



# **ON REPRESSION PATTERNS IN EUROPE**

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Repression is happening all around us and affects people in their political activism. Sooner or later every one of us encounters repressive administrations, however radical you think you are. Often even those who are not challenging the law face repression, because the state is constructing conspiracies to prevent people from being political active, especially in wider campaigns.

### **WHY DO WE PUBLISH THIS ZINE?**

We feel it is useful to share experiences of these state repressions, both to feel less alone, and to share the tactics of resistance and solidarity that we have developed during these times. So, the zine was not only about telling what happened and how much we were repressed, rather analyzing how the communities reacted towards that, which strategies were developed, and if could they help us. The advises that we can give to others and things we consider important.

The zine includes two general text about repression on European level and a short overview on the matter of extremism and terrorist laws. Further on we want to introduce five case studies where movements faced big repression waves. These stories from Austria, Belgium, Belarus, Czech and Poland are in this times just examples and we can find a lot more in other places.

We think it is important to learn from each other and develop together strategies against repression and show solidarity.

**DON'T LET THEM TAKE YOU DOWN!**  
**UNTIL ALL ARE FREE, NO ONE IS FREE!**  
**ABC – ANARCHIST BLACK CROSS**

## **EXTREMIST AND TERRORIST LAWS AS TOOLS TO CRIMINALIZE SOCIAL STRUGGLE**

*ex·trem·ism*

*a tendency to go to extremes or an instance of going to extremes, esp. in politics.*

Definition of extremism from the dictionary (meaning of the word):

The development of the extremism theory evolved from totalitarian theory discussion, which appeared as a result of the cruelties of national socialism and Stalinism, occurring in the middle of the 20th century. Even though the theory is not new, it has gained exposure in the recent years due to the repression against any kind of opposition to government. All around the globe, anti-extremist and anti-terrorist laws are introduced or further developed. Although anti-terrorist laws were already invented in the 19th century as a reaction to activities of the anarchist movement, there is an obvious push towards the extremist theory in terms of law enforcement and political propaganda.

But what does it mean and why is it so dangerous for society for it to be possible to express opposition against existing systems and politics?

According to anti-extremist theory, the core of society is constructed as a democratic union, continuously endangered by all kind of extremisms. This leads to the criminalization of all criticisms of the state, capitalism and the authorities. In that sense, whatever political opposition: social movements, fascist, terrorist, anarchist, anti-fascist, are put in one box. It lumps popular movements that fight oppression and supremacy with those that reinforce it.

But this also implies that any ideas outside the core are not legitimate, and narrows the boundaries of public political debates. The core of society wants to keep the status quo, and maintain this situation by

following conservative and right wing movements. Daily racism or homophobia for example are not seen as problems. The structural oppression, carried out by state and society in our days, mostly connected with colonialism, history of brutality and genocide, is denied. The oppression of the state itself as an authoritarian institution is not discussed.

A lot of states developed anti-terrorist laws due to particular developments of different political movements, like the activities of the Basques independence groups in Spain or the RAF in the 70s in Germany. The national state saw the need to protect its institutions and authorities and react with laws which legitimize interference with personal rights, and allow repression tactics, for example total isolation in prison. Since 9/11 and the declaration of war on terror the upgrade of anti-terrorist laws has been happening all around. Unlimited surveillance or the fact that people can stay in prison for months without clear accusation or trial, are just some effects of these laws.

This kind of politics is not only connected with the liberal world. Whether under Liberalism or a dictatorship, with terms like extremism or terrorism it is easy to stigmatize the enemy. And the terms are used vaguely, just like the laws they are connected with, and applied to any kind of activism.

With the result that for example in Spain, Cesar Strawberry, singer of the group Def con Dos, was charged, with the prosecution demanding 20 months of prison for the content of some of his lyrics ("e.g. Esperanza Aguirre's fascism without complexes makes me even miss the GRAPO" (Maoist militant antifascist group from Spain found in 1975))[1]. First he was released without charges. But during January 2017, Cesar Strawberry was sentenced to two years of prison by the supreme court, without another trial, for terrorism apology.

In Russia in June 2016, anarchist Elizaveta Tsvetkova was sentenced to one year of corrective labor for spreading leaflets criticizing the police. She was charged under the Criminal Code Article 281.2 "... hatred or enmity towards a "social group". In her case, the social group were "police officers". This article is classified as an extremist crime under the criminal code. Tsvetkova was found guilty, even though Elizaveta Koltunova, an assistant professor of linguistics at Nizhny Novgorod University, who was subpoenaed as an expert witness, noted that she could find nothing extremist about the leaflet that had led to the charges filed against Tsvetkova. Rosfinmonitoring has included Tsvetkova in its list of terrorists and extremists and blocked her bank account.[2]

We as anarchists do not see the point in fighting the term extremism. We stand for radical change of society, questioning the cores of regimes that state no alternative is possible. We oppose both liberal and dictator states and if those define our solutions as extreme, so be it, because indeed we see no possibility for compromise with those exploiting us.

1:[http://cultura.elpais.com/cultura/2016/07/19/actualidad/1468922662\\_941636.html](http://cultura.elpais.com/cultura/2016/07/19/actualidad/1468922662_941636.html)

2: <https://avtonom.org/en/news/russian-anarchist-svetlana-tsvetkova-sentenced-year-corrective-labor-leaflet-about-police>

## **REPRESSION ON EUROPEAN LEVEL**

The instrument to enforce a Europe wide system of arrest is the so called European arrest warrant (EAW) that was introduced in 2001. Legal authorities from different countries inside European union are able to proceed with the warrant and act directly, without bureaucratic delays, taking fast decisions and working together easily. The country which is asked to surrender the persons is not allowed to question the lawfulness of the warrant. Diplomatic procedures between states are no longer necessary.

We can see how well this repression mechanism worked in Aachen (Germany) recently - the story of two bank expropriations in 2013 and 2014.

The journey of this anarchist ended in July 2015, at the Greek-Bulgarian border. She was arrested and forced to stay two months in a Bulgarian prison. Afterwards she was deported to Germany, where she was again imprisoned, for four more months. She is suspected to be part of an armed bank expropriation of the Pax Bank (a bank of the catholic church) in 2013 in Aachen. It became possible to arrest her in Bulgaria due to the EAW, issued by the Aachen public prosecutor on June 24. On December 16, the judge ordered her release as all the charges were dropped. Six months of investigations didn't bring enough results to start a case against her. The authorities filed an appeal, and the case was opened again. During this period, she was arrested again, this time in the Netherlands, being handed over to German authorities on September 21, also due the EAW. On December 8 2016 she was set free. The prosecution has already announced their recourse to the revision court. This means that a judge now will review the whole court case to see if there were any procedural mistakes or incoherence with the judges reasoning for his decision. In case this court finds any errors, the

trial will have to be re-done in the court of Aachen, but by a different judge. If this recourse fails, these charges and juridical procedure will be closed.[3]

On 13 April 2016 the Mossos d'Esquadra (autonomous Catalanian police), in cooperation with the German police, carried out an operation where two private houses and the social center Los Blokes Fantasma were raided. This action ended with the arrest of an anarchist, alleged to be involved in the expropriation of the Pax Bank in Aachen, in autumn 2014. This procedure was also legitimized through EAW.[4]

During the morning of the 21 June 2016, the Mossos d'Esquadra kicked down the door of a house in Barcelona. It was the home of an anarchist, his partner and another flat mate. He was arrested, based on the alleged match of DNA traces from the Aachen Pax Bank and a sample taken via a fake breathalyzer test. He was also accused of participation in the 2014 bank expropriation. Due to an EAW against him, he was extradited to Germany. At the 7 June 2017, the judge pronounced the sentence in the court. While the second one was set free, the first was sentenced to seven and a half years of prison.[5]

In all the cases mentioned, the close cooperation of legal and police authorities inside the European union made the arrest of the anarchists possible. Not only are the EAW playing an important role to exert European wide repression, but are also particularly engaged with the exchange of DNA data, being mostly gathered and stored without authorization.

With the rise of the anti-globalization movement and the transnational No Border Camp, the cooperation between the different police forces and legal authorities became even more intense, and focused explicitly

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3; 4; 5: <https://solidariteit.noblogs.org>

towards political activism. Investigators and law enforcement agencies were criminalizing political protests against transnational events and summits, supported by politicians. Defamation campaigns by media and state authorities, which often legitimize brutal police violence, were also carried out. On the other hand, undercover cops were used across borders to spy on and unsettle activists.

Germany has pushed to develop a EU-wide database of "troublemakers", tied to the Schengen Information System (SIS), that is not yet implemented. The term Euro-Anarchist, established in 2003 by the Italian interior minister, is now used as a generic term inside the European police forces.[6]

Those people were repressed as they were anarchists or political activists. They have been targeted and punished through different EU agreements and institutions. The basis for the cross-border policing is the Prüm Convention. It was signed on 2005 in the German city of Prüm, and allows access to different databases managed by the countries' authorities, including DNA analysis files, digital fingerprints and vehicle registrations. Since this convention, databases, which often contain illegal or unprotected personal data, can be exchanged without any bureaucratic limitation. For example, in the cases described above, DNA samples have been taken during a fake breathalyzer test, and from a thrown-out beer can. The Spanish cops needed those samples to update their database entries, and to compare with the German ones. This comparison allowed the arrest of the two anarchists in Spain. At the European level, police usage of genetic technologies has increased and the criteria for data-sharing approval have been relaxed. Potentially this will target not only anarchists but also wider society.

To enforce the cross-border repression mechanisms, the CEPOL - College of European Police - was founded to strength the education and experience exchange of the European cops. For example, in July 2012

6: <http://www.heise.de/tp/artikel/36/36629/1.html>

in Greece a seminar was held about terrorism, where a deep overview of the repression measures against the anarchist insurrection movement was given by the Italian authorities.[7] Europol- European Police Office, publishes an annual report: Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (TE-SAT), where you can find a whole chapter dedicated to Leftwing and Anarchist Terrorism. But not only do police forces take actions against anarchism, also the SitCen - European Union Intelligence and Situation Center, wants to deal with it, and organized for example a Situation Assessment in October 2011. Germany, Greece, Spain and Cyprus contributed to the report.[8] European union member states also network on a legal level, linking the work of different national prosecutions to monitor anarchist structures. This institution is called Eurojust and has organized several events about animal liberation, or what they call animal rights extremism.

The development of these institutions on a European level demonstrates a common approach towards political activists, even if national laws are laid out differently. The cases mentioned within this zine, where several anarchist activists were accused of bank expropriations, have shown the explosive nature of this topic, and the consequences of these policies. It becomes clear that the European Union is currently developing not only economical apparatus, but apparatus of control of the population, giving cops from different countries the opportunity to unite their efforts in destroying political opponents of the established systems.

**SOLIDARITY WITH THE ANARCHISTS IMPRISONED FOR THE BANK EXPROPRIATION.**

**UNTIL ALL ARE FREE.**

7: <https://www.cepol.europa.eu/media/blog/counter-terrorism-awareness-seminar-held-greece>

8: <http://dipbt.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/17/082/1708279.pdf>

## **BELARUS WHAT CAUSED THE POLICE TO START THE REPRESSION? WAS THERE ANY SPECIAL DYNAMICS THAT LEAD TO THAT POINT?**

For the sake of this publication we will see into the so-called 'case of Minsk anarchists' in 2010. It is connected with the attack on the Russian embassy, carried out by an unknown group of anarchists in solidarity with antifascist prisoners in Russia. The attack was followed by a huge wave of repression, that left more than 50 people interrogated, 17 detained on suspicion and 5 people found guilty of several direct-action counts.

Everything started long before September 2010. The years 2009-2010 were rich in radical direct actions claimed by Belarusian anarchists. They included anti-militarist marches, destroying windows and damaging the walls of some governmental and capitalist institutions, throwing paint, smoke bombs, and arson. After every action the police would start a criminal case, but never arrested anyone. Generally, the police at that time was focused on repressing the opposition, and most anarchists were never detained or even known to the police. At least this is what we thought. Anarchists were mostly making illegal pickets, participating in demonstrations, spreading leaflets, engaging in Food Not Bombs and subcultural events. It looks like some activists got tired of the complete lack of results from their activity, plus their information was coming from all over the place about insurrectionism in Greece, which inspired anarchists in Belarus. Some activists then decided to try out other means - mostly symbolic direct actions.

When the Russian embassy was attacked with Molotovs on August 31, 2010, at first nobody claimed responsibility for the action. Russian authorities condemned the incident as a KGB provocation, while Belarusian government accused Russian forces of an attempt to ruin the good relationship between the two countries. A diplomatic war started, leading to

comments from president Lukashenko himself blaming the Russian side. Suddenly, on September 2, 2010 there appears a statement on Belarusian Indymedia of a previously unknown anarchist group 'Friends of Freedom'. The next morning police raids 8 flats of anarchists, on suspicion of the attack.

### **WHAT TACTICS DID THEY USE? WAS IT SUCCESSFUL? IN WHAT WAY AND WHY?**

It appears that the police compiled files on some anarchists, knew where they lived and who the most active and pro-direct action people were. At the same time, they were also detaining random anarchists and even some right-wingers, who were probably all mixed in their list of extremists. Every day the police detained more and more people as suspects and put them in detention for 72 hours. Every day they would come to the activists and ask them all kinds of questions related to the movement and the attack on the embassy. In most cases, they used informal talks, not proper interrogation procedure, and didn't notify lawyers about it.

They were trying to make relations charts (who knows who in the movement and in what relations they are) in order to find people with more connections (as possible leaders) and interrogate others, eliciting all kinds of information.

They also put some snitches in the cells of detainees, that were trying to get information from the anarchists regarding the case.

Since they were not able to deal with all this information within 72 hours, they started re-detaining the same people on other counts, thus extending the term of detention for another 72 hours. One anarchist Mikalai Dziadok was re-detained 7 times, so he remained in detention facility for 21 days without any accusations. When they had run out of

suspected anarchist actions to charge him with, they even used a robbery case to detain him for 3 days more.

They were also pressing some activists to give evidence against the detained, and they succeeded in with 4 people (maybe more, but these are ones we know of). 2 of them went on to retract their statements, but their testimonies were still included into case files and used as evidence of guilt.

The most wide-spread threats where to expel people from university, fire their parents from work, and put accusations on them instead of the suspects.

It should be pointed out that none of these people were accused of the attack on the Russian embassy – at that point they were already investigating other cases.

After a while two people who participated in the attack on the Russian embassy confessed – police told those who confessed that they already have information about who did attack from another person. They were told that it's better to confess as the sentence will be less severe if you admit your guilt. At that point it seemed that the cops where just bluffing and the two people bought it.

At the same time, they were looking for 2 other people that were on the run. They wanted to get them and used the most sophisticated methods for that.

First of all, they harassed their parents. They also wrote letters to one of them pretending to be his girlfriend. Cops told some bullshit about how nobody cares about him and that he is ruining his future. Also, they asked one of those who confessed in the attack to go to Moscow and organize an appointment with the wanted people, where they would be caught.

This person refused to do it and ran away himself, later withdrawing his testimony against the others. Nevertheless, they found another anarchist who was quite close to the wanted people, he then arranged a meeting, where one of wanted, Ihar Alinevich, was arrested and put into a high-security KGB prison.

Cops also scanned the confiscated computers and checked phone connections to get a better understanding of the network of people within the movement.

They made most people give their DNA for analysis, and even asked some of their parents to do it.

Cops also took advantage of Indymedia and started posting some crazy messages on behalf of activists, trying to convince the readers, that they should condemn the detained and the direct actions they've allegedly made.

Before the trial cops also issued a documentary about dangerous anarchists to influence public opinion.

## **WHAT WAS THE RESPONSE OF THE COMMUNITY? WAS IT SUCCESSFUL?**

At the moment repression started, there was already an ABC group, but it was informal and was not experienced in solidarity campaigns. They also didn't have many resources to help the arrested. Thus, ABC-Moscow came to aid with resources and advice. Within a week a Minsk Solidarity group was formed, which mostly dealt with publishing updates on the situation, translated the information and spread it abroad, issued calls for solidarity actions. Later, when most people were released and it became clear that the rest will stay in custody, a formal ABC group was formed, that took over the duties of Minsk Solidarity group.

Autumn 2010 was just before presidential elections, and a lot of people believed that the attack on the Russian embassy was a provocation to start repression against political activists. This action was also quite different in terms of damage from all the previous ones, and also done by an unknown anarchist group, so it made a lot of people in the anarchist movement itself doubt if it was really done by anarchists. Nobody has ever dared to do something like that. Indymedia collective also decided that it was a cop provocation and deleted the manifesto from the site. Later, when it turned out that the action was actually done by anarchists, one person offered apologies for suppressing the open publication, and left the collective. But it was too late - part of the movement started to boycott Indymedia for unclear policies. In his prison diary, Ihar Alinevich condemns their actions and calls for boycott, too.

At the same time part of the movement tried to put the case of anarchists on the agenda for human rights organizations. They organized press-conferences, gave interviews, wrote articles about conditions in detention, and were pushing the human rights defenders to recognize anarchists as political prisoners. The HRO were reluctant to do so, as the case was connected with direct action and 'violence' against private property. Given that after the elections a lot of members of the opposition got arrested and later convicted for mass disorders and ended up doing time with anarchists in jail, the process of recognition as political prisoners became easier. A lot of opposition politicians signed a petition demanding anarchists were recognized as political prisoners, and since they didn't admit their guilt and there were a lot of violations of procedure in the trial, they finally got this status. This put more pressure on Lukashenko, as the EU and USA introduced sanctions against him, demanding the liberation of all political prisoners. In the end, it allowed some anarchists to get released before the end of their term.

Generally, the movement reacted awfully. With so many searches, detentions and interrogations, the previous communication infrastructure got

damaged - cops confiscated phones and computers, and a lot of people became disconnected at the same time. There were a few meetings after the repression, but with new detentions and interrogations coming every day, people became paranoid, information was distorted, not complete and in many cases based on gossip. Old communication channels got compromised and not everyone subscribed to the new ones that were created. Usually people informed about being called on by the police after it happened, not before. People didn't show any clear solidarity with the detained, many people were afraid to move and to be seen with other activists. In a few months anarchists were able to gather a 40-person blockade during the protests against elections and the main banner was showing solidarity with the arrested. There was also one more direct action done by a motley group of a nationalist, an antifascist and an anarchist that resulted in arrests and convictions for them as well.

### **WHAT COULD BE DONE BETTER?**

First of all, it would be a lot better if a solidarity group was already in place and had some money, infrastructure, contacts to lawyers and human rights defenders. Also, the security culture was underdeveloped and there was absolutely no training and literature about communication to the police. From the very start people individually and collectively should have started to educate themselves on legal issues so they would not be fooled by the cops in case they were subpoenaed.

As soon as possible people should have made new communication channels - tell each other about the news, who was interrogated, what was asked, etc. Thus, people could be notified about the danger of possible searches and get ready for the interrogations.

Probably, people could have thought out some ways of showing solidarity with the arrested, even though it is quite impossible to make anything public in Belarus without being detained and tried for misdemeanors.

There is an opinion that it might have had more sense to call the arrested people in the media ‘anarchists’ from the very beginning, as at first they were called ‘social activists’ since we didn’t know what their position was. It is hard to say if doing so created additional confusion, and certainly it didn’t help them to get away from cops, as they knew they were anarchists from the very beginning. The mainstream media was also using the term ‘anarchists’. At the same time, people could have made it clear beforehand if they wanted to be referred as anarchist or just a person who has no connection to politics. Although it should be recommended to articulate your political ideas as we are participating in political struggle after all.

### **WHAT WAS THE POSITION OF THE DEFENDANTS?**

The defendants (apart from the snitches) didn't admit their guilt on most counts, and said they didn't do the actions. Aliaksandr Frantskevich only admitted that he has filmed an attack on a community police office. Ihar Alinevich admitted his participation in an anti-military march at the Army HQ and throwing a smoke grenade at it. Anyway, based mostly on the testimonies of the snitches, they all were found guilty and sentenced to prison terms from 3 to 8 years. All activists claimed they are anarchists, though.

The snitches got only 1.5 and 4 years of limitation of freedom, and some were just witnesses, not defendants.

### **WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME FOR THE MOVEMENT? HOW DID IT CHANGE?**

The outcome was dramatic. Actually, everyone was very scared. So, we had several active people constantly under arrest, others were witnesses, some turned snitches. People who avoided the police wanted to avoid

contact with comrades, as they thought they were under surveillance, or didn't want to get into more trouble being seen with some 'dangerous' people. The movement was totally paralyzed for the duration of the investigation. People would only do some things with those they trusted. In the end for about 2 years there were no general meetings, no discussions of what happened, just some small groups met and acted underground. From then on the security culture changed drastically. Most groups became closed and anonymous. Questions about who is in which group and what people are doing were seen as provocative and undesirable. It cut off the inflow of new people and destroyed connections between groups. Some people stopped using phones and social networks altogether. All communication was held online. At the same time, it has become clear that everyone is now known to the police and can be easily controlled. People were afraid to do public actions. Education about security of activity and of information as well as about legal issues became more common. Over time the movement became more open and reunited again, but it is still quite underground and most of the activity is directed inside the movement.

**BELGIUM** First of all I should mention that I don't speak in the name of any group, but only for myself. Other people facing accusations together with me might have different views upon certain issues, maybe all. Others might agree with what I say. Secondly I should mention that the antiterrorist section of the Belgian federal police has been investigating “us” for quite some years, inventing the construction of a “terrorist organization”. I should state clearly that we refute the accusation of being a “terrorist organization”, we are also not speaking about “us” as a group. We are individuals that shared experiences and struggles throughout many years, and we shared them alongside many others, anarchist comrades or non-anarchist rebels. I am not a member of a “terrorist organization” or of a “group”, but I am an anarchist individual fighting the state, together with others or not. Furthermore, we are always talking about anarchists and antiauthoritarians because not everyone struggling would define themselves as anarchists. However, in what follows I will just talk about anarchists, to facilitate the writing and the reading of this text. Lastly, I want to mention that none of us has gone to prison during all of these years, we have just been investigated and spied upon for years now. In 2015 the justice department let us know that the first investigation against anarchists is closed, we are waiting for a trial. A second investigation (opened in 2013) is still ongoing.

**WHAT CAUSED THE POLICE TO START THE REPRESSION? WERE THERE ANY SPECIAL DYNAMICS THAT LEAD TO THAT POINT?**

The first investigation opened in 2008 when some comrades opened an anarchist library in Brussels (called Arcata). In 2010 the investigation moved to the antiterrorist section of the federal police. I would say that from 2008 onwards, the anarchist movement in Belgium had an intense offensive period. Inspired by the movement in Greece and strengthened by a turbulent social climate in the prisons and in certain neighborhoods in Brussels. We could see the repression of anarchists

in Belgium at first as part of a more general attempt of the Belgian state as well as on a European level, to pacify certain disobeying tendencies that were clearly present and causing trouble, as a matter of preparing or pushing further economic reforms. When I nowadays look back to it, it seems like we were living in another reality, where prison revolts were bursting out one after the other and riots in the neighborhoods were not uncommon. In the years 2009-2010 the anarchist movement shared a very intense struggle against a new deportation camp for illegalized people. Attacks upon the companies building the new structure of oppression, interruptions of public spaces, discussions, a very visible struggle by means of posters and leafleting. In this period the newspapers started speaking about “violent anarchists”, the state security mentioned the danger of those anarchists, the OCAD (institution evaluation the threats of attacks) put the anarchist threat at its highest level, some far right politician started complaining about anarchists in the parliament. All this resulted in the police file being transferred to the antiterrorist section. I could say that this struggle made them worry, because its proposal to fight this new deportation camp outside of the democratic framework of what is legal to do or not is a frightening proposal to any state. The state is not afraid of some isolated group of comrades; it is afraid of the proposal of self-organization and attack spreading throughout society. They want us to vote and we are proposing to burn down the voting offices, these are two irreconcilable ways of looking at matters.

### **WHAT TACTICS DID THEY USE? WAS IT SUCCESSFUL? IN WHAT WAY AND WHY?**

The fact of being investigated by the antiterrorist police means you are confronted to an endless series of means of control and spying. Basically, the police just needed to ask permission to the investigating judge (Isabelle Panou) for any means they wanted to use, which she never refused. So we experienced cameras in front of private houses, a camera

was found hidden in the living room of two comrades, microphones, police stationed in front of houses or in front of the library, phone taps, being followed by cops, at least 3 attempts at infiltration, attempts at recruiting snitches, house raids when you're not there, house raids when you are there, systematically searching the garbage in front of the houses of comrades as well as overwhelming police presence at each attempt of a public demo.

Basically, they try to intimidate as much as possible. They focus on a few people in order to scare away others, to create splits and divisions where before you had just difference of ideas or focusses. They try to create the image that "if you go that library you will be in trouble", which is of course pure intimidation. But it works, I cannot deny that the police pressure had an influence upon how anarchists related to each other and upon the horizons of its imagination of what is possible and what is not.

We've always tried to be as open as possible about aggressions of the police, because we consider that these things, that are known already to the police, need to be known by other comrades, in order to avoid rumors and in order to make this a subject of discussion. When no one is talking about what happens it just becomes more complicated. This is not to claim the position of victims wanting to talk about repression for hours and hours, but just to be able to overcome the police pressure and continue to fight. At some point, we started a monthly open meeting, dedicated to all that specifically has to do with repression, be it in Belgium or in other countries. But even if we did this effort, I cannot say that the "movement" as a whole was able to get away without some secrets kept up or contacts lost, motivated by fear, to take up stupid positions just to "protect" oneself.

## **WHAT WAS THE RESPONSE OF THE COMMUNITY? WAS IT SUCCESSFUL? WHAT COULD BE DONE BETTER?**

Looking back to certain moments I think the reaction of anarchists was very weak, for example when we found the camera hidden in the house of two comrades. On other moments, we managed to react in a way that enabled us to regain strength after some aggression, for example when houses were raided in 2015 many comrades got together to discuss and organize a public gathering on a square. “They want us to shut up, we scream and we will continue doing so” was kind of the message.

Well, what could be always done better I think is to break with two mentalities. The first one is the mentality of separation that thinks the aggression of the police concerns only those who live it in the most intense way. No, police aggression concerns all of us. If we recognize ourselves in the struggles comrades are engaging themselves in, if we recognize ourselves in their fight to destroy the state, the aggression against a comrade or more is a matter for all. Secondly the mentality “shit, I might be next” which makes people to take a step back. This may be understandable from a certain point of view, but it is actually not very logical. When comrades take steps back, the struggle becomes weaker and it becomes easier for the police to continue their attacks. However, when we stick together it gives the police a tougher time and it becomes more difficult for them to attack others.

## **WHAT WAS THE POSITION OF THE DEFENDANTS?**

Out trial still needs to happen, so I cannot say much about this. What I would mention as something very important to me, is the defense of the anarchist struggle on the streets. This is to say: what goes in front of court are not just some comrades, but the anarchist struggle which is being attacked. By anarchist struggle I mean: self-organization and attack. So, a way of struggling without media, politicians, unions and

other institutions. A way of struggle where one organizes without all of this and where one doesn't want to make petitions or shake hands with representatives of the state, where one wants to get to the point of attacking the state instead of reforming it. By attack I mean a wide variety of means that can be used; posters, pamphlets, fire, graffiti, plyers, stones. It is the proposal we have been making throughout all of those years, a proposal to anarchists and all rebels: organize to attack. For me it is very important to defend this proposal on our terrain, which is the street. But it is most definitely not only up to the "accused" to do this, it's up to all of us who are still burning inside with a desire to live freely, a desire which cannot be silenced by words of "be patient" nor by police intimidation, even if times are not always easy and the world in which we are living takes upon the look of our biggest nightmare.

### **WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME FOR THE MOVEMENT? HOW DID IT CHANGE?**

I think a movement constantly changes. Many factors are in play when trying to understand why a movement changes, not only police pressure. We can take a look at how society is changing and what influence it has on people. Repression is present at all fronts of life; it is not only a matter of police oppression. Here I am referring to for example work and family. In Brussels, a fierce struggle against the construction of a huge prison has been going on for some years, with high points and low points, but never static moments. I guess I would say that a small number of comrades can do huge things. But this doesn't mean that I am not craving for a change in society, a wave of subversion opening up the minds of people including ourselves. In the meantime, we shouldn't be waiting, there are so many things to be discussed and done. Throughout history all revolutionary movements have gone through difficult times, it is not a reason to be desperate!

**ABC NIJMEGEN: [HTTPS://ABCNIJMEGEN.WORDPRESS.COM/](https://abcnijmegen.wordpress.com/)**

## **BRISTOL   OPERATION RHONE REPRESSION IN BRISTOL**

The repression probably started after the Stokes Croft Riots in 2011, but the police likely wanted to go after anarchists beforehand. Well-known local anarchist Huw Norfolk went underground as a result of police investigations in August 2011, and has still not been found by the police, despite having a £10,000 reward on his head. Operation Rhone, which mainly targeted anarchists and anti-state movements, started (according to the police) on June 13th, 2014. They have been investigating 100s of ‘incidents’, and arrested five people who were released without charge. Em Sheppard, who was sentenced to two years in prison, was never officially linked to the operation. The police tried to claim this as a victory for them but she wasn’t arrested as a result of their operation, in fact she was simply caught at the scene of a crime. We can only guess why they decided to go after us, probably due to insurrectionary actions claimed by anarchists, which they never caught anyone for and were a bit embarrassing for them.

There were lots of raids on peoples’ houses, the cops used intimidation tactics like calling up people, their friends and partners, threatening them and trying to persuade them that they were wrong. We did a pretty good job of supporting each other, and not giving any information to the police. The defendant solidarity group (which confusingly has the acronym BDS) published a “statement against police harassment”[9], signed by 14 local groups, refusing to let the police divide us, and even got some media to let us put our message across – the Guardian (a nationwide lefty newspaper) published a comrade’s quote that “if the police want to prevent death they should be arresting each other instead!”

People even felt empowered during/after the repression – we published cops’ photos online, went to the police station wearing badger face masks (a silly stunt but it felt good), and made fun of them.

9: <https://bristolabc.wordpress.com/2014/10/15/statement-against-police-harassment/>

However, we could've done a lot of things better, or other people could've! For example, more "fluffy" or "apolitical" groups refused to sign our statement, wasted our time, or were just confused by our response. We did let some of the more liberal groups dilute our message though, and this may have put off some insurrectionary groups from publicly supporting our anti-repression campaign. If we could start again, we would use the campaign to get more people involved in the defendant support group, in order to do more of the projects, we had planned - outreach, poster, information sharing in general. We did quite well in getting the word out to more mainstream media, but we could've done better; we could've responded to Vice's manipulation of the conversation. We used an outdated (in this country) form of media - indymedia - to get our message out. If we could've used Facebook the message might have got out better, maybe we missed a trick there.

There were no defendants but Operation Rhone did have an effect on the insurrectionist actions in Bristol, and the anarchist scene in general. People are scared and may be less likely to go out on actions. The repression has worked in this way; people are more cautious. The repression had some emotional repercussions, and dealing with the police is draining generally. For people, more on the peripheries/fluffy groups who were also targeted, it made them more radicalized/political, realizing that they aren't exempt from these repressive campaigns.

At the time of writing, November 2016, Operation Rhone has not been formally retired, although no-one that we know of has faced harassment or raids for at least a year. We have had information that it's still going, so we are cautious. However, the insurrectionary actions have more or less stopped in Bristol after Em's imprisonment, so you could say the cops succeeded.

**[HTTPS://WWW.WHATDOTHEYKNOW.COM/REQUEST/OPERATION\\_RHONE](https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/operation_rhone)  
[HTTPS://BRISTOL.INDYMEDIA.ORG/](https://bristol.indymedia.org/)  
[HTTPS://BRISTOLABC.WORDPRESS.COM/?S=RHONE](https://bristolabc.wordpress.com/?s=rhone)**

## **CZECH** THE DYNAMICS BEHIND THE REPRESSION IN **CZECH CALLED OPERATION FENIX**

This text was composed during spring 2017 and we need to say that many people of the anti-authoritarian spectrum would have a different analysis and feelings on the case. Also the situation in the country is quite dynamic so much information may have changed. For more information check [antifenix.cz](http://antifenix.cz).

Operation Fenix was the biggest repression against any social movement since 1989. The police entrapment (infiltration leading towards provocation and arrest) has also not been experienced before. And it was first time ever in the history of so called Czech republic when a group of people was framed as terrorists in the country.

That brings about many questions. Why against us – anarchists, radical left and animal and earth liberation movement? Why right now, when actually the fascist movement has been growing so quickly? And why they labeled terrorists the participants of an action in the state of preparation fabricated by the police and not nazis when they have killed so many people in past or burned down a house full of people sleeping in it just few years ago?

Us, as AntiFenix, definitely don't want to play smart know-it-alls but we have some answers to these questions.

What caused the repression against us? Many have the pragmatic answer. Police needed to spent their budget. Well, that may be, but why against us and right now? In so-called Czech Republic we have seen quite a game change in the understanding of (some) subversive actions amongst the public. Some projects and actions became quite popular. Mostly squatting due to many squatting actions 5-2 years ago and the big squat Klinika, which became a very well known place of encounter and during the biggest migrant wave the first and for some time only

place providing any solidarity to the most targeted ones. At the same time, new tactics were introduced in past 4 years. On the anarchist field, an insurrectionist group called the Network of Revolutionary Cells (SRB) claimed several sabotages on Big Brother's property, mostly arson of police vehicles and toll gates. ALF and Animal Rights Militia on the other side did some sabotages on fur farm properties and releases of thousands of minks etc.

In past ten years, we have seen uprisings and revolts happening in very unexpected places, where radical tactics became very popular and spread quickly. People have enough of facing crisis of different kinds. In such an environment, the possible connection of popular movements and more radical direct action could be very dangerous for the authorities, as it could spark alternatives amongst people.

A massive repression is the best way how to disconnect the two, scare radicals and make them divided and paranoid and mostly how to discredit the movement by labeling us "terrorists".

Anarchists equals terrorists? Well, let's think about the term "terrorism" and its history. Before it was introduced, the governments had to spend a lot of propaganda, energy, time and resources to label some group of people as enemy of majority (in their language called the state). Of course, these division lines still work very well and racism and xenophobia for example exist strong as ever before. But not everyone falls into the excluded minority and some minorities may not be seen as evil by majorities as nationalists need them to be. Then the term "terrorism" is drawn from the pack. People don't ask anymore. They fear. But all the millions of so called terrorists around the world have almost nothing in common. Different culture, ethnicity, religion, values etc. The only things they have in common are that they didn't label themselves as terrorist, but the repressive apparatus (followed by media and majority) did. And they are somehow in conflict with the prevailing order. For better or worse.

That answer how it is possible that Nazis never faced such accusation is because they aren't in conflict with the prevailing order. Actually, their ideas and language became political mainstream. When we hear about terrorism in news, we can see pictures of Daesh followed by comrades facing trial behind the moderator.

The repression wasn't the single big case of Fenix, but also the case of Igor Sevcov and later Lukas Borl. Igor's one – charges of an attack against the house of minister of defense – could have different dynamics behind the scene. Despite the lack of evidence, the accused was an anarchist from Russia and by the police and media and the minister himself labeled as “pro Putin anarchist”. It doesn't seem like coincidence if we consider that in the same period of this so called attack (no fire, no firefighters nor police called the same night but almost two days later, no one except a bottle in the garden was seen), the minister of defense was signing crucial contracts with the US about their military presence in Czech territory. The media didn't focus on that at all, but on the case of “an assassination of the army leader's house” (their term). His ministry started military programs in schools to attract children to join the military and mainly sees NATO as a friendly necessity. At the same time, he pushed for reestablishing the mandatory draft. All the cold faced mister said when they asked him for comment on the attack was “it proves that the direction me and my ministry is heading is right and we have to be even stronger”.

Of course it is possible that some pro Russian fanatic (there are militarized groups understanding the conflict as pick the side in an USA vs Russia binary world) really didn't know how to make a molotow and threw some bottles on the minister's house out of frustration, who knows. But these facts should be taken into account when we think what caused the repression against us.

One thing we have to take into account is incredible naivety and lack of security culture and sober thinking of some of the people in the entrapped group. Without that, the repression would not be so successful.

But still it was the police who infiltrated this group in the first place. And the goal of the agents-provocateurs was clear. Provoke an action which will lead towards nation wide repression and arrests.

### **THE COMMUNITY RESPONSE AND THE STATEMENTS OF THE ACCUSED**

In the beginning, there was an informational chaos and we didn't have structures capable of dealing with such a situation. It was really hard to find out what was actually happening. Three of the accused were in prison, so the communication was very limited and they were told by the lawyers (all of the imprisoned have had state attorneys) not to connect to the movement and not to speak publicly about the case. Another one went back to her home country and her father took her under very strict control and she didn't want to get in touch fearing further sentences. The two who stayed out were accused "only" of not reporting the terrorism but not of preparing it themselves, so they weren't considered by cops as part of the so called terrorist group and also they were told not to talk to anyone by the lawyers. That changed with time, but the beginning was messy.

The response of the anti-authoritarian community differed. There were half open assemblies where many different people met and people talked a lot what to do, but unfortunately it gave me the feeling that these meetings were more about how to avoid being in trouble and clean ourselves of the terrorist narrative rather than about what actions of solidarity to take. I think that this was mostly because no one knew if the accused really planned the attack on the train and if they are connected to the Network of Revolutionary Cells (SRB), as police claimed. SRB is an insurrectionist group which claimed several sabotages on po-

lice vehicles and unfortunately became very unpopular, because many people organize on an activist base and understand themselves as part of a struggle in which the diversity of tactics isn't acceptable once it gets "too violent". But to be fair, the language of SRB is also not helping this division of the movement as it is understood (or misunderstood) as vanguard and because the language of their communicate only helps the militant tactics to be disconnected from the rest of the millennium. Because there was already such a distance from radical tactics, it was easier for police to portray the accused as part of this new insurrectionist way and many people automatically stopped to support them and even to cooperate with the support groups. However we as ABC do not fall into this language or guilt, terrorism etc. We want to stress that the police purposely lied when they said that by Fenix they broke down SRB because they listened to their meetings and knew they weren't part of any of these attacks and in the end within two years, the police didn't charge them for anything connected to the actions done by SRB. Also the police claimed that by Fenix they broke down SRB, but thankfully they didn't, as SRB did more sabotages in response to Fenix than ever before.

### **WAS OPERATION FENIX SUCCESSFUL AND WHAT COULD WE DO BETTER?**

The aim of the repression definitely is to paralyze the movement. That is approached through accusing and imprisoning comrades, spreading fear and paranoia, dividing activists, discrediting us on a public level. All of that happened, especially in the beginning.

The biggest success of the ones behind Fenix must have been the division within the anarchist and radical left movement and blaming each other for the repression. Many people turned their back against the accused and felt that in using the narrative "we are not terrorist, look how anarchists are helpful" (as if the accused are the bad terrorists). The

paranoia and fear got pretty high, which is totally understandable, since this was the first time the generation of today's anti-authoritarians experienced anything like raids, home searches, confiscations, arrests, interrogations and imprisonment.

It took quite some time to explain, that this is exactly what the repressive apparatus wants to achieve. As ABC/AntiFenix, we promote the idea that it is not a problem of a few imprisoned radicals, but an attack against the future of subversive action as a whole. It is a very big mistake to fall for the narrative of the police and believe that the accusation they put is the only true story. Using the language of our enemies is not a useful for us. It only helps to paralyze us. All the terms like innocent/guilty, violence/non-violence, legal/illegal, terrorist, extremist etc. we were forced to use by culture, education, media and every day repression. We must leave these terms for good and look on actions with our own analysis. Asking questions like "How does any action distribute power?".

Looking through the lenses of power distribution, we don't ask if the possible attack against the cargo train with military equipment is violent, illegal and so on. Rather ask what is military equipment used for? How many people die if this amount of it will be used in a warfare? Who are the usual casualties and who profits from wars? Isn't such a train more dangerous when it gets to the battle field than when its prevented from getting there?

Anyone can answer these questions for themselves. This time, the circumstances were faster than the answers. When the fact that the group was infiltrated and it was a big police provocation came to light, the police lost their legitimacy in the front of even the most peaceful reformists. That was a strong momentum. Soon Igor's case was revealed as another made up story and when they didn't have enough evidence and connected the attack together with charges of complicity on crimi-

nal damage – Igor video recorded someone else who started to spay paint a prison wall during a noise demo – the police lost the last believers. Infiltrators and Igor's theatrical court was a game changer. Now our position and legitimacy of badmouthing the police as an institution is much better than it was in the beginning.

## **WHAT'S NEXT?**

Now in spring 2017 there are 8 anarchists facing trial or having sentences or both. Five of them are in the group charged with the terrorist charges because of the train (the Fenix case). None of them is in remand anymore. The verdicts will be pronounced this spring. Some of them may face up to life sentences. Another anarchist, Ales, was at first labeled as part of this group but later police realized he had nothing to do with them and he was released of custodial jail and sentenced with probation for illegal bearing of arms. Next one is Igor, who due to the time in jail for a thing he didn't do (even by official court decision) lost his student visa and asked for working visa which he was denied to get due to his criminal record - the sentence of complicity on criminal damage and his anarchist, anti-state and “against public order” attitude. That means that right now (May 2017) Igor is illegal in EU and the state started the deportation procedure. Igor is facing big hustle by the police since he is banned to join any sport, cultural or other anarchist event and lately they want to start a new criminal procedure for that he just got invited to the police station for giving a testimony and also he has to go to the police station every time an anarchist event in Prague takes a place. The last one is Lukas Borl, who was jailed after a year of living underground and accused of some sabotages and defrauding an ID and of foundation, supporting and promoting a movement against human rights and freedoms. He is also accused of being the author of the graffiti which Igor recorded. Lukas got released from remand in April 2017 and with the other pending trial outside of prison walls. Now in May 2017 there are no anarchists locked in prisons here in Czech.

In some ways, operation Fenix has changed many things. People learned and made a healthy conflictual relationship towards the police. It is true that now we know that some people one can never trust but even if this is a sad thing to realize, it's better to know that. On the other hand, some ties are stronger than before. But still, there is much more to be done on this field. There have been many mistakes done but we must stick together and approach each other with critical solidarity. This long struggle will take many mistakes and we should learn from it, but still the biggest mistake would be to stay home and not to do anything.

We got to create much stronger bonds between each other and places where we organize and build stronger security culture and communities and collectives with a strong sense of self defense without relying on state or private security. And we must show that with the strongest solidarity to the imprisoned and comrades in hiding, our future doesn't rely on the loss of individuals. That as collective we are much stronger than that and we don't let anyone to take us down or divide. Because that's what the oppressor aims for. We also must forget these popular phrases with hope to make media and their readers and Facebook clickers being on our side but rather to connect with people in our close surroundings and make these connections sincere, strong and based on trust not an empty promises.

Facing nation wide crackdown against us is hard and it takes a lot of energy and resources. However, we can see the repression as an armed criticism of our movement and if we read it correctly, we can find our weak spots and only become stronger. As a member of the George Jackson brigade and Men Against Sexism, long term anarchist prisoner and gay liberationist Ed Mead says "We learn a thousand times more from defeat than we do from a victory."

**ABC CZECH: [HTTPS://ANARCHISTBLACKCROSS.CZ/](https://anarchistblackcross.cz/)  
ANTIFENIX SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN:  
[HTTPS://ANTIFENIX.NOBLOGS.ORG/](https://antifenix.noblogs.org/)**

## **WARSAW THE WARSAW THREE**

Please note that the trial has just started. Therefore a lot of information about the case cannot be shared with you yet and the situation will continue to develop. We are not aware of the full range of possible impacts of this case on our 'movement'. We are not always able to gauge the level of the repressions, especially when the source remains hidden from our view. There is plenty yet to be discovered . To evaluate the case, from the perspective of the support group it seems like trying to understand what is broken in a car that is still rolling. This piece of information should be treated as work in progress.

### **BRIEF INTRODUCTION:**

On the night of May 23rd 2016, the police in Warsaw arrested three anarchists. The anarchists were caught in a trap. An anti-terrorist squad had been waiting for them, and they were severely beaten and taken to a police station. They were beaten and tortured at the place of arrest, the youngest was also tortured and interrogated later that day at a police station. Then they were transferred to a remand prison where they were held in custody for over three months, awaiting trial and facing up to 8 years in prison. A media frenzy broke out over the arrest in the next few days, with high-ranking politicians and experts on terrorism discussing the matter on TV. Photos and video reruns of the arrested walking with chains around their feet and hands were broadcast on public television. The accusations were: possession of explosives and the intention to use them by setting police car(s) on fire.

They were called terrorists by the police and media. This accusations were quite serious – they were facing from 6 months to 8 years of prison.

The first hearings of the accused took place at District Prosecutor's Office on 24th May. Marks of tortures were visible on their bodies. One of them was beaten so severely that police had to select only photos taken from the rear to give to the media.

On 25th May, during the prosecution session at the district court, the prosecution decided to hold them in custody for three months (which could be automatically extended to 6 months). A few days later the whole matter was transferred to the special section of the State Prosecutor's Office for organized crime and corruption. All three were classed as particularly dangerous ("N" for Niebezpieczni) and detained in isolation. During the first week none of them had access to a lawyer.

On July 4th, two days after a solidarity demo held outside the prison gates in Warsaw, all three were moved to the city of Radom, away from their lawyers, families and friends.

On the 18th of August the court decided to hold the three anarchists in custody for the next 3 months. All of them were still held in single cells and treated as "the most dangerous" prisoners.

Mass media in the service of the state reproduced the authorities' propaganda. A witch-hunt began, creating mass hysteria and the image of a country threatened by terrorism. By doing this, the authorities and their collaborators were trying to justify the implementation of the new Anti-Terrorism Law. Significantly, just before the entry into force of the Act, on the 10th, 23rd and 30th May 2016, a series of false bomb alarms took place in several Polish cities, leading to evacuation of sites such as the editorial offices of the press and television, shopping malls and banks.

The wave of repression against the anarchist movement was rising. On May 23rd 2016 the police raided one of Warsaw's collectives four times, a group involved in fighting the real estate development industry and empowering the struggle for food sovereignty. Since then, the

collective has constantly been harassed by uniformed visitors. In Kraków, they searched the apartment and questioned a person who had set up a social media site ridiculing with irony the inflated police accusations over the Warsaw three. In Warsaw and other cities multiple stories emerged about police harassing people associated with the movement, and attempting surveillance of places that are important for the movement.

The witch-hunt atmosphere of the campaign against the broad anarchist movement was building popular consent for repression and surveillance targeting social movements, that are fighting against the most influential interest groups in this country.

On September 14th 2016 during a court sitting concerning the complaint for prolonging the arrest, a decision was made to release them on bail and thanks to tremendous support from our comrades from different collectives and regions on 19th of September all three were released. They had strict parole rules: couldn't talk to each other or case witnesses, couldn't change their place of stay, travel outside poland and had to sign off at police station every day.

On the 16th of January 2017 the three were informed about a change of charges. They are now (only) facing accusations of trying to destroy property. This carries a possible sentence from 3 months up to 5 years of prison. The accusations were changed after the 4th and final expert report into the supposed explosive material contained into the plastic bottles. A 15-page document unquestionably proves that the charges for the three anarchists were incorrect and demolishes the thesis stated in 3 previous police experts' opinions that had been the main reason to arrest and maintain them in total isolation for over 4 months.

Finally on April all the restrictions were revoked. The three can now talk to each other, don't need to sign off at police stations, can travel

freely withing poland and abroad and their bail fee will be returned (unless it will be sentenced to use it to cover the cost of the trail or as fines). They also plead guilty to new charges – (attempted) property damage.

Meantime a case of the police brutality against one of the anarchists after his arrest is now being investigated. The investigation was demanded by one of the prosecutors after the first hearing of the anarchists' case, when police beatings were visible on the body of the arrested to an extent that it wasn't possible to ignore. The case was soon dropped but the defense appealed this decision. On 7th of February 2017 the court decided to reopen the investigation.

**WHAT CAUSED THE POLICE TO START THE REPRESSION? WERE THERE ANY SPECIAL DYNAMICS THAT LEAD TO THAT POINT?**

The case of the Warsaw three is strongly tied up with the polish political context and it is not going to be possible to explain it without saying few words about the place of the anarchists on the political map. For people who don't know much about mainstream politics in poland, you should picture a country where the two main political forces are right wing religious conservatives and (center) right neoliberals. Until not long ago The neoliberals, were in rule (for past 8 years), with the right wing as opposition mobilizing politically and on the streets (their biggest success is the polish independence day – 11th of november – the biggest nationalist march in europe / around 75 thousand people last year, 100 thousand two years back), benefiting from resentment all the government's nocive anti-people policies (they often confronted authorities, stealing all the space for young rebels unhappy with status quo). Recently they changed places and the right wing took power, pushing the neoliberals into opposition (they also organized at the street level, but nowhere close in force or numbers to the street-organized right wing people).

We find ourselves in between, small groups fighting all sides.

Since the PiS party (Law and Justice) took power we have noticed the increase in attention given by the authorities to the 'freedom movements'. Even if the new anti-terrorist and surveillance laws were already proposed and worked on by the neoliberal fraction which was in power previously, it's only under the new government that we have begun to feel the increasing interest in us. If we talk about the repressions and their origin from the perspective of the authorities, it is hard for us to judge how much they really see us as a threat.

Even if the Polish anarchist movement is quite active in a few fields, for the moment it is hard to see our successes in a way that would make the authorities lose sleep over it. In the Warsaw context, surely the tenants movement, to which anarchist movement is somehow connected, would be the one which has had some results in fighting the neoliberal process of re-privatisation. But even in this case the current government shouldn't see anarchists focused on the tenant movement as such a big problem, since the right wing, catering to its own needs, makes stands against neoliberal housing policies, trying to feed off and even trying to appropriate parts of the tenants' struggles.

One could have an impression that the repression of anarchist movement happened somehow 'by chance' and the case of the Warsaw 3 was and is still being to justify the introduction of the new anti-terrorist law. The very fact that the anarchists were caught on the eve of the introduction of that law was extremely useful to create a fake terrorist threat in Poland, with the new law being one of the measures to fight against it.

Forthcoming events of international scale (World catholic youth days in Kraków and NATO summit in Warsaw) helped to increase media discussion of the need to secure the country against potential terrorist attacks. This situation is no different to that in any other state, where most of the extra security measures implemented for this kind of big international events remain in place until the present day.

The media entered the arena with a sensationalist discourse, publishing new 'truths' about the case, and connecting arrestees with specific projects and spaces. This has had consequences for those projects; in one case after an article linked the 'terrorists' to a squatted space, the building of social support for that space and cause became very hard if not impossible. We know that the police have been intervening and pushing the owners – the development company – to get rid of the squatters. From the moment of the arrests in May, the police has visiting the site countless times under different pretexts. Nevertheless the place still struggles to exist although most of the previous collective members didn't manage to withstand the pressure and left.

### **WHAT TACTICS DID THEY USE? WAS IT SUCCESSFUL? IN WHAT WAY AND WHY?**

When it comes to the tactics used by the police and ABW (Internal Security Agency), we can say that from our perspective it is difficult to see them as efficient or not if we take into account the fact that repression of the movement doesn't seem to be the main motive behind the state's actions.

The main aim of the government right now is to create the conditions for their autocracy to grow and flourish. The fact that the ruling party didn't need a coalition to form the government means that they have all the necessary legislative tools for that. If in this case the government wanted to create the atmosphere of terrorist paranoia, what in return should allow them to introduce the new laws that would secure their position in power, then we could say they have succeeded. It doesn't mean that they absolutely needed the Warsaw 3. Looking at Polish society's political apathy while the government introduces new, ever more restrictive laws, and looking how the society buys the narrative of the war of civilisations (in the migration context), we could easily say that they had no need for the Warsaw 3 case at all. Nevertheless the

case is being used politically and we can see different political decisions and political games in how it has unfolded so far.

If it comes to tactics, there is plenty of space for speculations about why they do what they do. We know for sure that there was extensive surveillance of our milieu for more than a year before the arrests. During that period we know that there were several attempts by the ABW to coerce some of 'our people' into co-operation. Our social centers were being frequently visited by plain clothes cops on different occasions. The fact that the police has trapped our comrades gives us a clear understanding that they knew everything about that action well in advance. The source of this information remains unknown and the serious gaps in the practice of security culture within this milieu is not helping us to narrowing down the possible ways the cops might have acquired that knowledge.

If we consider that the authorities already knows so much about us, then it doesn't seem so logical for them to try to divide this movement any further. If the aim of the state was to divide us, it was successful. Saying that, even if this case did deepen some splits, we usually manage to do that just fine on our own.

There is always the notion of 'control for control's sake'. We know that once terrorist charges had been imposed in this case, the police and ABW had a very good pretext to officially enter Warsaw's squats. The fact that they didn't do it and only increased the outside control using (mostly recognizable) agents might mean that they have a need to keep these spaces that have become established as centers of anarchist activities. Surely – looking at how the streets have been heating up recently – the anarchist movement could be considered as something which could become a potential threat to the government. Especially when the protesters run out of 'citizen' ways to have influence on the law-makers. In that case it's good to know all the faces, addresses and

number-plates and the phone numbers. In spring 2017, cars belonging to visitors to social centers in Warsaw were frequently photographed and few weeks after the three were arrested, a few dozen policemen broke into one of the social centers in the Silesia region during an exhibition just to collect the personal data of everyone inside at that time. There was a lot of effort in the last months by police and secret service to get informers from inside the movement, both by bribing or threatening. We know about at least 10 such cases from the last year and one is being pursued aggressively at the moment we write these words (summer 2017).

### **WHAT WAS THE RESPONSE OF THE COMMUNITY? WAS IT SUCCESSFUL? WHAT COULD BE DONE BETTER?**

The anarchist milieu in Poland responded in diverse ways. Some groups made statements of support and there were a few gestures of solidarity. Banners and walls were painted, money collected during benefits... There was a wide range of commentary about the case: from treating the whole case as a police provocation (not believing at times that those anarchists really existed, treating the whole story as fictitious, just like the fake bomb alarms) to begin with, to absolutely condemning voices. At the beginning, right after the arrest took place, when media started to attack the anarchist milieu, a press conference was called, where an attempt to present a common narrative that could represent Warsaw's milieu was made.

The support group was formed and now with the trial starting we can evaluate at least some points of their work. The group was created to deal particularly with this case – ABC Warsaw supports its actions and members of ABC are also taking part in wawa3. wawa3 is something wider thou– something that is designed as a political campaign aiming for supporting the arrested 3 but not only – it has also broader antirepressive political goals of its own – in this aspect it becomes

something similar and parallel to ABC. Important element is that at the beginning the support group was consisting in big part of closest ones of the arrested. This, as we now know, was not the best position to make political campaign, as main goal was making sure the arrested will not get a long sentence. This has led unintentionally to solidarity actions being 'centralized', which effected in misunderstanding with part of the movement.

The problem from the very beginning was the lack of communication with the arrestees and our confusing initial assumptions about their own positions. It wasn't sure what line of defense they would choose, if they would want to be connected to the movement at all, etc. Since our only contact with the arrested was via lawyers and they choose to not communicate the real request of our comrades, we trusted that the tactics communicated or proposed by lawyers was the one our friends choose. This proved to be false, however we only learned about it after their release. As a result, we were trying to rather speak less than more in order not to have a negative influence on the case, which at the first glance looked bleak. We tried to build support by referring to solidarity with comrades that happen to be in the hands of the enemy, and who cannot even make their own statements. The whole narrative outside our scene at that point was that prepared by the police and the media. In order to avoid divisions inside the movement and to build a strong solidarity front, we were referring to basic questions, like solidarity with prisoners being held by our common enemies. Anarchists in Poland have little experience with the kind of means that the three were allegedly employing, therefore we cannot count that the response would automatically be supportive. We were afraid the three would be condemned by the milieu itself before their court trial even started.

The tactics applied after the arrests - to rather hold back than do too much in order not to cause harm to the defendants, was read by many people as 'better do nothing' and as a consequence wasn't really

compatible with the solidarity campaign. The solidarity group was swarmed with work and did not communicate enough with the local milieu, hoping that they will follow news and statements from the website. This didn't happen however and local response for the case was very weak, even more so since there were many voices condemning the action by the three comrades.

As for the solidarity campaign, there were some attempts to change the narrative used. An internet site appeared, which gathered materials on the wider repression against the movement as well as the Warsaw 3 case in an attempt to strengthen the solidarity network, fill the gaps in security culture and provide a space to create our narrative about the case. Meetings were organized, both practical and on a more general level about security culture, case studies from other countries were presented, as well as meetings with the arrested after their release.

A serious problem was the lack of good communication with families of the arrested. Some of them didn't have trust in the scene and the solidarity group, which in one case led to hiring another lawyer by mother of the youngest of the arrested. That lawyer's defense line was attacking the movement and since she manipulated our imprisoned comrade into collaborating with the prosecutor, it made tremendous harm for the case and the milieu.

Outside the prison walls the biggest harm was caused by gossip in the milieu. The most drastic example of this harmful behavior was when a squat in Kraków was attacked by a self-proclaimed antifa group which has used rumors about the collaboration of the youngest of the arrested with prosecution to measure their own version of justice. At this stage the case files were still secret and the only knowledge about the statements could have been coming from the defendants (talking about the statements by any of them could send them straight back to jail), lawyers or straight from the police. When the accused anarchist came

to the squat, the 'antifa' group threatened people living in the squat for a couple of days, invading the place and causing big enough mess to get the cops interested. After few days of their visits, situation has finally resulted in the squat eviction and charges for people who were living there. Since the three anarchist could not talk about their testimonies before the trial, neither them nor the support group could deal with accusations, which were blown out of proportions and taken out of context, many of their accusations were completely false (like being a snitch). The bullying way (threatening all the collective with violence) the group of attackers have tried to deal with such sensitive issue (having no proof of anything) have left no other option than to condemn the attackers officially. After the eviction the collective that run that social center partly went into hiding and had issued a statement, condemning the aggressions of that group. The smear campaign against the attacked collective in the movement had begun on the basis of an argument that issues from within the movement shouldn't be dealt with through a public statement. The only two collectives that have taken a stand that supported the attacked collective have been (unofficially) accused of an attempt to divide the movement. We see this situation as an extension of police repressions on the movement, this time few people showing a muscle are helping the police in dividing the milieu even deeper. Especially the fact that they were basing their arguments on rumors and that there were plenty of different means to deal with the issue rather to attack a person and a whole collective.

Another example of how the movements is easy to manipulate was right before the first trial. A week before the first trial an article appeared, revealing parts of the statements the three made in jail, their identities, life experience, medical records – part of the information was also not true. This was clearly a strategy prepared to divide the milieu even deeper and prevent solidarity actions on the day of the trial. Sadly, this tactics proved successful to some extent, and part of the

movement has decided to judge the three yet again based on gossips (this time provided by media) and enemy narrative rather than wait until they will be able to speak openly a week later. On the brighter side, this forced the three to publish statements, first time in their own names since their arrest, which in the end proved beneficial for the case, as it helped them to decide the strategy for the trial.

Since the trial started the support group and the three comrades were able to talk more openly about the case details, which helped to clear some of the initial misunderstandings as well as the gossips with at least part of the movement and to show the context in which the statements to the prosecution were given. This brings a possibility to change the narrative in which the case is seen inside the movement.

In general, when it comes to support group and solidarity campaign we've come to few conclusion that can be generalized to other similar cases. Firstly, the support group, which is usually the closest ones of the arrested comrades and is taking on such tasks as staying in touch with the arrested and their families, should have it's own support group, that will be independent and responsible for political campaign. Secondly, solidarity campaign should not be centralized, our strength lays in variety of different approaches and reactions that such situations trigger. Also – judging from this case – if there were no statements from the arrested saying otherwise, we should always claim the arrested as part of the anarchist movement and therefore picture their arrest as a political act, which is almost always the case. And finally – in countries such as poland, where lawyers are not experienced with such cases – the support group should have limited trust in strategies that they propose, if they are trying to cut off the political aspect of the case. Better communication with arrestees, their families and local milieu is also essential for a good solidarity campaign.

## **WHAT WAS THE POSITION OF THE DEFENDANTS?**

The case is showing up many mistakes made by the arrestees and many organizational difficulties on the side of the people trying to do support from the outside. The communication blockade imposed on the arrestees by the prosecutor's office was a serious problem (for the first week they couldn't even see their lawyers, and during their whole time inside there were no visits allowed, apart from some exceptions for family members). It seems that it was especially these communication problems which made it impossible to decide an efficient strategy during the days after the arrests.

The only information they had access to were the official notes from the prosecutor's office informing on actions the lawyers are taking or that the other defendants had made statements. This served as a form of communication, based on which each of the detained had to create their own strategy, relying on their own experience of course.

Each of the three has defended himself to the best of his abilities, trying to limit the harm to the others arrested and to those on the outside. It wasn't always successful. How much each of them decided to cooperate with the attorney depended on their personal decisions, which differed according to experience. In general (unsurprisingly) – more experience in antiauthoritarian/anarchist/emancipatory movements led to a stronger decision not to cooperate with the authorities and to rely on the help coming from the outside. However, since many reactions of the Polish anarchist movement were strongly demotivating, it might have been for good that the news about them did not penetrate the walls.

We now know that some of them had been pressing for more visibility for the case as well as a more offensive defense strategy, and this scheme was also favored by some of their lawyers. Due to the lack of

communication however it wasn't possible to apply this strategy. A letter written by one of the prisoners to a certain journal, in which he described police brutality as well as many other incidences of police harassment that he has suffered, combined with a criticism of "the justice system", never left the prison, and did not even land in the case files.

The prisoners did not plead guilty until the charges where changed to property damage on the later stage and at the beginning refused to testify. Unfortunately during the investigation they had to take a position regarding evidence that was presented and made statements while questioned by the prosecutor.

The fact that the arrested comrades did not leave any hints about the position that they would like to take if arrested also created a lot of misconceptions on the side of the support group. The communication between inside and the outside was broken which made impossible to take decisions. Any information within the reach of the arrestees has always been passing through lawyers – who in fact also had chosen different strategies.

The lack of cooperation between the lawyers was a big issue (there were separate lawyers for each person arrested). Warsaw's anarchist milieu doesn't have access to that many lawyers who might share some political affinity with them. This caused serious problems, when mother of one of the arrested hired a second lawyer for her son's defense. Since he was only 17 she was still his official guardian. The lawyer manipulated him saying that the other two anarchist agreed to give statements to the prosecutor, as she believed the cooperation strategy will be best for him. She made him believe that the police knows about everything (it wasn't unlikely given the way the arrest took place) and that the others therefore decided to testify. Also the fact that he was tortured after the arrest and that threats of tortures were again repeated

when he was taken to testify weakened his resolution not to talk (as he did not talk even when tortured). The most shameful part however in this manipulative strategy was unconsciously played by a so called anarchist, who publicly criticized the direct action of the three a day after they were arrested. His words of un-solidarity were the only ones that reached the youngest in prison (which was again his lawyer's strategy to weaken his morale), leaving him with a belief that the anarchist milieu cut themselves off from their case. The lawyer (whom he fired right after he learned about her deeds, which was unfortunately only after leaving the arrest) made a deal with the prosecutor that he will be the first one to testify, and the other two had to adjust their statements to the ones the prosecutor already got from him, which in turn made their statements broader then they initially wanted.

Until the communication ban between the three was withdrawn in April 2017 (together with all other restrictions), they were not able to communicate and therefore had no common strategy. Fortunately since they are now able to talk freely, they presented a common strategy during the first court sitting. They have withdrawn all their previous statements and are talking openly about the political reasons for their action. None of them claims regret for the undertaken means. Their strategy is rather to attack state and police brutality as the real issues that should be discussed.

To conclude, you can say that the biggest mistake by the three anarchists was not being prepared for being arrested. Not having a common strategy in case of arrest and not leaving their friends any information about the kind of support they would need in such case. And too big trust in their lawyers, as well as the fact that the lawyers didn't collaborate with each other nor the support group to create a common strategy.

## **WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME FOR THE MOVEMENT? HOW DID IT CHANGE?**

We cannot openly talk about all the aspects of the case before the trial ends. However, it does seem that a thorough and honest analysis of this case would be very beneficial for the Polish anarchist scene, as this case has revealed many of our faults and weaknesses.

The full scale outcome of the case is yet to be revealed, but some things have already started. The anarchist movement in Poland is now even more divided than ever (when it comes to this case), and the different opinions about the case slowly gravitate towards winning arguments with violence. It looks like the police/secret service has played well with our fears about a possible informer from inside of the movement, to divide us even deeper. Gossip and suspicions about the existence of an informer has been going around ever since the Warsaw 3 were arrested. It is not possible to determine (as for now) however if such a person really exists, or whether it is merely a phantom built of our fears, projected into our minds by the cops. To some easy solutions and accusations seem a good way out. On our side however we see the destructive potential of such accusations, if they were thrown at someone unjustly. And so far none of these rumors have been confirmed.

At the same time, unfortunately the situation did not create a better security culture, in some cases it even lessened the motivation to act securely because of a presumption that all we do is anyway already spied upon and known to the police.

The information campaign about the case was mostly directed towards Western Europe, since we needed to raise funds for the case. This definitely did not help the Polish movement to get a better understanding of the case. At the same time, the lack of support

structures is strikingly visible in this case. The support group shrank to just a few members that could not cope with all of the demands of the case as well as criticism from the Polish scene combined with a general lack of interest in political actions. The anarchist movement in Poland still hasn't decided, if physical attacks on police property are allowed in the anarchist moral codebook, and whether support for prisoners is a necessity or just occasionally trendy. There are no ready made scenarios available to us in such cases and the movement, when attacked, is still rather tending to create divisions, than to join forces.

On the slightly brighter side, there have been some positive outcomes of the campaign. Firstly – so far at least and with our fingers crossed – we can say that we are slowly moving in the right direction. The three were released from jail, all the restrictions were removed, their charges were reduced and an investigation about the police brutality during their arrest was reopened (arguably positive). It's arguable whether we should see these as victories, given that we don't believe in the justice system. Nevertheless if we look at the fact that initially all three were isolated in their cells looking at up to 10 years behind bars, we can see that the general conditions are improving. Secondly – there have at least been a few improvements of the knowledge about security culture, prisoner support and the new anti-freedom laws implemented in Poland and abroad. There have been demonstrations, anti-prison days, workshops, meetings with ex-prisoners and meetings around the topic of systemic oppression, as well as many new materials (articles, fanzines, publications) organized, distributed and made accessible to all willing. We could say that a discussion of all those topics has started, but it will probably take some years before this will ripen into conclusions. Since we started to openly evaluate the case in public, some people and groups noticed that the material and experience we've gathered is quite unique for Polish conditions and could be of some value also for them, especially since repressions are rising. This for sure is a sign of a more mature approach to the case and we intend to build

better support and security networks by sharing the knowledge and experience we were forced to get.

Our vision of the conditions in poland is not so positive and perhaps it will be seen as cynical and unfair by some people that are working hard, trying to fight this uneven fight. We are not wishing to dis-motivate them. Our point of view would rather be – if we're already experiencing repressions, we should learn how to respond in a way that would challenge our weaknesses too. We should strengthen and not weaken each-other. If we don't want to serve them as scapegoats, we should patch the holes in the security culture, overcome the need to gossip, see how to actively broaden our struggles and fully understand what prisoners support and solidarity is. For there is no future for any movement if it doesn't take care of it's own prisoners.

**FREE WARSAW THREE CAMPAIGN: [WAWA3.NOBLOGS.ORG](http://WAWA3.NOBLOGS.ORG)  
ABC GROUPS IN POLAND: [ACK.MOST.ORG.PL](http://ACK.MOST.ORG.PL)  
EMAIL: [ACK.WAW @ RISEUP.NET](mailto:ACK.WAW@RISEUP.NET)**

## **VIENNA REPRESSION AND STRUGGLE IN AUSTRIA WHAT IS IT ALL ABOUT?**

The following text is an introduction to the repressive practice of the Austrian state against the antagonist movement[10]. We are focusing on bigger events in the recent years which, according to the law 'Criminal Organisation' (§278ff) criminal code, are some actions that confronted prison society and new laws that have been introduced in the last years.

The purpose of the text is to give some examples. It is not possible to present the whole situation in one text. All actions of solidarity, the propaganda that anarchists and anti-authoritarians have been doing constantly in the last years and other cases of repression are not listed here.

### **ANTI-TERRORIST LAWS IN PRACTICE**

§278a ('Formation of a Criminal Organization') and it's appendices §278b,c,d,e and f have been used in the last years several times to investigate against parts of the antagonist movement in Austria and in two cases to bring comrades to court. That happened in 2008 and 2010.

The Austrian state introduced §278 in 1974 to fight the so-called 'organized crime'. They have used it often in the last years and still do, but mostly against "foreign criminals", always with some racist smack. But

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10: We use the term antagonist movement to describe the complexity of the different groups, collectives and individuals. There might be bigger differences in theory and practice between anarchists, antifascists, animal rights activists, left radicals, autonomous,... We have to question if these terms are the right descriptions in context of the circles of individuals, collectives and groups which are active in austria. But that might be a different question. In this text we use it as a general term for those who fight in an antiauthoritarian way against state and capitalism.

it is also not new to use it against antagonist structures: during the 90s, the Viennese police tried to start a campaign against an anarchist group called 'Revolutionsbräuhof'. One of the accusations was §278a because of a number of posters appealing for violent action against bosses and politicians.

In May 2008 members of the Viennese elite police force stormed several apartments in Austria. Some residents were awoken in their beds with guns on their head. A total of twenty three apartments, houses and offices were searched in Vienna, Lower Austria, Styria and Tirol.

The justification for the raids was the accusation of 'Formation of a Criminal Organization' according to §278a of the penal code as well as accusations of various crimes such as property damage, arson... The punishment for §278a is six months to five years jail time. 10 people targeted by the house searches were arrested.

The repression was directed at two different groups: The VGT (Verein gegen Tierfabriken) and the BAT (Basisgruppe Tierrechte). The police investigated against an imagined group of individuals who should be responsible for all direct actions in the context of animal liberation since the 90s. The investigators constructed a network of those two groups, which have partly contrary views on the idea and methods of animal liberation and other political activities. This was also very controversial for supporters and solidarity work. For example, the VGT was and is an official association with a strict hierarchy, the BAT an autonomous group. The VGT loved to organize press conferences, the BAT never did this before.

The development of the solidarity movement was a diverse and interesting process. People who participated in demos, solidarity actions and legal help did not all come out of the animal liberation movement. So the repression against individuals who were fighting a specific struggle

against state and capital, in this case animal liberation, was the common ground on which different anti-authoritarians, anarchists, autonomous and left radicals were organizing.

Basically there were two solidarity movements. One for the BAT and one for the VGT that did different things concerning press, lawyers... but generally – during the time in prison – most of the people joined both demonstrations or other events and it was a cautious and respectable contact.

Interesting is also that, although the VGT is a big established organization in Austria, most of their members did not talk a single word to the police during the time in prison.

After 105 days of imprisonment the last prisoners were released from custody jail.

One and a half year later, in March 2010, the trial started. It lasted for over a year. Quickly it got obviously that the investigations as well as the court case itself were very badly prepared. Even the bourgeois public was surprisingly critical about that. In May 2011 the sentence was one of acquittal in case of the §278a and later also in case of the other accusations. This simply happened because there was not enough evidence to convict the 10 defendants.

Even though none of the comrades have been found 'guilty', the trial itself was the punishment. For more than a year having to be in court up to 3 or 4 days a week destroyed every social existence of the comrades. It led to them losing jobs, stopping them from being active in struggle and the force of being present all that time in the court room was a tactic to break them in a psychological and also financial way.

*“Also if this bourgeois society of institutionalized violence seems to be the best of all the bad alternatives, it is worth and important to look for an alternative without cages and prisons and fight for it.”* From the final statement of a defendant

In July 2010 the Viennese police carried out another attack. On July 5, 2010 cops raided several apartments in Vienna and arrested 3 people. Two weeks later another person's home was searched and afterwards they were transferred to a custody jail. Meanwhile, the §278 was re-formed. So in 2010 the 4 comrades were accused of §278b ('Terrorist Offense'), arson and other acts.

The background was – again - an adventurous investigation by the cops, that began during the students protests in 2009 in Vienna. The comrades were followed by the cops on demos and observed on an action at Vienna airport where people tried to stop a deportation. In the end of June a job center in Vienna was attacked by lighting trash bins in front of it. A video communique was published online which set the action in a perspective against work and capitalist exploitation.

Like in 2008 the comrades had been arrested for around 3 months before they were released. In July 2012 the trial started. It was just two days of court case. All the accused comrades were found 'not guilty' by the court.

In both cases the comrades did not give any information to the police when they were arrested or during the interrogations. In 2011 the comrades of the BAT also refused any cooperation during the trial and just gave statements about their ideas and the farce of the court case. In the same way the comrades acted in the court case of 2012. Lawyers were responsible for the legal defence, but a solidarity group also worked with the court files and tried to prepare questions for the trial.

*"I will not make any testimony concerning the acts I am accused for, because I regard court and justice not as (neutral) institutions. Not the clarification of the so-called crimes, but the retention of inhumane conditions is of interest. These are the criminalization of refugees and migrants or the protection of the capital before the protection of human life and its self-determination. Every testimony in front of that court would be a cooperation with these conditions."* statement of J. in front of court in 2012

While the repression of 2008 was a long planned operation of the Austrian police, where tons of informations and materials were collected, in 2010 it was different. It seemed that cops wanted to experiment another time with the §278 which was reformed shortly before.

In both cases the cops used all kinds of tools for the investigation: monitoring of mobile phones and e-mail accounts as well as tracking of the phones and personal observation. In the case of 2008 cars were prepared with tracking devices. A flat was under surveillance outside by video and inside by audio installations. The police worked with snitches[11] and in 2008 there was also an undercover agent infiltrating the VGT group. The cop was uncovered during the court case by one of the solidarity groups that worked with the court files.

## **THE STATE WON ANYWAY**

The state got lots of information of how groups are working and how they can use different technical devices against disagreeable people. This is, even though the comrades were sentenced neither in 2008 nor in 2010, always an important aspect of repression: knowledge of the political enemy. But (and that's the one and only good point) we also got new experiences on how the repressive wheel of the state police is working.

Also in both cases individuals from different perspectives, but mainly anarchists, had a critical position concerning the solidarity structures, for cooperating with bourgeois media as well as using structures of the Green Party. We know that the circumstances may be hard when the state hits a part of the movement, but even then we can't rip theory and practice of anti-authoritarian struggle apart. In 2008 some anarchists published a critique with the title 'What is the price that everybody of us is paying?'[12], that was followed by a controversial discussion about solidarity work.

For example, it was problematic to act so close to a political party because they are part of the system we are fighting. This happened, because, in the moment of repression, the supporters were afraid they will be the next to get in prison. So they decided not to use a bank account from an individual or a solidarity group for donations but from the Green Party. Also, the co-operation with the media had a contradictory character, when press conferences were organised to get more publicity for the comrades in jail. Some mistakes just happened because nobody had experience with situations like the one in 2008.

The §278 gives the authorities a tool for easier investigation. So they haven't brought any of the investigations since 2010 to court, but done a lot of research which is legitimated by §278. The last examples for that practice were investigations against antifascists since 2014[13] and against an 'unknown left extremist group' which should be responsible for a number of direct actions against police cars[14].

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11: The term 'snitch' we use here for people who got hired by the cops or made deals with them.

## **NEW LAWS AS A BASIS FOR REPRESSION**

In the last years the Austrian state invented a series of laws in the context of surveillance, control of communication, terrorism, police methods of investigation and so on.

Since 2015 and with the argumentation of the 'fight against terrorism' and the so-called 'Refugee Crisis' the Austrian state invented a series of laws and is pushing forward different discussions about 'State of Emergency', 'Riot and Crown Control', 'Control of Communication'.

What happened in July 2016 is the reform of the 'Staatschutzgesetz'. This law gives the state police a much bigger range of options to investigate and prepare the basis for repressive operations. 'Dangerous individuals' will be registered in a special database, in which also friends or family members of the person will be registered as 'contacts'. The content of that database will be also shared in an international context with other intelligence services. The police can hire snitches for investigations without any permission of a court. These snitches will be also allowed to make testimonies in court without exposing their identity. The observation of vehicles, mobile phones and internet connections is now also possible without judicial order. In fact, the state police got the status of an intelligence service.

## **STRUGGLE IN AND OUTSIDE PRISON**

Since 2007 several renovations and new prison projects were implemented on the Austrian territory. In some cases there were actions carried out against these projects.

12: 'Welcher ist der Preis den wir alle dafür zahlen?' (Flyer) published in: Entfesselt. Anarchist Black Cross Info von ABC Berlin und ABC Orkan. Januar – Februar 2009

13: <https://linksunten.indymedia.org>; [nowkr.at](http://nowkr.at); [at.rechtsinfokollektiv.org](http://at.rechtsinfokollektiv.org)

14: Bruchstellen. Monatliches Infoblatt des Anarchist Black Cross Wien. Nr. 14, Mai/Juni 2015

One of these new prisons is the detention center in Vordernberg, a small village in Styria. It was the first prison in Austria, that is partly run by a private security company. This company, the G4S Group, is well known for their human rights violations all around Europe.

In the years of 2013/2014 several actions against this project were carried out. The office of the SUE architects, who planned the prison, was attacked, a presentation of SUE on the new prison at the Technical University of Vienna was interrupted. At the opening day, a group of people appeared with banners against prison, spray-painted the walls and shouted slogans[15].

In Salzburg a new prison was built in the village of Puch. Some individuals tried to agitate against this process. They released posters, flyers and spread the material in the region.

*"It is clear, nobody will feel disturbed by a new prison. Because our whole life is determined by enforcement, control and submission. School, education, office, hospital, asylum ... prison - as the worst of all - are connected to each other. [...] We want a free and dignified life, this is why we speak to all those who share the same aversion to prison like us: If we prefer to spread solidarity, our own initiative and freedom, instead of repression, enforcement and authority, if we want neither to order nor to obey, if the voluntary servitude is for you as bad as to put individuals behind bars, than let us disrupt and block the construction of that prison complex made of cold glass and concrete! And let's do it with our own hands. For that purpose we don't need politics or Representation."*  
Poster against the prison in Puch (Salzburg)

The poster also made public the institutions and companies who profit on that project. All of the actions that were carried out, where more in a sphere of publicity, than in a way of trying to stop or prevent a project of power becoming reality.

In 2015 some prisoners tried to build up a prisoners union, inspired by the activities of the GG/BO (Gefangenengewerkschaft/Bundesorganisation) in Germany. Even if we have our own critics on the idea of the union, we appreciate a self-organized struggle of prisoners, which is in conflict with the prison authorities and its conditions. The activities of the prisoners were answered with repression by the state. They isolated them from each other and from the outside even more, held back the correspondence and confronted them with lots of other restrictions.

The steady growth of control and militarization, the constant development of new projects of power that present themselves in the form of prisons, surveillance technology and other forms of biopolitical regulation, have become the specific methods of power in the present. In uncountable examples we can clearly see that those who dare to rebel, those who focus their subversion and confrontative ethics against the inhumane and oppressive potential of the state, are the first who feel the reaction. Mostly together with those scapegoats who in times of social tension already were used as a buffer. Therefore, we see the struggle against the 'prison complex' and the support of those who are held hostage by the state, in our struggles as an omnipresent reference point.

**ABC VIENNA: [HTTPS://WWW.ABC-WIEN.NET/](https://www.abc-wien.net/)**

# LIST OF ABC AND PRISONER SUPPORT GROUPS

## **AUSTRIA**

ABC Wien

<http://www.abc-wien.net/>

## **BELARUS**

ABC Belarus

<https://abc-belarus.org/>

## **BRAZIL**

ABC Rio de Janeiro

<https://cnario.noblogs.org/>

## **CANADA**

4 Struggle Mag

<https://4strugglemag.org/>

ABC Toronto

<https://torontoabc.wordpress.com/>

## **CZECH**

ABC Czech

<http://anarchistblackcross.cz/>

Antifenix solidarity campaign

<https://antifenix.noblogs.org/>

## **ENGLAND**

ABC Brighton

<https://www.brightonabc.org.uk/>

ABC Bristol

<https://bristolabc.wordpress.com/>

Green and Black Cross

<https://greenandblackcross.org/>

## **FINLAND**

ABC Helsinki

<http://www.amrhelsinki.org/>

## **GERMANY**

Prisoner Solidarity Jena

<https://gefangenensolijena.noblogs.org>

ABC Rhineland

<https://abcrhineland.blackblogs.org>

ABC Dresden

<https://abcdde.org/>

ABC Jena

<https://abcj.blackblogs.org/>

## **MEXICO**

ABC Mexico

<http://www.abajolosmuros.org/>

## **NETHERLANDS**

ABC Nijmegen

<https://abcnijmegen.wordpress.com/>

## **POLAND**

ABC Groups Poland

<http://ack.most.org.pl>

Free Warsaw Three campaign

<http://wawa3.noblogs.org>

## **RUSSIA**

ABC Moscow

<http://wiki.avtonom.org/index.php/>

ABC Irkutsk

<http://abc38.noblogs.org/>

## **SPAIN**

ABC Spain

<http://www.nodo50.org/cna/>

## **USA**

Anarchist Black Cross Federation

<http://www.abcf.net/>

ABC South Brooklyn

<https://sbrooklynabcf.wordpress.com/>

ABC Denver

<https://denverabc.wordpress.com/>

ABC NYC

<https://nycabc.wordpress.com/>

