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Green Anarchist Sentences

Anarchist Communist Federation

1998

The first results of the GANDALF (Green Anarchist and Animal Liberation Front) trial are out and it was a big win for the forces of oppression. Three editors of Green Anarchist, Steve Booth, Sax Wood, and Noel Molland, have been convicted of conspiring to incite 'Persons unknown' to commit criminal damage by printing and distributing animal rights and ecological info over a five year period. They have been sentenced to 3 years in prison for this. Another editor, Paul Rogers, has had his trial postponed to next year. Simon Russell, editor of the Animal Liberation Front newsletter, was acquitted.

Now the ACF has more than minor differences with the politics of Green Anarchist, as has been seen abundantly in the pages of *Organise!* and frankly find their tactical approach foolhardy and unhelpful to the cause of liberation. Obviously we will continue to make these criticisms of GA politics. But equally as obviously, we do not like what has happened in the Gandalf trial. We will campaign against the sentences.

One theory put forward in the pages of *The Big Issue* is that the real target of the police who zealously pursued prosecution, was Robin Webb, press officer for the Animal Liberation

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Front. He was originally to join the others in the dock, but the case against him was dismissed . In an extraordinary move the Crown Prosecution Service intend to demand a judicial review of the magistrate's decision.

But an equally valid theory would be that the police are testing the water. They were able to carry out a number of raids, fishing expeditions to gather information on British anarchism in general. Now that the GA editors have been convicted the way is open for arrests of class struggle anarchist activists. If there is a social explosion in the coming years, riots, mass waves of wildcat strikes, a growing revolutionary movement, then the State has a precedent and can more easily prosecute anarchist publications. The implications of the verdict are that anyone who reports on sympathetic reporting of any direct action activity risks being prosecuted.

Far right activists have produced material far more capable of prosecution. Only in a limited number of cases has the CPS decided to act. The sentences dealt out against GA were heavier than far to any previous sentencing in similar cases. Also note that the heavy 18 year sentence handed out in December to Barry Horne, animal rights campaigner convicted for a firebomb campaign is a much heavier sentence than that given to many rapists and murderers. The judge, it should be noted, is the only civilian judge with military rank, Major-General Selwood.