

REPRESSIONS IN SO CALLED CZECH REPUBLIC



Police repression and surveillance targeted against anti-authoritarian and subversive movements had always been present. In past years we experienced them at an unprecedented scale in Czech context and history, including entrapment, terrorist charges, large media demonizing, attempts of dividing the movement, spreading paranoia, imprisonment and long exhausting court hearings. „Operation Fénix“, the police name for the entrapment operation that took place, is relevant to other similar crackdowns in European and north American context. Especially because of the divide-and-rule tactic that status quo has in the very heart of its meanings and goals. We hope that this timeline helps you to understand our experience better and to know what to expect in the place where you live and organize.

2015 April 28th Major crackdown started. Early morning, police raid several homes, and social center Ateneo in the city of Most, they confiscated many electronic devices including a server hosting some radical web pages and printed materials, arrested 11 people and many more were invited for interrogation. People were forced to give their DNA and finger prints against their will. Three anarchists Petr, Martin and Ales were put into custody jail. Police claim an embargo on information about the case.

2015 May Petr, Martin, Ales and Sasa (Sasa wasn't put in remand) are accused of conspiring to prepare a terrorist attack on a train carrying military equipment. Another two anarchists have been accused as being co-conspirators who knew the plan about the attack but didn't report it to the police. In spite of an information embargo, the media published leaked information that the official aim of operation Fénix was to reveal and dispose of Network of Revolutionary Cells, a group that carried out several arsons on police vehicles, toll gates and vehicles of a boss and restaurant owner, who didn't pay wages.

AntiFenix collective was founded as a group of radicals who feel that we can not stay quiet while facing such repression. Antifenix closely cooperates with the Anarchist Black Cross with close focus on events around immediate repression back home.

2015 May 6th Cibulka squat is evicted after three years of existence. Eviction was huge and expensive police operation, with more than 120 riot cops and some heavy machinery.

The information about an entrapment is spread.

2015 June 6th Media is filled with information that a house of minister of defense of Czech republic was attacked by several Molotov cocktails. There was no fire, firefighters weren't called and the ministers wife found the bottles more than 24 hours after the „attack“ and then called the police. Anarchists are making bets if this suspicious looking attack will have some aftermath and turn against us.

2015 June The information about an entrapment is spread. The group accused of the conspiracy was infiltrated already in 2014 by two agents provocateurs who gained their trust. The agents were recording the meetings with the aim to bring forth a plan for greater militant action, in order to start the repressive operation against the movement. Notwithstanding the police statement, that whole operation destroyed the Network of Revolutionary Cells (an insurrectionist group), sabotages and arsons against police and capitalists continued and their number increased.

2015 June 26th Another anarchist comrade Igor S. is arrested and remained in custody, accused of arson attack on house of the minister of Defense of Czech republic. No evidence submitted, nevertheless the most strict conditions were imposed.

2015 August 9th Aleš, one of four imprisoned anarchists, is released from remand. Police dropped down the accusation of terrorist attack and accused him of illegal bearing of arms based on the raid of Aleš's home. After some months Ales was found guilty for that and got probation for this misdemeanor. Ales didn't appeal this court decision.

2015 late summer Another anarchist Lukáš Borl takes a decision to go underground, because of permanent police surveillance and harassment of him and his beloved ones.

2015 September 25th Igor is released from remand on bail. Petr and Martin remain in jail.

2015 November Petr released from custody jail based on procedural flaws and good work of his lawyer.

2015 winter Police put a profile of Lukas Borl online as „wanted“ and claim that he is dangerous and armed. This point we understand as the beginning of Fenix 2.

2016 April 5th Police break into the flat of our comrades in Prague. Official reason stated as a search for Lukáš Borl. The next day, **April 6th**, cops break into another flat in Brno, claiming the same reason for search.

2016 April 26th-27th The first court hearings are taking place since „Fenix“ started. During great theatrical court Igor S.'s abused case was closed due to lack of evidence, which is interesting in light of the decision of lower-level Prague district 6 court, to change the classification of act and charge on Terrorism. Nevertheless, as punishment for solidarity graffiti on a prison wall, Igor was sentenced to 2 years deportation from Czech republic – after prosecutor asked deportation and 4-8 months in prison. Igor appealed right away.

2016 June 9th Martin starts hunger strike as a protest against his imprisonment, operation Fenix and bad conditions in the jail, like isolation from social activities and sports and prison kitchen disrespecting his vegan diet. Martin stopped the strike after 10 days due to his mother's bad health conditions.

2016 July 20th High court changed punishment for Igor. Still found guilty for recording someone else spray-painting on the prison walls. Instead of deportation he was banned from all anarchist public events for next 3 years. Using it as a tool of control, police are cooperating with probation service and bans Igor from all events and actions which they see as anarchist – from Food not bombs and demonstrations, to any public event

announced in leftist or anarchist space, concerts and talks; for making monthly list of banned events, police use radar.squat.net web page.

2016 August 2nd-3rd Court hearings with accused anarchists in Fénix case have started.

2016 August 31st Police is breaking into the same flat in Brno again, as they did on the 6th of April 2016, searching for Lukáš Borl. Same as the last time, they didn't have any official permission.

2016 September 4th Lukáš Borl is arrested in his hometown Most after a year in underground, and put into remand with the accusation of fundering, supporting and promoting a movement aimed at suppressing human rights and freedom, blackmail and some arson attacks.

2016 September 27th After 17 months of remand, Martin I., is released after decision of Constitutional court about illegality of any further imprisonment of Martin.

2016 autumn, winter court hearings of Fenix. 1– 5 anarchists accused of a terrorist attack against the train.

2017 April 13th Lukáš Borl is released on bail from remand after 7 months of imprisonment.

2017 April 24th Court senator member Petr Blahuš is expelled from senate for not being objective. It turned out that for 13 years he was working for the same police unit, that actually created operation Fénix.

2017 May 10th Igor Ševcov was found completely innocent. According to the Highest court and Prague 6 city administration, he didn't commit even minor misdemeanor. Ministry of (in)justice apologized for illegal actions of police and paid a compensation in scale of nearly 14 thousands euros.

2017 June Police are coming up with new charges in the Fénix 2 case, accusing 4 more people, all charged with 16 felonies in total. Police connected these four with Lukáš and accuse them of „establishing, supporting and spreading a movement leading to suppressing human rights and freedom“ for putting some communiques online and or having some pamphlets at home.

2017 September 22nd City court in Prague found accused anarchists in Fenix 1 (the attack against the train) innocent in all cases. State attorney appealed right away. Whole case will go to High court. There is still a possibility that they will get prison sentences, up to the life sentences in case of two of them. Media mostly change their narrative and are generally neutral to accused ones, writing about police provocation.

IS FENIX OVER? WHAT'S NEXT?

Igor is completely innocent, charged anarchists in Fenix 1 won the first instance completely, so will they stop calling us terrorists? Well, one of our efforts is to make a common understanding, that it really does not matter how the repressive institutions label us. It is not really our task to fight big media and to prove that we aren't terrorists or extremists. Rather we can think about how to connect with people around us and keep explaining why an aim to build some real community based on mutual aid and solidarity has been and always will be in conflict with the state and its repressive institutions.

For many of us the Court's verdict is a relief. For a moment we can breathe, meet up for dinner, and see our friends in a more relaxed state of mind outside the prison walls. These moments are important in life and it is good that we can enjoy them. The Prison is a useless institution, it divides relationships, isolates people and destroys lives. This is why the verdict, no matter how much more pleasant than „guilty“, is not a total win for us. We do not forget what three years of investigations meant. Ales, Martin, and Peter have been imprisoned for 27 months in total and Lukas who was one year underground and after that 7 months in prison. Let's not forget about Igor, who is today recognised as innocent, yet was in the toughest custody for three months, he is still facing hard restrictions and has been reporting to the probation services for almost one year and a half. On top of that, he is still at risk of deportation from the Czech Republic due to his stay in custody. The families, friends and the closest people of the defendants and imprisoned as well as those who are directly affected by the „Fenix“ case are facing a great deal of emotional pressure and separation. Home raids, threatening behaviour, surveillance, evictions etc. In short, it is clear that there is nothing to celebrate. In cases like the Fenix one, it is necessary to understand what it is really about. The police are not primarily after long prison sentences of a few anarchists. The Repressive units are not afraid of us alone. What scares them is that more and more people would come out through identifying with our ideas, especially if they start using a wider variety of tactics. The protectors of the status quo invest a lot of energy and resources to keep people in the belief that this is the freedom they dream for.

We have learned one thing. If we want our actions and our organizing to be really effective and dangerous for the structures of oppression that keep us under control, these must come from collective discussions and negotiations that go beyond the outlines the state set for us. We learned that there is no point to hide from the repression, it is better to be ready to face it and create conditions that will make such operations inactive.

Fenix is not an operation targeting a few naive anarchists, but an attack to the future of subversion as a whole. Let's take care of each other, so we can be dangerous together.

SOLIDARITY IS OUR WEAPON

In this timeline we focused on events led by the state and its institutions to make it more clear what we have gone through. That is not to say that we shall focus and act according to the oppressor. One of the biggest tasks for us as abolitionists is to analyse the patterns of repression world wide and turn our organizing into pro active one rather than staying stuck in constant reaction. We didn't put different soli events and actions in the timeline because the information about the repression would almost dissolve under all the small local actions happening all over the world. Yet, we still want to remain critical. In the beginning, when the shit hit the fan there was big confusion, a lack of solidarity and quite a big division in antiauthoritarian scene. What we found most important was providing solidarity with the accused ones and those surrounding them, and mainly to break the fear and paranoia quickly spreading within left scene. We mostly feel the necessity to lay ourselves as bridges over the gaps between different groups and the different approaches, to come to an understanding that regardless of our differences we must stay united when it comes down to repression. We think that to create a strong defence against repression and a solid base of solidarity is through understanding the repression and its goals and educating each other locally and internationally with a focus on an improvement of security culture.

As ABC/AntiFenix we held several presentations and discussions on different topics, published several posters, fliers, pamphlets and stickers. We maintain contact with persecuted comrades and their families and emotionally and materially support them through benefits, letter writing nights, noise or other demonstrations etc.

From the beginning of Fenix we witnessed many actions coming from all over the world. From banners, graffiti, demonstrations, actions at Czech embassies, all the way to burned police cars, ignited banks, or the release of minks and another sabotages on fur farms. The tactics are as diverse as we are and many different actions and activities can be connected with solidarity and it is important when we act in solidarity with different struggles and among each other.



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