

RNC Update

Two Charges Dropped in Frame-up of Republican Convention Protest Organizers

Fifth Estate Collective

2009

In a sign of the power of post-Republican National Convention court solidarity, Ramsey County, Minnesota prosecuting attorney, Susan Gaertner, dropped two of the four unfounded charges against the RNC 8, in April.

The RNC 8 are organizers against the 2008 Twin Cities Republican National Convention who have been falsely charged in response to their political organizing: Luce Guillen-Givins, Max Specktor, Nathanael Secor, Eryn Trimmer, Monica Bicking, Erik Oseland, Robert Czernik and Garrett Fitzgerald.

The eight defendants originally faced a single charge of “Conspiracy to Riot in Furtherance of Terrorism,” as a result of their organizing efforts of protests at the convention in St. Paul, but three other charges were added later.

Caving into months of public pressure, Gaertner dropped one count of Conspiracy to Commit Riot in Furtherance of Terrorism, and one count of Conspiracy to Commit Criminal Damage to Property in Furtherance of Terrorism.

“We are heartened by the fact that our supporters have won this concession,” said defendant Nathaniel Secor. “It’s taken a tremendous show of strength and solidarity over the past seven months.”

Following an intense support campaign, over 3,000 petitions urging the prosecutor to drop all four charges were submitted. Among other statements, a resolution from the 17,000-member Duluth Central Labor Body in support of the RNC 8 was also delivered. National media attention, including an appearance on MSNBC drew significant attention to the case at the same time as Gaertner is accelerating her campaign for governor.

The broad-based RNC 8 Defense Committee has called widespread attention to the Minnesota PATRIOT Act, and played an instrumental role in applying the pressure that led to the reduction of charges.

Even with charges facing the eight, the campaign continues to drop all charges. “Make no mistake,” said defendant Luce Guillen-Givins, “This change to the complaint against us is a token gesture meant to placate our supporters and bolster a floundering political prosecution.”

In the months leading up to the RNC, the defendants were involved in open, public organizing with a broad coalition of Twin Cities activists and community members. The only “conspiracy” committed by the RNC 8 was to provide basic and necessary infrastructure for people who wished to engage in their fundamental right to dissent.

More information and how to support the RNC8 is available at RNC8.org.



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Fifth Estate #381, Summer-Fall 2009

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