

My Personal Zine

An unknown error occurred formatting this story.

Rolling Thunder #3 Complete PDF Available

By pfm on January 24th, 2009

We mailed out the last [Rolling Thunder](#) #3 yesterday, and as such, the complete PDF is now available for free download.

[Download Rolling Thunder #3 PDF \[9 MB\]](#)

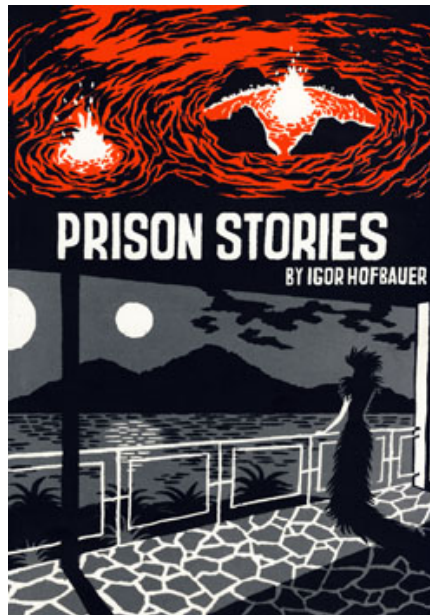
International reports from last Mayday's pro-immigrant rallies! Analysis of the Bush regime's strategy to promote terrorism worldwide! Discussion of the latest wave of federal repression! Testimony from a convicted anti-war arsonist! Anarchist perspectives on and reports from the struggle against domestic violence! A tell-all interview with notorious graffiti artist(s) BORF! A shocking exposé on German pro-Zionist lunatics! A how-to guide to funneling resources out of universities! A spy's-eye-view of immigrant labor in factory farming! A narrow escape from the flaming Pentagon on September 11, 2001! A history of direct action and rioting in queer liberation struggles! A cartoon recounting the riots at the canceled World Bank conference in Barcelona! A mad-lib for radicals with poor social skills! A satirical guide to writing reviews! Visionary storytelling, technical advice on computer security, eulogies and poster designs and more!

Prison Stories

By Edd on March 19th, 2009

This is a revelation. I've never heard of Igor Hofbauer before; but this may be the best book I've read so far in 2009. *Prison Stories* is a rolling narrative of seven interlocking stories exploring imprisoned characters. The book is frankly terrifying. Not in a 'goblins are going to eat my skull' way, but a 'humanity has deserted all bonds of allegiance' way.

In terms of mood imagine Charles Burn's *Black Hole* turned up to 11 and you're getting close to the futility and despair exuded by every character in this book. Terrifying but strangely beautiful at the same time.



The book starts with 'Nail story', a short silent comic about an attempted murder and the revenge which has a sense of Jim Woodring about it. In many ways the story is filled with non-sequiturs, but where as others may use the technique for comic timing here it just adds to the terror.

In many ways, 'Olympia story', the second story and the longest in the book by far is more traditionally structured and if you've enjoyed anything by Charles Burns or Daniel Clowes you're in for a treat. I took it as a metaphor for the suffering of a failed celebrity and the anguish the final fan must feel.

The remaining stories continue the theme. All use a stripped down palette of heavy blacks, dark grey and an iridescent orange. Many use no, or very few words, with people inhabiting near soundless, and apparently deserted, cages. Even if that cage is a city. I'd strongly recommend finding a copy. My new aspiration is to create a story that's halfway towards being as good as these.

How to Organize an Insurrection

By b. traven on December 25th, 2008



We are pleased to present one of the first inside reports from participants in the upheavals [that shook Greece](#) after the police murder of 15-year-old [Alexandros Grigoropoulos](#) in the anarchist neighborhood of Exarchia on December 6.

This is only the first set of answers to come in from our Greek comrades. We hope shortly to receive further perspectives from other elements of the Greek uprising, so we can provide a comprehensive background on the context and dynamics of the revolt. If you or someone you know is situated to give your own answers to these questions, please email them to us at rollingthunder@crimethinc.com.



How were the actions coordinated within cities? How about between cities?

There are hundreds of small, totally closed [affinity groups](#)—groups based in longstanding friendship and 100% trust—and some bigger groups like the people from the [three big squats in Athens and three more in Thessaloniki](#). There are more than 50 social centers in Greece, and anarchist political spaces in all the universities of the country; also, the [Antiauthoritarian Movement](#) has sections in all major cities, and there is a network of affinity groups of the [Black Bloc](#) active in all Greek cities, based on personal relations and communicating via telephone and mail. For all of them, [Indymedia](#) is very

important as a strategic point for collecting and sharing useful information—where conflicts are happening, where the police are, where secret police are making arrests, what is happening everywhere minute by minute; it is also useful on a political level, for publishing announcements and calls for demonstrations and actions.

Of course, we can't forget that in practice the primary form of coordination was from friend to friend through mobile phones; that was also the main approach used by young students for coordinating their initiatives, demonstrations, and direct actions.

What kinds of organizing structures appeared?

a.) All sorts of small companies of friends were making spontaneous decisions in the streets, planning actions and carrying them out themselves in a chaotic, uncontrollable manner: thousands of actions taking place at the same time everywhere around the country . . .

b.) Every afternoon there was a General Assembly in squatted schools, squatted public buildings, and squatted universities . . .

c.) [Indymedia](#) was used for announcements and strategic coordination of actions . . .

d.) The various communist parties also organized their own confederations of students . . .

e.) . . . And also, one especially influential federation was organized by the friends of Alexis, to organize the students' demonstrations and actions, the squatting of schools, and to publish general announcements from the students' struggle.

Were there any structures already in existence that people used to organize?

For the [young students](#) who were in the streets for the first time, and also for the immigrants who participated, the telephone was more than enough; this produced a totally chaotic and unpredictable element in the situations. On the other hand, for anarchists and anti-authoritarians, the General Assemblies are the organizing tool they have used for the last 30 years during any kind of movement. All affinity groups, squats, social centers, university occupations, and other organizations have their own assemblies, as well. Some other participants included left political organizations and left and anarchist university political spaces. During the fight, a lot of new blogs appeared, and new coordinating networks of high-school students.

What different kinds of people have participated in the actions?

The majority were anarchists, half of them older ones, some at high risk as they had previous charges for actions and would have to face custody if they were arrested. Beside them were thousands of school students 16-18 years old. Alongside these groups were immigrants, thousands of university students, many "gypsy" [\[Romani\]](#) kids taking revenge for social repression and racism, and old revolutionaries with previous experience from other social struggles.



| *What different forms have the actions taken?*

a.) **Smashing**, looting, and **burning** were the main actions that the young people used. They often attacked the expensive shopping districts, opened the fancy luxury shops, took everything from inside, and set fire to it in order to counteract the effects of the tear gas in the air. Many turned cars upside down to serve as barricades, keeping the police at a distance and thus creating liberated areas. The police used over 4600 tear gas bombs—nearly 4 tons—but people set countless fires, enough to maintain areas in which you could breathe despite this chemical warfare waged by the state against the people.

When the thousands of people on the streets realized that the black smoke of the fires could cancel out the white smoke of the tear gas, they used the tactic of burning everything at hand as a protection from the tear gas. Other techniques included the smashing of the pavement with hammers, to produce thousands of stones for people to use as projectiles; and, of course, the personal initiative of producing and throwing molotov cocktails. This last tactic was used especially to force the riot police to fear and respect the demonstrators, and also as a way of controlling the space and time of attack and escape.

b.) Attacks with sticks, stones and molotov cocktails were carried out against countless banks, police stations, and police cars across the country. In smaller cities, the banks and the police were the primary or only targets, as the small-scale society and face-to-face relations discouraged the smashing of shops, with the exception of a few multinational corporate franchises.

c.) Hundreds of symbolic occupations were carried out in all kinds of public buildings, municipal offices, public service offices, theaters, radio stations, TV stations, and other buildings by groups of 50-70 people. Also, there were many symbolic acts of sabotage and blockading of streets, highways, offices, metro stations, public services, and so on, usually accompanied by the distribution of thousands and thousands of pamphlets to people in the area.

d.) Every day there were silent protests, art happenings, and non-violent actions in front of the parliament and in all cities. Most of them were brutally attacked by the police, who used tear gas and arrested people.

e.) Leftists organized concerts in public spaces with the participation of underground bands and also politically

conscious pop stars. The biggest one in Athens involved more than 40 artists and drew over 10,000 people.

f.) Controlled student demonstrations were organized by the Communist Party. Many of these attracted much less participation than the chaotic spontaneous student demonstrations.



| *How many of the participants in the actions have been involved in similar actions earlier? For how many of them do you think this is their “first time”?*

Many thousands of people were experienced anarchist insurrectionists, anti-authoritarians, and libertarian autonomists; half of them were older anarchists who come into the streets only in very important struggles, as most of them have previous charges. There were also many thousands of young people who were radicalized over the last three years in the course of the social struggles for Social Insurance and against the privatization of education, and also in the huge spontaneous demonstrations that took place during the fires that burned almost 25% of the natural areas of Greece in the summer of 2007. We estimate that for about 30% of the people, this was their first rioting.

| *Which of the tactics used in the actions have been used before in Greece? Did they spread in the course of this rebellion? If they did, how did it happen?*

Most of the tactics used in this struggle have been used for a long time now in Greece. The most important new characteristic of this struggle was the immediate appearance of actions all over the country. The assassination of a young boy in the most important area of anarchist activity provoked an instantaneous reaction; within five minutes of his death, anarchist cells all over the country had been activated. In some cases, the police were informed much later than the anarchists about the reason they were facing attacks from the people. For Greek society, it was a surprise that the majority of young people in the country adopted the tactics of “anarchist violence, smashing and burning,” but this was a result of the generalized influence that anarchists’ actions and ideas have had in Greek society over the past four years.

| *Have any conflicts emerged between participants in the actions?*

The Communist Party separated itself from anarchists and leftists, and organized separate demonstrations. Also, the announcements that the Communist Party published, their appearances in the corporate media, their speeches to the parliament, and the negative propaganda that they carried on against all leftist organizations prove that they are a real enemy of any kind of efforts for social change.

What is the opinion of the “general public” about the actions?

What is called “general public” during a period of tele-democracy is something that needs a lot of discussion.

Generally speaking, the “general public” feel fear when the TV says that we were “burning the poor people’s shops,” but the people know well what kind of shops exist in the expensive districts where the riots took place; they feel fear when the TV says that angry immigrants came out to the streets and looted, but also they know that the immigrants are poor and desperate, and also that it was only a minority of them that came to the streets. There were many artists, theoreticians, sociologists, and other such personages who offered explanations about the revolt, and many of them were beneficial for our causes; some were probably trapped by their need to participate in the spirit of the times, while others were using the situation as an opportunity to honestly express their real ideas. The “general public” is angry about the murder of a 15-year-old boy by a police officer, and they hate the police much more than before; anyway, nobody liked the police in the first place. The majority of “normal” people in Greece don’t trust the right wing government or the past (and probably future) socialist government, and they don’t like the police, expensive shops, or banks. Now a new public opinion is appearing that offers all the social and ethical justifications of revolt. If it was difficult to govern Greece before, now it will be much more difficult.



How important to the context of these events is the legacy of the dictatorship in Greece? How does it influence popular opinions and actions in this case?

In 1973, the young people were the only ones who took the risk to revolt against the seven-year-running dictatorship; even if this was not the only cause of the end of dictatorship, it

remains in the collective memory that the students saved Greece from the dictators and the domination of the US. It is a common belief that young people will put themselves at great risk for the benefit of all, and this produces a feeling of hope and a tolerance of the students’ actions. Of course, this story is now an old story and though it influences the background of the fights, it is not mentioned in reference to this conflict.

Another influence comes from the student struggles of 1991 and 1995 against the privatization of education, which succeeded in changing the plans of the government and saved public education until today. Granted, the revolt of December 2008 was probably the apex of the anarchist movement in Greece until now, as it appeared all around the country and with a great deal of influence on the actions and slogans and ideas of a general part of the society; but the earlier student struggles, especially in Athens in 1991 were more visible and more generalized.

Do you think troubles in the economy are as important in these events as the corporate media is saying?

The young people from the many rich areas of Athens also attacked the police stations of their areas, so even the class war Marxists have serious troubles to explain what is happening: the separation of the rich and poor doesn’t seem to matter as much as long-existing solidarity and participation in the fight for equality and social justice.

On the other hand, Greeks between the ages of 25 and 35 cannot make families and have children, because of the economy. Greece is the most underpopulated society in all Europe. But we don’t talk about that here as the cause of the revolt. Young people are angry and they hate the police, capitalist cynicism, and the government in a natural, instinctual way that doesn’t need explanations or a political agenda. The local media tried not to speak in depth about social conditions here the way the English, French, or US media have. The local corporate TV stations attempt to pass off lies about chaotic “masketeers” with no ideas and no social identity, because the moral influence of anarchists is so strong now in this society that if they start to talk seriously about our ideas on television, society could explode. With the exception of some TV programs and newspapers, most of the mass media are trying to separate economic issues from the chaotic revolt.

Even the leftists from the May ’68 generation, when they speak to the media, say that the smashing and the riots are not political expressions of the needs and the hopes of the people—that the anarchists and young people don’t have the ability to express a political agenda, and the people need other kinds of political representation. Of course, all this has little influence on the young people who will participate in the social struggles of the future, as after this struggle there exists high tension and a great distance between the younger people and any kind of political leadership or authority.

What other motivations, besides anger against the police and the economy, do you think are driving people to participate?

The personal and collective need for adventure; the need to participate in making history; the chaotic negation of any kind of politics, political parties, and “serious” political ideas;

the cultural gap of hating any kind of TV star, sociologist, or expert who claims to analyze you as a social phenomenon, the need to exist and be heard as you are; the enthusiasm of fighting against the authorities and ridiculing the riot police, the power in your heart and the fire in your hands, the amazing experience of throwing molotovs and stones against the cops in front of the parliament, in the expensive shopping districts, or in your small silent town, in your village, in the square of your neighborhood.

Other motivations include the collective feeling of planning an action with your best friends, making it come true, and later hearing people tell you about this action as an incredible story that they heard from someone else; the enthusiasm of reading about some action that you did with your friends in a newspaper or TV program from the other side of the planet; the feeling of responsibility that you have to create stories, actions, and plans that will become global examples for the future struggles. It is also the great celebrative fun of smashing the shops, taking the products and then burning them, seeing the false promises and dreams of capitalism burned in the streets; the hatred for all authorities, the need to take part in the collective ceremony of revenge for the death of a person that could have been you, the personal vendetta of feeling that the police have to pay for the death of Alexis across the whole country; the need to send a powerful message to the government that if police violence increases, we have the power to fight back and society will explode—the need to send a direct message to society that everyone has to wake up, and a message to the authorities that they have to take us seriously because we are everywhere and we are coming to change everything.



to understand, explain, or react to the massive wave of violence and participation from every level of society. Their announcements were irrelevant to what was really happening. Their popularity decreased dramatically among the younger population, who don't see themselves in the logic and the politics of the political parties and don't feel represented by them.

What has been the role of anarchists in starting and continuing the actions? How clearly is their participation seen by the rest of society?

Over the past few years, anarchists have created a network of communities, groups, organizations, squats, and social centers in almost all the major cities in Greece. Many don't like each other, as there exist many significant differences among the groups and individuals. This helps the movement, though, as the movement now can cover a great variety of subjects. Many different kinds of people find their comrades in different anarchist movements and, all together, push each other—in a positive, if antagonistic, way—to communicate with society. This communication includes creating neighborhood assemblies, participating in social struggles, and planning actions that have a meaning for the general society. After 30 years of anti-social anarchism, the anarchist movement in Greece today, with all its problems, limitations, and internal conflicts, has the capability to look outside of the anarchist microcosm and take actions that improve society at large in ways that are readily apparent. Of course, it will take a lot of effort for this to be obvious, but day by day nobody can deny it.

As for the role of anarchists in starting and continuing the actions . . . especially at the beginning—Saturday and Sunday, December 6 and 7—and also in the continuation after Wednesday, December 10, the anarchists were the vast majority of those who carried out the actions. In the middle days, especially on Monday when the destructive Armageddon took place, students and immigrants played a very important role. But the vast majority of students found it easy to feel satisfied after one, two, or three days of smashing, and then went home or attended demonstrations with a [more pacifist atmosphere](#). Likewise, immigrants had to face a very strong backlash from locals, and they were afraid to return to the streets.

So the 20,000 anarchists in Greece started it, and continued it when everybody else returned to normality. And we have to mention that the fear of returning to normality helped us to keep up the fight for ten days more, putting ourselves into great danger as acts of vengeance for the assassination of our comrade transformed, in our fantasies, into preparations for a general strike. Now European society knows once and for all what a social insurrection looks like, and that it is not difficult to change the world in some months.

But you need all the people to participate and play their roles. The young people of Greece sent an invitation to all the societies throughout Europe. We are awaiting their responses now.

How much visibility do anarchists have in Greece in general? How “seriously” is anarchism taken by the majority of Greek people?

Are political parties succeeding in co-opting energy from the uprising?

In “real” numbers, the Socialists have increased their lead over the right wing government, gaining an 8% lead in the polls; the “European Social Forum communists” lost 1% even though they helped the revolt, but still they are in third place with 12%; the Communist Party has 8%, the Nationalist neo-fascists 4.5%, and the Green Party is holding steady at 3.5%.

It is also interesting that the leader of the Socialists appears now to be regarded as first in “capability to govern the country” after many years with much less popularity than the right wing prime minister. The riots had a great effect on the political scene: the political parties seemed unable

In a way, you can say that it is just three or four years now since anarchists started to take themselves “seriously” so we are seen that way in the broader society. It is only in the past few years that we have succeeded in expanding beyond the limitations of the anti-police strategy that had characterized our efforts for 25 years. According to that strategy, we attack the police, they arrest people, and we do solidarity actions, over and over again. It took us 25 years to escape from this routine. Of course, the anti-police attacks and fights continue, and the prisoner solidarity movement is stronger than ever, but the anti-social element inside the anarchist movement is under conscious self-control and we can speak, care, and act for the benefit of the whole society now, using actions and plans that can be comprehended much more clearly by at least a part of the society.

Many actions, like the attacks on supermarkets and the free distribution of stolen products to the people, became very popular and well-accepted. The attacks on banks, especially now following the economic crisis, are well-accepted also, and the attacks on police stations have been adapted and utilized by high-school students around the country. In one way or another, we have been the first subject in the news for the last 15 days. Generally speaking, with our participation in students’ or workers’ struggles and also in ecological struggles, every week some action taken by anarchists attracts attention and offers visibility to the anarchist movement.

This doesn’t mean that “anarchism” is taken seriously by the majority of Greek people, as most people still believe the lies of television that describe us as “masketeers” and criminals, and also the majority don’t have any idea about how an anarchist society could ever function—that includes most of the anarchists, also, who refuse to address this question! But our actions, critiques, and ideas have strong influence now on left and progressive people. It’s not possible anymore to say that we don’t exist, and now our existence radicalizes the majority of the younger generation.

What role have subcultural groups—like punk, squatting, and so on—played in making the uprising possible?

After ’93 we had a strong tendency in the Greek anarchist movement—accompanied by many serious internal fights—that eliminated the influence of “subcultural” styles inside the movement. This means that there is no punk, rock, metal or whatever anarchist identity in the Greek anarchist movement—you can be whatever you like, you can listen to whatever music you like, you can have whatever style or fashion you like, but that is not a political identity.

In the street fights this month, many “emos” participated, together with hippy freaks and ravers, many punks, heavy metal boys and girls, and also trendy, normal kids and students that like Greek music or whatever. It has to be social and political consciousness, social critiques and collective understandings that bring you to participate in the anarchist movements, not fashion. Of course, for at least the last 19 years the Void Network and similar collectives have played the role of offering a cultural introduction to radical political spaces. Such groups organize many cultural/political events, festivals, and parties every year and have the power to attract thousands and thousands of people to underground cultures. But even

Void Network doesn’t create subcultural identities, doesn’t separate the different subcultures, and tries to organize events that include most of the underground cultures. It’s true, though, that the majority of the people in the scene attend and participate in most of the events of the d.i.y. underground culture; many events are organized every month in liberated spaces.

What things have made the anarchist movement healthy in Greece?

The separation from subcultural identity politics made people understand that to call yourself an anarchist it takes much more serious participation, planning, creativity, and action than just wearing a t-shirt with the antichrist on it and walking around in punk concerts drinking beer and taking hypnotic pills. Now there is an understanding that to call yourself an anarchist you have to come to demonstrations, to come out into the streets with banners and black or red-and-black flags, shouting slogans together and manifesting an anarchist presence. Also, that you should participate every week in one, two, or three different assemblies with people for one, or two, or three different preparations of different actions, plans, or struggles to call yourself an anarchist. You have to be friends with people you trust 100% to plan anything dangerous, you have to be aware and informed about anything that is happening in this world to decide what the proper course of action is, you have to be crazy and enthusiastic, to feel that you can do incredible things—you have to be ready to give your life, your time, your years in a struggle that will never end. It is healthy not to have expectations, because then you don’t get disappointed. You don’t expect to win. You are used to appearing, fighting, and then disappearing again; you know how to become invisible as a person and visible as collective power; you know that you are not the center of the universe, but that any time you can become the center of your society.



In what ways do you think the anarchist movement in Greece could be better or stronger?

We need to find more intelligent ways of explaining our ideas to people. We need techniques of political communication with all of society, better and stronger ways to make the “political translation” of our actions and put the whole struggle in its social context. In a tele-democracy, where the politicians are nothing more than television superstars, our refusal to

communicate with or through the mass media is healthy, but we need to find new ways to overcome the mass media “consensus reality,” the media propaganda against us, and find ways to explain the causes of our actions to society. As long as whatever the TV shows “exists” and whatever doesn’t appear on TV “doesn’t exist,” we will be there with our crazy ideas, the dangerous actions and the street fights to break the normality of the TV program, we will use the negative advertisement of our actions to kidnap the fantasies and dreams of the common people. But how can we explain our positive ideas to everyone? How can we help people cease to trust the media? How can we come into contact with millions and millions of people?

It will take millions and millions of posters and free pamphlets, traveling hand by hand in the streets; it will take millions of invitations for demonstrations and participation in social struggles; it will take more free public services in sections that the government don’t want or cannot cover—free anarchist doctors and teachers, free food, free accommodation, information, underground culture, and so on—that can bring people closer to our ideas. It will also take more and more squats and social centers. If you can start a squat, that is better, but even if it’s not possible to squat in your town, rent a building with your friends, take care of the bureaucracy, make a collective, start an assembly, and put the black or red-and-black flag in the entrance. Start offering the people of your city a living example of a world without racism, patriarchy, or homophobia, a place of equality, freedom, and respect for differences, a world with love and sharing. We need more “Autonomia” in the insurrectionism of the Greek anarchist movement, to make it shine as a paradigm of a new wave of social life and demonstrate this novel survival methodology in the metropolis.

How effective has police repression been in shutting down the anarchist movement? How have people resisted it?

The dreams and plans of the insurrectionists came true: a huge wave of participation “overpassed” the anarchists, and for many chaotic days people traveled and fought in the city like never before, in an unfamiliar time and space of existence.

In the same days, of course, they came face to face with the limitations of insurrection. The people now spend many hours in long discussions about how to expand popular understanding and invent practices, actions, and methods that will sustain and enrich the struggle. Many people think about ways that will bring really close all the different elements of this revolt. The police repression didn’t play a more important role in the conclusion of the riots than physical fatigue did. All of us share a feeling of completion and a feeling of beginning, and these are feelings that the police can not touch.

What do you think the final result of the events of December will be?

Ongoing struggle! A never-ending fight for political, social, and economic equality! Constant expansion of freedom!

In the future, neoliberal governments in Greece and throughout Europe will think very seriously before attempting to implement any kind of economic or social change. The riots in Athens and the economic crisis ended the cynicism

of the authorities, banks, and corporations, radicalized a new generation in Greece, and gave our society a chance to open a dialogue about the massive social struggles of the future.

As the slogan of December 2008 in Athens and Exarchia goes:

WE ARE AN IMAGE FROM THE FUTURE.

Questions answered by [Void Network](#) (Theory, Utopia, Empathy, Ephemeral Arts); posed by the [CrimethInc. ex-Workers’ Collective](#)

Appendix I: Links to the Blogs of the Occupied Universities



-[This is the blog of Polytechnic University](#) that was in the center of the riots, 200 meters from the area where Alexis was assassinated. Here you can find links for most of the squats and initiatives that were organized in schools, universities, and many public buildings during the revolt in all country.

-Though most of it is in Greek, [this is the blog from the squatted Athens School of Economics](#), which accommodated hundreds of different anarchist, autonomist, libertarian, utopian and antiauthoritarian movements, actions, and groups. It is located 500 meters away from Polytechnic School in the center of Athens.

-Again, most of it is in Greek, but [this is the blog from the first ever occupation of the building of the General Federation of](#)

[Greek Workers](#), a syndicalist institution that has functioned as an obstacle to workers' struggles for the past 90 years. The building is located between the Economics University and the Polytechnic School.

-Though it seems that it wasn't used as much for political work and the sharing of ideas as the other blogs, [this is the blog of the squatted University of Law in Athens](#), the main center of the Anti-Authoritarian Movement and many other leftist groups.

Appendix II: Important Squats in Greece

There are countless other buildings, social centers and projects in Greece—these are just a few.

In Athens:

Villa Amalias - <http://villa-amalias.blogspot.com/> (since 1990)

Lela Karagianni - http://www.geocities.com/lelas_k/index.htm (since 1988)

Farm Prapopoulos - <http://protovouliaxalandriou.blogspot.com/> (since 2006)

. . . and also we have to mention Nosotros - <http://www.nosotros.gr/> (Free Social Space) in Exarchia, even though that social center is not a squat but a rented building.

In Thessaloniki:

Fabrika Yfanet - <http://fiveprime.org/hivemind/Tags/yfanet> (since 2004)

Terra Incognita - <http://www.flickr.com/photos/20222375@N07/2280591376> (since 2005)

Delta squat - <http://delta.blogs.squat.gr/> (since 2007)

G20 protesters guide to the law

By anon on March 18th, 2009

The upcoming G20 protests have already been targeted by a police smear campaign. And it seems likely that the G20 protests will see heavy handed [police tactics](#) like those used at Climate Camp in 2008. In this sort of situation knowing your legal rights is vital in protecting yourself from intimidation and to help forge a stronger movement.

It's common that police know little about the law at these sorts of events, and have often been known to lie in an attempt to coerce information from protesters. Learning your rights before an event can save you becoming a victim to police intimidation. What follows is a very brief guide answering a few common questions on your legal rights as a protester.

Can the police take my name and address?

Generally the police have no powers to obtain your personal details so in most circumstances it's not an offence to refuse to give the police your name and address. There are some exceptions though such as: when you are the driver of a vehicle (an offence under the Road Traffic Act) or if the police suspect you engaging in 'antisocial behavior' (behavior which has caused or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress). In these circumstances refusing to give your name and address is an offence (section 50 Police Reform Act 2002) and could

lead to your arrest. Before giving your details though ask what 'antisocial behaviour' they suspect you have committed, as they could just be trying it on in order to get your details.

It's not an offence to refuse to give your details if the police say you have committed a criminal offense, but it may make it more likely that you will get arrested if you don't. If they can't tell you what offence they think you have committed or it doesn't sound at all plausible then they may just be trying to get your details for evidence gathering purposes, in which case don't give them the pleasure. It has recently been reported that the police have a database on information on protesters so it may be in your interest to withhold your details where possible. More information about the database can be found in the Guardian article: [how police keep tabs on activists](#)).

Can the police stop and search me?

There are a number of different pieces of legislation that permit the police to search you:

Under section 1 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 you and your vehicle can be stopped and searched if the police have a 'reasonable suspicion' that you're carrying drugs, weapons, stolen items (tools etc) to carry out theft, burglary or criminal damage.



Police perform a 'stop and search' only to find a pair of gloves and a dirty tissue

You and your vehicle can be stopped and searched if the police have 'reasonable suspicion' that you are a 'terrorist' (section 43 Terrorism Act 2000). The search is for any items that will constitute evidence that you are a terrorist e.g. laptops, paperwork, address books, or phones. Under the Act, 'terrorism' is very broadly defined, it includes serious damage to property as well as violence to people. Your action must also be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public or a section of the public, and must be for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

You and your vehicle can be stopped and searched if a search has been specifically authorised by a senior police officer (section 60, Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994). The search can only be for offensive weapons and dangerous instruments.

This is a blanket search power, the police don't need any grounds to suspect you of carrying weapons or dangerous instruments. The definition of these is wide-ranging, it could include a flick knife, a broken bottle, a pair of scissors, a spanner or an umbrella. But it's not a right to search for anything else e.g. an address book, diary, or camera film. It is an offence to refuse to be searched under this power. Sometimes when they use this search power the police surround a group of people and search them one at a time before release. It is also not unheard of for them to use this power as an excuse to examine your wallet for identification. They will claim they are looking for razor blades.



Police search a vehicle

If a search has been authorised under section 44, Terrorism Act 2000, you and your vehicle can be searched for articles that could be used in connection with terrorism. Again its a blanket search power and there is no need for the police to have any grounds for the search. It is an offense to refuse to be searched under this power.

Under all the above stop and search provisions the following apply:

There is no need to give your name and address, unless you are the driver of a vehicle being searched.

You only have to remove outer clothing for searches in public places. They can 'pat you down' but this must be done by a same-sex officer. They can check bags and pockets.

If they find any weapons or other items, that they are entitled to search for, these can be seized.

They must provide you with written record of the search and a list of anything they seize. If you have not provided them with any personal details it is likely they will ask you to sign the form in an attempt to find out your name.

If you are arrested

In the unlucky event that you are arrested you are only obliged to give your name and address to the police. They will also ask for your date of birth to confirm exactly who you are - you don't have to give them this information, though it sometimes speeds things up if you do. The police can use 'reasonable force' to acquire your DNA and fingerprints at the police

station. The best advice is to say, 'No comment' to anything they ask beyond your name and address. You have the right to ring a solicitor and you should not allow the police to interview you until the solicitor arrives. Advise your solicitor that you wish to make a 'no comment' interview if the police want to interview there and then. '[No comment! The defendant's guide to arrest](#)' is a very thorough resource that the Legal Defence and Monitoring group published in 2004.

Find out more

The above information has been adapted from a pamphlet created by a The Activists Legal Project titled 'Know Your Rights: A Climate Activists Guide to the Law'. The pamphlet also covers what to do if you are arrested as well as other information on laws that may affect you on a protest.

Visit The Activists Legal Project website at www.activistslegalproject.org.uk where you can download the complete pamphlet.

On the days of protest themselves in is also advisable to look out for legal observers from the Legal Defence and Monitoring group who will be handing out information on your rights as well as contact details for solicitors should you be arrested.

Rolling Thunder #4 Complete PDF Available

By pfm on December 9th, 2008

We mailed out the last [Rolling Thunder](#) #4 yesterday, and as such, the complete PDF is now available for free download.

[Download *Rolling Thunder* #4 PDF \[10MB\]](#)

The centerpiece of the fourth *Rolling Thunder* is a full-color photoessay chronicling the popular uprising during which the people of Oaxaca, Mexico wrested control of their city from the government for a period of months. Continuing that theme, other feature articles cover the defense and eviction of South Central Farm in Los Angeles, the Really Really Free Market as a model for reclaiming public space from capitalism and bureaucracy, the resurgence of squatting in Buffalo of all places, the university occupation movement in France, and the ins and outs of urban exploration. The remainder of the issue includes a comprehensive guide to supporting prisoners and defendants, the lyrics to "The Big Rock Candy Mountain" as interpreted by acclaimed comic artist Nate Powell, a gallery of ready-to-use stencils, and plenty of the edgy artwork and poignant prose you've come to expect.

New Poster: Crisis is Business as Usual

By ret marat on November 29th, 2008

[Here's a new poster on the economic crisis](#), perfect for wheatpasting in neighborhoods with a lot of foreclosures.

Everybody knows that you've got to have money to make money, and never is that more true than in a speculation-driven economy. As the stock market reached unprecedented heights, its connection to the nuts and bolts of the economy became more and more illusory, making a "correction"

inevitable—and profitable, for some. Gambling on the correction became a money-making scheme in its own right, and continues now after the collapse, without regard for the fact that such late-game betting assures that the recession will be all the more severe. Institutional investors can afford to play this game because, for them, a collapse of the stock market just means an opportunity to gamble on bonds or currency or whatever other financial product which might benefit from the disappearance of trillions of dollars in artificial value.

But if the value lost in the stock market is artificial, the consequences for human beings are very real. The ranks of the unemployed are rising by the hundreds of thousands every month. Inflated prices for consumers goods will largely stay inflated, even as earnings decline and homes are repossessed. And while the ultra-wealthy will ride out the recession in a riot of luxury and consumption, everyone else will be faced with a new, harsh reality—one in which the means of subsistence are increasing hard to achieve.

So for all the media's obsession with stunned stockbrokers and disgraced corporate tycoons, their suffering is distinctly abstract: paper losses to be pondered during a long and comfortable early retirement. The rest of us will be forced to wonder why the most basic needs of our lives—food, shelter, medicine—are tied to the whims of a marketplace designed for collapse.

Further Reading

[A brief introduction to the sources and implications of the economic crisis](#)

[A glossary of terms for the crisis](#)

[Prescient discussion of the crisis before the media even acknowledged it](#)

Stay The Course

By ret marut on November 15th, 2008



-
An analysis of the political climate following the election of 2008; a plea for anarchists to maintain vibrant networks and confrontational organizing even as Obama takes office; a discussion of what it takes for such networks and organizing to succeed; and a brief review of actions around the election, with a glimpse of what is to come.

Featuring a [revision](#) of our earlier Obama poster, and a [PDF \[6.2 MB\]](#) of a paper used to [satirize corporate media](#) the day after the election . . .

STAY THE COURSE

As much as radicals have focused on bringing people together in public spaces over the past ten years, not all public togetherness is necessarily radical. On election night, when sports-riot-size crowds took to the streets of many cities to celebrate Obama's victory, the subtext was that representative democracy, long discredited under the Bush regime, had been rehabilitated as the populist spectacle it was always meant to be. The chants of "Yes We Can!"—appropriated, like most of Obama's shtick, from actual grassroots movements outside electoral politics—translated to "Yes *He* Can": in endorsing the transfer of power from one politician to another, people may feel powerful, but it is not *their* power they celebrate. It was exactly the kind of display that prompts young defeatists to declare that "the masses" don't want anarchy; to be fair, with hundreds of millions of dollars for publicity, anyone could probably have achieved the same results—even anarchists.

Obama has ridden to power on the same social currents that radicals have relied on to propel their organizing and outreach over the past eight years: disgust with the excesses of empire, longing for more fairness and sociability in daily life, optimism about vague alternatives. It is no coincidence that the liberal anti-war movement died out just as the presidential campaigns got underway; the race effectively subsumed the energy of all not explicitly critical of representative democracy. This cooptation of popular momentum is as essential to the disempowerment of the populace as the brutal repression associated with the right wing. The powers that be are equally willing to tear gas us or hire us to go door to door registering voters—whatever it takes to keep us from building our own power outside and against their structures. In that regard, Obama's election marks a new phase of their efforts to keep their system viable—calculated to defuse discontent, further marginalize radicals, and maintain the essential power imbalances of our society while giving the institutions that perpetuate them a makeover.

Top-down structures obscure the motivations and individuality of the participants, but they don't necessarily neutralize them. Some of those who packed the streets on the night of November 4 must harbor desires too radical to be realized under capitalism, desires which might still [bubble to the surface](#) despite the veneer of social consensus. In Minneapolis, not far from September's bitter street conflicts outside the Republican National Convention, a mixed crowd of East African immigrants and predominantly white anarchists occupied a major intersection for several hours, blocking traffic and defying police until the authorities resorted to pepper spray and finally called in massive backup. Chants of "Yes We Can!" and "U-S-A!" mingled with "Smash the State!" and the traditional "Whose Streets?" as drummers pounded out rhythms, dancers filled the lanes, and multiracial lines of masked youth taunted and blocked police cruisers.

In one reading of this event, the anarchists were cynically endangering the less privileged immigrants by luring them into a dangerous situation; presumably, had the anarchists gone home, the immigrants would have had the sense to

stop provoking the police and get back to pulling themselves up by their bootstraps—a challenge that can only be easier now that there is to be a black President, never mind the recession. In another reading of the situation, the anarchists and immigrants found tentative common cause in seizing public space, coming together on the basis of a shared desire to celebrate—even if they respectfully disagreed on the details of what was worth celebrating. Together, they were able to obtain a few hours of the visibility and jubilation normally forbidden to their class; and the inevitable confrontation with the police demonstrated to all that, Obama or no, we only get what we are prepared to defend.

The Obama years will doubtless offer us countless complicated opportunities such as this one. But bad advice abounds in radical circles as this new era looms. Some, afraid of being misunderstood, caution against confrontational organizing of any kind, forfeiting the initiative precisely when it is most important to maintain radical momentum. Others, in attempting to keep a principled distance from all things reformist, risk isolating anarchist projects, denying them the interplay with other efforts and milieus that makes them effective and infectious. How do we chart a middle course, staying connected to popular currents without subordinating our own priorities to those of the forces that exploit them?

What Now?

Unfortunately, there is a recent precedent for anarchists freezing up and dropping the ball, which too many have already forgotten. After September 11, 2001, radical projects and momentum collapsed around the country as anarchists, fearful of appearing insensitive and of running afoul of the anti-terror reaction, cancelled plans and stepped back from organizing. The resulting loss of impetus contributed to the decline of the anti-globalization movement in the US and enabled authoritarians to determine the character of the incipient anti-war movement; it took years for anarchist organizing to recover from these setbacks. The lesson is that, however inconvenient a particular historical juncture may be for anarchists, it's always easier to maintain organizing than to start over from scratch.

Yes, Obama is the first person of color to be elected President. His victory doesn't mean representative democracy is suddenly inclusive and egalitarian any more than the successful careers of Bill Cosby and Michael Jordan indicate that capitalism isn't structurally racist; it also doesn't mean that the inequalities of the system are suddenly invisible to our neighbors. We can affirm others' enthusiasm at the shattering of this particular glass ceiling without endorsing the authoritarian structure that remains or giving up on our opposition to it being intelligible to those around us. Real relationships with people in adjacent communities are the best protection against the corporate media accounts portraying them as lockstep converts to liberal democracy; those who insist most stridently that confrontational organizing is now self-defeating may do so because they lack connection with their neighbors.

Make no mistake about it—more people of color are in prison in the United States than ever before in history. Obama will not grant them clemency or reassemble the communities torn apart by their kidnappings. Global capitalism continues to

plunder peoples and devastate ecosystems, disproportionately affecting people of color worldwide. If anything is racist, it is failing to attack the roots of the system that perpetrates these injustices.

Some have expressed fears that any overt resistance to Obama's ascendancy will be misrepresented as racist, but these have already proved unfounded. Although there was considerable discussion on this topic before the protests at last summer's Democratic National Convention, not only did corporate media coverage fail to cast any such aspersions, locals on the street also seemed clear on the motivations of the predominantly white black bloc. Participants in the protests could certainly have done more to convey their opposition to white supremacy, but the precedent indicates that it is possible for anarchists to act against Obama without being misconstrued.

Coming out of the protracted mobilizations leading up to last summer's Democratic and Republican National Conventions, anarchists have actually built up some networks and momentum. It would be all the more tragic, then, for hesitation to erode those modest gains. Depending on what happens next, [the clashes outside the Republican National Convention in St. Paul](#) indicated either that anarchists have regained the initiative in the streets, or simply that they were the last rats to leave the sinking ship of the anti-war movement. Either momentum will fizzle as ad hoc networks drift apart, or additional efforts will shift anarchists to the forefront of radical struggles now that the former liberal opposition occupies the highest seats of power.

A word is necessary on what it takes to maintain healthy networks, since anarchists in the United States have had so little success with this. Networks only persist when they offer something concrete and desirable to the participants. Were there an anarchist federation that could provide its members with free health care, this country would not lack for anarchists. The networks that developed in the buildup to the convention protests flourished because they offered the opportunity to participate in something exciting and historic; they are unlikely to endure unless people find other ways to use them to circulate useful resources. Otherwise, as has happened countless times already, most people will drop out in search of more productive uses of their time, leaving only the most tiresome individuals to play at bureaucracy as an end in itself. [Some tentative attempts](#) are unfolding to make use of the networks that linger in the wake of the conventions; if they don't take off, anarchists will have to start all over again next time a nationwide mobilization is called for.

So what are anarchists to do, at the opening of the era heralded by Obama's victory? First, we should maintain explicitly anarchist organizing. This doesn't mean refusing to work with non-anarchists, but establishing our own projects and organizing bodies, so we won't be stuck reacting to others' initiatives or lose ourselves in authoritarian structures that absorb our efforts without bringing real liberation any closer. The efforts of the [RNC Welcoming Committee](#) provide an excellent example of this, in stark contrast to the absence of any serious anarchist initiatives at the Republican National Convention of 2004. Now that the Democrats hold power in Washington, D.C., it should be much easier to distinguish

ourselves and our positions than it was when we were lumped in with the liberals under Bush.

And how can we organize popular resistance, when seems that everyone loves Obama? With the economy in shambles and global warming finally acknowledged as reality, the answers to this question should be obvious enough. Capitalism hasn't gone anywhere—on the contrary, its negative effects are only more and more apparent to all. Rather than entrenching ourselves on the losing side of the pro-or-anti-Obama debate, we should sidestep that trap to pose new questions. Here is one example of how this could play out concretely. The past two Presidential inaugurations have featured spirited liberal and anarchist protests questioning the legitimacy of the new ruler; this time, rather than simply repeating that equation with significantly diminished prospects of success, it would be strategic for an anarchist mobilization to focus on economic issues and economic targets, plenty of which can be found in Washington, D.C. As of this writing, [a vague call to action](#) for the inauguration has circulated, but it remains to be seen whether anything more concrete will materialize.

Above all, to repeat this once more, we cannot afford to withdraw into the shadows as we did after September 11, 2001; a world sliding swiftly into catastrophe cannot afford this either. But to urge anarchists to maintain confrontational organizing is not to endorse any and all action for its own sake; on the contrary, it is essential that we pick our battles carefully. The disaster of capitalism presents us with an endless number of fires to put out, and running around attempting to do so with no strategy can only exhaust us pointlessly. As our numbers and resources are currently extremely limited, we should start with the objectives that will best enable us to extend our networks and capabilities. Once we've done so, we'll be better equipped to put an end to [mountaintop removal](#), thwart the [racist deportations carried out by ICE](#), and so on.

We leave it up to you, dear readers, to sort out what this looks like in practice—though here's a hint.

Appendix A: A Point of Departure

This year, with one exception, anarchist actions around the election were fairly isolated and predictable. There were the usual scattered [acts of vandalism](#), presumably limited to small in-groups, and [principled refusals](#) to participate in the electoral spectacle, which attract an even narrower demographic; only one effort stood out as subversively combining public and clandestine elements.

The morning following election day, consumers around the country woke up to find that the newspapers in the dispensers on their streets, and in some cases even in their very driveways, had been provided with a [spurious front page](#) courtesy of [local pranksters](#). This occurred in at least twenty cities, including [Washington, D.C.](#), [New York City](#), [Lawrence, Milwaukee](#), [Duluth](#), New Orleans, and Chicago, not to mention several cities in [Iowa](#), [California](#), and [North Carolina](#). One [paper](#) estimated that 1000 copies of their publication alone had been affected.

Presumably, one or two groups came up with this idea, then solicited the participation of others around the country. Because it involved comparatively low risk on the street level,

it offered a perfect opportunity for newer groups to build up experience in an activity they wouldn't necessarily have had the resources to pull off alone and to invite new people to participate. This is exactly the sort of format that can enable a network to increase its numbers and capabilities. On top of all this, the action gave visibility to dissent precisely when Obama's triumph was obscuring it.

This action demonstrated the proper way to make use of the networks that remain after the convention protests. Had one group simply called for actions targeting corporate media, surely very little would have happened. The point of a network is to save organizers the trouble of duplicating groundwork, and to increase the scope of what can be achieved with the same tactics so it is possible to escalate conflict without increasing individual risk. Further efforts to utilize these networks need not take the same form, but they must follow the same basic principle; otherwise, the groups that compose the networks will inevitably return to the isolation of focusing exclusively on local projects without outside support.

Download the paper used in the aforementioned newspaper prank: [PDF \[6.2 MB\]](#)

Instructions for how to pull off a newspaper wrap can be found in [Recipes for Disaster](#).

Appendix B: Revised Poster

ONE BLACK MAN COULD BE PRESIDENT



ONE MILLION BLACK MEN ARE IN PRISON

ok, ok - so it's more like nine hundred thousand, if you don't count the ones on parole and probation, in institutions and juvenile detention centers, working minimum wage jobs or waiting in line at the welfare office, locked into homeless shelters or locked out on the streets. But now that Obama is in the White House, we're supposed to forget about all that - America, land of opportunity!

Representative democracy is just like the free market: everyone supposedly gets a chance, but only a few come out on top. If you don't win, you must not have tried hard enough! This is the same rationalization that our rulers use to justify the injustices of capitalism, sexism, and racism: look, you lazy bums, you could have been Bill Cosby or Hillary Clinton if you'd just worked harder.

The rest of us know the system is rigged to make us all losers. We deserve another world, another way of distributing power and resources that values everyone's needs equally. If someone has to be a failure, let it be the ones who aspire to world domination, whose triumphs make us feel small; if anyone must languish in prison, let it be the politicians who seek power at everyone else's expense. That would be some real Hope and Change.

Whoever they vote for, we are ungovernable WWW.CRIMETHINK.COM 

Now that Obama has won the election, we've revised [our earlier poster](#) to keep it relevant. Please print these out and disseminate them: [PDF \[684 KB\]](#)