

# **To comrades in Russia**

**The letter from Tekoşîna Anarşîst**

Tekoşîna Anarşîst

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We watched the «Network» case process until the end. We wish comrades to be strong, and use the time in prison to learn, educate, maintain and develop revolutionary spirit and human dignity, and come out of that ordeal stronger than before. We wish freedom for all as soon as possible. The torture can break, injure and kill people, but it can never kill our ideas.

We know that strong dilemmas arose during the process. We are aware that many people stopped supporting certain defendants because of their deeds, attitudes and decisions before and during the «Network» process. And as the trial has come to an end, we would like to wish something to our comrades in Russia.

## **Approaching contradictions**

All of us and particularly comrades in post-soviet countries need to analyze the «Network» case and learn from its contradictions. The case has been devastating for a lot of people and drew a lot of resources. Now the challenge for comrades is how to grow stronger from the last years and keep a strong spirit. We all need to think, how to approach the events and outcomes of the case, thinking as a movement that is responsible for comrades in it, and not only as individuals and groups of friends. The repression is a part of our reality in the struggle for a society without the state. We have to count on it and be ready for it. It also means consciously **not** creating an illusion that we might avoid repression from the Russian or other states, if we are «good enough» from their point of view, not „bad enough“ to get jailed. No matter what we will do, comrades, we won't be good enough for the Russian or any other state. And that's not what we should be trying to do. We need to leave behind the categories and dichotomies of legality and illegality, imposed by the legislation. With all the trials of recent years and just simply every day life, people in Russia again and again experienced the injustice of the corrupted legal system. Instead of legality, they can relate much more to a sense of legitimacy. Many of our comrades can understand that very well after the «Network» case, too. As long as we struggle to change the country, that path will mean a lot of sacrifices and militancy in confrontation with the police state of Russia. And it means that more comrades will face prison and more contradictions and challenges will arise in front of us. We must be ready and be able to face contradictions and such problems we saw in «Network» case head-on, not allow that to create division between comrades and cracks in our culture of solidarity.

We need to be able to struggle for real change in a long-term revolutionary organizing which frame goes beyond our life-times. For that, there is a need to find solutions to the conflicts, contradictions and divisions of past decade, which we could see grow in Russian, Belarusian and Ukrainian anarchist milieu. That milieu has to be less of «a scene» and needs to start developing into a movement. We already know it can't be a political party, but also it needs to stop reproducing toxic dynamics that we learned in capitalist society. Such movement cannot be authoritarian. It must have autonomous women and non-male structures that would ensure inclusivity, variety of experiences and approaches that would address the issues of oppression that women and LGBTQIA face. Not on a liberal or parliamentary, but on a social, liberatory and radical level. Issues of patriarchy have been one of the central problems of anarchist movements in post-soviet countries and they have to be addressed as fundamental problems of our society. Simultaneously, people in Russia are facing a brutal police state and it's inherited ex-GULAG prison system, monstrous and ridiculous trials and a reality of surviving in capitalism. For years now, we all watch

the chauvinist conservative trend siding and growing with the orthodox church and hegemony of the political regime of the Russian state. To be able to survive that and build a revolutionary movement, we have to develop effective liberatory (libertarian) mechanisms to deal with our internal issues and foster our organizational structures. We cannot fight each other, instead we need to build comradeship and be able to struggle collectively for a better and more free life.

Because of such and many other problems named above, we can feel alone, alienated, disconnected from revolutionary organizing. And then, when the police state knocks on the door – we are not ready, because we do not have a strong movement behind our backs. A movement, that is able to give a serious reason and motivation to struggle, and stand our ground in the face of the state machinery. For that reason, struggle should also be accessible and understandable for different people with different capacities and needs. If we don't have that, with next waves of repression we will see more Russian comrades leaving the country in the face of repression, unable to rely on and defend themselves within any kind of organized movement. Moreover, we need to build a different approach and become militant organizers that would constitute such movement. Without militants, we can't have a long-lasting and strong organization and movement. And without organization, without movement, we can't have militants – only individuals that will struggle as semi-isolated participants of the “scene” or circles of friends, until they burn out like matches. It eventually results in comrades leaving the dreams and practice of the revolution, comradeship and struggle for life in freedom, in favor of securing their own private life and personal survival in capitalism.

## **Necessity of understanding and practicing self-defense**

There is a need of a strong movement in Russia, that would provide solid political and social basis for the people to organize themselves. It needs a solid political foundation and perspective, a deep analysis and understanding of the current reality and situation. In Russia and other post-soviet countries, we cannot ignore the fundamental problems of prison and judicial systems, patriarchy and misogynistic, homophobic violence, cruel struggle in economical realities of capitalism and its impact on ecology. The reality which we live in is formed by these and many other problems such as Russian colonialism, and we need to make this understanding to be the holistic, inter-connected basis of the struggle. In such basis, we want to recognize cultural, linguistic, physical, material and spiritual patterns as equal aspects of resistance. It brings new dimensions and changes fields of the struggle. What does self-defense mean to us, if we recognize that the existence of the state and its institutions, patriarchal mindset in all everyday relations, and coercive authority are the social warfare itself? We need to put self-defense at the core of our revolutionary culture.

Whenever we establish mechanisms that ensure prevention of hierarchies and give power to the communal processes, it is self-defense. When we survive repression and defend people on the inside of the state apparatus and build support networks, we practice self defense. Protection units and defense structures that wage collective physical defense are probably the most widely recognized form of self defense. When we are able to create strong communal bonds and mutual care, growing confident in our competence, we lay the foundation of self defense. Establishing autonomous women and non-binary structures to ensure inclusion and actively work on the patriarchal, capitalist patterns within ourselves and our comrades, we battle the strongest

enemy inside of us, in the interest of self defense and comradeship. A connection, relation, bond to the land and nature in all her forms and keeping it safe is self defense. Remembering our comrades that lost their lives or defending other people, nature and society, as well as supporting those who fell in captivity, means self-defense. A strong spiritual, mental and physical health is foundational for self defense, as well as mechanisms that will help us to heal, recuperate and reconcile with ourselves and communities around us. Creating our channels for propaganda, media and communications is a vital part of self defense. When we study and train to gain knowledge and expertise, strong focused education is an ultimate condition of successful self defense. And sometimes the most effective self-defense is an offensive attack.

To conclude, we wish success and strength to our comrades in Russia and all post-soviet countries. Take care of each other, so we all can be strong together! No constitution or laws, no state or it's leaders can give freedom, justice and equality to the people. We can only build it together.

*Tekoşîna Anarşîst,*  
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