

A Letter from the RNC 8

Dear Friends, Family, and Comrades:

We are the RNC 8: individuals targeted because of our political beliefs and work organizing for protests at the 2008 Republican National Convention, in what appears to be the first use of Minnesota's version of the US Patriot Act. The 8 of us are currently charged with Conspiracy to Commit Riot in Furtherance of Terrorism, a 2nd degree felony that carries the possibility of several years in prison. We are writing to let you know about our situation, to ask for support, and to offer words of hope.

A little background: the RNC Welcoming Committee was a group formed in late 2006 upon hearing that the 2008 Republican National Convention would be descending on Minneapolis-St. Paul where we live, work, and build community. The Welcoming Committee's purpose was to serve as an anarchist/anti-authoritarian organizing body, creating an informational and logistical framework for radical resistance to the RNC. We spent more than a year and a half doing outreach, facilitating meetings throughout the country, and networking folks of all political persuasions who shared a common interest in voicing dissent in the streets of St. Paul while the GOP's machine chugged away inside the convention.

In mid-August the Welcoming Committee opened a "Convergence Center," a space for protesters to gather, eat, share resources, and build networks of solidarity. On Friday, August 29th, 2008, as folks were finishing dinner and sitting down to a movie the Ramsey County Sheriff's Department stormed in, guns drawn, ordering everyone to the ground. This evening raid resulted in seized property (mostly literature), and after being cuffed, searched, and IDed, the 60+ individual inside were released.

The next morning, on Saturday, August 30th, the Sheriff's department executed search warrants on three houses, seizing personal and common household items and arresting the first 5 of us- Monica Bicking, Garrett Fitzgerald, Erik Oseland, Nathanael Secor, and Eryn Trimmer. Later that day Luce Guillen-Givins was arrested leaving a public meeting at a park. Rob Czernik and Max Specktor were arrested on Monday, September 1, bringing the number to its present 8. All were held on probable cause and released on \$10,000 bail on Thursday, September 4, the last day of the RNC.

These arrests were preemptive, targeting known organizers in an attempt to derail anti-RNC protests before the convention had even begun. Conspiracy charges expand upon the traditional notion of crime. Instead of condemning action, the very concept of conspiracy criminalizes thought and camaraderie, the development of relationships, the willingness to hope that our world might change and the realization that we can be agents of that change.

Conspiracy charges serve a very particular purpose- to criminalize dissent. They create a convenient method for incapacitating activists, with the potential for diverting limited resources towards protracted legal battles and terrorizing entire communities into silence and inaction. Though not the first conspiracy case against organizers- not even the first in recent memory- our case may be precedent-setting. Minnesota's terrorism statutes have never been enacted in this way before, and if they win their case against us, they will only be strengthened as they continue their crusade on ever more widespread fronts. We view our case as an opportunity to demonstrate community solidarity in the face of repression, to establish a precedent of successful resistance to the government's attempts to destroy our movements.

Right now we are in the very early stages of a legal battle that will require large sums of money and enormous personal resources. We have already been overwhelmed by the outpouring of support locally and throughout the country, and are grateful for everything that people have done for us. We now have a Twin Cities-based support committee and are developing a national support network that we feel confident will help us through the coming months. For more information on the case and how to support us, or to donate, go to <http://RNC8.org>

Continued on reverse -
with info on supporting the RNC 8

We have been humbled by such an immense initial show of solidarity and are inspired to turn our attention back to the very issues that motivated us to organize against the RNC in the first place. What's happening to us is part of a much broader and very serious problem. The fact is that we live in a police state- some people first realized this in the streets of St. Paul during the convention, but many others live with that reality their whole lives. People of color, poor and working class people, immigrants, are targeted and criminalized on a daily basis, and we understand what that context suggests about the repression the 8 of us face now. Because we are political organizers who have built solid relationships through our work, because we have various forms of privilege- some of us through our skin, some through our class, some through our education- and because we have the resources to invoke a national network of support, we are lucky, even as we are being targeted.

And so, while we ask for support in whatever form you are able to offer it, and while we need that support to stay free, we also ask that you think of our case as a late indicator of the oppressive climate in which we live. The best solidarity is to keep the struggle going, and we hope that supporting us can be a small part of broader movements for social change.

For better times and with love,

**the RNC 8: Luce Guillen-Givins, Max Spector, Nathanael Secor, Eryn Timmer,
Monica Bicking, Erik Oseland, Robert Czernik, Garrett Fitzgerald**

www.RNC8.org

RNC8.org has been set up in support of the RNC 8: organizers against the 2008 Twin Cities Republican National Convention who have been falsely charged in response to their political organizing. The site contains news updates, press releases, biographies, resources, events, and information for donating to their legal support.

The legal expenses are estimated at \$250,000 for the RNC 8. Contributions of all sizes are appreciated. If you would like to support the **RNC 8** with a donation:

Communities United Against Police Brutality is collecting donations for the RNC 8 Legal Defense Fund. Donations will help cover the legal fees and other expenses related to the trial. You can donate via PayPal online at **www.RNC8.org**.

If you'd like to donate in the form of a check, make the check out to "**CUAPB**" and put "**RNC 8**" in the memo.

If you plan to donate more than \$100 and would like your donation to be tax deductible, make your check payable instead to "**National Lawyers Guild Foundation**" (not CUAPB) and note "**RNC 8**" in the memo area.

For either method, mail your check to:
RNC 8 Legal Defense Fund, c/o CUAPB
3100 16th Ave S
Minneapolis, MN 55407

Thank you for your support!