

# Police continue repressive tactics in Denver

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In the two days since Denver police—acting at the direction of U.S. Secret Service—attacked and jailed nearly 100 peaceful protesters outside the Democratic National Convention, the virtual militarization of Denver has continued. In total, over 130 protesters have now been imprisoned.

As late as Tuesday afternoon, fifteen hours after the arrests, about 60 protesters were still being held at a makeshift detention center, sarcastically called “Gitmo on the Platte” by protesters, as well as in a downtown city jail. By Wednesday most of those detained had been released after posting a \$500 bond. The protesters were processed in specially-created kangaroo courts dubbed “DNC Courts.”

The WSWWS spoke with Brian Vincente, a lawyer for the People’s Law Project, which is representing many of the protesters. Vincente said that lawyers were denied access to prisoners at the detention center. Then city officials attempted to process many of those arrested in the middle of the night.

Vincente said that the city has been preparing the special court system for over one year, but “instead of creating something streamlined and smooth, they came up with this night court to slam people through.” Vincente has represented people mistakenly arrested by police, including school teachers who were on their way to work.

Police arrests and provocations continue. On Wednesday afternoon, the coordinating center for the protest group Unconventional Denver was raided and equipment used to make banners was seized. Riot police pulled up in an armored personnel carrier, entered the building and arrested two.

On Tuesday, police struck a Code Pink antiwar protester, Alicia Forest, in the face with a baton.

A Kansas pastor and religious extremist, Ruben Israel, and a small group of supporters had begun a confrontation with anti-war protesters, taunting them. A

Recreate ’68 organizer, Carlo Garcia, approached police to request that they remove the pastor, as Recreate ’68 had a permit to use the public park where the confrontation took place, and Israel’s organization, Bible Believers, did not. Instead, police arrested Garcia.

In a scene captured on video and posted on YouTube, Forest can be seen approaching the police to ask for an explanation. The officer responds by striking her with his truncheon and saying “back it up, bitch.” Moments later, as she is being interviewed, Forest is grabbed suddenly by her arm and apprehended by several police. (See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KfISlq1gzK8>)

Right wing counter-demonstrators, far fewer in number, have targeted and harassed the anti-war protesters. The right wing protesters have faced less repression from the police, and in some cases, such as the police assault on Forest, have received de facto police protection.

However, thirteen anti-abortion zealots of Operation Rescue, including its founder Randall Terry, were arrested on Monday for blocking a security gate at the Pepsi Center—though it is difficult to imagine that the anti-war protesters would have been allowed to get so close. Elsewhere, an anti-immigrant rally of the fascistic Minutemen organization drew only about a dozen participants. The small gathering was addressed by the ultra-reactionary politicians Tom Tancredo, Bob Barr and Alan Keyes.

As of today, no major Democratic figure has called for a lessening of the level of police repression in Denver, or for the release of those protesters who are still imprisoned. One delegate to the convention, Syracuse Democrat Alfonso Davis, confessed to being surprised by the magnitude of the police presence. “This is not my first Democrat National Convention,” he said, but “I’ve never seen this type of law enforcement presence. This is, I would say, a little

intrusive.”

Police preparations are underway in St. Paul and Minneapolis for next week’s Republican National Convention, which promises to draw more protesters. According to the National Lawyers Guild, three videographers from New York City had their equipment confiscated by members of the Minneapolis Police Department on Tuesday morning. The videographers had planned to record police interaction with protesters during the RNC. Meanwhile, the Associated Press has reported that a makeshift prison encampment has been created out of a parking area in a police complex in St. Paul.



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