anarchists tend to show up at all demonstrations prepared to act should the situation escalate, and this case was no different. Yet, it is simply incorrect to suggest that there was some conspiracy of anarchists from the "outside" who were able to manipulate the helpless youth of Oakland as part of their sinister agenda. This is a paternalistic and disempowering misreading of what was unquestionably a spontaneous outpouring of rage, led by youth of color, creating an extremely empowering moment for participants in the streets. There, temporary alliances were made as those who were motivated to act in the moment experienced a unique cross-pollination that cut across the inhibiting social boundaries of everyday life.

The allegations of an anarchist takeover are destructively misleading. At best they come from ignorance and at worst they represent a flawed and divisive ideology of social change that embodies paternalistic and racist assumptions about those involved in the actions. Scapegoating anarchists for what transpired robs from marginalized and oppressed youth of color the agency they possess and the power to

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Sea Bandits: Poverty, Business and the Rise of Somali Piracy

By DAVID ZLUTNICK
OF THE FRIENDLY FIRE COLLECTIVE

*An expanded version of this article is available at:
www.friendlyfirecollective.info/seabandits*

Stories of Somali piracy abound lately as a sharp increase in attacks in the Gulf of Aden have caused a crisis in the shipping industry and an international naval mobilization. At this writing, several ships and over 200 crewmembers are being held by pirates, including a Saudi oil tanker containing two million barrels of oil and a Ukrainian cargo ship loaded with weaponry. This year there have been over 120 acts of piracy in the Gulf of Aden, compared to only 37 during all of 2007. In response, warships from a host of countries are patrolling the area, so far without much success.



Somali pirates on a mission.

Many questions arise: What are the reasons for this huge increase in piracy? Why such alarm in the media when the military response has been generally restrained? What is at stake economically and politically? And, the unasked question, what is at stake for Somalia and its people?

Somalia

A study of Somali piracy must begin with some context. Somalia has been a failed state without a central authority

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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 toward 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.

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JAN. 15, 2009 – Members of the Nor'easter Collective are infuriated by the reckless loss of life in the Gaza Strip and Israel in this most recent explosion of fighting. We condemn the actions of Israel toward the Gaza Strip. We stand in solidarity with Palestinians as they struggle against their occupiers, as well as with Israelis who demand that their country cease its violence against Palestine. We oppose the capitalist media's unbalanced sympathy toward Israel. This battle is not equal; we are seeing one of the world's most advanced and well-funded military forces, with the financial and technical support of the United States, continue to try to crush a people's will to

exist. Its actions and statements show that it is intent on not just terrorism, but also the complete elimination of the Palestinian people. This current outbreak of violence is within a history of attempted genocide, and in some ways, one that is ironically and frighteningly similar to the Holocaust.

Moreover, it is coming at an enormous cost. The numbers of those killed are astounding evidence of the power imbalance – less than two-dozen Israelis and over 1,000 Palestinians. Gaza continues to experience shortages of food, fuel and medical supplies. Yet somehow, the United States government deems Israel the victim of terrorism.

We cannot even conceive of the terror that every Palestinian experiences every day under Israel's occupation.

We do not aim to oversimplify this complex war, but it is fundamentally a relationship of domination and oppression by Israel over Palestine. While we do not take the deaths of the Israeli civilians lightly, we will excuse neither the catastrophically larger Palestinian death toll nor the multitude of pro-Israel apologists. As anarchists, we stand with all those who struggle for freedom from oppression.

The Nor'easter

Blurbs

Earth First! Won't Put Everglades Second

INDIANTOWN, Fla. –

On Jan. 10, local police arrested 17 Earth First! activists after six of those activists entered the Barley Barber Swamp illegally and chained themselves to trees, demanding that the swamp be opened to the public. Police scooped up 11 other protesters for trespassing in a place that they had mistaken for public property.

Barley Barber Swamp is a fragile ecosystem, home to thousand-year-old cypress trees. Florida Power and Light (FPL) has been systematically sucking the swamp's water to cool their plant, leaving the trees' roots exposed and rotting. The Earth First!ers want FPL to allow scientists to monitor the condition of the swamp and its trees.

The 17 activists at Martin County Jail have a bail set at \$18,000. Everglades Earth First! is currently collecting donations for this cause. Visit: www.evergladesearthfirst.org



A Rage from Below

MEXICO CITY & CHIAPAS, MEXICO – Jan. 1, 2009 signified 25 years since six individuals entered the Selva Lacandona to form the EZLN; 15 years since the Zapatista Army for National Liberation emerged from the jungles of Chiapas, declaring a war against forgetting; five years since the birth of the Caracoles and Juntas de Buen Gobierno; and three years of the Other Campaign and Zetza Internacional.

In commemoration of these dates, the Indigenous Revolutionary Clandestine Committee of the EZLN called for the First Global Festival of Dignified Rage (*el Primero Festival Mundial de la Digna Rabia*) to take place in Mexico City, San Cristóbal de las Casas and the Caracol of Oventik from Dec. 26 to Jan. 5. Participants shared experience, music, dance and ideas of an Other World and Other Path, below and to the left.

Among those invited were members of Movement for Justice in El Barrio (MJB), from la Otra Nueva York. Coming off a recent victory against Dawnay, Day Group (the London-based corporation pushing gentrification in East Harlem), members traveled from East Harlem to attend the festival and share their struggle and path of Zapatismo Urbano.

Ungdomshuset Blir! (The Youth House Lives!)

COPENHAGEN, DENMARK – On Dec. 22, 2008, two years after riots first broke out in defense of *Ungdomshuset* (the Youth House), 15 activists were convicted of possessing unlawful weapons and preparing to assault police officers at the March 2007 eviction riots. These charges were evidenced by fireworks and Molotov cocktails found at the site.

Eleven of those convicted were sentenced to one year and three months in prison, while three others were sentenced to one year. The remaining youth, who was under 16 at the time of the arrest, was given a nine-month sentence.

Twenty-four years before the eviction, the city of Copenhagen gave the building to a group of anarchists to use as a social center. In 1999, the city resold *Ungdomshuset* to the right-wing Christian group *Faderhuset* (the Father's House) despite the fact that it was no longer theirs to sell. This move precipitated legal action and eventually protests and riots in defense of the building in 2006. *Ungdomshuset* had been on lockdown from December 2006 to March 1, 2007 when police used a helicopter to enter the building from the roof, evacuate it and finally demolish it on March 5.

Faderhuset had intended on making the former social center their headquarters. Today the lot still sits empty.

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National & International

The Republic Workers Remind Us That Direct Action Gets the Goods

By JAKE CARMAN

At a time when Big Business gets big government bailouts but workers are laid off and tenants and homeowners are evicted, the employees of the Republic Windows and Doors factory in Chicago have taken matters into their own hands. And they have won.

On Dec. 5, following the announcement that the factory of 300 employees would close in three days, 250 of those workers began a sit-down strike; a move that could catalyze a working-class renaissance of resistance in the United States.

Republic CEO Rich Gillman had informed the workers that although Bank of America recently received a \$25 billion bailout, it was pulling its loan from the factory. As a result, Gillman gave his employees three days notice of Republic's closure – well short of the 60 days notice required by federal law.

Facing the grim prospect of joining countless others in the unemployment line, the workers – members of the United Electrical Workers (UE) Local 1110 – refused to leave. The occupation lasted five days and quickly earned attention from the media, politicians and others, shaming Bank of America back to the bargaining table.

The well-known activist Reverend Jesse Jackson brought food to the workers, saying, “These workers are to this struggle perhaps what Rosa Parks was to social justice 50 years ago...This, in many ways, is the beginning of a larger movement for mass action to resist economic violence.”

Then-president-elect Barack Obama also offered his support.



Supporters of United Electrical Local 1110 picketing outside the Chicago factory.

“When it comes to the situation here in Chicago,” he said, “with the workers who are asking for their benefits and payments they have earned, I think they are absolutely right...what's happening to them is reflective of what's happening across this economy.”

On Dec. 9, Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich announced that his state's government would boycott Bank of America until the loan to Republic was reinstated. The next morning, however, the FBI arrested Blagojevich for alleged corruption. As a result, media attention shifted from the Republic factory to the Governor's arrest, and all the cars on the street outside of the factory were towed. The workers inside then issued a call for support, fearing a raid on their plant. The raid, however, never came.

The politicians and corporate media were not the only ones paying attention. According to Giuseppe, an eyewitness to the occupation who preferred to use just his first name, “There is definitely an increased sense of class consciousness...other workers have been inspired.” He also said that the mainstream unions, who previously shunned the UE, have pledged to use similar tactics, and Republic workers have vowed to offer the same kind of solidarity

and support that they received to others struggling in the future.

After only five days of occupation, media attention and the resulting public outcry, Bank of America agreed to reinstate some of their loan, along with \$400,000 from JP Morgan Chase. According to the Chicago Independent Media Center, “Late Wednesday night...more than 200 workers and members of UE Local 1110 voted unanimously to accept a \$1.75 million settlement that includes eight weeks of back pay, two months of continued health coverage and compensation for unused vacation time.”

“We fought to make them pay what they owe us, and we won,” said Local 1110 representatives.

Republic has stated that it will not reopen the plant, and neither will its landlord, the Mars candy corporation. The union, according to Giuseppe, “has created the ‘Windows of Opportunities Fund’ to raise the money to buy the factory, which would make it essentially worker-managed. There hasn't been discussion about what that would look like.”

As Boston City Councilor Chuck Turner said in an interview, “The workers in Chicago are showing us the way...We see them stand up and [we] say ‘If them, why



not us?’ That's the nature of evolutionary/revolutionary change.”

Like the Chicago workers who led the 1880s movement that won the eight-hour day, the workers of the Republic Windows and Doors factory are an example for the rest of us. The government is willing to use our tax dollars to help the richest CEOs keep their companies, but when it comes to defending what is ours – our jobs, our homes, our communities and our futures – the only way to win is to band together and fight back.

“They want the poor person to stay down.” Silvia Mazon, 47, told the *New York Times*. Mazon is a formerly apolitical mother and worker at the factory for 13 years. “We're here, and we're not going anywhere until we get what's fair and what's ours. They thought they would get rid of us easily,” she said, “but if we have to be here for Christmas, it doesn't matter.”

Less than a month after the victory, UE Local 1110 announced that Serious Materials had worked out an agreement to purchase the company's assets. The California-based company – the leader in the green window business – has said that it hopes to eventually hire all of the former Republic workforce, according to a UE press release. *

Oscar Grant from page 1

resist that they demonstrated that evening. It also ignores the remarkable diversity and unique solidarity in the streets that created a liberating experience far beyond any rally or march.

There were some moments during which individual anarchists attempted to influence the course of events, but these instances still do not fit into the narrative that the corporate media and some organizers have tried to tell. At one point, a group of black youth smashing the windows of a locally owned business were encouraged to target large corporations and banks instead of “mom and pop” shops. They proceeded to do just that. Anarchists also un-arrested youth and encouraged people to push dumpsters and other objects into the streets to prevent the police from advancing, a tactic that was quickly picked up and utilized. Other examples of this type of interchange

involved anarchists encouraging youth participating in the riots to wear bandanas over their faces, change clothes during calm moments, and other tactics to help avoid arrest or identification. Without question, the exchange went both ways as anarchists took away valuable lessons in mobility, evasion and more as they worked together with the youth throughout the night.

None of this, however, suggests that anarchists had some sort of control or single-handedly determined the events that transpired. The rage and energy that transformed downtown Oakland into a momentary battlefield came from those who are most directly affected by the racist police-state regime. No one group had any control over what unfolded. It was a spontaneous rebellion that sprang organically from the streets of Oakland and, in retrospect, anarchists played an important yet relatively minor role.

The property destruction and rage that burned throughout downtown Oakland was at times undirected and ended up damaging many small businesses and cars along with corporate targets such as Sears and McDonald's. However, some of the most powerful moments that paralleled the destruction were confrontations with police and spontaneous high-energy gatherings of people in the street who refused to be dispersed. It was during these moments that chanting would again erupt from the crowd, reminding all who were present that the direct political demands of justice for Oscar Grant and active resistance to the racist police-state system in the United States were the motivations of all who took to the streets that evening.

It's important to also remember that not one person was assaulted during the actions and there were no reports of fights or scuffles among the groups of youth who resisted police and destroyed property into the night. In this sense, the rebellion was not violent. It is disturbing to watch as fellow organizers and members of our communities have uncritically adopted the rhetoric of the right in their confused denunciation of mass property destruction as “violence.”

On the other hand, the Oakland Police Department, who every day harass, intimidate and beat Oakland's youth, was unleashing its very real violence that night. Police opened fire on crowds with different types of “less lethal” projectiles and in some cases shot tear gas canisters directly into people's bodies. A Berkeley High teacher had his face bashed during arrest and spent the night in the hospital before being taken back downtown for booking. A man taking pictures was attacked by police and his bike helmet was cracked as he was beaten.

During the mass arrest at the end of the night, 80 people were forced by police to lie on their stomachs at 20th and Broadway, including a very pregnant woman who was screaming in pain.

What manifested during the Oakland rebellion was a moment of interchange and revolutionary transformation that rarely happens within the rituals of left organizing in the Bay Area. Between white “community organizers” overtaken by guilt into an impotent politics of servitude, professional activists worried about annual reports and grant cycles, and vanguardist Marxist sects continually looking to use the next demonstration as a recruiting drive, many radicals find themselves in a desert devoid of revolutionary activity and thought. Within this barren landscape, it is rare to find new possibilities for radical social change while combating racism and the constant oppression of capitalism. Resisting the police shoulder to shoulder, destroying property (albeit with different emphasis), helping one another evade arrest, exchanging tactics and gestures of solidarity across racial barriers pushes the desire for a multi-racial revolutionary movement years ahead, more than any speaker at a rally ever could.

Anarchists are very accustomed to accusations of spoiling carefully managed demonstrations, and in some cases this is true and necessary. The Oakland rebellion was a different story. Those who are truly committed to revolutionary change in this country need to appreciate the significance of what unfolded in the streets that night and move forward without falling into the usual sectarian traps. *

This analysis was written collaboratively by a group of anarchists based out of Oakland who together were present at all moments during the rebellion.



Oakland police through the haze of tear gas after riots in response to the death of Oscar Grant.

Somalia from page 1

since 1991. Factionalism between rival clans, warlords and secessionist movements has created a desperate situation. The exception was the rise of the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) through most of the country, taking control and establishing a tenuous peace more or less welcomed by the general population. The UIC held power for only six months before being ousted by a US-backed Ethiopian invasion in 2006. The invasion backed the weak but internationally recognized Transitional Federal Government (TFG), a loose coalition of rival clan warlords plagued by infighting and power-grabs.

Two years later, however, the more radical segments of the UIC are engaged in an insurgency against the TFG and its Ethiopian backers, the latter of whom are withdrawing their forces in early January. The UIC has proven fairly successful. Insurgents again control most of the country, leaving only the cities of Mogadishu and Baidoa in the hands of the government.

Who and Why?

The instability in Somalia has had tragic effects. The UN's World Food Program, which expected to feed 3.6 million of the country's 6 million inhabitants by the end of 2008, is calling it "the worst humanitarian crisis" in the region in decades. With essentially no economy – meaning no livelihood for many – piracy has arisen as a profitable and worthwhile occupation.

Somali piracy is based primarily out of Puntland, an autonomous region on Somalia's northern tip. Puntland was once home to many fishing villages, but following the collapse of the central government in 1991, the coast was left unguarded. The result has been overfishing and dumping of hazardous waste in the unregulated waterways. The waters that the populace have counted on for survival for generations are now unfishable.

In interviews, the Somali pirates have rejected the notion that they are criminals. "We don't consider ourselves sea bandits," Sugale Ali told the *New York Times*, speaking from the deck of the hijacked MV Faina. "We consider sea bandits those who illegally fish in our seas and dump waste in our seas and carry weapons in our seas. We are simply patrolling our seas. Think of us like a coast guard." Sugale's group and others claim that ransoms for hijacked ships serve as a replacement for taxes, licensing fees and reparations for fishing and waste disposal. "We don't see hijacking as a criminal act but as a road tax because we have no central government to control our sea," said Asad Abdulahi, a pirate interviewed by *The Guardian*.

Piracy is generally supported by local communities, as well as some members of the government, largely due to the economic stimulus generated by pirate boomtowns along the Puntland coastline. Money is now pouring in from ransoms, creating new restaurants, bars, construction projects and even employing people to act as the pirates' accountants and negotiators.

The Economic Cost of Piracy

The number of ships attacked in the Gulf of Aden has increased significantly over the past year, and so has the rhetoric of governments and international bodies. But why? What is the real or perceived threat to these institutions from Somali piracy?

Interestingly, global piracy has dropped slightly over the past several years. There were 199 acts of piracy around the world in 2008 from January through September, 63 of which were in the Gulf of Aden or Somali coastal waters, according to the International Maritime Bureau (IMB). In 2004, the number was 251 during the same period, with only six in the highlighted area and the majority occurring in Southeast Asia. Outside Somalia there has actually been a decrease in piracy of almost 45 percent. While these numbers do show a steep rise in piracy in Somalia, why is it perturbing

global governments in a way that piracy in Southeast Asia never did?

Economics and geopolitics are the primary factor. Somalia finds itself situated in one of the world's busiest shipping lanes. Ships leaving the Mediterranean Sea to reach Asia have to pass through the Gulf of Aden to avoid the much longer trip around the Cape of Good Hope. Twenty-one thousand ships pass through this waterway annually.

The actual impact of the pirates is minimal – in the first nine months of 2008 there were only 199 pirate attacks out of a world trading fleet of 50,525 ships. Yet the capture of a Saudi oil tanker, the *Sirius Star*, worth \$250 million in total, and the attempted attack on a luxury cruise liner in early December, have contributed to a significant reaction by the shipping industry. Talk among the big companies is about rerouting around the Cape of Good Hope, which can add two to three weeks to travel time and cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. The alternative is to withstand the relatively low risk of attack by pirates – although serious in terms of human risk and monetary loss – and pay the ever-growing price of insurance to travel through the Gulf, which in some cases is ten times what it was a year ago.

Pirates vs. Islamists vs. World

Besides economic concerns, politics is prompting governments to respond. Who will rule Somalia, and whose side will they be on? What role will the pirates play?

Soon after the *Sirius Star* was captured, word came that al-Shabab, the radical wing of the Union of Islamic Courts, was displeased and sending its militia. "Saudi Arabia is a Muslim country and hijacking its ship is a bigger crime than other ships," a spokesperson, Sheikh Abdirahim Isse Adow, told Reuters. Under Sharia law, piracy is punishable by death. According to reports from Michelle Lynn Ballarin, a contractor involved in the negotiations, the pirates' demands include that they are not offloaded in Somalia, where the Islamist militias await.

During the months of UIC rule, piracy was severely diminished, as the Islamists made sure arms and money stayed under their authority. However, the invasion that took the UIC from power allowed piracy to flourish in an even less stable setting. The invasion also splintered the UIC, with the radical Islamist militias, in particular al-Shabab, coming out on top. While the dispute between pirate groups and the Islamists continues, as evidenced by the reaction to the *Sirius Star*, many now allege collusion between the two.

The allegations include pirates transporting arms and foreign fighters into Somalia, and training the Islamists in naval tactics. The real fear for governments the world over, however, is what happens to the massive resources gained through piracy. Millions of unregulated dollars could tip the balance of power in real terms, as could material gains such as the large arms shipment, including 33 tanks currently being held on the *MV Faina*. Thus, five US Navy ships, as well as a Russian frigate, according to reports, are surrounding the hijacked ship. "Our concern is right now making sure that this cargo does not end up in the hands of anyone who would use it in a way that would be destabilizing to the region," said Geoff Morell, the Pentagon press secretary.

"Anyone" presumably means in particular the UIC. But the pirates claim that they have no plans to aid the Islamists, especially with weapons. Sugale Ali told the *New York Times*, "Somalia has suffered from many years of destruction because of all these weapons. We don't want that suffering and chaos to continue. We are not going to offload the weapons. We just want the money."

And many analysts, such as Richard Cornwell at the Institute for Security Studies, say the evidence of pirate/Islamist links is thin – although not nonexistent – and the best chance at fighting piracy is the



Above: Somali pirates on the job.

Right: Somali pirates wielding guns.

reestablishment of Islamist control. "The last thing the Islamists want to do is give an unnecessary provocation to the major powers, who might come after them in a big way," Cornwell says. "What experience tells us is that if the Islamists did take control of Somalia, piracy would stop overnight." This fits with al-Shabab's public statements. Spokesperson Hassan Yacub has made it clear that an Islamist administration in Somalia would ensure security in the waters off its coast. Governments are thus forced to choose between piracy and the Islamists.

The World Responds

The response to the pirates by the international community has been fairly restrained. International naval deployments followed the hijacking of the *MV Faina*. The US Navy sent its Fifth Fleet, along with NATO and EU forces, as well as ships from a handful of other states. So far they have had little success. Under their watch, several more ships have been hijacked, including the *Sirius Star*, and others continue to be held for ransom.

Despite having AK-47s, RPGs and no fear of punishment, the Somali pirates have yet to kill any of their captives. "Killing is not in our plans," said Sugale Ali. We only want money so we can protect ourselves from hunger." The pirates have been relatively kind to hostages, according to released sailors. After French commandos recaptured a yacht in April, it was reported they had found a pirates' "good conduct guide" with rules for treatment of hostages. There has even been some friendly interaction between the pirates and sailors during the long waits for ransom money. So far, the only casualties of piracy in the Gulf of Aden have been pirates and fourteen Thai fisherman mistakenly killed by the Indian navy.

The international response has been complicated by differences in individual nations' laws regarding piracy. The US, for example, has a law that targets pirates, but it only applies to attacks against US-flagged vessels, of which there were only four in 2008.

The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea allows military actions against pirates, but first an officer has to board and inspect the ship in question, an unlikely event in a pirate hunt. UN Resolution 1816 allows anti-pirate operations in Somali waters with permission from the government. But even if the TFG allows it, it's barely arguable that it has authority to grant such permission.

In October, UN Resolution 1838 was passed to temporarily authorize the use of force to stop piracy in international waters, but states aren't necessarily eager to send their navies to hunt pirates. With over 1.1 million square miles of water in the Gulf of Aden and the navies of the US and UK bogged down in other operations, sending warships to scour the sea for pirates isn't a priority. Militaries are now openly prescribing a different solution.



Piracy Stimulates the Economy

In 2005, the TFG in Somalia attempted to hire a private security firm, Top Cat Marine, to fight the pirates for \$50 million. But the deal fell through after scandals surfaced surrounding the US company's CEO Peter Casini, as well as ties to Sandline International, a former mercenary company all too connected to many of Africa's messy conflicts throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. A French company, Scopex, reportedly won the deal to take Top Cat's place in June, but it now appears to be up in the air.

Centuries ago, governments would often hire mercenaries to fight piracy. This option is again being pushed by governments as an alternative to committing their navies. Vice Adm. William E. Gortney, commander of the fleet now patrolling Somali waters, said his forces are over-extended and is urging the shipping industry to hire private security firms. "The coalition does not have the resources to provide 24-hour protection for the vast number of merchant vessels in the region," Gortney told Reuters. "The shipping companies must take measures to defend their vessels and their crews." The Royal Navy's senior commander, Commodore Keith Winstanley, has also said they recommend shipping companies hire armed guards.

With security teams costing up to \$60,000 per trip, this may sound like a lucrative opportunity. Contractors are found throughout the anti-piracy industry, from negotiators to ransom-drop teams to security. And where there's money to be made from conflict, there's Blackwater Worldwide. Blackwater is steaming into the Gulf of Aden on their new 183 foot ship, the *MacArthur*, which carries two helicopters, inflatable assault ships, 15 crew persons and 35 armed guards. "As a company founded and run by former Navy SEALs, with a 50,000-person database of former military and law enforcement professionals," a press statement said, "Blackwater is uniquely positioned to assist the shipping industry."

Other private security firms, however, aren't thrilled with Blackwater's approach. Former British Army pilot Nick Davis runs Anti-Piracy Maritime Security Solutions (APMSS), specializing in non-lethal security using high-tech audio equipment. The sound causes terrible pain within two or three hundred yards and, combined with evasive maneuvers, barbed wire, grease, etc., prevents pirate attack. Davis told Salon.com that he is "filled with dread" at the prospect of Blackwater deploying to the Gulf. "The pirates are not aggressive," he says. "It's a very, very difficult and sensitive issue with

Continued on page 5

Rising Tide Boston to Bank of America: We're Still Breaking Up with You!

By ALYSHA SULEY

Rising Tide Boston is part of a network of groups and individuals working to confront the root causes of climate change by promoting local, community-based solutions. We recognize that in order to confront the climate crisis, we must first expose the intersections between the oppression of humans and the exploitation of the earth.

In conjunction with the growing national movement against the coal industry and coal investment, as well as other struggles, Rising Tide Boston has kept the pressure on Bank of America. In the span of five weeks, we held three separate actions utilizing protest, street theater, satire and civil disobedience at Citibank and Bank of America locations in Boston. Rising Tide Boston has announced its intentions to continue pressuring Bank of America to drop its support of and involvement in the coal industry by publicly “breaking up” with the bank this Valentine’s Day.

On Oct. 7, Rising Tide Boston, Rainforest Action Network (RAN) and City Life/Vida Urbana, a well established tenants’ rights organization in Boston, held a rally at Bank of America in Harvard Square. The message to the banks was “Not With Our Money” should they continue to fund coal or continue their ongoing evictions in our community. We then marched around the corner to where four climate justice activists had locked themselves to Citibank’s front doors. This action sparked a “Not With Our Money” mantra across the US at bank protests and formed a strong bond of solidarity between climate justice and social justice movements and organizations in Boston.

On Halloween, a crowd of “zombies” visited several Bank of America and Citibank locations to remind them that “coal is killing us.” Although police and security officials frowned upon the mass of undead, the Boston community showed strong support.

Then, as part of a National Day of Action against coal financing, Rising Tide Boston set up “Green Coal” marketing tables outside branches of Bank of America and Citibank. We handed out free gifts of “clean coal” to passersby expressing interest in helping to fund climate change, and to those patrons of the banks who said they



Protesters lock down at Bank of America protest in Boston.

already had “environmental destruction” accounts. We felt an immense sense of accomplishment at becoming the first research group to find a way to truly make coal clean and green (we washed it in the sink and then painted it) – until one onlooker pointed out the black coal dust on our hands (despite its cleanliness!).

The purpose of these actions was to draw attention to the myths and lies that enable reformist green capitalists to keep the coal industry alive and profitable. Ironically, Bank of America released its new “Coal Policy” in the last week of November. This so-called “policy” has been “praised” by RAN and other groups and considered a victory for communities in coal-mining regions in Appalachia. But we in Rising Tide Boston see through the smokescreen of this PR gimmick intended to distract the public from Bank of America’s ongoing funding of the coal industry.

The statement fails to commit to a timeline or any concrete action to halt their financing of mountain-top-removal coal mining, and the alternatives that the bank pledges to support are not solutions at all. On the other hand, the release of the statement shows that Bank of America has been feeling the heat of direct actions across the country – enough to release a statement intended to, perhaps, keep us happy. Unfortunately for them, we still have plenty of energy (generated without the use of coal) in our organizations to continue pressuring the banks until they finally meet the people’s demands.

This Valentine’s Day, join Rising Tide Boston, City Life/Vida Urbana and groups around the country in “breaking up” with Bank of America by closing our accounts. With this gesture, we will demand that Bank of America stop financing the coal industry and enforcing post-foreclosure evictions.

For more information, visit RisingTideBoston.org and CLVU.org. ✽

Piracy from page 5

regards to arms.” Davis worries about trigger-happy contractors and overly aggressive engagements. “[B]asically, if we start killing people, or private security companies start killing people, then they’re going to start killing their hostages and that will turn the situation upside down and be very, very bad news.”

Davis’ point explains why many shipping companies are wary of arming commercial ships and why some insurance companies charge a higher rate if arms are on board. Overall, however, the shipping industry desires the security teams in the absence of state protection, making the Gulf of Aden a lucrative market for military firms. Some innovative British mercenaries have teamed up with insurance companies to offer package deals, with lower rates for ships carrying armed guards. With such collusion, the Somali pirates could generate hefty profits for some London executives.

The World Only Cares About Pirates

Rerouting ships, adding security teams, increased insurance costs and ransoms are causing hysteria in the world economic community. Several small boatloads of Somalis have wreaked havoc on the region’s shipping and energized naval powers. Contractors long waiting in the wings are

finally getting their chance to reap rewards. The pirates will probably fall increasingly under attack if they continue to seek large prizes in an effort to live beyond their former poverty.

Meanwhile, the root causes of piracy will most likely be ignored. Little will be said of the rampant environmental exploitation that drove fishers to piracy, and deploying destroyers will do little to ameliorate the humanitarian crisis or reverse Somalia’s tremendous poverty. The lack of stability as a result of repeated foreign intervention leaves a perfect breeding ground for pirates and other extremists. No military campaign can solve this problem. “World powers have neglected Somalia for years on end, and now that its problems are touching the world, they have started on the wrong footing,” said Bile Mohamoud Qabowsade, an advisor to the president of Puntland.

Until there is a marked shift in priorities and governments begin to pay attention to the human costs of policy; until countries are not abandoned due to economic insignificance; until intervention to determine a nation’s political future is done only by its own people; and until the theft of capital derived from misery is instead considered reparations, long live the Somali pirates! ✽

Reportback from the Disrupt Lake City Presentation

By SUBLETT

On Thursday, Dec. 18, at Encuentro 5 in Boston, Dave Strano of Disrupt Lake City (DLC) spoke about an upcoming campaign to “Stop the War at the Point of Production” by disrupting operations at the Lake City Army Ammunition Plant in Independence, MO.

Since this plant produces about 90 percent of the small arms ammunition used by US military forces, it is an ideal target. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have generated enormous pressure on ammunition production, to the point that countries to which the US used to export ammunition now send it here instead. Even minor interruptions in the flow of ammunition from Lake City can have significant effects on the war effort. Recently, some workers at the plant created a temporary shortage of ammunition just by stealing bullet-making supplies for scrap metal.

Highlighted talking points:

- Disrupting military logistics follows in the tradition of such actions as the Port Militarization Resistance in Washington State and the Shannon 5 warplane saboteurs in Ireland.
- Unlike at summits or party conventions, there is no federal grant money available to the cops for security operations.
- Unlike Minnesota, home of the RNC 8, Missouri has no state PATRIOT Act.
- All ammunition leaves the plant via a single rail line.
- The point of the action is not just to create a short-term ammunition shortage, but to begin a series of actions leading to an ongoing disruption of plant operations.
- More broadly, the idea is to kick-start a moribund anti-war movement by introducing tactics that have a chance to actually work.

Strategy: The proposed strategy draws heavily from the Republican National Convention protest in St. Paul, MN. As in St. Paul, there are three tiers, ordered by importance. Tier One is the rail line, Tier Two claims the entrances to the plant and Tier Three includes the surrounding roads. The area around the plant is divided into three sectors, with Sector Three being considered a space for less confrontational tactics. From DLC’s pamphlet: “If you are interested in being part of this action and need information to form an affinity group with the intention of tackling a certain sector contact the disruption crew and we will get you all the info you need. The disruption crew will be coordinating all committed affinity groups and providing them with support on the ground.”

Guiding principles:

1. Clear opposition to militarism and occupation. Iraq and Afghanistan are not the only wars the US is waging. Globally and locally, the American empire is a habitual warmonger and occupier. On the domestic front, the cops and courts occupy all of our blocks – especially targeting people of color and poor folks. On the global front, the US military officially maintains over 700 bases in roughly 130 countries – not to mention those that are kept secret. Furthermore, we are against all states and empires.

2. Respect for a diversity of tactics. As anti-authoritarians, we will not allow the authorities to define the appropriate methods for responding to their domination. We will stand in solidarity with each other while cooperating to disrupt their ammunition shipments.

3. No condemnation of fellow participants in any media outlets or public forums. We are not getting together to air dirty laundry or to ignite any conflicts and turn them into soap operas. All our critiques of one another should remain internal to promote cohesive and decisive action.

4. Non-hierarchical organizing. Actions should be organized autonomously through collective participation. Obviously that can take a variety of forms, but the consent of actual participants is the common thread tying all our efforts together. No authoritarianism or coercion tolerated.

5. No collaboration with the State or its agents. Organize intelligently, make your plans securely and don’t ever sell out comrades!

Allies: The DLC is having ongoing discussions with a variety of groups and individuals. While it would be premature to name them here, rest assured that we will not be alone.

Legal situation: The rail line and the plant grounds are federal property. The plant is surrounded by a fence and patrolled by armed guards. No support is planned by the DLC for inside the fence. That means no legal observers, scouts or medics. As mentioned above, Missouri has no PATRIOT Act of its own. The plant workers who stole the supplies were charged under federal law and are looking at two-year prison sentences.

Schedule/Logistics: The action will run from June 4-8, 2009, the main day of action will be June 6. Consultas will be held starting around March. The sector map was included in the presentation and should be on the DLC Web site (www.stoplakecity.org) soon. Independence, MO is about 25 minutes from Kansas City, so getting there by plane, train or bus shouldn’t be difficult.

More information/how to help: Keep checking www.stoplakecity.org for updates. Questions can be e-mailed to unconventionalks@gmail.com. Cash or whatever else can be sent to Disrupt Lake City, PO Box 277, Lawrence KS, 66044. ✽



Somali pirate waves an inauspicious finger while hauling a good deal of ammunition.

Greece from page 1

Excharcheia to instigate residents, drawing protests from teens who threw stones at them. The police responded by shooting Alexandros, inciting the uprising that has brought the Greek government to its knees and quickly spilled out across the rest of the world.

Within a half hour of the assassination, thousands of anarchists mobilized and attacked police stations with Molotov cocktails, rocks and other improvised weapons. By the end of the night, protesters filled the streets of every major city, targeting banks and chain stores in intense riots. The next day, students poured out of schools, organizing marches and demonstrations in the tens of thousands. The cops attacked the enraged youth with tear gas and other implements of social control, exacerbating their thirst for revenge.

By Dec. 8, the riots grew into an uprising as students occupied their schools, workers called a general strike and immigrants joined in on the streets. They continued to attack police and banks, but also government ministries, and in the evening, protesters torched Parliament's massive Christmas tree in Athens.

By Dec. 12, according to the *New York Times*, police had fired 4,600 tear gas canisters, exhausting their supply but failing to contain the protests. They had to order more tear gas from Israel. That weekend, though the world's mainstream media reported "lulls" in the "riots," the uprising became a general insurrection against the government, boldly declaring a new vision of society.

While the anarchists find themselves at the helm of this insurrection, their influence swelling enormously, they make up only a fraction (albeit a large one) of those involved in the revolt. More importantly than the anarchists' numbers, however, their ideas of self-determination, community power, freedom and economic justice have spread across the struggling populace in the form of strong anti-authoritarian sentiment, manifested in hundreds of calls for assemblies and strikes, and scrawled on thousands of banners and building-sides.

On Dec. 13, residents occupying the Agios Dimtrios Town Hall in Athens held a popular assembly according to their call "to break through the silence, to take over our lives!" Students also began occupations of over 100 schools, adding their own assemblies to the hundreds forming in towns and cities. The assembly at the occupied Polytechnic University of Athens – a long-time center for anarchist organizing – released a statement announcing nightly meetings.

"In the barricades, the occupations, the demonstrations and the assemblies, we keep alive the memory of Alexandros, but also...all the comrades who were murdered by the State...Our actions, our attempts are the living cells of the insubordinate free world that we dream, without masters and slaves, without police, armies, prisons and borders," they said.

On Sunday, Dec. 14, rebels occupied four major radio stations and three stations in universities to broadcast their messages, cracking the capitalist media's stranglehold on the truth and setting the tone for the weeks to come. Insurgents took over and operated dozens of media stations, spreading their ideas. According to a poll in the conservative paper *Kathimerini* that day, only 20 percent of respondents thought conservative Prime Minister Karamanlis could end the uprising, while even less (17 percent) supported the Socialist opposition party. A *Chicago Tribune* article on the *Kathimerini* study said, "The most popular choice of those polled...was the option of 'nobody.' By Sunday afternoon, there were jokes in Athens cafes about the appeal of Mr. Nobody." At the end of the day, the youth occupied more than 400 schools. Banners read, "Greece is the birthplace of democracy. It will also die here."

School occupations (estimated at 600 on Dec. 15) and assemblies continued, and media occupations spread to the islands of Lesbos and Ioannina. The next day, anarchists burst into Greece's state-run news TV studio, interrupting the Prime Minister's speech, holding up banners that read, "Stop watching, get out onto the streets." The Center for Strategic Anarchy reported that "a leaked police report revealed official fears that the current crisis will fuel a recruitment drive for Greece's anarchist movement."

On Dec. 17, Athens awoke to two giant banners hanging from Acropolis Hill, and radical workers soon occupied the headquarters of the General Confederation of Workers in Greece. In their call, they accused the union bureaucrats of selling out the workers, denounced the media for "the myth that the workers were and are absent" from the insurrection, and called for the "self-organization of the workers" and a general strike. With the help of anarchists from the Polytechnic and the union bureaucrats trying to reclaim the building, the "Liberated Workers' Zone" held an "Open Workers' Assembly," and long red and black banners hung from the roof down to the bottom of the four-story building.

In the city of Thessaloniki, anarchists raided a grocery chain and gave the food to the people at a nearby farmers' market. According to *Occupied London*, a free anarchist journal in the UK, "the municipal radio of Tripoli, 'Nea Tileorasi' TV in Chania, Politeia FM in Sparta, and 'Star FM' and 'Imagine 897 FM' in Thessaloniki were occupied," along with the "Labour Centre" union building in Patras.

Also that day, an unknown assailant shot another young protester, this time a 16-year-old student, the son of a union leader. The rebels responded with expected rage, with thousands protesting at Parliament and the French Institute in the next few days. Students' banners read, "Their Terrorism Will Not Work." CNN reported, "At least 800 high schools and 200 universities remain shut as thousands

of youths have seized the grounds and campuses in protest."

A few days before Christmas, many of the rebels on the streets or in occupied buildings called for a break, promising to return to struggle on Jan. 9. For immigrant workers and others, however, another assault by the rich and powerful on the poor and struggling meant the rebellion would have no Christmas vacation.

On Dec. 22, Konstantina Kouneva, a militant syndicalist, general secretary of the cleaners' union of Athens, and active feminist, was attacked by – what she and her comrades claim to be – agents of her bosses at Oikomet. The company has close ties to the Socialist Party and contracts cheap labor to banks, government buildings and the metro system. Kouneva, a Bulgarian immigrant, had been struggling to demand her fellow workers receive their Christmas bonuses. She was also very active in the Assembly of the Occupied General Workers' Union, and had received a series of threats. The thugs assaulted her with vitriolic acid, which destroyed one of her eyes, threatened the other and her vocal chords, and put her in a coma. In response, her comrades held a protest on Dec. 26 outside Evangelismos hospital, attacking a police car with rocks. The next day, the Assembly for Solidarity to K. Kouneva occupied the headquarters of the state-owned Athens-Piraeus Electric Railway Company, which subcontracts to Oikomet, where Kouneva had worked.

At midnight, as the New Year began, "hundreds of protesters gathered outside the central prison of the country in Koridallou, SW Athens," according to Libcom.org, "where the majority of arrested insurgents are kept pending trial." With fireworks, songs and chants, the protesters and the imprisoned reveled in shared solidarity. Meanwhile, in Athens center, the rebels again tried to attack the Syntagma Square Christmas tree, disrupting the Mayor's celebration and forcing riot police to defend the tree. Marches in solidarity with arrested comrades occurred in Salonica and Chania Crete, and municipal Christmas trees were torched in Heraklion Crete and Larissa City. As Libcom.org reports, many more actions rang in the New Year of struggle: "A barrage of attacks against banks and state organizations rocked the country. According to the media, minutes after midnight, eight banks and four car expos in Salonica, and five banks, six shops and one mall in Athens torched down."

On Monday, Jan. 4, an armed assault on the riot police – claimed by the leftist urban guerrilla organization Revolutionary Struggle – left one officer dead in Excharcheia, where Grigoropoulos was shot on Dec. 6. State forces occupied the anarchist neighborhood and unleashed a massive wave of repression. The police closed the area's bars, attacking patrons, harassing and questioning workers, and detaining 72 people. They surrounded and shut down the Polytechnic school for the next two days. According to Libcom.org, after they released all 72 detainees for lack of evidence: "The police shifted its strategy of intimidation by arbitrarily breaking in[to] houses in the wider area and detaining scores of people based on their ideological profile as anarchists. Five of the detained have been since charged with ridiculous accusations of 'arms possession' for Swiss knives and decorative Chinese swords."

On Jan. 7, the police broke into the Excharcheia home of Stavroula Yannakopoulou, a lawyer who frequently defends radicals. The people of Excharcheia responded by organizing a march through their neighborhood against the police and what they called "the return of Nazi occupation."

On Jan. 9, the vacationing rebels kept their promise and 10,000 poured into Athens for a march. According to the Greek mainstream media, 8,000 police officers confronted the demonstration with tear gas and other weapons, and the protesters retreated to a university.

Demonstrations and attacks on police stations occurred in Athens, Patras and Thessaloniki that day. Before most of the participants woke up, Kouneva's comrades were busy ransacking her bosses' headquarters in Thessaloniki. The headquarters of the Lawyers Association in Thessaloniki was occupied, and the city's Labour Inspection Bureau was attacked in solidarity with Kouneva. In Athens, protesters outraged at the repression in Excharcheia, according to Libcom.org, occupied "the Municipal Cultural Center of Byronas...demanding total disarming of the police, immediate release of arrested insurgents, abolition of the anti-terrorist law, end of bosses terror...and an end to forest demolition for the construction of a bypass in the area."

Also in Athens, radical journalists and other media workers occupied the Union of News Editors, transforming the reformist union's building into a space to confront the capitalist media's control on the truth. "We don't fool ourselves about what the media, a crucial ideology apparatus of the State, will do to force the people to leave the streets and go home; they'll do everything," they said in a statement on Jan. 10. "Our main goal is to prevent the bosses from imposing their views about the events..."

Alongside this beautiful outpouring of revolutionary passion and determination has been Israel's brutal occupation of Gaza. A Jan. 10 letter from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine called on the Greek workers to prevent a shipment of US arms from the port of Astakos to Israel: "Three hundred and twenty-five 20-foot containers of ammunition, over 3,000 tons, in an emergency shipment of arms to aid the occupation in its ongoing war crimes against the Palestinian people in Gaza." The next day, the Anti-Authoritarian Movement, the anti-war Internationalist Movement and the Astakos assembly issued a call for protesters to flood the port on Jan. 15. Only one day later, Jan. 12, the Greek government called off the shipment. Meanwhile, the rebellion continues.

From rebel media workers in the occupied Union of News Editors on Jan. 10: "The thousands of protesters that filled the streets in Greece on Friday, Jan. 9, proved that the fire of December won't be put out, not by bullets and acid against activists, nor by the ideological terrorism spread by the media these last few days."

With no end in sight, it seems that the Greek insurrection can only grow, while the government struggles to stay afloat. Though this uprising won't likely bring a Greek revolution, it has brought tens of thousands into the anti-authoritarian movement and taught them how to fight in the streets, created thousands of popular assemblies as well as strengthened existing groups, and shown both the insurrectionary populace and the government and capitalists that the power truly does lie with the people. The Greek people have a taste for revolution, and their struggle against authority – one that has continued unabated for hundreds of years – can only continue.

The uprising is the first proper response to the global recession, caused by the failure of capitalism and the mismanagement of governments. Already, workers and revolutionaries across the world are taking their cue, starting with solidarity demos at Greek consulates and spreading to the institutions of their own oppression. The shot fired on Dec. 6 has echoed across the globe. In some places there are ripples of discontent, while in others, vast seas of riot and rebellion. One thing is for sure: A brand-new Left was born in December and this New Year is ours. The power is swinging and the world will never be the same. Capital, beware; we are coming for you. ✱

A valuable interview: <http://www.crimethinc.com/blog/2008/12/25/how-to-organize-an-insurrection/>



Greek protesters battle police in the streets of Athens.

Reports

From Rochester with Love!

COMPILED BY TED FORSYTH

Rochester Students for a Democratic Society has been very active in the past few months since forming. They've had at least two successful solidarity actions – one in support of the uprising in Greece and another for Oscar Grant, the young man of color who was murdered by Bay Area Rapid Transit police officers in Oakland, Calif. Currently, they are organizing a Do-It-Yourself Festival and March 19 anti-war activities, among other events.

Rochester Indymedia (R-IMC) recently put out a year-in-review feature that highlights 76 articles from local contributors, covering everything from animal rights to the Iraq war to the bailout. R-IMC also hosted a number of directors with their films this year: Hannah Dobbz with *Shelter: A Squatumentary*; Frank Lopez AKA “The Stimulator” from *It's the End of the World As We Know It and I Feel Fine* with *Ground Noise and Static*; Helia Rasti and Jonathan Stribling-Uss with *Shutdown: The Rise and Fall of DASW*; and Mara Ahmed with *The Muslims I Know*. IndyTV, R-IMC's cable access TV show, has completed over 25 shows since it started last year. The collective is working on putting out a print edition of the Web site.

Rochester Food Not Bombs (FNB) is continuing to serve the community through consistent meal shares and local events. During the winter, FNB has to get creative to share meals as blustery/snowy evenings make for poor serving times outside. This year, the anti-war storefront on Monroe Ave. has opened its doors to the group as a fall-back on those not-so-nice days. The group is also moving forward to put

together a cook zine, record oral histories of the current chapter (now over 2 1/2 years old), as well as expand and offer assistance to others who would like to start a Food Not Bombs in their neighborhood.

The Anarchist/Anti-authoritarian Reading Group continues. We meet once a month and are currently finishing a discussion on Peter Kropotkin's *The Conquest of Bread*.

The IWW-Rochester is currently looking for an identity. One direction that might bare fruit is an organizing training offered by the national. This is in the works. Also, as a way to meet and greet with the community, the group is going to be screening the film *Wobblies* at the end of March.

Rochester anti-war activists are attempting a paradigm shift in organizing for the sixth anniversary of the illegal invasion and occupation of Iraq through the use of a spokescouncil. In previous years of organizing for March 19, activists and other concerned individuals have generally come to meetings hosted by larger anti-war organizations in which decision-making processes, goal setting, and strategy and tactics were usually directed by those organizations, and other organizations were asked to join the effort and subsume their autonomy. So far, there have been three meetings with at least 15 different organizations present and somewhere between 20-30 folks present. The group uses a hybrid of consensus and direct-democracy for decision-making.

Critical Mass still meets on the last Friday of the month at the Liberty Pole in downtown Rochester at 6 p.m. They ride regardless of weather conditions—rain, shine, sleet or snow. Numbers decline substantially in the winters, but still they ride! ✱

Boston Anarchist Black Cross

Boston Anarchist Black Cross regularly supports hundreds of prisoners by sending out literature, fulfilling research requests and maintaining pen pal correspondences. We keep up a \$20 per month contribution to Jericho Boston's commissary fund, which goes toward meeting the material needs of political prisoners.

We tabled at the Boston Zine Fair and distributed a great deal of prison abolitionist literature. We got out the word about Jericho's 10/10 march in New York City to free political prisoners and sent down about 10 people. Most of our collective turned out for a prison abolition strategy session hosted by Jericho Boston and Rising Tide Boston. We have turned out in support of City Life/Vida Urbana's eviction blockades, which have a 7-2 record in preventing the eviction of families.

In collaboration with other Anarchist Black Cross chapters, we collect entries for, produce and distribute a publication called *Prison Action News*, which is composed of submissions from prisoners detailing their efforts to fight back against oppressive conditions. The latest issue was released on January 1.

As part of our legal defense work, we send money to comrades in need and bail out comrades when situations arise. Recently, we have contributed to the defense funds for the Revolutionary Autonomous Communities in Los Angeles; their Nov. 8 benefit show was raided, and its attendants were arrested and badly mistreated by police.

We also contributed to the defense fund for Iraq Veterans Against the War, 10 of whose members and five of whose supporters were arrested Oct. 15 in



Hempstead, N.Y., when a police horse smashed the face of Sgt. Nick Morgan. We are pleased to report that charges against the Hempstead 15 have since been dropped, but Nick Morgan's face is still smashed and his medical bills are outrageous.

We had a Halloween benefit show to replenish our legal defense fund, but we are perpetually seeking more monetary resources.

If you want to support the prisoner support and legal defense work of Boston Anarchist Black Cross, you can send concealed cash or blank checks to:

Boston ABC
P.O. Box 230182
Boston, MA 02123 ✱



Ithaca Update

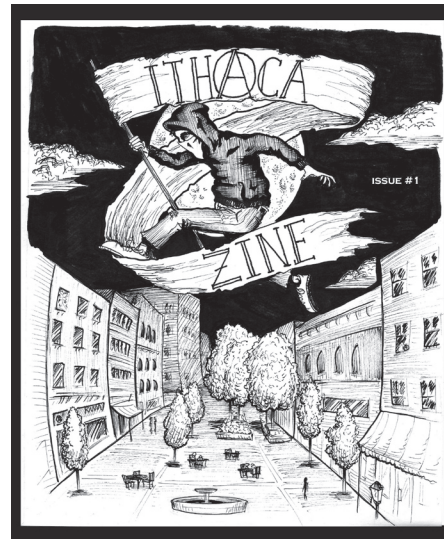
By RYAN CLOVER
(SILENT CITY DISTRO COLLECTIVE)

Ithaca is staying warm this winter with a turbo boost of kick-ass projects and community building. While there are many exciting things happening around here in this small, hilly city, the anarchist folks (us) here at the local radical distro have some very specific updates from the Silent City. Read this like newsflash headlines. If you want more, you're gonna have to get our zine.

“Ithaca Zine!” is a radical publication of anarchist art, poetry, photos, essays, etc. We publish this zine every two months with a big celebration and benefit show. It has brought a whole bunch of new folks out of the woodwork! Our second issue is coming out in February and we're psyched. Order one today, or download it and print it out from <http://silentcity.wordpress.com>

Silent City Distro: We are celebrating our new office space on the Ithaca Commons. We just built a wooden structure and some new shelves, and stocked them full of awesome radical literature and newspapers. Along with the Intro to Anarchist Studies class and radical reading group, we will be holding regular office hours and operating a zine library. Anybody want to hook us up with a copy machine?

Storm Country Tour: Coming to a folk-punk house near you starting in February, 2009. Ithaca is representing music from the Silent City this winter, and a group of local musicians are hitting the road to play music and spread inspiration and love to our comrades in the Northeast. We'll be touring from Ithaca to Syracuse, Rochester, Buffalo, Kent, Pittsburgh, DC, Philly, NYC, Boston, Providence, Portland, Montreal, Vermont, and Albany. Did I miss anyone? Check the Distro Web site for links.



Ithaca Freeskool is still kicking ass with a variety of classes and skill-shares from around Ithaca. The next session begins in February and will most likely keep the energy through the winter. <http://ithacafreeskool.wordpress.com>

Natural gas companies have laid out the pipelines and legal groundwork to completely devastate Upstate New York and surrounding regions through drilling operations in the Marcellus Shale. They want to start horizontal drilling, using millions of gallons of clean water and creating massive amounts of irreversible contamination. Our lives are on the line. More info can be found at: www.shaleshock.org

SCIENCE FICTION vs. FANTASY... Dance Off. Who will it be? SHOWDOWN 2009: It's about time. Come to Ithaca and show your stuff at this \$5 benefit party. It will be on February 7, at 8 p.m. at the Silent City Distro Barricades, 115 E. MLK St. (the Commons), Ithaca, NY, 14850. Contact us if you and your affinity group (for dancing!) need a place to stay. ✱

Boston Anti-Authoritarian Movement Update

By LAILA MURAD

In the past few months, members of Boston Anti-Authoritarian Movement (BAAM) have organized, supported and participated in various events. In late September, we tabled at the Boston Zine Fair and distributed hundreds of newsletters and pamphlets. We also raised money for mailing our NEAN outreach packets. We organized a NEAN outreach committee and mailing list, and sent dozens of outreach packets to different infoshops, collectives, etc. all around the Northeast.

Throughout the fall months, our members supported home-eviction blockades organized by City Life/Vida Urbana and have been staying updated for future actions. As November came to an end and Black Friday marked the beginning of the annual holiday consumer frenzy, BAAM hosted our annual Radical Caroling in a busy local shopping district.

We followed the uprisings in Greece and answered the calls for solidarity. BAAM organized two Greek Solidarity events: a demonstration at the Greek Consulate on Dec. 16 and a “Tour of State Repression Institutions” through the downtown area on Dec. 20. According to the *Boston Globe* and Boston Police Detective Andrew Creed, red paint was thrown on the consulate one night and its front gate was smashed at the Dec. 16 protest.

We are in contact with a new comrade from Greece involved in the Athens Anti-Authoritarian Movement and the *Babylonia* newspaper, we will be collaborating on Greek solidarity and media work in the future. Members of BAAM participated in Gaza solidarity events and plan to organize and attend future Palestinian and Gaza solidarity events.

BAAM has also continued to publish our monthly newsletter. We are offering mail subscriptions for \$12-15 a year. The perfect present for your loved ones! Interested?

Contact Jake at:
trenchesfullofpoets@riseup.net ✱



Above: Copies of *Steel City Revolt!*, the new publication from the Pittsburgh Organizing Group

Wooden Shoe Talking Changes in Tough Times

By JAMES GENERIC

The Wooden Shoe Books collective has been engaged in discussions about restructuring and revamping our organization. We are talking about restructuring the Wooden Shoe from being an all-volunteer, one-tiered collective to being a two-tiered workers' collective with paid collective members and volunteers (along the model of Baltimore's Red Emma's).

The only way we could do this would be to expand from being just a bookstore into being something bigger, such as a cafe/bookstore. That's not really possible in the place we currently are; over the years, it's become abundantly clear that any reforms, tweaks, attempts at changing the culture, anti-oppression trainings, discussions on the culture or even large-scale business changes become quite impossible as a 50-person collective with decent turnover.

By six months to a year later, turnover undoes any of those changes. If we're really lucky, changes sometimes last longer, but overall, it's very frustrating for long-term members of the collective to have to reinvent the wheel constantly because of the high turnover; not being clear on who is committed and who is not; and not being able to choose who makes up the decision-making group. In the end, it all comes back to structure.

The planning committee has met five times. First, we brainstormed what the new structure would look like and came up with some ideas. Then we sat down with members of Red Emma's and picked their brains for about an hour and a half for details of how their program operates. Red Emma's has a fascinating model that keeps them from spending more on wages than they make.

At Wooden Shoe, we now have nine people on the planning committee, up from the original six that first came together. Collective members keep asking how to get involved with this process, so I'm pretty sure it's going forward. It's exciting, although we know there is a lot of work ahead.

Our next steps are to come up with a detailed and well thought-out business plan/manifesta/constitution/bylaws (whatever you want to call it), have a retreat in February, and try to get a consensus on it. After that, it would be pedal to the metal to find a new space and get it set up before September 2009. ✱

A Steel City Revolts with Launch of New Anarchist Publication

By MARIE SKOCZYLAS
A MEMBER OF POG

This fall, Pittsburgh Organizing Group (POG) launched its quarterly print publication, *Steel City Revolt!* The first issue is packed with 48 pages of anarchist-related articles on events, theory, analysis and culture. Members shared their thoughts on voting (or not voting) and the movement's relationship to electoral politics, personal reflection on the \$700 billion bailout and the broader financial crisis, and memories from the streets in Seattle in 1999 during the World Trade Organization shutdown.

As the bottom-liners for Sector 1 of the blockade strategy at the Republican National Convention protests in St. Paul, Minn., POG members document their stories from the demonstrations in September. One story is by a POG member who blockaded an intersection for over an hour by using a cement lockbox to attach himself to the steering wheel of a car.

The issue contains an overview of local labor struggles at Equitable Gas, Verizon and Pittsburgh Port Authority, where management recently announced its intention to impose a contract on workers setting the stage for a possible transit strike (that was narrowly averted in the end).

The inaugural issue also includes information on the construction of I-69 – the free trade “Superhighway to Hell” – and resistance to it, the successful struggle for an imprisoned Spanish anarchist's freedom, radical gifting ideas in preparation for the holidays, a book review and updates on anarchist resistance around the world.

POG is hoping to use the *Steel City Revolt!* as a much-needed forum for local anarchist news and analysis, as well as an ongoing fundraising effort to support its work throughout the year. Members are distributing this first issue far and wide, hoping to secure subscriptions for subsequent issues. Would you like a copy or a subscription? Contact pog@mutualaid.org.

Although the creation and launch of the *SCR!* kept members busy throughout the fall, POG also managed to put on another Tactical Training Initiative workshop (“An Introduction to Global Political and Economic Frameworks”); to hold an orientation for new members; to steal away for a retreat in the woods; to work on deconstructing interconnected oppressions with a potluck/reading/discussion on anti-racism in global justice and anti-war organizing; and to march with fellow NEAN members in New York City in October to demand freedom for all political prisoners and prisoners of war on the 10th anniversary of the first Jericho march.

For more POG news and upcoming events, visit www.organizepittsburgh.org. ✱

Events

Thursday, Feb. 5:

Republic Windows and Doors victory tour. 6:30PM - 9:00p.m. at 150 Mount Vernon St, Dorchester, Mass. This will be a community forum with some of the sit-in strikers from Republic Windows & Doors in Chicago.

Saturday, Feb. 7:

Silent City presents Fantasy vs. Sci-Fi party. Silent City Distro is celebrating the release of the new issue of Ithaca Zine with a kick-ass dance party and contest. DJs. Food. Radical literature. Matches. Patches. Etc. 8p.m. at 115 E. MLK St., Ithaca, N.Y. www.silentcitydistro.org

Saturday, Feb. 14:

Valentine's Day: Break up with Bank of America. Join Rising Tide Boston in demanding that Bank of America stop its funding of the dirty and deadly coal industry and demanding, in solidarity with City Life/Vida Urbana, that the bank stop its unjust foreclosures and evictions of working families. Closing your account with Bank of America is an important step in bringing closure to this unhealthy relationship. In Boston, we are planning a day of coordinated bank account closures in at least two locations, and are encouraging people in other places to organize something similar with a national call to action. Contact: valentinesday@risingtideboston.org

Tuesday, Feb. 17:

Anarchists Against the Wall and Noam Chomsky will speak at the Unitarian Church in Cambridge at 7 p.m. The address is 3 Church St. in Harvard Square, Cambridge, MA.

Friday, Feb. 20:

Pittsburgh Organizing Group (POG) is holding its annual Anarchist Ball on Friday, Feb. 20, 7-11p.m. at the Machine Age Space in Pittsburgh. This year's theme: "Set the Night on Fire (no, really)." This annual all-ages dance is open to all friends of POG. \$10 donation goes toward supporting POG's activities. Refreshments, cheesy photography and raffle prizes! Dress to impress! There is no dress code. DJs for the evening include DJ Sean MC, Jenny Jihad, DJ Thermos and Mary Mack. RSVP requested but not required. Contact: pog@mutualaid.org

Saturday, Feb. 28:

Anarchists Against the Wall will speak at the University of Pittsburgh, David Lawrence Hall room 121 at 7p.m.

Monday, March 2:

Mass Non-Violent Climate Change Action. 12:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m. at the Capitol Coal Plant, East St. SE @ New Jersey Ave. SE, Washington, D.C. <http://capitolclimateaction.org>

Thursday, March 19:

Sixth anniversary of Iraq War invasion. Protests in most major cities; check with your local anarchists or start your own!

Saturday, April 11:

Third annual New York City Anarchist Bookfair. A one-day exposition of books, zines, pamphlets, art, film/video and other cultural and very political productions of the anarchist scene worldwide, at Judson Memorial Church in Manhattan. To contact the NYC Anarchist Book Fair Organizing Collective to volunteer, make a donation or get more information, e-mail us at info@anarchistbookfair.net. www.anarchistbookfair.net/

Saturday, April 18:

F.A.D.G.E. Fest! FADGE (or Feminism, Autonomy, Diversity and Gender Expression) is a female-positive day of workshops, art and music. This year's festival focuses on the female as a whole person, body and mind. Workshops will cover diverse topics such as self-defense, art therapy, sexual violence and body image. There will be live music throughout the day as well as art vendors. This event is for all ages and genders. Your \$10 donation will benefit a local women's shelter. Noon - 11:00p.m. at the Charter Oak Cultural Center in Hartford, Conn. For more information please visit www.myspace.com/fadgefest or write ctcnfest@gmail.com

Sat. & Sun., April 25 & 26:

IMF/World Bank Meeting, Washington D.C. Details TBA, but save the date.

Sat. & Sun., May 16 & 17:

Montreal's 10th Annual Anarchist Bookfair at the CEDA, 2515 Delisle, a short walk from Lionel-Groulx metro). Part of the month-long Festival of Anarchy, throughout the month of May 2009 at venues and locations all over the island of Montreal. The Montreal Anarchist Bookfair – and month-long Festival of Anarchy – brings together anarchist ideas and practice, through words, images, music, theater and day-to-day struggles for justice, dignity and collective liberation.

The bookfair is as much for people who don't necessarily consider themselves anarchists but are curious about anarchism, as it is a space for anarchists to meet, network and share in a spirit of respect and solidarity. All are welcome. The bookfair principles are linked here: <http://www.anarchistbookfair.ca/en/node/4>

TBA, this Spring:

Northeast Anarchist Network assembly. Date, location and schedule yet to be confirmed. For announcements about the assembly or for general announcements throughout the northeast, subscribe to the NEAN listserv at <http://lists.riseup.net/www/info/anetwork> or visit <http://www.neanarchist.net>

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