

NorthStar Needs List

- Dry Erase Markers
- Trash Bags
- Coffee
- Allergy-Free Hand Soap
- Toilet Paper
- Pens
- Towels & Rags

Thanks again to our monthly donors for making NorthStar possible!

NorthStar Hours:

Tues.–Fri.
2pm - 6pm
or by appt.

NorthStar Listserve

If you would like to join the NorthStar announce- ments listserve, email northstarcenter@gmail.com with subscribe in the subject line

NorthStar Collective Meeting

Every Wednesday
7:30pm
Everyone is Welcome

I will support the

NorthStar Center

Name & Organization:-----

Address:-----

Phone Number & Email:-----

With a monthly pledge of

-----\$25 -----\$50 -----\$Other Amount

One-time donations are more than gladly accepted. Checks can be made out to NorthStar Center. Please send all mail to: NorthStar Center P.O. Box 4794 E. Lansing, MI 48826 and not to our local address.

Thank you for your solidarity with Greater Lansing activists in this effort to empower our communities by building sustainable projects.

The NorthStar Center - 106 Lathrop St. Lansing, MI 48912 - 517.371.2001 - northstarcenter@gmail.com - www.northstarcenter.net

The NorthStar Center

October 08
Newsletter

-The NorthStar has historically been a symbol of freedom and empowerment. At the NorthStar Center, our goal is to further a legacy of resistance through community organizing-

106 Lathrop Ave
Lansing, MI 48912

Mailing Address:
PO BOX 4794 E.
Lansing MI 48826

517.371.2001

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OPEN:
Tuesday- Friday
2-6 PM
or by appointment

...resistance through empowerment...

...resistance through education...

...resistance through mutual aid...

...resistance through
NorthStar

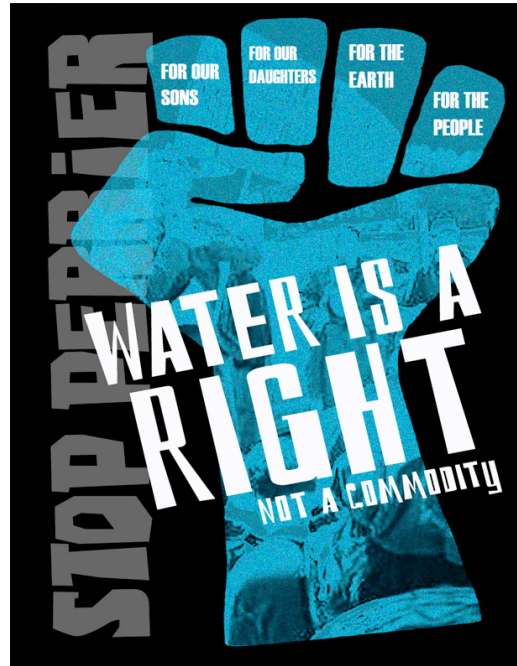
The War On Dissent At the RNC Protests



This past month, protests took place at the Republican National Convention (RNC) in St. Paul Minnesota. There was little to no media coverage of the protests, the wide spread police brutality or the organized all out assault on dissent. The level of action against protestors and the protests themselves represent a new level of state repression of those who disagree. Pre-emptive raids of houses, pre-emptive arrests, and charging organizers with “Conspiracy to riot in furtherance of Terrorism” are just a few of the tools used in St Paul and increasingly in the war on dissent. Much of this month’s newsletter will be about the RNC protests and, what you didn’t see on the 6 o’clock news, but should have.

Thirst
NorthStar Movie Series

Tuesday
October 21st
8pm



Global corporations are rapidly becoming involved with local water supplies, trying to combine private profits with what many feel should be a fundamental right to water access. Looking at tensions in Bolivia, India and Stockton, California, "Thirst" reveals how water is becoming the catalyst for explosive community responses to the exploitation of the world's water. This is especially important here in Michigan where local struggles are taking place for water rights.

RNC Report-Back Event At Northstar



ANALYSIS AND REFLECTION OF THE RNC PROTESTS

(Cont. from page 4.)

It is obvious based on the police actions that they are attempting to instill a message of fear to people engaging in dissent against the government in any way outside of begging them for a permitted march. (Which, by the way, the Poor People's March received a permit, but that did not stop the police from tear gassing & shooting off concussion grenades at the marchers as they left from the permitted march!) The police/State/FBI in the Twin Cities sent the message that they believed the organizers posed a real threat to the convention and required high levels of infiltration, surveillance, media misrepresentation, and mass arrests.

While in the Twin Cities during those nine days, I spent a lot of time contemplating the idea of 'security culture.' Many of the police tactics I witnessed pre and during the RNC, were things I was conscious existed but had not directly experienced (phone taping, arresting/brutalizing journalists, taking film/videos/photos that were evidence of police brutality, FBI raids, text message disruptions, police informants, arresting 'leaders' with conspiracy charges to name a few). It became incredibly apparent that there is a desperate need for organizations to work within a semi-closed system of organizing to develop the necessary trust and responsibility to one another to be effective organizers. I still maintain the importance of public actions and groups to function to politicize people, but the experience at the RNC was a fierce reminder of the potential devastation to organizations that police infiltration poses. Reading the affidavits for each arrested organizers, some of the 'evidence' included casual conversations, previous workshops attended, materials found in their home, rallies and demonstrations people had attended. All things that many committed organizers locally and across the country could be vulnerable to.

I left the Twin Cities extremely motivated to work harder and more thoughtfully about organizing, and look forward to engaging in discussions with others about issues raised above as we develop the visions to develop our organization. -Lacey



Protestors Being Violent

Gender Violence & Colonialism – A lecture by Dr. Andrea Smith



Thursday - October 9th
3 pm

115 International Center, MSU

Andrea Smith is Assistant Professor in American Culture and Women's Studies at the University of Michigan, and will be joining the faculty at UC Riverside in 2009. She is a co-founder of INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence, the largest grassroots, multiracial feminist organization in the United States. She is the author of numerous works, including 'Conquest, Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide'. Her most recent book is 'Native Americans and the Christian Right: Gendered Politics of Unlikely Alliances'. A flyer is available at <http://www.aisp.msu.edu/oct.html>
Sponsored by the American Indian Studies Program



Police in Action at the RNC

Reflection & Analysis of the Republican National Convention Protests

The Pre RNC Organizing

After spending 9 days in Minneapolis, it is difficult to begin to write a report back from that experience. Residing in Minneapolis and St. Paul during those nine days was both inspiring and at times brought a frightening consciousness of state repression against dissent. Although much could be written about the experience, the main points I want to focus on is the pre-RNC organizing, the raids and representation of state repression before, during and after the convention.

To begin, I was inspired by the organizers that I met from across the Midwest and broader who came with a strong commitment to disrupt the RNC and provide support for other anarchists in the community. People formed strong and quick bonds and demonstrated a concern and solidarity with one another both on the street and in between. Being in the twin cities gave me the opportunity to meet solid and dedicated organizers from across the country. For a short window, I experienced living in a city of a few hundred anarchists (from Minneapolis & out of town organizers) and what that experience felt like.

While I speak positively of many organizers, I also carry strong critiques of the local sector organizers & 'black bloc' style anarchists. Before arriving in Minneapolis, I had an illusion of an existing strong and cohesive organization and upon arrival to the Twin Cities, it became apparent that it did not exist. While the RNC welcoming committee did an excellent job providing a convergence space, workshops, information, legal and food for hundreds of activists, within the 7 sectors, the organization was a disaster. Many organizers and affinity groups had done little to no planning or recruiting work specifically for the sector my affinity was assigned. Original measures of a vouching system were temporarily disastrous when the main security person was arrested on conspiracy charges. Very quickly, what earlier seemed like a semi-secured and organized process became vulnerable to infiltration and disorganization. Affinity groups from out of town ultimately picked up the work (vouching, facilitating, scouting, developing tactical strategies, providing medical assistance, etc.) that had been understood to have been completed. As a result of the disorganization of the sectors, the necessary numbers were not achieved to make the block aids effective in every sector.

Multiple anarchist organizers demonstrated a disinterest in straying away from the black bloc strategies. To me they demonstrated a dangerous disinterest in developing strategies that may be more effective and minimize arrests. The concerns I had played out before my eyes on September 1st when a unplanned black bloc 'swarm' developed of about 50 people who were ultimately ineffective in providing anyone (Bash Back, block aids, detainees...) support because they were being marched around by the police and national guard.

In reflection, I think that the 'swarm, seize, and stay' model demonstrated an effort to break away from the reoccurring and ineffective black block strategy. However, without an increased number of people willing to participate in the overall strategy, it left people participating in block aids naked to the police attention and brutality. Original ideas of working with other organizations/blocs such as the anti-capitalist bloc or the Rude Mechanical Orchestra did not materialize and left groups of 25-50 (at best) in each sector isolated away from the permitted march downtown.

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Analysis & Reflection on the RNC Protest (continued)

People participating in the block aids made a commitment under the pre-arranged 'St. Paul Principles' to be separated from the permitted march by 'place or time.' This was developed out of not wanting to attract police activity and potentially harm to people who were marching in the permitted march. However, these principles left thousands of marchers unaware that three blocks away people were blockading intersections, turning away delegate buses and being maced, tear gassed, pepper sprayed and experiencing the effects of concussion grenades.

The Raids

Before the main days of action against the RNC, the police demonstrated tactics of intimidation through raids, detainments and preemptive arrests.

On Friday, August 30th around 9:30 pm, the police raided the RNC Welcoming Committee's Convergence space. Everyone inside was detained, and to be released were photographed and profiled by the police. While the raid was occurring, a group of about a hundred community members, activists, legal observers, medics and journalist gathered outside the convergence space. Instead of people being demoralized by the raid, people seemed to use it as fuel for the upcoming actions. Each detainee was welcomed from being released with cheers, water bottles and eventually snacks!

This challenged the police intentions of instilling fear and demoralization to the protesters.

On Saturday, August 31st the police raided three houses of organizers in the Minneapolis area. One of the houses included the Food Not Bombs house which had opened its doors to many out of town organizers that week. Beginning around 8:00 am the police and members of the FBI raided the houses and detained all the members (except one four year old child who was eventually allowed to leave). Police and FBI came in the houses guns drawn and handcuffed and detained everyone in the homes, arresting one-two people for each house listed on the affidavit.

An impromptu meeting was called that afternoon in Powder Horn Park to discuss the raids and provide updated information. Over a hundred people attended and although the raids were a demonstration of the frightening level of police repression, people were in good spirits and undeterred by the raids. Committees were formed to provide safe child care, additional legal work and assist in repairing raided houses. It was personally inspiring to see people come together, and as 'main' organizers of the RNC Welcoming committee were being picked off & imprisoned by the police, the Friends of the Welcoming Committee was formed! People both from Minneapolis and out of town worked and sweated together to continue the work of the RNC Welcoming committee when it became apparent that the police and FBI were trying to bring the 'leadership' to their knees. As each 'leader' was brought down, a few more strong organizers were brought up!

The Police Repression

As of Wednesday, September 3rd, it was made public knowledge that the first step of police repression against anti-RNC organizing came through the installment of two paid informants and an undercover officer in the RNC Welcoming Committee over a year ago. These three people worked for over a year developing activist profiles of the welcoming committee's 'leadership' of the group of the original 30-35 people who attended the meetings. The information gathered by the informants led to the arrests of eight RNC Welcoming committee organizers who were being held in the Ramsey County jail but as of Thursday, September 4th were all released on bail or bond. Each organizer is facing 7 1/2 years of prison time for conspiracy charges.

In addition, organizers from out of town were painted by the police as 'organized criminals' coming to carry out criminal anarchist activities. One police statement goes as far to suggest that organizers were planning to kidnap a delegate!

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Voices of Dissent at the RNC Presentation & RNC 8 Benefit

On September 17th Northstar hosted a report back from several Lansing area activists that organized and demonstrated against the Republican National Convention (RNC) in St. Paul. The presentation included video, photos and personal account of the ten days that organizers spent in the twin cities preparing and protesting the RNC. Presenters broke the presentation down to pre-organizing, the days of action and the continuing solidarity work that is occurring. The report back highlighted both the strengths and weaknesses of the 'swarm, seize, stay' tactic model, the severe police repression of dissent, the powerful solidarity amongst demonstrators both on and off the streets.

The night was also a fund raiser for the eight RNC Welcoming Committee members who were preemptively arrested before the RNC. The RNC Welcoming Committee was formed in 2006 to facilitate the informational and logistical framework for a radical resistance presence at the RNC protests. All of these eight organizers are committed community organizers from the Minneapolis area. For over 1 1/2 years these organizers worked to provide resources, food, shelter, medics and workshops for demonstrators to were coming from out of town to protest the RNC.



The preemptive arrests of these eight organizers is a clear demonstration of a police tactic to silence dissent through fear. The RNC 8 are being charged with 'Conspiracy to Commit Riot in Furtherance of Terrorism', a 2nd degree felony that carries the possibility of several years in prison. Their estimated legal costs are around \$250,000. NorthStar wants to thank everyone who came out for the event and for raising \$125.00 to benefit the RNC 8.

If you want more information the RNC 8 have established a website: www.RNC8.org. or to donate, mail checks to:

RNC 8 Legal Defense Fund, c/o CUAPB
3100 16th Ave S
Minneapolis, MN 55407