

# **Revolutionary Struggle trial**

**Statement to the terror court of Korydallos**

Jean Weir

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# Contents

<b>Athens, the Revolutionary Struggle trial: Statement of anarchist Jean Weir to the terror court of Korydallos</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>A short background on the Revolutionary Struggle case by guerrillanews.wordpress.com</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Revolutionary Struggle trial</b>	<b>10</b>

# **Athens, the Revolutionary Struggle trial: Statement of anarchist Jean Weir to the terror court of Korydallos**

I wish to clarify right away that I stand here as an enemy of the State and society. Far from being a lively community sharing social well-being and the joy of life, what is referred to as society is no more than the dull organisation of inequality and exploitation through social roles and forbiddance. The law is the barbed wire that holds everything in place, and has been internalised to such an extent that it forms the unconscious basis of daily habit and routine even for those who apply it. The media form opinions to maintain consensus and the delegation of individual responsibility to that organ of institutionalised terror, the State. The State, which includes its subjects, is at the basis of every social relation at the present time, including the one here in this court today.

I have come to stand face to face with the enemy inside this bastion of State terror because I was invited by the three comrades of Revolutionary Struggle. I haven't come to enter into dialogue concerning these comrades or any others. My presence here is an act of solidarity and a continuation of my struggle as an anarchist. At least the present judicial proceeding has discarded every vestige of the democratic swindle, revealing the true essence of power. It's impossible to pass over the fact that this trial is taking place inside a prison, the greatest crime perpetrated by man over man, and the physical proximity of the judge and the gaoler is an unusual if unintentional declaration of truth. The judge is nothing without the gaoler. The gaoler is nothing without the judge. They are one and bear equal responsibility for their actions. Terrorists and criminals are the servants of the State and capital, not those struggling to survive or fighting against a world of strife, war, poverty and oppression.

It is in the context of this struggle that I first heard of the anarchist Nikos Maziotis. He was in the extreme and dangerous phase of a hunger strike to enforce his refusal to wear a uniform and become a killer in the pay of the State. At the time many anarchists in Italy where I was living had also refused to do military service, choosing to go to prison rather than join the armed force that keeps humanity divided into classes and intervenes violently to extinguish any attempt at liberation. But also and above all because military service is one of the State's weapons for building model citizens devoid of personality, individuality and their own way of thinking against which it is necessary to rebel and refuse.

I was already aware of the anarchist struggle, of the importance of the anarchist struggle in Greece alongside the exploited, the students, the bus drivers, schoolteachers, the people of the villages of Halkidiki, etc and had read inspiring reports of their actions and also about the State repression against them. But it was Nikos Maziotis, who without knowing it, was to be the propulsive element in my coming to Greece in person. It was on the occasion of his trial in 1999 that I came to Athens for the first time, to attend the court in solidarity with him. It was then

that I discovered the wild beauty of the Greek anarchist comrades, their passion for freedom that found immediate expression in a thousand ways and never ceases to grow and intensify, inspiring and igniting free spirits all over the planet. Two things in particular impressed me on that occasion. First and foremost the unmitigated courage and dignity of Nikos Maziotis as he faced the perpetrators of power and privilege. His statement to the court, his affirmations as a man, an individual, a revolutionary, an anarchist, were made looking into the barrel of the gun of judgement without any concern for the consequences in terms of the years he was facing locked up in a cell. What he said that day is a classic of anarchist theory concerning the need for violent attack on the class enemy in first person and I personally have contributed to spreading it in the English language (the text, I mean, hopefully also the attacks). It has inspired comrades and rebels all over the world. What also impressed me and has affected my life ever since was the immediacy of so many comrades' action in solidarity, without mediation, without the taboos about so-called violence that put a brake on the just anger of the exploited. They expressed solidarity in its only authentic manifestation, by continuing the struggle, the conscious attack on the profits of the bosses and the instruments of repression, even and above all when the class enemy was out in all its force to protect the property and arrogance of the rulers of the planet. Each with their own means, each with their own responsibility.

Armed struggle is on trial. Anarchists also. For any struggle to be worthy of the name it must be armed and self-organised, far from any delegation to the self-proclaimed representatives of the workers movement who have shamelessly betrayed the latter and collaborated with the bosses by reigning in the bad passions of those who have nothing to lose but their chains. Anarchists are against hierarchy and this also applies to the weapons used in the struggle. The weaponry of the anarchist combines the idea, the concept of freedom and the need to destroy not only inequality and poverty but also and at the same time, authority, hierarchy and obedience. They have the capacity to organise themselves and go to the attack without leaders or led, and push others to do the same. Words, stones, pistols, fire, dynamite, Molotov cocktails, graffiti, sledgehammers, hacksaws, theory, analysis, identification of the class enemy as it changes in order to stay the same, machine-guns, spray cans, bazookas are some of the weapons for the self-management of the attack.. (I forgot the catapult, la fionda..) All combine in destructive playful alchemy far from the deathlike logic of judgement. Even when a class enemy is struck down, it is just something to be done and let's get it over with.

Anarchists abhor the blind institutionalised violence of the State with its arsenal of uniformed robots, tasers, tanks, drones, poisonous gases, flash grenades, truncheons, jackboots, armoured vehicles, cctv cameras, helicopters flying over our heads, courts, prisons, concentration camps, bomber planes, missiles, institutionalised religion, the media, the manipulation of people's minds, etc. Only the State has the power to send men to their death or to kill, always with the blessing of the priest, after instilling them with patriotism and xenophobia from birth. Greece was the first country to use napalm against the guerrilla in the mountains. Now, irony of history, it uses nerve gas imported from the Israeli State which, after evicting millions of Palestinians from their homes to survive in camps, claims its legitimacy from the gassing of 6 million Jews by another State over half a century ago.

Anarchists are against prisons even for their enemies and know well that when the present setup of the means of production is destroyed and social wealth belongs to everyone, to each according to their needs, from each according to their desires, there will be little cause for strife. The State will do anything to obstruct the struggle for freedom in whatever form it takes, what-

ever instrument it uses. Since the beginning of the anarchist movement around the middle of the nineteenth century the organs of power have always reacted particularly violently against anarchists because the State, any State, be it red, black or the multicoloured version of social democracy, cannot tolerate freedom, be it in the form of ideas or in the self-organised action of the exploited. I could give many examples but I think we are short of time and I'll carry on. And of course not only anarchists have been massacred by the State but the exploited in any attempt they have made to self organise their attack against oppression, and we saw this the other day in South Africa when 27 miners were gunned down in a demonstration against the conditions in the mine.

In the space of a century and a half the number of anarchists who have been imprisoned, exiled, guillotined, garrotted, electrocuted, tortured, gunned down in action, shot by firing squads, beaten to a pulp in the street and left to die in a cell, pushed out of police station windows or killed in traffic 'accidents', add up to thousands, and often the written word of the anarchist revolutionary has been as severely punished as the bullet. Far from showing signs of penitence or begging for mercy these proud fighters faced death as they had faced life, fearlessly, with a proud cry of Long live anarchy! Long live freedom! That is why the exterminatory delirium of the State is a battle lost before it begins. For every anarchist and rebel slain by the State thousands more spring up out of the nowhere of the uncertain, and the undecided. And that was visible in 2008 in this country, something which inspired people all over the world. Every second an anarchist spends in prison his spirit strengthens, expands beyond the walls and nourishes the solidarity that he or she inspires.

The anarchist struggle is qualitative not quantitative. Its aim is not to control and lead the masses into battle or act in their place but to push the exploited and excluded to act in first person to attack the class enemy and its structures. Sometimes it's the other way around, a mass explosion of rage erupts after some exalted lackey of the State takes the law into his own hands and guns down a schoolboy, a rioter, a respected elder in the ghetto or a kid in the banlieu. When anarchists put themselves alongside the exploited it is not as their saviours but to fight together with them to extend and widen their attack, to turn riots into insurrections. Sometimes reality acts the other way, the rebels surpassing the anarchists in their destructive fury. In recent years in Greece and in many parts of the world there has been a proliferation of direct attacks on the structures of capital and the State by small groups or individuals. Unlike the seventies and eighties when capitalism was undergoing ferocious restructuring that was responded to in part, not only, by highly structured marxist-leninist armed struggle groups, from the nineties the attack has taken a more flexible form by anarchist groups based on affinity, often with no name or acronym. The workerist element of the struggle more or less disappeared along with the industrial working class due to the introduction of robotisation and real time operations thanks to information technology and capital's resulting ability to exploit starvation wages on the other side of the planet.

The armed group Revolutionary Struggle appeared in 2003 at a time when there was an anti-terrorist frenzy globally, which in Greece coincided with the capture of the 17<sup>th</sup> of November group followed by true media delirium. At first their targets were symbols of authority and the State – police, the American Embassy, the Ministry of Finance and Labour, and also an attempt on the minister for Public Order who had been responsible for upgrading the repression. They acted directly without needing the alibi of the masses in order to strike the common enemy, for their own dignity and coherence. When in 2008 the so-called financial crisis became official

along with the responsibility of the State and the banking corporations, their actions turned to financially-related targets such as the Stock Exchange, Citibank, Eurobank, etc.

During the whole period the group published extensive analyses which were combined with their actions and contained a strong class position, exhorting the class of exploited to rise and attack those responsible. They are a part of this new complexive reality of the struggle against capital and the State, one that is pushing towards a self-organised revolutionary outlet. Their choice of armed struggle in the specific sense is not presented as an end in itself but simply as a tool to bring the revolutionary perspective to the fore and present the hypothesis of the need for immediate attack in an unequivocal discourse addressed both to the anarchist movement and the wider movement of the exploited.

The comrades who have claimed responsibility for this organisation are individuals who have been active fighters in the struggles of the anarchist movement in Greece in its many forms for decades and are well known in the movement and beyond. In the face of the media outrage and scaremongering following their arrests they came out and proudly claimed the organisation, decriminalising it in the face of the terroristic attack of the media on the minds of the population in order to prepare the terrain for consensus and support for their political and physical annihilation at the hands of the repressive organs of the State. They have written volumes explaining the reasons for the attacks and the need for social rebellion particularly at this moment where, as in many other parts of Europe and the world, the organised crime of State, bosses and banks has led to further extortion from the dispossessed who are now at breaking point. Their message is that of the need for direct attack, that the structures of capital and the State are not invincible.

The words and the actions of the Revolutionary Solidarity group [eh, you mean the Revolutionary Struggle? interpretor] of the Revolutionary Struggle group, (yes... it's the same thing... solidarity is the struggle and the struggle is solidarity...) have been translated into many languages in the dimension of the continuation and intensification of revolutionary solidarity in the dimension of attack. This has led to multiform actions, from banner-hanging, sabotage, incendiary attacks on banks and the structures of repression, discussions, international meetings, publications, posters, etc. and have been one of the recent sources of inspiration to anarchists everywhere.

At a time when life has been mortgaged to Capital and become little more than a question of accountancy where every day people are bombarded by the media with figures in billions while they are struggling to stay alive and feed their children, Revolutionary Struggle has had considerable impact on those who see the crisis not as something that has to be readdressed and corrected, but faced head on and destroyed, along with work and the whole economy. Poverty will never be eliminated until we destroy work because it is the condition that forces people to spend their lives doing soul-destroying jobs at starvation wages.

Millions of young people all over the planet are made to feel useless and without hope due to spreading unemployment. It's time to destroy work as a very concept and take back our lives. Work is a crime, an ideological and physical imposition on the great mass of human beings, animals, and the earth itself, for the benefit of a small percentage of glitterati, but believed in and defended by the whole social set-up, exploiters and exploited alike. In the words of Herman J. Schuurman one of the founders of the Mokergroep, a group of young proletarians in 1923 wrote this: We want to create as free people, not work as slaves; therefore we will destroy the system of slavery. Capitalism only exists because of the work of the workers, thus we will sabotage it and put an end to it. If we are not working towards the destruction of capital, we are working towards

the destruction of humanity! We do not want to be destroyed by capitalism, so capitalism will have to be destroyed by us.

I don't know if the Revolutionary Struggle comrades are advocating the destruction of work, but that is where the totality of the struggle for the destruction of the existent takes us, without compromise or half measures.

# **A short background on the Revolutionary Struggle case by guerrillanews.wordpress.com**

On March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010, anarchist comrade Lambros Foundas was murdered after an armed scuffle with police forces. Those were the days when Greece was first subjected to the stifling scrutiny of the IMF/ECB/EU Troika, those were the days when Lambros Foundas, member of the Revolutionary Struggle group, lost his life in a shootout with the police during a preparatory action aimed against the political and economic elite that ravages the planet, and plunders and exsanguinates social wealth globally, relegating human life to rock bottom.

After a month and amid a climate of terror-hysteria, in April 2010 the police made preemptive detentions in order to dismantle the Revolutionary Struggle group, and also arrested and imprisoned anarchists Kostas Gournas, Nikos Maziotis and Pola Roupa, who took political responsibility for their participation in the organization.

Simultaneously, anarchists Vaggelis Stathopoulos, Christoforos Kortesis and Sarantos Nikitopoulos were caught and sent to prison. The latter three categorically deny any participation in the organization ever since their arrest, stating that their prosecution concerns their years-long involvement in subversive projects, their political affiliation to the anarchist/anti-authoritarian space and their comradely relationships.

Kostas Katsenos is also charged with participation in the group, and ever since the period of these pretrial incarcerations an arrest warrant was pending against him, too.

The system wanted to deliver a decisive blow to the organization, deeming Revolutionary Struggle as a threat; therefore, it expanded its offensive through the aforementioned arrests so as to crush a wider part of the subversive movement.

After six months, in the context of this expansion of the repressive offensive, dozens of comrades from the anarchist/anti-authoritarian milieu were called to testify and underwent interrogations, along with friends and relatives of the six imprisoned anarchists.

The vindictiveness of repression mechanisms was proved once again, when the State went as far as to charge Marie Beraha — spouse of Kostas Gournas — with participation in the group. This prosecution is a purely vindictive act against Kostas Gournas, in an effort to curb his combatant stance.

On October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2011, the RS case trial got underway in the special court of Koridallois prisons, in a closed room, with complete absence of any publicity. While the mass media always seemed eager to aid the repressive offensive and state propaganda, nowadays they keep silent—in a provocative way and under a political mandate—about anything related to the court proceeding of the RS case.

On the one hand, the regime is conducting a trial against its political adversaries and wants to gag any message of struggle and to distort its meaning. On the other hand, the three comrades,



who took political responsibility for their participation in the organization, have defended its actions and political plan. At the same, with their statements in court, all defendants in this case have converted the trial sessions into a harsh reproach upon the political-economic system of wretchedness and exploitation, unveiling the nature of laws and specific treatments that are enforced against those who have the strength to resist.

It must be emphasized that none of the accused comrades is currently imprisoned. Vaggelis Stathopoulos, Sarantos Nikitopoulos and Chistoforos Kortesis were ordered released after 12 months of pretrial incarceration. Kostas Katsenos presented himself to the authorities at the beginning of the trial, and was held imprisoned for six months before being released.

Revolutionary Struggle members Kostas Gournas, Nikos Maziotis and Pola Roupa were released from prison after 18 months, when the maximum period of pretrial detention expired.

Today, Nikos Maziotis and Pola Roupa are at large (!) and no longer attend the court proceeding.

As we write these lines, the trial is at the stage of defense witnesses' testimonies. Already, the witnesses in defense of Revolutionary Struggle members K.Gournas, N.Maziotis and P.Roupa gave their statements in court. In particular, comrades from Greece and abroad argued the significance of the Revolutionary Struggle group in political and historical terms, and defended armed struggle as well as the entirety and breadth of revolutionary ventures. In the upcoming days, the court will hear witnesses' testimonies for the defense of V.Stathopoulos, K.Katsenos, S.Nikitopoulos, Ch.Kortesis and M.Beraha, who deny their participation in the organization, nevertheless demonstrate the importance of struggle and the need to resist.

During the days of this international appeal, in late November, it is estimated that the trial will likely be nearing the defendants' statements. It is thus considered as very important to receive messages of solidarity and resistance from comrades all over the world, who can show in their own way that the accused comrades are not alone, that the struggle for the overthrow of this world is always timely.

# Revolutionary Struggle trial

On April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2013 the judgment on the Revolutionary Struggle case was a slight improvement of the prosecutor's proposal. The court's decision on the Revolutionary Struggle case:

*Defendants who have denied participation in the organization*

- Acquittal of Marie Beraha, Sarantos Nikitopoulos and Kostas Katsenos of all charges (on benefit of doubt).

- Conviction of Vaggelis Stathopoulos and Christoforos Kortesis for alleged participation in the organization.

*Admitted members of Revolutionary Struggle*

- Acquittal of Nikos Maziotis, Pola Roupa and Kostas Gournas of the accusation of 'directing a terrorist organization.'

- Conviction of Nikos Maziotis, Pola Roupa and Kostas Gournas for 'simple synergy' with the actions of Revolutionary Struggle (without a shred of evidence concerning their involvement in specific actions, but rather applying the Nazi principle of joint liability).

To sum up, Revolutionary Struggle member Nikos Maziotis was sentenced to 86 years' imprisonment; his sentence was merged into 50 years. Revolutionary Struggle members Pola Roupa and Kostas Gournas were both sentenced to 87 years; each sentence was merged into 50 years and 6 months. For all three of them, the maximum prison term is 25 years (which are typically served either as a full sentence or by day wages in prisons, or after the completion of 3/5 of the prison term, when a prisoner can be granted conditional release under specific conditions).

Vaggelis Stathopoulos and Christoforos Kortesis were sentenced to 8 and 7 years' imprisonment, respectively. The sentence against Vaggelis Stathopoulos was merged into 7 years and 6 months.

In addition, for all five convicted anarchists, the judges' decision provided for deprivation of their political rights (5 years for the three admitted members of Revolutionary Struggle, and 3 years for the other two anarchists), as well as non-suspensive effect of appeal.

While Nikos Maziotis and Pola Roupa are on the run, Kostas Gournas, Vaggelis Stathopoulos and Christoforos Kortesis were immediately taken to prison. The militant slogans of the audience and the clenched fists of the three anarchist fighters were the last moments of the trial.

**Solidarity with all anarchists imprisoned or persecuted by the Greek State! The battle for freedom is far from over. Long live Revolutionary Struggle!**

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