

THE

DIDN'T RISE
FROM THE ASHES



Fenix didn't rise from the ashes

7 myths about 'operation Fenix'

or

Why it is important to support
the accused ones and spread
the counter story

Contains an excerpt of the essay

Bounty Hunters

& Child Predators - Inside the FBI's strategy

Operation Fenix (Phoenix)

In late April this year police commenced an operation against the anarchist and anti-authoritarian movement, including the movement fighting for animal liberation. This operation police named “Phoenix”. In the first wave of the operation police questioned and arrested several people and also raided many places in the Czech Republic, including the Social Autonomous Centre Ateneo in the city of Most. People were surprised by the police at home or in the workplace. Police confiscated the server on which ran several Web sites and seized countless electronic devices, especially computers, phones, hard drives, cameras, and flash drives. In addition, police also seized literature and personal belongings of the detained people. So far we do not know how extensive is the entire operation, how many of us are monitored and what the police’s intentions are. In many cases, the police made up or concealed important facts in order to gain permission to search houses and make arrests¹. The police argue that they were tracking down and defusing “The Networks of Revolutionary Cells (SRB)”, the name signed under the communiques of several arson attacks on property and other acts of sabotage.

The greatest media attention has so far focused on the so-called “ultra-left terrorism”. Two (Petr S. and Martin I.) of the original eleven detainees remain in custody jail still awaiting trial. Petr and Martin are accused of „planning a terrorist attack.“ In this case there are three more accused who are not in custody. One has the same charge as Petr and Martin and the other two are suspected of not reporting the crime. For some time there was another person, Aleš K. in custody, who was accused of the offence of illegal possession of arms.

After two months of interrogation and holding three people in custody, police arrested another activist Igor S. who was accused of committing the alleged attack on the house of the Minister of Defence.

For more information on the case including a description of Igor’s optics / words found on <http://antifenix.noblogs.org/post/category/igor-s/>

The operation is accompanied by a media message and the word “anarchist” is replaced by the word “extremist” more than ever. This word has become the new terrorist equivalent. The words “terror” and “terrorists” are perhaps the most used. Although no one was convicted yet, the media already present the

¹ more <https://antifenix.noblogs.org/post/2015/06/03/interview-with-an-activist-detained-during-operation-fenix/>

detained people as terrorists. Presumption of innocence vanished from their vocabulary. For the authorities, law enforcement bodies and the media, topics of extremism and terrorism are very attractive. Why are the terms *extremism* and *terrorism* so popular? Why does this happen? What is going on here? What is at stake?

Here are some myths associated with operation Fenix and their rebuttal:

Myth 1: The police always catch the culprits. SRB carried out several attacks.

It should come as no surprise that the police tried to suggest that they caught the people responsible for all the attacks, which we read about in the media. The police had to show that they have things under control. But the truth is that the police in a few cases have arrested people they know could not have been present at the time of the attacks claimed by SRB², as they were in another country³. The Police have sufficient enough funds to find out when and where are the people who they suspect of committing crimes. An argument corroborating the statement that the police were not focussed only (if at all) on the people of SRB is the fact that the vast majority of detainees were quickly released. Neither of the detainees have been charged with any attacks claimed by SRB. This includes those who remain in custody. Aleš, Petr and Martin have different charges. The fourth detainee Igor is accused of an

² <https://revolucnibunky.noblogs.org>

³ One of the detainees (Tomas Z.) was interviewed by A2Iarm.cz about his experiences with police operation Fenix. He says: „In their records they explicitly wrote that I was an active member of some collective body and the leader of this organization, which planned and approved individual attacks . It was written in the search warrant. Also, there was written that I was suspected of attacking a police car, which took place in January 2014 in the city of Litvinov. In this case, the police lied to the prosecutor, because they had, from several sources, verified that at that time I was not in the Czech Republic. I was on a long stay in the UK. During the interrogation one cop even had a printed copy of my email communications with my acquaintance, which implied that I could not have carried out the attack, and they could easily verify that. However they justified requesting a warrant to search my house by the fact that they needed to find objects connected to the attack on the police car. The Police handed the prosecutor selective and mendacious information to enable action against me.“

Source: <https://antifenix.noblogs.org/post/2015/06/03/interview-with-an-activist-detained-during-operation-fenix/>

attack not claimed by anyone, let alone someone from the anarchist movement. However, none of these facts prevented the UOOZ (Police Task Force for Fighting Organised Crime) from doing numerous house searches, arrests, confiscations, and the sniffing and seizing of the server and digital technology. None of the seized items have been returned.

After the first wave of Operation Fenix there were even more attacks claimed by the SRB. This means that the statement by the police, that repression prevents these attacks, it is evidently not true, according to a communique issued by the SRB the attacks were a response to the repression and the arrests.

It is clear that those attacks could not have been carried out by the people in detention.

Myth 2: But they were planning a terrorist attack on a train...

After the first wave of questioning, police charged 6 and kept 3 people in remand. Three of them were allegedly planning an attack on a train carrying military material. Two for not reporting crime (friends of Petr and Martin). The last one is accused of illegal possession of arms.

A few weeks after their arrest it was discovered that a group of friends around Petr S. and Martin I. had been infiltrated by at least two police agents⁴. Police admitted it. Agents (known as Petr and Robert) first began to participate in political activities. According to Petr S. and Martin I. it was the agents who began to talk about militant tactics and who later began preparing an attack on a train. The two agents were trying to provoke a few other events. For example during the eviction of Cibulka squat they came up with the idea for the activists to be prepared and have buried Molotov cocktails nearby. On another occasion, people from the group Voice of Anarchopacifism⁵ went to a demonstration in Vienna, the police infiltrators hid various weapons and marijuana in the car they travelled in together, which were later found by the Austrian police during an “unexpected” check. Later it came out that it was actually a police van which they traveled by. Martin’s lawyer stated about his client: “If he had not met those two police agents he would never have gotten into the present

⁴ More on police infiltrators at: <https://antifenix.noblogs.org/post/2015/07/01/the-czech-undercover-police-agents-reveald/>

⁵ The anarchist collective, whose members were Petr S. and Martin I.
<http://voiceofanarchopacifists.noblogs.org/>

difficulties.”

When we read articles in the media, it sounds as though the accused were caught with bombs around their bodies, determined to invade Prague Castle! Joining the planned attack on a train with prior attacks claimed by SRB creates the feeling that the detained have done several attacks in a row before being caught, but the truth is that neither are accused of any events claimed by SRB.

It is important to note that plans to attack a train (and possibly things on its implementation) were brought into the collective by police agents.

Police did not respond to the threat, they created it.

Petr and Martin did not know Ales and probably have never seen him before. Ales is facing charges of illegal possession of arms, and his arrest was accompanied by hysterical reports in newspapers and on TV about the need for evacuations of the whole street and how innocent people are sitting in a cafe just a block away, without knowing that they are so close to an armed terrorist. Reporter's assertion that being armed with explosives implies the desire to kill, ideally random people on the street, is just another attempt to create a sensational article. It is interesting to see how we are purposefully served the information, Aleš had explosives at home, so he is suddenly a “terrorist”, regardless of the fact that the police never communicated how he was going to use them. The media, however, do not appear to be quite as critical to weapons and explosives (their quantity, production, trade and use) when they talk about the so-called armaments industry. As well, they neglect a critical look at those who actually kill people, mostly civilians, officially, they are not

⁶ In the village Vrbětice at the beginning of 2015, two warehouses storing explosives „accidentally“ blew up. The first explosion killed two people and scattered explosive devices as far as one kilometre. Explosions could be heard in the area for another week due to wind blowing bombs from trees or animals trampling upon them. Two schools and about 1,000 people had to be evacuated. The area around the warehouse was sealed. Hundreds of soldiers also searched the neighbourhood. Firefighters did not have maps of the area and when they came they were exposed to great danger. The entire warehouse is now moving to a new, „safer“ place. It is fortunate that more people were not killed or injured. The entire event was and will cost millions of Czech Crowns (Czech currency). You may ask what is a warehouse containing 13,000 tons of military equipment needed for? Czech Republic exports weapons, explosives, ammunition and other military equipment worth millions of Euros every year. Among the buyers are countries with military-dictatorship regimes where weapons are used to suppress and kill thousands of people who oppose the dictatorship. For example: Azerbaijan, Yemen, and Saudi Arabia. Such events and facts never cause a media wave as big as an „illegally armed terrorist“ and no one is accused of misconduct when selling such weaponry, but then how could they be accused, these transactions are completely legal.

called terrorists, but the Army⁶.

Despite the fact that we consider the accused innocent until their guilt is proven, the question remains whether we should support them if they had anything to do with a “planned attack”. We can ask a couple of questions that the official media do not consider: What the train with military equipment carries? What is the military equipment used for? How many people could be killed by military material carried by one train during a war? What are wars, whom do they serve and who dies in them?

When we answer these questions simple equation tells us that the attack on the train can result in saving the lives of many people. Needless to say, the victims of war are not among those who lead and sponsor wars, and the numbers of dead civilians are always high.

These considerations, of course, have no connection with the accused. Only the story, which the newspapers do not write.

Myth 3: But Igor’s attack on the home of a Defence Minister could seriously injure him or kill innocent people.

The story is convoluted.

There are reports that the Minister of Defence, Stropnický and his family, with the exception of one son, had left the house on the evening of the attack, on returning they found shards of glass which they disregarded as remains from a drunken passer by, and threw them in the bin. There has been no effort by the police to retrieve these shards as use for evidence. Later a family member found an unbroken bottle in the garden and reported it to the police. The first round of media reported molotov cocktails and most importantly flames.

Later it turned out that there had been no explosions. In fact, no firefighters

were called. The bottle in question allegedly contained flammable liquid and was sealed shut. Police reported that there was no ignition or fire where the bottle was found, however pyrotechnical examination of the bottle revealed that the bottle itself had been burnt from the outside, still it contained flammable liquid and was sealed. The story keeps changing and there are discrepancies between police statements. With the bottle containing flammable liquid being the only evidence of a “terrorist attack” and the only witness being the son of the minister who on the fateful night, looked out of the window because he woken up by a noise, this story appears weak. In the mean time Igor was arrested, questioned (about an unrelated case) and released. Later Igor, a Russian citizen, was again arrested and accused in connection to the attack on the ministers house. After his arrest, the media reported that the minister had received several “pro-putin” threats made before the attack. The evidence used to accuse Igor was that of a scent match, his scent on one of the unexploded bottles, as identified by a police dog. Despite the unreliability of such evidence, according to case law it should only be used at a maximum as indirect evidence (probably because it is very easy to frame a person using such methods by the police or others), Igor is still imprisoned. Recently evidence supporting Igor’s innocence has emerged, that the DNA on the bottle does not match that of the accused, substantially stronger evidence than an unreliable scent match. In addition to this the police have made no attempt to view or secure as evidence the footage from the security camera on the entrance of Igor’s college accommodation, which according to Igor would clearly demonstrate that he was at home during the time of the attack. (This is the only exit/entrance and all of the windows are secured with bars).

The whole situation and allegations Igor described in a letter: <https://antifenix.noblogs.org/post/2015/08/03/a-letter-from-igor-reckless-endangerment-and-other-police-blunder/>

This time the media did not highlight the political background of the alleged perpetrator, but predominantly focussed on his Russian citizenship, probably because that is the only way they can link the attack on the house of the Minister of Defence, an activist from Russia and “pro-Putin” threats.

However in this case his political identity is a crucial factor. For example, Igor was among others detained in Russia on a demonstration against the occupation of Ukraine, in the Czech Republic he gave a lecture on the fact that not every Russian supports Putin’s foreign policy and Russian anarchists are in the sharpest opposition to Putin’s nationalism and imperialism. These facts fundamentally change how the case can be viewed, and it certainly does not make sense that such a person would support Putin. In Russia the anarchists are normally imprisoned for their political beliefs.

The fact that such an attack is viewed as unacceptable from an anarchist view point, because it involves civilians, demonstrates that it does not resonate with previous SRB attacks. This attack creates fear and feeds the terrorist rhetoric, and this is why it comes across as being staged. Despite the fact that such an attack is something unacceptable for the whole anarchist movement, even for those who support actions of SRB. Property sabotage is still quite removed from attacking the civilian population. It is also interesting to look at the political situation of the Czech Republic. At a time when the Minister is about to secretly sign a contract for the US military presence on Czech territory and seeks to impose levies of recruits, the attack on his house by a Russian person is well-suited and fits perfectly within the context of propaganda for his policy. After the alleged attack the Minister said: "For me, it is actually a confirmation of the righteousness of the direction of the Ministry of Defence, which I lead." It would not be the first time in history that politicians have made similar inside jobs to legitimise their future activities.

When we combine the fact that the preparation of an alleged attack on a train with military equipment was planned by infiltrating agents and the information surrounding the attack on the Ministers house, the whole operation creates a deeply unreliable impression.

Myth 4: They are extremists and terrorists anyway.

Theoretically, the defendants are innocent until convicted. But the reality is different. Police and reporters are doing everything possible to keep the detained condemned by public long before the court even begins. The terms "terrorists" and "extremists" are intentionally used to tilt public opinion, and to legitimize the raids and persecution and the entire operation, - in short, to discredit the anarchist movement.

A quote of an article "Je suis l'écoterroriste"⁷ written long before the start of Operation Fenix by an radical eco activist for czech independent media reads:

⁷(again „Je suis l'écoterroriste“)... If we go back to the definition of terrorism, found in most attempts this term is used to describe two common characteristics: 1) attacks on non-combat (civilian) people, 2) it is the use of violence or threat of violence to enforce their political goals. This generalized definition, which filters the subjectification relative to those in power and the dominant political discourse could easily be applied also to the police force, especially if we take account of the already above-mentioned facts that the police is for the civilian population

“According to the US Department of State (Foreign Office) in 2011, a total of 17 Americans died as a result of terrorist attacks which included civilian casualties in countries such as Afghanistan and Iraq. According to the US Centres for control of mortality who publish the statistics of the most common causes of death in the United States, far more common causes of death include diseases of the circulatory system (35 079 times more than the victims of terrorism), cancer (x33 842), sexually transmitted diseases HIV and syphilis (x353), texting during driving (x353), contaminated food (x110), falling out of bed (x26) or a dog bite (x2). The number of victims of terrorism can be compared to the number of people who were crushed to death in a US by television or some piece of furniture. The threat of terrorism should therefore cause no fear to the civilian population. Other comparisons even indicate that pre-school children (between 3 and 6 years) each year shoot more people in the United States than terrorists. Why didn't the US government declared war against preschool children, but against terrorists?

By the time the police identify people as extremists or terrorists, their activity and any defence is discredited. This means that even though no one has been convicted, in the eyes of the media and across mainstream society the anarchist, anti-authoritarian and radical ecology movements are doomed as a whole and called “ultra-left extremists”. The animal liberation front (ALF) is facing the same repression and labelling, who have never killed or hurt anyone whilst saving millions of lives of non-human beings that are otherwise regarded as assets. Such a label gives police the legitimacy to use almost any means against anyone who fits into the category of extremism, and sets a precedent for the criminalization of anarchism (or ALF) as such.

The desire for sensation overtook humanity, we cannot find articles on what the alleged ‘extremists’ enjoy, what did they really do, what their thoughts are and which issues they were involved in and why.

Not even a single article about Aleš being released, though his arrest with captions about ultra dangerous explosives were all over the headlines of national media.

statistically a greater threat than the official „terrorists“ and that their confidence in the current concept of democracy is only indoctrination of a certain political goal. This may be an exaggerated interpretation, but in any case, the abuse of police power is worth greater attention ...

This police activity still has two fundamental dimensions: the police need to report activities and “fill” the budget (the term used for spending money). This actually means that the more money the police spend, the more they gain next year from the state. Otherwise, if there is still money left before their budget runs out, the police receive less money in the budget the following year. The second reason for spending large sums from the state budget is political propaganda. Instead of people being angry at the police for spending too much of their tax money, they are angry at the “ultra-left extremists” because the media report how much is spent by the police on its suppression and neutralization.

We have seen this for example in the recent eviction of a squat, Cibulka in Prague⁸. About 120 police officers from the emergency unit in full armour, and a lorry with a water cannon were summoned to evict 12 people, and the whole operation cost a quarter of a million Crowns. Such actions are definitely not unique in the fight against “left-wing extremism”, but rather common⁹. In the past the police even used helicopters, dog handlers and hundreds of police officers for evicting squats.

How much money will be needed to pay for the operation Fenix is not yet clear, but we already know that it will be a minimum of millions, spent on investigations of cases that the police create themselves.

These two aspects go hand in hand, whenever you need to spend a lot of money, it must be pointed out how extreme these cases are. But the police need to report their activities not only in accounting, they must demonstrate their crime fighting.

It is not our choice whether we would consider ourselves to be “extremists”, it is the police and others who label people to fight and discredit disconcerted and concerned people and to justify their own actions. The Counter-extremist (like any other) department must simply show some work. In their case it is fighting crime. When there is no work, it must be invented. In the past, the label of extremism identified people loudly disagreeing with political, socio-cultural and economic decisions adversely affecting the environment and

⁸ As it is with most squats, Cibulka was abandoned for a long time and fell into disrepair, squatters got rid of several tons of garbage, gave life to a degrading house and offered people a space for their self-realization.

⁹ The Police stepped into the role of judge in the case of Cibulka, as well as several times in the past, not waiting for the decision of the court, they acted swiftly and harshly. At other times, the eviction of tenants can take weeks or months, and it's a long judicial process. In the case of „leftist extremists“ things happen fundamentally faster, deploying large forces and all necessary means.

the lives of their own or someone else's. Just remember the scandal about lumbering in Šumava National Park or the protests against the so-called radar that the United States wanted to build in the Czech Republic.

It seems that, as in the case of operation Power (police wave of repressions against neo-Nazis) the police did not have much evidence to hand and so are again forced to speculate and help out with labels of "terrorism", which can only be laughed at. This approach, however, tells us much about the very principles on which democratic police work, and among which, apparently, includes storytelling, bullying and lying.

Myth 5: Nobody agrees with the SRB anyway, we only have problems because of them!

As noted above, none of the prisoners are accused of actions that have been claimed by the SRB. The fact that some people detained in the first wave of Operation Fenix in the past published an SRB communique on the websites of groups in which they contribute, does not mean that they are themselves part of the SRB, nor does it mean they have to agree with everything that SRB say and do.

People who give space to militant actions on websites are not necessarily fully agreeing with its content word by word, in the same way that most of us wouldn't agree with the entirety of any campaign which we reference as a community. For instance, each uprising in Greece or Egypt, each flag at an anti-fascist blockade or even every tactic to get a populist media campaign in support of refugees. Yet we give them our support or at least our space.

Agreement of everybody on every detail is not required, not to mention that it is not necessary and is usually counterproductive, since centralization and unified effort of compliance and uniform opinion makes us weaker and more vulnerable. When we respect and support each other despite different views on particular things, the autonomy and diversity of tactics and beliefs make us stronger. We are less predictable and more difficult to stop or to paralyse as a whole.

When similar situations happened abroad, our support is manifested almost immediately and without further analysis of texts and crimes of convicts. Among the people who received a lot of attention and support in our movement, were for example anarchists from Belarus, especially Igor Oliněvič (Ihar Aliněvič), who himself was not a pacifist. When there is no problem to support comrades abroad, even though they are sentenced for the actions of militant character, why is it a problem to support our comrades accused in contrived case? They definitely do not deserve to be imprisoned or not to receive support, just because some of them were part of a collective who do not have a problem publishing SRB communiqués.

The police try to create an atmosphere of chaos and fear using the rhetoric about terrorism and the threat of long sentences. The police want to create an environment that will help to divide and disrupt the movement and its integrity and coherence.

To blame someone because (s)he has not published any communiqué or for various reasons did not express support is certainly not a solution. Fear of years spent in prison is absolutely justified. Therefore no one should be mocked. But the question remains as to whether disassociating from people who give space to militant tactics gives the police more room for repression in the long-term. After Petr, Martin, Aleš and Igor, the police will consider those who are not afraid to support or perhaps issue a communiqué about some sabotage, as the most radical. After them it might be campaigners for animal rights, and then those who openly supported them, eventually any militant anti-fascists or solidarity networks. Step by step, piece by piece, like the ending of the famous phrase about the growing power of the fascists: "...and then they came for me, and nobody was left who would have stood up for me."

Publication of the communiqué could be as simple as providing information about activities in our cities and regions.

Another argument why some collectives give space to groups such as the SRB, although they don't necessarily agree with the content or rhetoric, may be the fact that unlike most other activities, groups similar to SRB have lack space for expression and communication. For obvious reasons, it would not

be wise to meet at the plenary with other people and to defend the activity regarding SRB actions and those of a similar nature (regarding militant actions). Yes, it loses the personal dimension, which is important, but it is precisely the personal dimension that must be absent in tactics of a such nature.

Activities such as public support for a new squat or receiving refugees are very commendable, but it should be noted that (so far) they are not prosecuted. This is one of the reasons why they can have so much support. The reason that nobody, nowhere proclaims affinity for SRB may not necessarily be that nobody agrees with militant tactics and sabotages, but in the current environment is almost impossible to voice sympathy. Eventually it seems as if no such person exists.

“Divide and conquer”. Since operation Fenix began, there has been the opinion that SRB actions were the catalyst for the police repression, and at times, it has even sounded like SRB should bear more responsibility for the repression than the police. Splits within the anarchist movement creates the perfect opportunity for the police to take advantage of the situation, therefore it is good practice to look to the past and learn from previous mistakes not to allow the police this vantage point. It is not helpful to direct our anger on individuals and groups within the movement, anger should be directed towards those who try to divide us.

If we apply the previous logic, of SRB being responsible for the police repression, to another situation we can recognise some problems with such a pattern, for example, it is like saying that anti-fascists were actually the ones responsible for a fascist attack on social centre, simply because anti-fascists have previously confronted the fascists, blocked their demonstrations and destroyed racist propaganda on the streets. At that moment, we are all rightly going to direct our anger towards the fascists, and have no blame for ourselves or condemn what we did to them (and thus provoked them). That is why we are angry with the police now. The function and the need of the police is something that we do not agree with, regardless of how much damage some marginal group in the movement has caused them.

This chapter is definitely not a defence of the SRB policy or anyone else.

“A company that removes all adventures, will make the greatest adventure of its removal.” John Zerzan

Myth 6:

But they were not our friends, nobody liked them and they made a lot of mistakes anyway.

Accused (in remand and outside) are different people with differing views. Some of them don't even know each other and have never met. Some are solitary individualists, others are not. Some are more popular than others.

There have been many mistakes, and not only on the part of the accused. We should talk about these mistakes in order to remedy them and avoid them in the future. It is not possible to answer speculations about specific accused persons and their "lack of security" and "lack of strategy" or a lack of anything else, because any answer could have unpredictable consequences and possibly lead to further repression. Yet we can easily deduce why we should take a step forward in their defence.

Neither solitary attitude, different opinion, missteps in the past, security flaws, bad reputation or lesser popularity in the movement can justify contrived accusations, imprisonment and everyday bullying such as a lack of food – and it is only a fraction of bullshit to which the accused are subject to.

Myth 7:

This is their problem, they can only blame themselves, and thanks to them we all have these problems, they do not deserve our support - we have limited options and other priorities:

Before we decide on the (un)importance and priority to support the accused we should remind ourselves why they have been detained and what may follow if we do not support them.

Perhaps we have a short memory, and this case may seem like an isolated incident which does not concern us, but for repressive bodies Operation Fenix is just another in a series of assaults against anarchist, autonomous, radically leftist and anti-authoritarian social movements.

History is full of examples of when police have used anti-extremist terminology to justify their tactics, let us remember only a few recent ones.

Persecutions and crackdowns against various anti-fascist blockades and demonstrations against the fascists and neo-Nazis, the most recent in Brno (Brno Blokuje/Brno Blocks). Tough and illegal action against the Šumava National Park blockade, where people - civil society and ecological activists - wanted to prevent massive logging. The spectacular operation (unauthorised by court) of the Cibulka squat eviction and formerly of Washington, Albertov, Milada, Ladronka and countless other squats. The violent crackdown of CzechTek where police ignored the fact that the organizers had a contract with the landowner. The bloody police operation at the club Bunker at Petrášské Square. Police behaviour after the IMF summit in Prague. And finally the case of the “cheerful dancer” in the early nineties. There are countless examples...

However none of these events were so extensive and many of them even decreased the legitimacy of the politicians and their repressive forces. Operation

Fenix and the story of detainees case in particular is the perfect situation for the repressive bodies, with their hunger for success - perfect in the sense that it opens the possibility to frame anarchists as terrorists and to set a precedent for an aggressive repression with extremely long prison sentences.

If this case sets a precedent to use scare tactics and accusations against (alleged) radicals and big penalties, the three incarcerated will not be the last.

If no one stands up to help the accused ones in their fight, the repressive forces will be encouraged to use the same technique to discredit and silence dissent in different cases in different locations across the country. If we allow ourselves to be intimidated and divided, afraid to support them, it will mean that the police method was successful.

In this case, not only the accused suffer, since it will be easy to discredit people who support them, mark them as supporters of terrorists and step by step advance through the movements on and on until groups that would have never thought they could be the target of repression will be the next, simply because there is no one left that would normally defend them.

Operation Fenix is not just about a few alleged terrorists, it is about the future of the anti-authoritarian movement, subversion and protest as such.

Turning our backs on the detainees and distancing ourselves from their case only supports this type of repression. Instead of discouraging authorities from using the same tactics against others, we show them that they can pursue one isolated goal after another and defend their tactics by using a story in which radical politics is automatically equated with crime and anarchist (read terrorist) conspiracy.

The only way to stop this process is to oppose it vigorously, particularly in cases where the state is successful in its influence on the public. By the time Fenix 7 (people accused in operation Fenix plus Igor S.) were labelled as terrorists, their support is all the more important.

So it is easy to understand why we immediately responded by calling for support. It has nothing to do with the guilt or innocence of the accused, nor did it prove any connection between anarchism and "terrorism".

Those who value their freedom to disagree and dissent, should always respond when others are vilified for their supposed political orientation - at least for their own interest, if not out of solidarity.

Fenix did not rise from the ashes, we are all extremists!



Condition of comrades in jail

- the isolation, hunger and division into different prisons

Petr and Igor are in Ruzyne prison and Martin in Pankrac prison. All three spent the the bulk of their detention in solitary confinement. Petr and Martin are allowed one visit, once every two weeks, for 90 minutes with a maximum of four people. Each prisoner is allowed to walk for 90 minutes per day, alone, in a restricted area of the prison. In addition, Igor got collusive custody jail, meaning he is not allowed visitors and his letters are checked not only by the censorship of the prison, but also by the prosecutor, so all correspondence takes an incredibly long time, and therefore has only just received letters from months ago.

Martin was transferred to the Remand Prison Prague-Pankrac in early June where his already unenviable condition was aggravated. He was in a small solitary confinement cell, where even his basic needs belongings were taken and it took weeks before the money that had been sent to him was delivered. Such prison practice meant that among other things, Martin could not receive a radio for two months as it had to pass control, paid for out of Martin's money. He meets his visitors and his defence lawyer handcuffed and only over through bars and plexi-glass.

The worst condition is related to Martin's and Igor's diet. Martin as a vegan (Martin is freegan) has according to the prison rules the right to eat vegan food, but he does not even receive a vegetarian diet. He was offered an "Islamic alternative", meaning that his diet is still composed of meat and other animal products (excluding pig derived products), certainly not vegan. The Ruzyne prison provides Igor with vegetarian diet, which in itself is not a solution for vegans as food is often made out of a meat stock, or directly contains pieces of meat.

Martin and Igor simply do not get enough to food! Each of the accused are only allowed to receive a maximum of 5 kg package, once every 3 months, and its content is very limited. The basic food intake should be ensured by prisons, not people from outside!

How can I help?

We call for supporting all seven of the accused and at the moment, especially Martin and Igor, who are hungry. The possibilities are many, you can do a lot in a small number of people:

- ▶ Tell people about this case. There was a lot of misinformation surrounding Operation Fenix. The police created a narrative in which anarchists are the greatest threat to society. A story about terrorists planning attacks on innocent people who were heroically caught by the police. This story is based on the interest of the authorities and repressive forces, not on reality. The narrative must be corrected before Fenix 7 go to court. It is necessary for people to learn as it will help to avoid similar reprisals in the future.
- ▶ Distribute this pamphlet and other materials: files for printing, benefit T-shirts, badges and other items are available on antifenix.noblogs.org. Extend your distro, acquire information and material or print and bring flyers to concerts or distribute it among friends or in your neighborhood.
- ▶ It is possible to visit, call or write to Pankrac and Ruzyne prisons and demand adherence to their guidelines about the diet of people who are imprisoned:
**Pankrac: Prison Service, Prison Prague-Pankrac, PO Box 5, 140 57 Praha 4
Phone: +420 261 031 111, e-mail: vvpankrac@vez.pan.justice.cz.
Ruzyne: Prison Service, Prison Prague-Ruzyne, Old Town Square 3, 161 02 Prague 6, Phone: +420 220 510 000, e-mail: e-podatelna@grvs.justice.cz**
- ▶ It is possible to organize solidarity demonstrations such as for example Solidarity Group in St. Petersburg¹⁰
- ▶ You can also organize information events in your cities, such as. Friends in Stockholm¹¹.
- ▶ Abroad, you can put pressure on the embassy for example, as friends did in Edinburgh¹².
- ▶ Keep informed and updated about the case on AntiFénix (antifenix.noblogs.org) - in addition to monitoring of the internet you can come to any of the planned events.

¹⁰ <http://antifenix.noblogs.org/post/2015/06/15/petrohrad-report-z-demonstrace-proti-represim-anarchistu-a-antifasistu/>

¹¹ <http://antifenix.noblogs.org/post/2015/06/06/svedsko-solidarni-den-hogdalen-folkets-hus/>

¹² <http://antifenix.noblogs.org/post/2015/06/12/solidarita-v-edinburghu/>

► At this moment financial support is very important. Legal assistance for arrestees and other defendants are associated with large financial expenditures. Finance also applies to the payment of prison fees and packages with food and other things that are otherwise not available in jail (books, radio, stationery, razors, phone cards, toiletries etc.). We will be glad if you organize any fund-raising events. There is a bank for financial assistance:

8760190237/0100

IBAN CZ98 0100 0000 0087 6019 0237

SWIFT CODE: KOMBCZPPXXX (KOMBCZPP)

If you want to send money in another way, please write to antifenix@riseup.net.

► Not all of us have extra money. One of the ways to obtain it is a fund-raising event: concerts¹³, dinners, barbecues, bar or baking a cake which you sell at a cultural event.

► You can also express support by any activity in which you engage. It may be a benefit concert, skate sessions, graffiti, banners, squatting, songs¹⁴ and so on. All power to the imagination. Creativity has no limits. Almost anything can be directed against the repression and to support the imprisoned.

As Petr writes in his letter:

“my greatest and dearest wish is for you to stay the way you are, and not be intimidated. My life-long philosophy is a belief in people as such and incarceration only confirms it. Even here between prisoners and guards I find in so many people a yearning for true freedom that I am myself taken aback.”

However please think about what sort of event and support you choose so you do not make the situation even worse.

¹³ <https://antifenix.noblogs.org/post/2015/07/30/solidarity-banner-event-vienna-aug-19/>

¹⁴ <https://provov.bandcamp.com/album/co-v-era-psali-v-novin-ch>

We'll share an excerpt of the CrimethInc essay “Bounty Hunters and Child Predators: Inside the FBI Entrapment Strategy.” Tracing the shift away from targeting long-term anarchist organizers and towards preying on younger and less-experienced folks from the fringes of radical scenes, the text outlines the FBI's strategy for using these entrapment cases to derail our entire movement – and how we can understand and resist it.

Excerpt: “**Child Predators And Bounty Hunters - Inside The FBI's Entrapment Strategy**”

To conclude our exploration of the state's use of conspiracy charges to repress anarchist resistance, we'll share an excerpt from the CrimethInc essay “Bounty Hunters and Child Predators: Inside the FBI Entrapment Strategy.” Tracing the shift away from targeting long-term anarchist organizers and towards preying on younger and less-experienced folks from the fringes of radical scenes, the text outlines the FBI's strategy for using these entrapment cases to derail our entire movement - and how we can understand and resist it.

Not so long ago, the FBI focused on pursuing accomplished anarchists: Marie Mason and Daniel McGowan were both arrested after lengthy careers of resistance. It isn't surprising that the security apparatus of the state targeted these activists: they were courageously threatening the inequalities and injustices the state is founded upon.

However, starting with the entrapment case of Eric McDavid—framed for a single conspiracy charge by an infiltrator who used his attraction to her to manipulate him into discussing illegal actions—the FBI seems to have switched strategies, focusing on younger targets who haven't actually carried out any actions.

They stepped up this new strategy during the 2008 Republican National Convention, at which FBI informants Brandon Darby and Andrew Darst set up David McKay, Bradley Crowder, and Matthew DePalma on charges of possessing Molotov cocktails in two separate incidents. It's important to note that the only Molotov cocktails that figured in the RNC protests at any point were the ones used to entrap these young men: the FBI were not responding to a threat, but inventing one.

In 2012, the FBI shifted into high gear with this approach. Immediately before May Day, five young men were set up on terrorism charges in Cleveland after an FBI infiltrator apparently guided them into planning to bomb a bridge, in what would have been the only such bombing carried out by anarchists in living memory. During the protests against the NATO summit in Chicago, three young men were arrested and charged with terrorist conspiracy—once again involving the only Molotov cocktails within hundreds of miles, set up by at least two FBI informants.

None of the targets of these entrapment cases seem to be longtime anarchist organizers. None of the crimes they're being charged with are representative of the tactics that anarchists have actually used in the US over the past decade. All of the cases rest on the efforts of FBI informants to manufacture conspiracies. All of the arrests have taken place immediately before mass mobilizations, enabling the authorities to frame a narrative justifying their crackdowns on protest as thwarting terrorism. And in all of these cases, the defendants have been described as anarchists in the legal paperwork filed against them, setting precedents for criminalizing anarchism.

Why is the FBI focusing on entrapping inexperienced young people rather than going after seasoned anarchists? And why are they intensifying this now?

For one thing, experienced activists are harder to catch. FBI agents get funding and promotions based on successful cases, so they have an incentive to set people up; why go after challenging targets? Why not pick the most marginal, the most vulnerable, the most isolated? If the goal is simply to frame somebody, it doesn't really matter who the target is.

Likewise, the tactics anarchists have actually been using are likely to be more popular with the general public than the tactics infiltrators push them towards. Smashing bank windows, for example, may be illegal, but it is increasingly understood as a meaningful political statement; it would be difficult to build a convincing terrorism case around broken glass.

Well-known activists also have much broader support networks. Going after disconnected young people dramatically decreases the resources that will be mobilized to support them. If the point is to set precedents that criminalize

anarchism while producing the minimum blowback, then it is easier to manufacture “terror” cases by means of agents provocateur than to investigate actual anarchist activity.

Above all, this kind of proactive threat-creation enables FBI agents to prepare made-to-order media events. If a protest is coming up at which the authorities anticipate using brutal force, it helps to be able to spin the story in advance as a necessary, measured response to violent criminals. This also sows the seeds of distrust among activists, and intimidates newcomers and fence-sitters out of having anything to do with anarchists. The long-range project here, presumably choreographed by FBI leadership rather than rank-and-file agents, is not just to frame a few unfortunate arrestees, but to hamstring the entire anti-capitalist movement.

To recapitulate the FBI strategy:

- 1) Divide and conquer the movement by isolating the most combative participants,
- 2) Stage-manage entrapments of vulnerable targets at the periphery,
- 3) Use these arrests to delegitimize all but the most docile, and to justify ever-increasing police violence.

For decades now, movements have defended themselves against police surveillance and infiltration by practicing security culture. This has minimized the effectiveness of police operations against experienced activists. However, it can't always protect those who are new to anarchism or activism, who haven't had time to internalize complex habits and practices, and these are exactly the people that the FBI entrapment strategy targets. Infiltrators need only find one impressionable young person, however peripheral, to advance their strategy. These are inhuman bounty hunters: they don't balk at taking advantage of any weakness, any need, any mental health issue.

If we are to protect the next generation of young people from these predators, our only hope is to mobilize a popular reaction against entrapment tactics. Only a blowback against the FBI themselves can halt this strategy. This will not be easy, but there is no better alternative.

Don't stop speaking out, organizing, and fighting—that won't stop them from repressing us or entrapping people. Retreating will only embolden them: we can only protect ourselves by increasing our power to fight back, not by withdrawing, not by hiding, not by behaving.

The best defense is a good offense. So long as capitalism is unstable—that is to say, until it collapses—there will be repression. Let's meet it head on. So if conspiracy charges are becoming central to the state's strategy for repressing anarchists and others, it's crucial that we develop a strategy of our own to respond to this and seize the initiative rather than simply reacting over and over to individual cases.

Repression is intended to discourage militants from engaging with the public, losing connection with a broader social base and deepening the false dichotomy between less militant "community organizing" and clandestine direct action. This is not to say everyone has to organize publicly—on the contrary, one function of public organizing is to prepare a favorable climate for more underground and anonymous actions. But organizing publicly is a necessary aspect of anarchist struggle.

One way we can protect ourselves against this is to practice good security culture—we'll cover this in more depth in future episodes, but for now you can check our website for some suggested resources to learn the basics. And now that we know that the NSA not only keeps tabs on everyone but also strategically analyzes and maps the massive amounts of data they gather, we have no excuse not to delete our Facebook pages!

And it's also important that we support and educate those who are new in our circles and make sure they don't become prey to government infiltrators. We can't afford to have any more Eric McDavids, NATO 3s, or Cleveland 4s — folks whose lives and roles in our struggles are being stunted by incredibly long prison sentences intended to intimidate others away from even thinking about taking action.

If the authorities come to rely on pressing conspiracy charges against anarchists as a central strategy of repression, we must take advantage of the ways this makes them vulnerable. Many in our society—and not just radicals—are uncomfortable with the idea of people being persecuted for thought crime. We need to find ways to address people outside of our social and political circles about the prevalence of conspiracy charges, to discredit the state and delegit-

imize conspiracy-based cases. The broader the range of people who disapprove of this tactic, the more the hands of the authorities will be tied. As long as there is inequality and injustice, there will be resistance, and those in power will attempt to repress it. If we take ourselves seriously as a revolutionary movement, we need to see ourselves in the larger context and history of resistance movements and the repression they have faced; we would do well to learn both from the successes and the failures of the past, and from other communities who face repression.

This stuff is scary, but we can't let them scare us out of acting altogether. **Be smart, be safe, and have each other's backs!**

Appendix: Protecting Ourselves, Protecting Each Other

Never undertake or discuss illegal activity with people you haven't known and trusted for a long time. Don't trust people just because other people trust them or because they are in influential positions. Don't let others talk you into tactics you're not comfortable with or ready for. Be aware that anything you say may come back to haunt you, even if you don't mean it. Always listen to your instincts; if someone seems pushy or too eager to help you with something, take some time to think about the situation. Reflect on the motivations of those around you—do they make sense? Get to know your comrades' families and friends.

These practices are sensible, but insufficient; we can't only think of security individually. Even if 99 out of 100 are able to avoid getting framed, when agents provocateurs manage to entrap the 100th one we still end up all paying the price. We need a security culture that can protect others as well, including vulnerable and marginal participants in radical spaces who may be particularly appetizing targets to federal bounty hunters. In addition to looking out for yourself, keep an eye on others who may put themselves at risk.

For example, imagine that you attend a presentation, and one person in the audience keeps asking crazy questions and demanding that people escalate their tactics. It's possible that this person is an agent provocateur; it's also

possible that he's not an agent, but a hothead that might make a very attractive target for agents. Such individuals are typically shunned, which only makes them more vulnerable to agents:

“Screw these squares—stick with me and we'll really do something!” Someone who has nothing to lose should approach this person in a low-stress environment and emphasize the importance of proper security culture, describing the risks that one exposes himself and others to by speaking so carelessly and urging him to be cautious about trusting anyone who solicits his participation in illegal activity. A ten-minute conversation like this might save years of heartache and prisoner support later on.

To learn more about federal repression and how to stop it: crimethinc.com

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The creators of this pamphlet do not speak on behalf of the Fenix Seven, and the defendants do not necessarily endorse its contents.

They were inspired by "The Asheville Eleven - or why eleven people are being demonized in the courts and in the media and why it matters" and „Bounty Hunters & Child Predators - Inside the FBI's strategy“

antifenix@riseup.net

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