

Anarchists Blamed for Anti-EU Letter Bombs

anon.

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Through late December and early January, explosive devices were mailed to the president of the European Commission, the governor of the European Central Bank, two members of the European Parliament, the directors of the European Union's police and judicial cooperation agencies, and other officials.

According to the January 12th issue of *Time* magazine in Europe, these letter bombs are the work of anarchists organized in "a loose confederation of cells" and who "have taken tactical cues from al-Qaeda." Predictably, the letter bombs motivated the EU's Europol and Eurojust international law enforcement organizations authorities to launch a special multinational police operation (to be followed, no doubt, by special emergency laws, special courts, and special prisons) against the menacing specter of "anarcho-insurrectionalism."

Actually, by most accounts, these "bombs" have been described as firecrackers or sparklers, unlikely to incur any injury even under optimum conditions: two devices exploded while secretaries were opening them for their bosses, and the package that had been sent to European Commission president Romano Prodi detonated in his hands with the only damage being a slight burn on his expensive carpet. It's almost as if the packages had been designed specifically not to injure anyone...

Why would self-identified libertarian insurrectionists deliberately provoke more repression for themselves and their comrades just to make such irrelevant gestures? Only statist, general, and homeland security fetishists stand to gain from having mass media outlets shrilly warning of the "anarchist terrorists" in the age of the Global War Against Terrorism.

Italian police have blamed a group in Bologna called the Informal Anarchic Federation (FAI), but no one has stepped forward to claim responsibility for the devices. In fact, anarchists and anarchist organizations in Italy, England, France, Ireland, Sweden, and the US have sent out communiqués announcing that they have no knowledge whatsoever of the Informal Anarchic Federation.

In a December 28 announcement, the Italian Anarchist Federation of Bologna (whose acronym also happens to be "FAI") suggested that the Informal Anarchic Federation may be a fiction manufactured by authorities to justify a clampdown on anti-capitalist activity. They cited the notorious "strategy of tension" operations conducted by the Italian secret services, the army, and the police in the late 1970s as a historical precedent. The worst of the "strategy of tension" incidents was the bombing of a second-class passengers' waiting room at the Bologna railroad station in 1980.

At the time, it was the single worst terrorist atrocity in European history, killing 85 and injuring 200. Revolutionary anti-statists were blamed, and it was six years before an independent investigation exposed the real culprits as neo-fascist agents provocateurs on the payroll of the Italian intelligence and paramilitary police authorities. More recently, police in Milan were empowered to crack down on a number of radical squats and social centers thanks to a strangely convenient letter bomb campaign in 1997. Likewise, it was persistent rumors about letter bombs that triggered the bloody carabinieri raids on sleeping anti-globalization activists during the July 2001 G8 summit in Genoa.

Of course, it may turn out that the anti-EU letter bombings were not part of an anti-anarchist police plot. After all, there are those within the anarchist milieu who think that blind, terroristic bursts of coercive force somehow advance the anti-authoritarian cause, so there could be those who feel that, despite all the counter-productive side effects and backlash, weak explosive devices sent to bureaucrats might somehow magically destroy the State and capitalism.

But if the putative Informal Anarchic Federation is at all serious in its commitment to undermining the EU Leviathan, then it must do more than scorch the carpets of paper-pushers with concealed fireworks. Such adolescent stunts do nothing more than provide anxious police goon squads and fear-mongering politicians with more excuses for unleashing heavier repression against communities of struggle committed to anti-EU dissent.

For Improved Aim and Sharpened Arguments

In a reflection on the Unabomber that appeared in the pages of *Fifth Estate* eight years ago, David Watson wrote: “Suppressing a natural sympathy for his victims—in the larger scheme of things, most of them were little more than bystanders—some people secretly rooted for the Unabomber. Perhaps they did so hoping that he would improve his aim while sharpening his arguments.” If the anti-EU mail bombs were indeed the work of anarchists, then perhaps we should all hope for their improved aim and sharpened arguments, as well.



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<https://www.fifthestate.org/archive/364-spring-2004/anarchists-blamed-for-anti-eu-letter-bombs>
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