

Phoenix: Where Anarchists Pack Heat and Send Nazis Packing

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“Okay, you’re a goon, but what’s a goon to a goblin?” – Lil Wayne

As I looked out from my appropriated aviator Forever 21 sunglasses – I won’t lie, I felt a little uneasy. “That’s a big group,” I thought, as a motley crew of mostly large men carrying American and swastika flags began to goosestep my way. On closer inspection, I realized that the large group that looked to be about 100, was in fact, mostly police. This of course didn’t make me feel any less uneasy...

So here I was, on the front line prepared to throw down against the “National Socialist Movement,” a political party that wants a fascist all-white America. The NSM has attempted to take over from where George Rockwell’s American Nazi Party left off in the 1960’s, and attempts to be a force within the White Nationalist movement as it continues to splinter, fracture, and die. I came to Phoenix hoping that the \$180 greyhound bus ticket and the 18 hour ride sitting next to a bathroom door that continued to open (despite the ever so delicately placed blue tape over it) and smell the entire room up with rotten piss, would be worth it. It was – and the success of the confrontational and militant actions on the 7th brings up several things that anarchists everywhere can learn from.

Inglourious Basterds

Several weeks ago, a flyer started circulating on the internet produced by the Phoenix Class War Council (PCWC – say it like, Pee Cee Dub Cee) that encouraged people to confront the NSM at their scheduled rally on November 7th at the Arizona state capital in Phoenix. The flyer included an image from the popular new movie *Inglourious Basterds*, in which an elite group of American Jewish service men in WW II brutally track down and kill nazis in Europe. The looming showdown of anarchists and nazis created quite a large buzz on the internet, getting coverage on several news sites, in the *New Times* (the major alternative Phoenix newspaper), as well as being picked up by some of the major Libertarian websites. The call to confront the NSM was followed by a well written piece entitled, “The NSM Offers Nothing for the Working Class but more Exploitation and Misery,” also posted on the PCWC blog and across the internet. The text argued an anarchist critique of the NSM and white supremacy, which was presented as a cross class alliance between working class whites and white elites that breaks up the unity of the working class and hindering possible united class action.

The media and internet was abuzz, and the fascists were stating in the press that they would bring out 200 people for their “America First” rally, highlighting their opposition to “illegal immigration.” The stage was set for a showdown on Saturday – with only one side coming out on top.

Desert of the Real

Phoenix is a city divided by race politics and the immigration issue. Unlike many cities on the coast, while a left wing is present in the city, it also boasts strong Libertarian and Constitutionalist scenes, which holds a sizeable influence. Struggles against speed cameras for instance which ticket people for driving over the speed limit, have been headed largely by Libertarian

type groups. This context makes organizing in Phoenix for anarchists quite different than say the bay area of California.

Probably the man that everyone has the biggest bone to pick with in town is Sheriff Joe Arpaio, who has served as Sheriff since 1993. People fucking hate this guy. You see it on t-shirts, in the newspapers, and in the streets. Sheriff Joe has gained so much scorn because of his 'tough on immigrants' stance and his harsh management of prisoners. Under federal law 287(g), which gives Sheriff Joe and his deputies the ability to deport people, raids in the area have broken up families and displaced working class people from their means of existence and their loved ones. But while Sheriff Joe has been going after immigrants, Phoenix in the last few years has been the playground of groups like the Minutemen. One of the figures to emerge from this movement, and also known to hob nob with Sheriff Joe and State Senator Russell Pearce, is former Maricopa County Republican precinct committeeman, J.T. Ready – who also just happens to be a supporter of the National Socialist Movement.

J.T. Ready first started getting heat for his after hours fascist activity when photos of him at a National Socialist Movement rally surfaced in 2007 and Ready started handing out anti-Semitic and racist texts at the office. Ready was fired after the embarrassment hit the papers and his Republican bosses buckled, but he continued to be a fixture in the local political landscape. In the days leading up the NSM demo, Ready appeared on several television stations, claiming that while he was not a member of the NSM, (which is interesting because his license plate read “NSM USA”), he supports the NSM because it is a “white civil rights organization.” While J.T. Ready has been pushed out of most of the Nativist movement, he still has been welcomed with open arms by many within the far right of Phoenix, and even spoke at Tea Party rally on July 4th. The ability of very vocal neo-nazis to exist within the Arizona anti-immigrant and far right movement shows the degree in which racist ideas have a sea to swim in.

Reich Here, Reich Now?

With their nazi uniforms and flags, the NSM will appear laughable to many people. Despite this, it is worth while to look at them, their ideas, and their strategy. What becomes clear after watching videos online and sifting through NSM texts and literature, is that the NSM has become very media savvy after so much time in the spotlight. Getting time in the media is perhaps one of the only things that the NSM is able to do well – since the whole website designing, video making, and general writing thing ain't going to well for them! The NSM knows how to work the media, because they are able to walk a line where they refer to themselves as “white nationalists” and “national socialists,” not “nazis” or “supremacists,” terms which they shy away from, and call themselves a “civil rights organization.” They are not “racist,” they are simply “pro-white.” All this is while they parade through the streets with stickers against “spics,” screaming “ZEEK-HAIL!,” and carrying Nazi flags. The media of course, does not call the NSM out on this and seems to take their claims at face value often – however it is clear to anyone who studies the NSM that they are through and through a racist organization. So, while the whole nazi dress up thing gives the NSM the ability to make the press come to them, at the same time they must hide and dodge everything that makes them and their politics who they are. They are a living contradiction and know it and must constantly duck from the genocidal and racist nature of their political ideology. Their strategy in doing these little rallies of theirs seems to simply be to get their name out in

the media – hoping that in doing so people will come to them and their movement will grow. In coming to Phoenix, the NSM hoped to make links with the anti-immigrant movement and build their influence outside of the skinhead and white power subculture – an effort that failed horribly on their part.

Image problems aside, a quick read through the NSM positions on their website tells a different story than the simple ‘merica lovers the NSM would like to portray themselves as. While the NSM states that they are “against illegal immigration,” they state clearly in their “25 Points of American National Socialism” that they are against any non-white migration into the United States. Once their party gains power they propose, they will then begin deporting all non-White people and Jews back to their original counties of origin, “peacefully or by force.” Being that the NSM couldn’t even get more than 40 people to show up to their rally (even after they bussed people in from out of state), I have serious doubts if they possess the organizational skills required to carry out such an operation!

As for all the “pro-white working class” rhetoric that the NSM pumps out, they are clear enemies to all working people: black, white, brown, and everything else. According to our would be fuherers, they want to do away with all “Marxist” trade unions, (by that I suppose they mean the ones that exist now?), and force workers to belong to National Socialist ones, ie, unions run by the state. While the NSM promotes a beefed up welfare state (money for schools and health care – not for Jews!), the NSM are not enemies of capitalism. Breathe easy big wigs and fat cats! In fact, despite all their attacks on “communists,” the NSM are bigger fans of the “nationalization” of major corporations than any Obamaites and probably most trustifarian college Trotskyist grad students that you’ll ever met! That’s right, in the state capitalist future of the NSM, you’ll work for a state run corporation, belong to a state run union, and live under the “unconditional authority of [a] political central parliament over the entire nation and its organizations.” Feel like a wage slave now? You ain’t seen nothing yet!

But that’s not all! In order to make sure that the white people who don’t get herded off into camps for having a Mexicano boyfriend or owning a copy of a Howard Zinn book don’t get any big ideas, they’re also going to control everything you read, see, and say! As the NSM wrote, they want their new government to “[Stop] the publishing of papers which are not conducive to the national welfare...We demand the legal prosecution of all those tendencies in art and literature which corrupt our national life, and the suppression of cultural events which violate this demand.” All of this of course means total political control, all run by the NSM political elites, which equates to a massive political and military hierarchy that can only be protected and backed up by an extensive police state and massive violence. For all their talk of destroying the “evil empire” of “the jews,” the NSM would replace the very real power of the upper class with their own ruling class.

Let’s go over this again, shall we? Under American National Socialism, you’re still a wage slave. You still will pay rent. You still will pay for things that you and other workers create at work. You still live in a class society of property owners and wage workers – only now, many of those property owners are now part of the government! You don’t work for private businesses, you work for state run corporations. You can’t participate in unions except ones that are run by the state. And, if you happen to have the hots for the foxy Korean woman down the street or happen to peep a gay porn website – you’re fucked! Be careful what you say and write as well, or the all-powerful NSM cadre just might pay you a visit. Despite the NSM’s standard line that they simply want to pressure politicians in the US to “put America first” and “end illegal immigration,”

the NSM's positions are very clear. They want a more bureaucratic and totalitarian version of the modern capitalist system. Think China but totally racist. Furthermore – their movement offers nothing for working people. Why drive across two states to a shitty rally with 30 other people who will probably be locked up for selling meth next week, when multi racial groups of workers are taking action all the time to actually better their conditions? For instance, the workers at the Republic Windows and Glass factory who occupied it together and won back their wages and benefits. I'd rather have ferrets dipped in Tapatio fight in my pants while I stand in line at the DMV than live in the America that the National Socialist Movement wants, but apparently a small amount of people would disagree with me – there in lies the conflict.

“IF YOU WANT BEEF THEN BRING THA RUCKUS – PHX AIN'T NUTHIN TA FUCK WITH!”

On November 7th, the anarchists of Arizona, made up of groups from Phoenix, Flagstaff, and elsewhere, numbered between 150–200. The coordination that allowed this to happen was in thanks larger to state wide gatherings that have been organized for several months. Joining the anarchists were Libertarian activists from various groups, as well as various veterans, leftists, queer folks, and Chicano activists. Another large contingent was Native youth, especially from the O'odham Solidarity Across Borders Collective, which was out in force as well as young people from various reservations across Arizona. Carrying huge banners that read, “THIS IS ANTI-FACISM: No States, No Borders,” and “No Foreclosures, No Deportations! Round Up Nazis Not Immigrants!,” and black flags, anarchists were clearly the largest group in vocal opposition. Most of the crowd wore black and covered their faces with masks. At this stand off, anarchists did several things right; firstly, they stayed ahead of the Nazis, and were able to physically attack them with rocks and paint bombs and did not allow the police to arrest anyone. Instead of physically being directly across from the Nazis, the anarchists tried to stay ahead of them in order to try and get into the street and confront them directly.

When the NSM group came up to where the anarchists where, police quickly moved them onto the side of the streets and kept the two sides from getting into the street. Several bottles where thrown at this point. The nazis then moved onto their rally site after having marched from their parking space a couple of blocks away. Hardly anyone was on the street at this point other than police, nazis, and anarchists. Anarchists made several attempts to get in the street and go at the nazis, but police on horses did there damnest to make sure we would not have the streets. After the nazis had gotten to their rally point, police at first attempted to separate everyone from their rally, which was simply held on the grass of the state capital (not on the steps like rallies in other states). This lasted for about 5 minutes, before people as a group said fuck that and rushed “the stage.” At this point police formed a line between the anarchists and the nazis, while brave souls threw rocks and paint bombs. Anarchists were able to use their large banners to create barriers between the prying eyes of the police and the large stones that littered the Phoenix ground and soon found themselves flying through the air. The NSM quickly responded by getting their “shield team” up in front, in an effort to deflect any projectiles on the leadership cadre. Despite the police presence that numbered at about 100, we should also keep in mind that comrades doing surveillance away from the rally also saw undercover SWAT team vehicles, filled with highly armed police that were ready and stomp anyone into the ground if

a riot erupted. Even if we could have rolled on the nazis, we must keep in mind that the state holds much bigger guns.

The greatest irony of the NSM rally was that there was no one at the capital! They spoke to no one outside of those who heard their message through the media. The anarchists who surrounded them were so loud that they could barely even be heard. The speakers on the mike also spent most of their time calling the counter-protesters “faggots” and “jews” that they didn’t really have any time to address anything else. The police quickly had enough, and an hour and a half before they had to leave, the police made them take off and walked them back to their cars. Along the way, anarchists again attempted to get in the street and made several attempts to create barricades but quick police response resulted in botched attempts and several near arrests. Quick action by comrades however resulted in freedom for those grabbed by the police – as anarchists pulled their friends back and de-arrested them. The nazis, over half of which were from out of state (lots of Texas plates), got back in their cars and headed out. As we walked back to our cars, someone pulled up and screamed, “The nazis just got into a car accident and they’re outside of McDonalds!” We rushed to the scene to find a speaker for the NSM with a broken leg. Stephen Lemons of the New Times, wrote:

“The only casualty for the NSMers came as a result of their own error, when they caused an accident at 7th Avenue and Van Buren in one of the rental cars they left in after the demo. An unidentified Nazi was rushed away in an ambulance for an injury to his leg. Phoenix Police Sgt. Brian Murray confirmed at the scene that the accident was the fault of the Nazis, whose small white car collided with a large red truck.

None of the Nazis were taken into custody, though the truck’s driver was arrested for not having I.D. and proof of insurance. Murray said the arrested driver would be ticketed and released as long as he had no outstanding warrants. The driver of the Nazi car was ticketed as well, but according to NSM spokesman Charles Wilson, the Nazi wheel man refused to sign the citation. Wilson later blamed the accident on the police, saying the cops were supposed to have kept the street clear for the Nazis’ exit.”

Probably the best scene of the whole day was when workers at the stores next to the accident came out and laughed at the nazis as they drove away surrounded by police and people in cars passed by laughing their asses off. While the nazis did some salutes to the anarchists laughing across the street, people in cars were heard to be screaming, “Karma’s a bitch! Hahahaha!”

Stay Strapped

Anarchists carried at this event. Meaning: ANARCHISTS HAD GUNS! Out in the open, and it was legal. That’s right, it’s not just nazis and anti-immigrant types who are packing now at protests, it’s our side. In Arizona, it’s legal to openly carry firearms as long as your weapon is legally yours. This is the first time I have physically seen anarchists at demonstrations carry firearms with them – and I have to say that the experience was very empowering to see. Those in states with similar laws should considering getting firearms and doing the same if possible. This is not me fetishizing armed struggle or guns; the way forward is collective action by working people in their workplaces, communities, and the streets. But, if we are going to go up against people like the NSM, we should be prepared to defend ourselves especially if we can avoid legal risks while openly carrying weapons. It should be noted that members of the NSM have been

seen carrying weapons while counter protesting pro-immigration marches. People like J.T. Ready have also been known to follow Mexicano people in the local area, often while armed, hoping to deport them.

Next Time

Confronting the NSM gave anarchists in Phoenix and the wider area a large amount of attention and also a chance to come together and act in a confrontational manner against their enemies. We had the chance to get in the street and see what each other were made of. We made plans, evaded and pushed back police, throw rocks, armed ourselves, and stood our ground. We need only take this experience and begin to apply it to the terrain of everyday life. As Stephen Lemons wrote, "Whatever bad rep the anarchists had before Saturday – deserved or undeserved – has now been absolved." Any political capital that the NSM hoped to have gained from the event on the 7th obviously slid from their fingers. They failed to attract anyone from the surrounding area (outside of party members), not to mention white people from the anti-immigration movement. The media was very clear in all their reports that protestors against the NSM outnumbered the NSM greatly. They failed to bring out 50 people, much less the 200 that they were banking on. In hoping to use the media to get the National Socialist Movement name out into the world, they have instead given the anarchists a platform due to their triumph over them. The question is, what are we going to do with it?

Clearly, we have to shift the discourse away from a liberal, middle class one that is focused on the issue being simply about "hate." Sure the NSM is hateful, but they are a political group that seeks to overthrow the US system and replace it with one that is much more totalitarian, bureaucratic, and violent. In the NSM's America, the millions who demonstrated and took over the streets on May Day 2006 against borders would have been shot and deported. The workers at Republic Windows and Glass would have been labeled communists and shot. The student workers who today in California occupy their schools against budget cuts and fee hikes would have been called traitors to the state and shot. We must oppose the NSM not only because they are racist, but because politically they offer only a more monstrous version of capitalism than what we have today. Furthermore, attacking the NSM allows us space to attack Sheriff Joe and the wider system that attacks working class migrants. We can begin to combat white supremacy that seeks to divide the working class in this country, which stops working people from coming together against their class enemies. Furthermore, the NSM is a weak enemy and fighting them is good practice. Let us sharpen our knives, load our guns, and train now, as we look out for bigger and better foes.

Next time around, anarchists will have to be on the defensive much more. The police were slow to respond and make arrests on the 7th, and anarchists could have gotten away with a lot more attacks and rock throwing than they engaged in. As the struggles against the speed cameras, Sheriff Joe, in the traditional O'odham communities against freeway expansion, and a huge looming strike at various Arizona grocery store chains lies on the horizon, the possibilities of intervention for anarchists in Arizona remain. We must also stay on our guard against the NSM – unless of course they crash their cars on the way back to Texas. Now that, would be something to salute!

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