

Marfin Case, 2010 (Athens, Greece)

Struggle against any state machination

The nation-wide strike of May 5th, 2010 against the 1st memorandum will go down in the history of social/class struggle as one of the most massive and combative demonstrations, during which up to half a million protesters clashed for several hours with the riot police in Syntagma Square, in front of the greek parliament, determined to resist against the plans of the local and international domination. The signing of that memorandum was catalytic for the gradual transition to the contemporary “State of Emergency”, in this suffocating context of crisis and social plunder.

This day was darkened by the death of three trapped employees due to suffocation, at Marfin Bank branch on Stadiou Street. This tragic incident —totally alien to the anarchist mentality, which does not adopt concepts like “collateral losses” or “bad timing”— constituted the field on which the state propaganda waged an ideological war, attempting to criminalize social counter-violence and target all those who resist, especially the anarchist movement.

In April 29th 2011, on the eve of the first “anniversary” of the May 5th incident, four people, three of them anarchists, were abducted by cops, lead to the Attica General Police Directorate (GADA) and confined to total isolation without any explanation or justification. (*As of late, prosecutions of comrades based on the sole evidence of anonymous memos and calls to the state security department have become a basic tactic of the police. This tactic is already considered controversial by the mainstream media, as well as by prominent law circles).

Meanwhile, a large-scale misinformation campaign was initiated by the greek media, announcing that the “perpetrators” of the “Marfin Case” have been finally caught. These events were immediately followed by the illegal police invasion and search in their

houses, identification procedures and comparison of photos, without any incriminating evidence showing up, of course. The four prosecuted were released after their statements. Their statements, alongside the “findings” were forwarded to the prosecutor, who was unable to press any charges, so he sent the files back to the police and the whole case seemed to be lead to the archive.

On May 8th, 2013, few days after the “anniversary” of the May 5th incident, with no further evidence, the Judicial Council reopened the “Marfin case” and pressed felony charges (3 homicides and 23 attempted homicides) against comrade Thodoris Sipsas. Of those four that were initially arrested in 2011, no charges were pressed against the other two comrades, while the fourth person was prosecuted for the arson of a bookstore opposite the Marfin Bank branch in Stadiou Street. In February 2013, comrade Thodoris stated in his defense what he has maintained since his initial statement: “The case file clearly proves, through witnesses’ statements, photographic material and videos from CCTV cameras that I had nothing to do with any attack, at any time, that day in the centre of Athens”. The examiner and the district attorney then decided to release comrade Thodoris from custody imposing specific conditions (a worth noting condition is the prohibition from participating in future demonstrations).

The state has decided to invest communicatively on the infamous “Marfin Case” which has been already served several state expedencies over the years, always supported by the media propaganda. It aims to criminalize all these social counter-violence practices which have been expressed through mass demonstrations and protests against the devaluation of our lives, focusing especially on the anarchist movement. This case aims at every part of our society that could potentially revolt, actually being a demonstration of strength by the modern “emergency” state, and a display of what may happen to all those who may choose to resist.

Shortly after the murder of the rapper Pavlos Fyssas by Roupakias, a member of the nazi party Golden Dawn, and the

following persecution of Golden Dawn members, government MPs declared the imposition of “legitimacy”, referring directly to the resistance of the inhabitants of Halkidiki area against the plundering of their lives from “Hellas Gold” mining company (which belongs to both Eldorado Gold and greek capitalist Bobolas) and of course to Marfin case.

Using the “theory of the two extremes” the state attempts to equate the violence of the Nazi murderers that is targeted to the different, the weak and anything liberatory, with social counter-violence against exploitation and brutality of state and capital, in order to establish the state monopoly of violence and the role of the state as the sole guarantor of “social peace.”

Within this context and while trying to prejudge the outcome, the trial was scheduled for December 2013 but was postponed for reasons concerning the prosecutor’s side (i.e the lawyers of one of the victims’ families) and rescheduled for May 14th 2014. Again, the trial was re-scheduled to a date close to the anniversary of the incident and in-between elections. A new “utility” was discovered by the government for “Marfin case”. On one hand, the state attempts to show its efficiency, crowing and trying to close the case before even the court takes place. On the other hand, it is trying to activate “social automatism” to maintain order and safety. This new utility did not finally work since the courts were shut down on May 14th, because of the municipality elections of May 18th. So, the trial was postponed once again, and scheduled for December 1st, 2014.

The collusion set up for our comrade T. Sipsas is not an isolated incident of state machinations, but is by far the most outrageous set of charges that has ever been pressed against an anarchist who participated in a demonstration. The aim was to deprive radical politics of any meaning and stigmatize as anti-social a political movement that has become influential in the recent years, through its continuing presence in the social-class struggle. During this period when any chance of claiming social consensus is lost, the only thing that is left for the state is overt repression. The “theory of

the two extremes” doesn’t seem enough to maintain social balance. Enforcing new repressive strategies, the state attempts to put under constant control and surveillance those who struggle. A new wide tactic is being promoted by the police; the invasion of activists’ houses. This had happened again a year ago, in Halkidiki area. And then, after C. Xiros’ (member of “Revolutionary Organization 17 November”) escape, police consecutively invaded anarchists’ houses, using various excuses (anonymous calls) and attempted to impose the fear and social control in the private sphere, showing at the same time its strength to entire neighborhoods. In parallel, the state tries to incriminate people who resist, actually penalizing their political identity itself, as in the case of Tasos Theofilou, who was sentenced to 25 year imprisonment without any evidence, imposing on them a “state of exception” condition. They are all potential terrorists, so they can be arrested, stigmatized, and condemned anytime.

The prosecution of T. Sipsas is a prosecution of all those who struggle against totalitarianism and barbarity, against the devaluation of life and dignity. The people who struggle, from the anarchists to base unions and neighborhood assemblies, will never leave anyone alone against the repressive state machinations and will reverse the accusations of homicide to cops, judges, ministers and all those who plan our political and physical extermination. What they fear most, is exactly what will happen. We will continue struggling in every field of daily life armed with solidarity and comradeship, for a world of freedom and equality.

Against the criminalization of any form of resistance!

Against the totalitarianism of the emergency state!

No prosecution will remain unanswered!

Hands off Thodoris Sipsas!

Hands off those who struggle!

“Solidarity to Thodoris Sipsas” Assembly

Text of the comrade indicted for the incidents on May 5, 2010

April 29, 2011: the story begins with unexpected arrests; mine and those of two other comrades. Unexpected because they were not based on evidence or eyewitness testimonies, but rather on an 'anonymous note' that was ever so 'conveniently' delivered into the hands of the greek police, naming me and two comrades, citing our phone numbers and home addresses.

Thus we were arrested in the midst of a climate of terror created by the State Security forces and mass media. House searches for alleged 'evidence' followed soon thereafter, as well as my own solitary confinement, hand-cuffed for many hours inside the Athens police headquarters. Meanwhile, for two days, we were dragged through the dirt by the corporate media, the mouthpieces of State Security, which falsely spoke of the 'arrest of the Marfin bank arsonists.' Then the authorities arranged for me to go on 'guided tour' through the floors of the police headquarters, until they brought me into a room designated for identification of suspects, where various 'witnesses' passed one after another, presumably in order to identify me. After that evening, we were called—incidentally for May 5, 2011!—to testify at the offices of the State Security service—without giving oath, fingerprints, etc.—concerning the tragic incident at Marfin bank branch and the attack on Ianos bookstore [both on Stadiou street, in downtown Athens] that had took place one year ago, during the strike mobilization on May 5, 2010.

In our statements, we denied all accusations against us in both of the aforementioned cases. The relevant alleged facts in the indictment clearly demonstrated that charges were obviously fabricated and unfounded. For about a year, the case file remained open, and just as May 2012 approached, we were notified that we would soon be summoned to testify before an examiner. Solidarity gestures of comrades took place during the same period. In the end, on February 1, 2013, I was the only one summoned to appear in court, in regards to the case of the Marfin bank arson.

In the midst of this frenzy of terror mongering, I denied all accusations against me, giving testimony while the lips of many repeated once again the words Scumbags—Snitches—Journalists, since the scum referred to the case through TV news bulletins and articles in newspapers, distorting even the indictment itself with their emetic ‘analyses’, playing a shell game on the graves of the three dead of Marfin bank branch, and targeting me as the guilty party...

Despite the apparent absence of evidence against me, there was dispute between the investigating magistrate and the public prosecutor on the issue of my remand—the latter was hugely ignorant to a portion of the indictment. Thus I had to remain in temporary custody at the Athens courts on Evelpidon street, awaiting the decision of a board of magistrates. After a long wait, I was released with restrictive court orders, which include the ban from taking part in any march or demo. These restrictive conditions [a ban from leaving the country, an obligation to present himself twice a month at the nearest police station, and prohibition of participation in any protest march or demonstration whatsoever] continue to apply until today, thus I find myself with an informal ‘hostage status.’

In mid-May 2013—and while comrades N.L. and G.P., prosecuted for the cases of Ianos bookstore and Marfin bank respectively, were acquitted on charges—a judicial ruling came as icing on the cake, indicting me in court [with the right to appeal the decision] for the Marfin arson and its tragic result, the death of three employees who were inside the bank branch. [In the meantime, a trial against Marfin bank’s top executives, who locked up the employees that day, began in April 2013.]

Many might wonder why I specifically was indicted, and based on what evidence... The case file clearly proves, through witnesses’ statements, photographic material and videos from CCTV cameras that I had nothing to do with any attack, at any time, that day in the centre of Athens, as I have mentioned earlier through my writings. In their persistent desire to produce results, the State Security agents and judicial authorities focus on me through an

exterior feature that I had in common with the alleged perpetrator, and most likely with thousands of other protesters that day. They also focus on the fact that I belong to this political scene —the anarchist/anti-authoritarian movement. According to their paranoid reasoning, ‘if there’s a similarity in this feature, and he is anti-authoritarian, we regard him as suspect.’ Just like the empty beer bottles, which when possessed by anti-authoritarians are materials for manufacturing Molotov cocktails, as in the case of the eviction of Villa Amalias squat. Trying to wrap up their serious criminal case by whatever means possible, wanting to demonstrate their effectiveness in the security sector, they are now targeting anyone who participates in demonstrations and resists the state of emergency..

Although I am convinced that it would not be hard to prove my innocence before an impartial court, I cannot say I feel at ease, since the State has shown that it does not respect the laws they supposedly uphold when it comes to satisfying their conservative public audience. At the moment that I’m writing this text, anarchist Kostas Sakkas is on hunger strike, as he has been since the 4th of June, asking for his immediate release from prison. For those who do not know, Kostas Sakkas is almost three years in prison without being convicted. The limit of pretrial detention in greece is 18 months. For anarchists, however, it seems that there is an informal Guantanamo prison camp. The laws and ‘pretenses’ are not obstacles to the neo-fascist gang that governs us. Striking examples of this are Villa Amalias, a squat evicted on ludicrous charges, or indifference of the greek government toward the ruling from the Council of State to relaunch [a slimmed-down version of] the ERT state broadcaster.

As I mentioned above, I belong to the anarchist/anti-authoritarian movement, and I struggle towards social liberation through open collective projects. I strive for a society that shall be free, classless, without Power, exploitation, or oppression. As a worker, experiencing waged slavery in my own skin, I participate in social class struggles, side by side with the oppressed.

Based on all this, it was obvious that I would take part in one of the largest strike demonstrations in memory, on May 5, 2010, against the signing of the first memorandum with the IMF/EU/ECB Troika. Approximately 200,000 people participated in that demo, besieged the greek parliament with combative spirit for hours, and tried to storm it and invalidate the voting on the memorandum.

The last act of the show is played now; the last battle will take place now, because of my indictment to trial... And in this final battle winners will be those who resist, the anarchists and anti-authoritarians, all of us, who have been defamed and felt the lies, the rottenness of the State and corporate media, encircling them, because by targeting directly me and, previously, the two other comrades as 'suspects' over the last three years, they have been indicating an entire political milieu as responsible for the tragic outcome of the arson on Marfin bank branch.

Crush all state machinations!

Prosecutions will not intimidate us, only enrage us!

Th.S.

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**TRIAL OF ANARCHIST THODORIS SIPSAS
WILL TAKE PLACE IN ATHENS ON 1/12/14**

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