

Green Anarchy

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Free to Prisoners!



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With Dynamite and Molotov's, Anarcha-Feminists Stage Insurrection in Bolivia

(July 2, 2001) Small debtors have been calling for a solution to their credit problems for 95 days. At ten o'clock this morning some of them took over government buildings. Among them were members of the anarchist-feminist group Mujeres Creando (Women's Initiative), whom the government named as responsible for the action.

About a hundred activists occupied the office of the Defensoria del Pueblo (People's Defense). Several dozen also occupied the office of the Catholic archbishop. But the most striking event occurred at the banking supervisory agency, where a thousand debtors occupied offices and detained 94 of the institution's functionaries.

One group of activists passed unnoticed by security guards, went into the banking authority building and took some of its employees as hostages. Groups were also able to enter the bishop's office and the Defensor's before they were noticed.

Once inside the banking agency, activists sprayed the entrance hall with gasoline near the door of the superintendent's office. From the top floor of the building they threw sticks of dynamite into a plaza in order to prevent the police from entering. Groups of plainclothes cops attempted to retake the building.

Top-level functionaries of the banking authority were tied up in their offices and bundles of dynamite were tied to their bodies to prevent any kind of police intervention. The activists wore dozens of dynamite sticks around their bodies and some carried old military firearms.

At least a dozen activists positioned themselves on the balconies of the fifth floor of the banking authority's building and gave speeches using bullhorns.

"We are here because nobody is listening to us. These people are showing the typical hard-heartedness of bankers. We are here because we cannot pay our debts." Their words echoed loudly from their fifth floor position, accompanied by insults and songs directed against the bankers.

Carrying a bullhorn, Molotov cocktails and sticks of dynamite, the small debtors walked around the building's balconies, setting off more than an explosion in the plaza Isabel la Católica in order to make their demands heard.

One woman protester used a bullhorn to communicate her complaint to the police surrounding the place: "For the poor there is no relief, no justice. They have taken everything from us, leaving us sticks of dynamite to eat. Because only the deal-makers have rights, we have been here, living in the street, in the cold of night, with scarcely one meal a day, for more than 90 days. And nobody will listen to us."

Representing the debtors at a press conference, another woman declared, "We cannot leave while there is no dialogue to solve our problem, and if no solution is found, we are determined to commit suicide right in front of them—because we cannot put up with this situation any longer."

This protest movement includes 12,000 workers and unemployed people

who have borrowed small sums of money and have been abused by the private banks' usurious practices. Today they are demanding total cancellation of their debts, an end to the suits against them and an end to the impounding of their meager goods. For three months thousands of debtors have been coming to La Paz from all parts of Bolivia to stage daily protests. These had pacifist beginnings but later became more radical, going as far as attempting to burn banks. During the conflict, because of the misery and desperation surrounding them, more than six debtors have committed suicide. Many have been forced to give up all their belongings and live in the street. Meanwhile, the government favors the rich by pardoning their debts and granting them immense sums of money.

In the middle of the night, attempts were begun to free the 94 functionaries still held in the banking authority building. This involved a six-person committee for assuring their safety, including the anarchist Julieta P., as well as some low types such as the rightwing legislator F. Kieffer, a former paramilitary operative. While the negotiations continued the building remained closed. Included in the talks were debtors (headed by the anarchist Marla Galindo Mujeres Creando group) and representatives of the private banks, senior Catholic clergymen, the Defensora del Pueblo (People's Defense), and members of Derechos Humanos (human Rights).

There has been a ban on cameras and bringing in food or drink. The building is constantly surrounded by a cordon of police. According to unofficial reports, sharpshooters have been positioned in the area and specially trained commando units have been brought in.

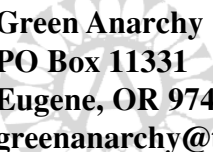
The Bolivian government is openly fascist. The genocidal President-General Banzer has had many social fighters murdered during the four years of his regime. We denounce the human rights clowns, the reactionary Catholic Church and the Bank vultures as makers of a smoke screen to divert attention to the negotiating table while the government prepares its dogs to execute a bloodbath.

The activity of the small debtors is by nature anti-capitalist, because it delegitimizes private property and directly attacks profits. It utilizes direct action and self-organization.

The Bolivian state has been called the most corrupt in the Americas. Inequality verges on the sordid. Hunger, massacres and unemployment rule. The intensity of the class struggle is making the exploited more radical in their struggles. Twelve days ago Aymara farmers blocked highways in the Altiplano region to demand an end to neo-liberalism. The state responded by murdering two of them. The answer was dynamite attacks on power-line towers.

We call on the anarchist movement in particular and anti-capitalists in general to protest at Bolivian embassies, to spread word of our struggles in order to stop a genocide in the making.

Violence is justifiable, insurrection is indispensable


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