

Young Anarchists Damage a McDonald's in Mexico City's Zona Rosa

Chronicles of the Mexican "Scene"

Gustavo Rodríguez

1995

According to a report that appeared in La Jornada on Wednesday, Nov. 9, 1994, signed by Ricardo Olayo, "About thirty 'anarchist' youths broke windows, computers and threw food and trash cans to the ground in the McDonalds located on Génova street in the "Zona Rosa" [a tourist and very upper-class area of Mexico City] as a protest against Proposition 187, which was passed yesterday (Nov. 8) in California...

"There were no attacks against clients nor against employees, although the misfits blocked entrance to the restaurant for about 10 minutes while they distributed propaganda against [California] governor Pete Wilson, and repudiating the xenophobic climate which has been set against foreign immigrants because of the proposition...

"Some of the youths had their faces covered with ski masks or bandannas according to witnesses. Others had hair painted in various colors, dark clothing and boots, like punks from London."

In the same article the reporter described the facts via one of the clients of the multinational chain who witnessed the event: "I asked one of them why they wrote 'no to Zionism' and they didn't know how to answer me."

This apparent ignorance had great repercussions when the action was reported on Teleméxico [Tele-"lies"], excuse me, Televisa [a government-dominated television network in México] on the news show of misinformation "24 Hours." Director Abraham Zabloudski, in clear command of the art of lying, declared that it was an act of vandalism by neo-nazi youth. The ignorance of the punk who was interviewed allowed the immediate twisting of events by these misinformation specialists, who presented an anti-Zionist posture (that is, against the imperialist and expansionist Israeli state in the Middle East) as anti-Semitism (being against the Jewish people).

Ricardo Olayo reported that "Before they left, they identified themselves as 'anarchists.' The flyer they left has the initials JAR, which probably stands for Revolutionary Anarchist Youth [Juventud Anarquista Revolucionaria], according to members of the Judicial Police...

"One of the witnesses said the youths 'smelled of some inhalant [Sniffing glue and solvents is a very common form of intoxication by youth in Mexico City; it is also used by homeless people

to stifle hunger.] or alcohol,' which he didn't like because they had their dinner hour interrupted by it...

"The anarchists," continued Olayo, "left towards Paseo de la Reforma, boarded two #100 busses, and headed towards La Villa. Several patrol cars left to follow the vehicles, but without success..."

Nothing else appeared with respect to the incident (setting aside all of the yellow journalism of the sensationalist dailies) until Sunday, Nov. 13 in La Jornada, when Ricardo Olayo once again reported on the progress of the investigation, in an article headlined: "A witch-hunt for those responsible for the McDonalds attack."

"The Judicial Police in the capital began a witch hunt against the young punks who they are trying to tie to the damage last Tuesday in the McDonalds in the Zona Rosa.

"Yesterday afternoon, they detained 12 youths from Monterrey and Guadalajara who were planning to go to a rock concert today, Sunday (Nov. 13).

"At night, hidden in another location, one group of youths who managed to escape said that they were detained without any reason near the Revolución subway station.

"They claimed to have nothing to do with the acts and that the judicial police fired on them several times and acted with 'extreme violence.'

"In the same manner, without direct accusation, the other youths are being detained for their presumed participation in the damage to the restaurant. The Public Ministry had indicated that they were captured in possession of drugs, and that they would be sent to the Attorney General's office accused of crimes against health.

"There is no indication about their participation in the acts, but the judicial police have identified them as punks that frequent the Zona Rosa.

"In an interview, both said that they were attending a meeting near Insurgentes, but that when there was low attendance, they left to go somewhere else. A few minutes later, a group of 30 'anarchists,' as some of them called themselves, gathered on Génova street and damaged the McDonalds. As a result, for the crime of damaging property, an investigation was begun.

"Jorge Brothers Avalos, 21 years old, and Antonio Porcayo Lara, 26, were detained the Rio de Janeiro Plaza in the Roma Colonia [neighborhood], where they were drinking beer last Thursday. Both had their hair dyed various colors, which "led" the police to detain them, because they matched the descriptions of those who attacked the restaurant.

"Are you members of the JAR [Revolutionary Anarchist Youth]?"

"No, everyone is independent."

"Are you an anarchist?"

"No, I'm a vegetarian, and I'm against the mistreatment of animals."

"Brothers said that he heard of the events the next day, when he saw a photo in La Jornada, and that he recognized one known as El Wilson, who was photographed kicking a door in."

In a broadcast on the news program "24 Hours," where Brothers and Porcayo appear with visible marks of torture, gave other names and addresses to the judicial police, which resulted in the apprehension of those previously mentioned.

Cowardice Does Not Have Ideological Limits

"It wasn't me, it was Teté, hit her,
hit her, it was her" (a children's game)

In the same edition of La Jornada on Sunday, Nov. 13, there is a letter published in the El Correo Ilustrado section signed by four groups and three individuals entitled "The Opinion of

Young Anarchists on the Events at the McDonalds.” (see the end of this article for the full text of the letter).

In this letter the authors express their desire to “make public” their position with respect to the events of the McDonalds. They question the attitudes of “those who call themselves anarchists” but at no time do they question the origins of the action: discrimination, xenophobia, and racism. They condemn “the rebels” but do not question the brutality of the state. They do not condemn the hunting down of youths (much like themselves, because we imagine that those who sign the letter as Cambio Radical are the grandchildren of the original collective members who disappeared due to the ineffectiveness of the collective), nor do they condemn the torture and violation of rights to which many youths were submitted.

I believe that since the authors of the letter do not hold many of the beliefs and currents of anarchism, they should stick more to their considerations that “the well-being of peoples can only be achieved through respect and mutual understanding” (are these prophecies from Nostradamus?) and to respect all of the form and ways which, within the principles of the liberatory ideal, try to reach a society without a state: liberatory communism. In this way, they obligate us to agree with this type of “aseptic anarchism,” and to feel at least a pinch of “respect” and a minimum of “mutual understanding.”

When the River Sounds

On Monday, Nov. 14, another letter appeared in La Jornada (yes, we do have a subscription) related to the events at McDonalds. This one was signed by two young PRD supporters [PRD—Party of the Democratic Revolution—often referred to as the “center-left opposition party” by the capitalist press. Center-center-sort-of-right might be more accurate. Headed by Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas] but in the name of the JAR. In this letter, the young anti-authoritarian revolutionaries deny any connection to the acts carried out by “unidentified individuals with no connection whatsoever with the JAR.” In the letter, the JAR explains that they, along with the signers of the other letter, carry out various cultural and informative activities, “in addition to participating in the social movement of the National Democratic Convention [the National Democratic Convention was convened by the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) last fall. The Convention was promptly taken over by PRD-dominated groups and by the PRD itself. See related stories in this issue.] and its various mobilizations.”

Reading the first report written by Ricardo Olayo, our first desire was to try to make contact with the youths and, within our few resources, offer them our solidarity in the difficult moments that they were facing. The second note made our search doubly intense, seeing the hunt started by the state against all youth, for the sole reason of having a punk appearance. We were even more put-off by the supposed “compañeros” of the youths who gave information to the judicial authorities, and to top it off, the clarifying letter in the same issue.

Now, with this letter in the name of the JAR, signed by two young PRD members who explain that they did not carry out the “destruction” and they demonstrate that they are not alone, that they are members of the CND, and that moreover they count on the support of the third most important party in the country. I continue to try to reach the “unidentified individuals” who set loose their rage against the imperialist transnational corporation with the solidarity within our limited resources.

Greetings!

Opinion of Anarchist Youth On the Incident at McDonalds

To the Editor:

We kindly ask that this letter be published in the Correo Ilustrado [Letters to the Editor in La Jornada] Section.

The groups signed below would like to publish our view with respect to events which occurred last Tuesday [Nov.] 8th, in the McDonalds building in the Zona Rosa, located on Génova St.

Through different means of communication, it has come out that those responsible for the incident call themselves anarchists, in the same way that we call ourselves anarchists. Nevertheless, we believe it to be appropriate to publicly clarify that the methods used by these people do not correspond with ours. We consider that the well-being of people will only be achieved through respect and mutual understanding.

In this way, questions of ethics, morals, education and culture are of great value to us.

And it is precisely around these questions that our duty is carried out. For example, by means of conferences concerning the question of women, of ecology, of health, among others in various places like the University Museum of the Chopo and other education and panels, language classes, participation in radio programs (Estéreo Joven [Youth Stereo] and Radio Educación [Education Radio]), publishing newspapers and magazines, expositions, musical events, etc.

“...The hatred of repression, the desire to be free, and the power to express one’s own personality in all of its enormity, it is not enough to make someone an anarchist. The aspiration to unlimited freedom, if not accompanied by love of people and by the desire that every one else enjoy the same freedom, can make rebels, but it is not enough to make anarchists: rebels who, if they have enough strength, will become the exploiters and tyrants right away...”

—Errico Malatesta

Sincerely,

A.N.I.M.A.L., Brigada Subversiva, Colectivo Cambio Radical Fuerza Positiva and Colectivo Edología Expresión Acción. Ricardo A. Pino Hidalgo, Miguel A. Chávez López, José Luis González Ruiz. La Jornada, Sunday 13 Nov., 1994.

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Translated by Todd Prane with Elizabeth Bright.

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