

After a long investigation by counterterrorism cops against anarchists, starting in 2009, we have finally arrived at the zenith of the juridical process. Three judges will hear both sides and make a verdict. This is the climax. Based on the evidence produced by the cops and rebuked by the defence, a sentence will be announced. Or so goes the mythology of this Justice system.

What is forgotten, is that during years the people investigated (and their close ones) have been harassed by cops spying on them (a microphone and cameras in and in front of houses, tapped phones, being followed, bullying and offering bribes in an attempt to recruit snitches), they had personal belongings and materials stolen (during several house raids in 2013 and 2015), their personal lives have been combed through.

What is hidden by this image of culmination, is that this trial and verdict will probably be just another episode. There have been more cliffhangers like this, since the moment it was clear an investigation was targeting anarchists and during all the following juridical steps after this investigation was closed.

What is not being said is that another investigation against anarchists by the same cops was opened even before the first one was finished. Another trial, another spin-off series. Coming to you soon.

What we're not supposed to talk about is that a couple of dozen anarchists have been put on the OCAM list [coordination of ministries, intelligence services and police]; meaning continued surveillance, unannounced visits to home addresses, pressure to participate in de-radicalising programmes ["voluntary" submission to more prying into personal lives by cops], and routine police controls anywhere in Europe turning into an interrogation, a patdown and records made of all travel companions.

Without wanting to trivialize the difference between being spied on by cops or being sent to jail; repression is not a question of an objective analysis of the situation possibly followed by a punishment, as democratic ideology would have it, but it is constant pressure and intimidation.

This trial is just a more spectacular scene in the ongoing saga of repression.

And I refuse to play my role in it.

I have been present in enough trials of others to know that I don't want to voluntarily take part in the power games being played in them. I don't feel the need to legitimize my life to people with whom I share no values and I won't be bullied into doing so by people who can ultimately decide to put me in a cage.

This is not my story, this is not my life.

Reading the files of a police investigation is like reading the mind of a conspiracy theorist. Every event, every gesture, every word, every individual can - with some twisting and bending - be made to fit into the narrative. The words seem like I heard them before, and in the pictures I recognize friends; but this is not my life, this is some fictionalized, distorted version of it.

I will not take my place in the dock for the accused because I don't want to allow them to think this trial is about my life. This trial is about a story crafted by some cops; what is the subject of the debate is the workings of their minds. If the judges share their mindset; they will convict. The existence of evidence matters only in view of the harshness of the punishment and how much they can give out without causing an uproar.

Some final remarks for the sake of clarity. I don't hold my position as an absolute, I respect other choices that seek in other ways to refuse the power of cops and judges over our lives. And I'm fully aware that my choice is taken inside a particular context. Part of this context is that being present during your trial is not obligatory in Belgium (although being absent is discouraged and understood as having a negative impact on the verdict), and that I will have a lawyer present; not to defend my life and my choices but to make the question turn towards the flawed and distorted storyline that has been constructed by cops seeing conspiracies behind every corner.

[Open letter to close ones, April 2019]

## Info

For more reading material about that period:

**Tout doit partir.** *Pour la liquidation totale de ce qui nous détruit.* The issues of this magazine are retrievable in different anti-authoritarian libraries. They also exist on the web.

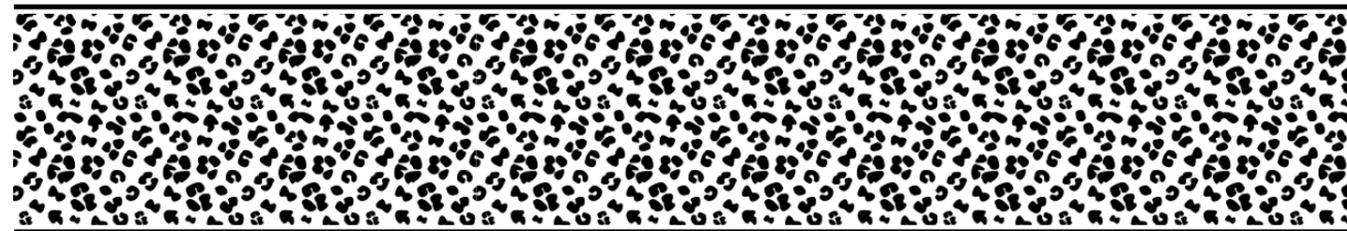
**Brique par brique.** *Se battre contre la prison et son monde (Belgique, 2006-2011).* Edited by Tumult (tumult.noblogs.org)

**Éclats de liberté.** *La lutte contre la construction d'un nouveau centre fermé pour clandestins à Steenokkerzeel (Belgique, 2009-2010).* Edited by Tumult (tumult.noblogs.org)

**Hors Service.** *Recueil de textes du journal anarchiste 2010-2014.* Edited by Tumult (tumult.noblogs.org)

# | Bulletin |

unbroken by repression,  
insurgent for freedom,  
from the belgian territory,  
and beyond the borders



From 2008, the Belgian State started a large investigation aiming at different struggles - but always without concessions - against detention centres, borders, prisons and the world of authority and exploitation. In its viewfinder: the anarchist library *Acrata*, anarchist and anti-authoritarian publications (*Hors Service*, *La Cavale* and *Tout doit partir*), dozens of flyers and posters, more than a hundred actions, attacks and sabotages...in other words the fight against Power in all its different expressions.

Initially charged with "participation in a terrorist group", it is finally **under the accusation of "criminal association" that 12 comrades were on trial at the end of April** in Brussels. Around the same time, **6 comrades received a convocation for the *Chambre du Conseil* connected to another investigation** that could result in formal accusations for "incitement to commit crimes".

June  
2019

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29 & 30 April

On the 29th and 30th of April 2019, the trial was held in Brussels against anarchists prosecuted for "criminal association" as well as for a series of crimes. In 2017 the *Chambre du Conseil* had already disqualified the accusation of participation in a terrorist group and dropped a number of accusations for which it felt there were not sufficient grounds to charge.

Two defendants attended the trial at the Criminal Court. They refused to answer the questions of the magistrates. The other ten accused did not show up. All were represented by lawyers. Following the oral argument of magistrate Malagnini of the Federal Prosecution, the lawyers took the floor and pleaded inadmissibility and acquittal. For his part, the prosecutor asked for sentences ranging from 100 to 300 hours of community service or a subsidiary sentence ranging from 12 months to 4 years in prison (9 accused), a suspended sentence of 12 months and a fine of 50 euros for one person and acquittal for 2 persons. The accused refused to accept work punishments.

28 May

On Tuesday, the 28th of May, the verdict was delivered. The court finally ruled the inadmissibility of the prosecuting since "the means of investigation implemented exceeded the framework of the strictly necessary and authorized" and "have brought a serious and irreparable harm" to "a fair trial". Regarding the attack on the police station of the Marolles in 2010 (which was originally a separate investigation); two persons are acquitted and one found guilty of having resisted his arrest without being sentenced because the reasonable length of time has been exceeded. However, the prosecutor has 40 days to appeal the judgment.

The judge considers that at the time of the investigation there were no serious indications of a terrorist offence, nor any specific evidence to suspect the defendants of having participated in arsons. Since these two accusations were the grounds on which the investigating magistrate Panou had relied to order wiretapping, these must be removed from the record. Moreover, she notes that at the beginning of June 2010 systematic observations (surveillance) were carried out without authorization. Finally, she considers that the investigation was clearly conducted in a proactive manner (aimed at the repression of offences that could arise from a criminal association), and not reactive (identifying the perpetrators or look for evidence of specific offences). However, she does not find in the file nor the authorization of the prosecutor to initiate an investigation of this type nor the grounds to justify it.

4 June

In the meantime, another investigation - also conducted by the same counterterrorist police but headed by the investigating magistrate De Coster - is moving forward. Following the formal stage of the *Chambre des mises en accusations* (to approve the means of investigation), a session in the *Chambre du Conseil* was scheduled for the 4th of June. The initial investigation report refers to the accusation of "participation in a terrorist group", but it is for "incitement to commit crimes (arson) and misdemeanours (property damage)" that 6 comrades will be potentially charged. The session was postponed until the 12th of September.

## Contact

**La Lime** - Solidarity fund from Brussels

lalime@riseup.net  
https://lalime.noblogs.org

Meeting each first monday of the month at 19h in Acrata

Bank number for financial support:  
IBAN BE10 0003 2444 6004  
BIC BPOT BE B1 (Bpost Bank)

**Acrata** - Anarchist library

acrata@post.com  
https://acratabxl.wordpress.com  
Rue de la Grande Île 32 - Brussels



## Some reflections following the trial

I have been called to appear before a Belgian State court along with some other anarchists principally accused of being a part of what was described as a “terrorist organization” at the start of a long investigation, but which in the end has been re-qualified as a “criminal conspiracy”. I am not writing these lines to begin an indirect dialogue with the State institutions, nor to tell the story of my life, but simply to tear off the veil of silence that the State might want to pull over any convictions.

The revolt against power, the struggle for freedom, has always marked human history. To put it better, in my opinion challenging established power is crucial to human

history on earth – and, in the light of the current titanesque society that is sinking in oceans of blood, suffering, despair and unspeakable tragedies, is somewhat paradoxical. There is a beautiful Greek tragedy that raises the problem of revolt, the incompatibility between State and conscience, coercion and freedom, law and ethics. It is the story of Antigone, a king’s daughter, who refused to obey. She refused to bow to the laws of this world, laws made by men, wanting to follow only “divine prescriptions”. It is obvious that gods, as well as divine laws, only exist in the human mind; the real essence of this tragedy is the revolt against established power. Ultimately, the “divine prescriptions” according to which Antigone intended to lead her life are simply the echoes of her conscience and the ethical consequences deriving from it. To renounce one’s conscience in order to obey power is to cease to exist as an individual. And how could conscience not immediately come into conflict with human laws? These laws are imposed to maintain power in office, the order of things. The powerful, the judges, the rich (but also, unfortunately, a good number of their subjects) will say that laws exist for the well-being of all, are an expression – incomplete without a doubt – of social justice and that, even with all their imperfections are necessary to prevent the “war of all against all”. Antigone knew that this was just chatter to put the unbelievers to sleep and legitimize the principle of power, of authority. These laws, these expressions – in the “best” of cases – of existing social relationships, are constructions erected on the immense sea of blood that fills up day after day. Millions of lives have been extinguished in the name of the law. Millions of others are condemned to an existence of slavery in the name of the law. We have killed, massacred, mutilated, imprisoned, burned, bombed in the name of the law; we continue to kill, massacre, imprison, burn, bombard in the name of the law. If individual conscience does not rise up against the laws of men, if

the voice of conscience is reduced to silence and arms and minds are resigned to obedience, if individual ethics does not become a rock in the human flood, there is nothing left but to simply give up, to watch the horrors produced by the world of Law pass by before our eyes, from concentration camps to isolation modules, from dirty wars to humanitarian wars, from perfidious exploitation to the abject exploitation of human beings through technological prostheses, from technological deportation camps to the mass drownings in the Mediterranean. The myth of Antigone is a tragedy, because the revolt of her conscience against the laws promulgated by her father is not based on coercion, the imposition of another model, the thirst for power: it is based purely on her individual conviction, her own ethics which is a part of her being.

Today, some anarchists are being dragged before the court of the Belgian State because, essentially – let’s smash through this open door right away – they have clearly not respected the Law. The anarchist is against the law, that’s obvious. Not against this or that more or less unjust law, but against the very principle of law. They conceive of living together starting only from the individual conscience of each one, not from coercion, imposition, the authority that the State and capitalism embody today. But there is something even worse about anarchists. Not only do they break laws, guided only by their own convictions and ethics rather than by the penal code, no. They go further: they do not violate laws because they would like to live like the rich, acquire power over others, seize State power, no, they transgress them because they are against all laws, all impositions, all States, be they democratic, religious, socialist, fascist, dictatorial or republican – and moreover, they have the arrogance to think they are right in doing so. This is their crime, which no State can ever forgive them for: anarchists want the destruction of the State, any State, and the end of exploitation. What does it matter then, beyond the labyrinths of judicial procedures, whether these anarchists have said this or attacked that: they are guilty in any case. Guilty of following the voice of their conscience rather than the law, guilty of turning against the State and the state of things; guilty of giving suggestions to the exploited and the oppressed and of taking the path of social revolution themselves and of radically transform existing social relations; guilty, if they have the audacity, courage and intelligence, of trying to undermine domination, of attacking with the means that they deem suitable for their aims, even if they are alone or only a few and when everything and everyone is trying to discourage them. Anarchism is the idea and action that pushes towards the destruction of the State, of all institutions, of capitalism, goods and wage labour, the destruction of everything that allows a few to exploit all the others.

In the history of the hostilities between anarchists and the State, there is nothing more classic than the accusation of “criminal conspiracy”. This is an extremely malleable legal expression, suitable for all contexts, and the repressive corollary of the very principle of the State, so well summed up by the Italian fascists: “*Everything in the State, nothing outside the State, nothing against the State*”. Since the only organization allowed by the State is its own, it is the organization of its power with its own administration, barracks, police, guardians, controllers, leaders. All the rest, everything that is potentially located outside the State is either tolerated, as it is not harmful (as in the case of many social or cultural associations), or encouraged because it can be integrated (as in the case of citizens’ committees, parties or unions), or classified, sooner or later, as “criminal”. Thousands of anarchists have been accused and sentenced as “evildoers” over the last 150 years. Depending on the repressive needs of the moment, this accusation can easily be extended to include more people. After the escapades that shook the Parisian bourgeoisie at the end of the nineteenth century, it was enough to be in possession of an anarchist flyer to be condemned as a member of a “criminal conspiracy” and risk relegation to the penal colony of French Guiana. In essence, nothing has changed today: anarchists disturb, no matter how few they are, and are dragged before a court like the evildoers they are. Moreover, it is no secret: one way or another, the anarchist dedicates themselves to the destruction of this world of oppression and exploitation. By destroying commonplaces and prejudices, by destroying the belief in authority, the structures in which power is materialized, also criticizing those responsible for the atrocities this world is based on. Every anarchist, according to their abilities, aptitudes, possibilities. But yes, in the end they are all guilty of wanting to destroy authority. In this regard, as someone in France said on the eve of the promulgation of nefarious laws designed to curb the spread of anarchist ideas at a time when the black powder of vengeance and social justice was perceived everywhere: “*However, the other morning the shopkeepers of Paris arranging their displays were saying, with their robust common sense: – Make no mistake about it, they want to undermine the foundations of our centuries-old accomplishments, we are facing a new plot. – Come, come, brave shopkeeper! You are wandering in the land of the absurd. Think for a moment, the conspiracy you are talking about is not new; if it is a question of razing the worm-eaten edifices of the society we hate, we have been preparing this for a long time. This is our plot of always!*” To implore the courts’ clemency or commiseration would be to immediately repudiate the crime for which I was summoned to appear: the fact, undeniable and duly proven by the hounds of the police and secret services, that I am actually what they wanted to prove I was, an anarchist, a declared enemy of the State, a lover of freedom. For the rest, what do you want me to say of those years of struggle that I was able to share with other rebels and anarchists? Of the remarkable means of surveillance used to identify, file, hunt down and – eventually – capture those anarchists who challenged power by spreading their critiques, participating in struggles and social conflicts, defending the need for revolt and direct action to oppose injustice, exploitation, imprisonment, servitude. The police broke into comrades’ homes,

followed them in their comings and goings, hid cameras and microphones in their houses, sent infiltrators to their initiatives, analysed the words written on their agitation flyers, intercepted their mail and, having listened to their telephone conversations, coordinated with their colleagues across borders, worked with State security and military intelligence, but most importantly, above all, they witnessed, somewhat distraught I imagine, the continuation of anonymous rebel efforts, in a long series of sabotage and multi-faceted attacks perpetrated by unknown hands. Direct actions that have struck targets that I too believe are harmful to freedom, as they are responsible for exploitation and oppression. Perhaps at some point they had enough and, instead of continuing the hunt for the elusive authors of sabotage and attacks that continued to multiply in all directions, they looked to the accumulated mountains of papers, reports, interceptions ... not sure what to distil from them in judicial language. Thus, the good old recipe came to the aid of the police of the anti-anarchist cell and the magistrates of the federal prosecutor’s office: rather than seeking to gather evidence of their possible involvement in those attacks, why not limit oneself to accusing them of belonging to an “organization”. Terrorist at first, to spice up the sauce; of evildoers today, perhaps to secure an easier sentence. But an organization all the same, without structures, without membership cards. An organization in any case, given that, they say, there is an anarchist library in the centre of Brussels, anarchist publications, distribution of thousands of copies in the streets, there are contacts among anarchists and other refractors, both in the streets and behind bars, there are initiatives, debates, gatherings, small demonstrations, which have undeniably known the participation of anarchists. This file, the result of six years’ investigation, is so weak at the judicial level that it can only be considered a pathetic attempt to attack a handful of anarchists (by pursuing them, beyond belonging to a criminal association and the absurd accusation for an *anarchist, enemy of authority*, of being a leader, *holder of authority*, for minor crimes that don’t need too strong a legal argument, such as a street fight, a wild demo, wall writings) to eradicate others, to settle some scores that remained open and to provide an easy legal instrument (criminal conspiracy association) to suppress any subversive inclinations. That is also why I reject all the charges against me, refuse to declare myself innocent or guilty, and even decided not to attend this trial. If they want to sentence an anarchist, because, after all, such is their job that they carry out with varying degrees of success, but always obeying their superiors and their religion, the reason of State, may they do so: they have my name written thousands of times on the mountains of papers in this file.

But unlike the tragedy of Antigone who, thrown in prison by her own king of a father, commits suicide rather than bow down renouncing, I can only answer my eventual sentencing with a promise full of life: I will not bow down to the laws of men either now or in the future and, consistent with my conscience and sensitivity, I shall continue to create my own path of struggle for anarchy.

Laurent,

1st of May 2019