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Mourning Commute Collective

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MORE THAN EVER – A TIME TO SPEAK OUT

Katie Sierra and the value of critical thought

By Matt Leonard

On many issues that radicals take a stance on (opposing the WTO, capitalism, authority, racism, war, homophobia etc), we can generally take our positions, argue our points, and not see our lives turned completely upside-down. We may have an unpopular idea, may get laughed at, or ostracized, or picked on – but by and large we can still live our lives. But in the current "crusade" (to quote George W.) against "any and all terrorists" (well, at least those that aren't approved by the US government), the mindless, patriotic fervor all around us has drawn some frightening reactions to a lot of ideas – a lot of ideas that I (and many of you) may hold.

For Katie Sierra, a 15 year-old high school student in West Virginia – her commitment to her values, and her unrelenting demand to voice those values has turned her life upside-down. She's become the subject of national media attention after her high school suspended her for voicing anti-war sentiments and her desire to start a student anarchist club. She was suspended for three days in October for defying school orders not to form an anarchy club and for wearing T-shirts that include slogans opposing the U.S. war on Afghanistan. The shirts that prompted her expulsion included the slogans: "Racism, Sexism, Homophobia... I'm so proud of the people in the land of the so called 'Free' and 'When I saw the dead and dying Afghani children on TV, I felt a newly recovered sense of national security. God Bless America.'"

While school administrators suspended her – on the basis that her shirts "disrupted the learning process" – other students reportedly wore shirts depicting gun targets on Osama Bin Laden, American flags, and numerous pro-war statements – yet they received no response from the administration. Katie took her case to court – citing violations of the 1st amendment, and describing in detail how administrators directly told her that they objected to the content of her speech, and felt "Anarchy is the antithesis of what we believe should be in schools". While the local county circuit court upheld the schools decision (this should come as no surprise being in conservative West Virginia), Katie and her lawyer are looking at pushing her case to the federal level – the Supreme Court if need be.

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ABOUT MOURNING COMMUTE

Operating in the King County and Eastside Seattle areas, we are a group seeking to organize around, expand on, and propagate the ideals of Social Anarchism. As defined by its history, theory, and practice, Anarchism is the proposal that humanity can and should operate without the negative constraints of domination. Social Anarchists seek to reorganize the economic, and political institutions in a decentralized and nonhierarchical manner, as to ensure opportunities for all people to participate in decision-making. The building of community-oriented alternatives to current institutions enables society to do away with unnecessary hierarchies.

**Our projects are not limited to this newsletter.
We invite everyone and anyone to our monthly
meeting, the first Thursday of every month.**

Next meeting: February 7th, 6:00 PM @
Victor's Coffee (97993 Gilman), Redmond

THE EUGENE MEDIA SENSATION

"Appalling desiccation of a great tradition"

By Andrew Hedden

Corporate media have always been, to varying degrees, sensationalist. Unfortunately, the "anarchists of Eugene" have always been up to the task of being the latest sensation: The Wall Street Journal, 60 Minutes and Time magazine have done features about them, and so has Newsweek. On November 27th, the Seattle Times took it upon themselves to again feature Oregon's "black-clad mob," this time in the context of September 11th.

The front-page article, titled "Anarchists' muted applause: The big bully got a black eye," carried on the pattern seen in each preceding feature: a gross emphasis is placed on Eugene's "black-bloc" property destruction, and Unabomber pal John Zerzan. Apparently, post September 11th, sympathy for mass murder has entered the mix. Of the World Trade Center attacks, "make no mistake," the Times asserts, "(anarchists) are applauding, if only among themselves." With such extreme examples, the term "anarchist" serves solely as an indictment of some sort.

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