

SOME GROUPS ALREADY IN ACTION:

RNC WELCOMING COMMITTEE
(+PRE-NC ORGANIZING):
PRENC@RISEUP.NET, WWW.NORNC.ORG

DENVER ANTI-DNC ORGANIZING:
HTTP://RECREATE68.ORG

THE OTHER CONVENTION IN LAWRENCE, KS:
AUGUST 20-23, 2008 THERE WILL BE A CONVER-
GENCE IN ADVANCE OF THE DNC AND RNC.
EMAIL OTHERCONVENTION@GMAIL.COM

CAROLINAS CONSULTA: THERE WILL BE AN
UNCONVENTIONAL CONSULTA FOR ACTIVISTS IN
THE CAROLINAS REGION MAY 12-13, 2007 IN
CENTRAL NORTH CAROLINA. EMAIL: UNCONVEN-
TIONAL_ACTION@MOUNTAINREBEL.NET

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UNCONVENTIONAL A C T I O N IS AN EMERGING NETWORK

looking to complement the work of organizers in Denver and the Twin Cities with regional organizing throughout the rest of the country. Our goal is to build a horizontal, inclusive framework for protests that will disrupt the upcoming Democratic and Republican National Conventions. We are currently organizing meetings, propaganda, and consultas in our communities and encourage those in other regions to do the same.

THE UPCOMING DEMOCRATIC AND REPUBLICAN National Conventions present a tremendous opportunity for anarchists and other opponents of war and oppression. If the increasingly unpopular occupation in Iraq is still in effect by summer of 2008, it will be easy to make the argument that neither docile street marches nor electoral campaigns are capable of putting an end to this or other outrages. After two years of power in Congress, it will be clear that the Democratic opposition is either not capable of or not interested in following through on their promises of ending the war, let alone solving all the additional problems capitalism poses.

We aim to organize MILITANT DIRECT ACTION that manifests opposition to both the Democratic and Republican Parties. As anti-authoritarians, we oppose representational politics itself, but even those who still believe in it must un-

derstand that we can only have leverage over our rulers by showing our own power, that we must back up our demands by demonstrating that we can interfere with their business as effectively as they interfere with our lives.

If we successfully disrupt the party conventions, this will inaugurate a new era of oppositional activity—and just in time, as federal repression intensifies and global warming brings ecological collapse ever closer.

We are fortunate to have over a year ahead of us to organize for these protests, but we must get started soon: we have to build up networks and infrastructure, and we have to organize an effective strategy that provides roles for everyone who desires to participate.

WE MUST GO INTO THESE PROTESTS WITH A STRATEGY

that is widely known, instantly comprehensible, and integrates a diversity of tactics and approaches. The farther in advance this strategy is established, the more effective we can expect to be. One of the fundamental shortcomings of the demonstrations at the Republican National Convention in 2004 was that there was no generalized strategy for anarchists, anti-authoritarians, and anti-capitalists. As a result, though tens of thousands came to the city, many had a difficult time coordinating their efforts or even figuring out what to do besides join marches organized by hierarchical groups. Establishing a strategy early on gives us the advantage of taking the initiative to determine what we do together.

A good strategy provides a simple goal that all the specific actions of individual protesters can combine to achieve. The strategy of the Direct Action Network at the Seattle WTO protests was a good example of this: by announcing early that their intention was to block off and shut down the summit, DAN gave all the participants in the protests a common end to strive for.

Everyone need not fall in line behind a single strategy, but there must be an easy way for people to plug into and contribute to something larger than themselves. Even explicitly

autonomous actions are more effective in the context of broadly coordinated activity. A strategy is not the same as a unified plan of action; it is simply a framework within which different plans and approaches can complement one another. A good strategy works whether or not the authorities are aware of it: it enables individual groups to retain their privacy in planning how to play their part, and takes into account the responses that can be expected from the police. The past years of experience have shown that not having a plan ourselves, simply so the police will not catch wind of our plan, is not effective.

The strategies for these demonstrations will have to take into account the local context of the host cities and the current political situation. It will also be useful to draw on the lessons of more recent mass actions such as the previous RNC in New York, the G8 summit in Scotland, and the anti-war protests of 2003.

Organizers in the Twin Cities have already called for a “pRe-NC” meeting a year in advance of the Republican National Convention in St. Paul, at which discussions will take place about the RNC protests. The pRe-NC will be an excellent opportunity to hammer out a strategy, but it will only be effective if everyone who attends it arrives with clear ideas of what they hope to accomplish. We urge everyone to begin meeting now on local and regional levels to discuss these questions so we will have some informed strategy proposals by the time of the pRe-NC in September and so some concrete strategies can emerge for the protests in Denver as well.

One way to begin such discussions is to ask what a victory would look like and work backwards from there, brainstorming approaches that can provide for the widest possible range of participation.

Finally, it is important that we do not approach these protests in a vacuum. We can only expect to arrive at the conventions ready to act effectively if there are actions leading up to them at which we can gain experience and momentum. Likewise, we would do well to aim beyond the protests, using them above all as an opportunity to build up national networks capable of powerful, horizontal, decentralized organizing for a long time to come.

We invite others who share our goals to organize under the name Unconventional Action as well.

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