

BEYOND EUROPE

Antiauthoritarian Platform Against Capitalism

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Just the beginning...

The slogan “Beyond Europe” is a clear “no” to current imaginations of Europe. Obviously, the dream of a politically-economically united, “more equal” and “just” Europe for everyone under the Euro is breaking apart. At the moment, this “Nation Europe” turns out to be a Europe of austerity and deadly disharmony. The nostalgic wish for a re-strengthening of the state to control the “lawless” market is no lasting alternative which can make life better; in the best case, this is just the other side of the same coin. Another false alternative is being propagated by several right-wing and reactionary forces across the continent. They argue that the only solution is to “fall back” to a “Europe of nations”, where it’s every national state for itself. We want to go beyond these solutions. We argue for the option beyond state, nation and capital brought about by anti-authoritarian struggle and self-organisation. Six years on from the start of the financial crisis, we finally make a start on the necessary project of a transnational platform for radical exchange, discussion and action. We see “Beyond Europe! – Antiauthoritarian platform against capitalism” as a small start that has been long overdue. Just one beginning for exchange and understanding between anticapitalist groups, beyond our usual borders and limits.

The Origin of the idea

It is becoming increasingly clear that partial, nationally contained struggles within and against the spheres of production and reproduction are not enough to resist the austerity measures of the Troika (European Commission, European Central Bank, International Monetary Fund). More and more of those engaged in social struggles are being confronted with the limits of national isolation and the urgent need to refer to common points of analysis and struggle; the need to work towards building transnational movements which relate to each other within and across national borders and that would be capable of creating new dynamics and of disrupting, at

least on the level of ideas, traditional conceptions of what constitutes the political terrain.

At the moment the exchange processes between people struggling in Europe and beyond are still underdeveloped. As movements, we are definitely still lacking the skills and the Know-How needed to coordinate effective long-term organising and resistance at the European scale and beyond. We see very few possibilities for even sharing our own histories or current experiences. If we want to build effective transnational movements we need to start experimenting with physical and virtual spaces where we can come together and develop these plans together. Fortunately, many groups and individuals have realised that there is a need to pass from visiting and consuming “hotspots” of (radical) protest and radical journalism to a more advanced level of activity, solidarity and to build solid connections with comrades throughout these places. This is an experimental process to create the tools and spaces needed to overcome both the boundaries we face now and through our consequent networking.

We had our first experiences in the process of transnational organization when we co-organized M31, the decentralised European action day against capitalism which took place on the 31st March 2012. Many of the activists in Germany had to discover that although mass demonstrations are normal in Greece, it does not mean that people will listen to a call for an anticapitalist action day within a European context. Different situations need different approaches and these approaches can only be decided by those putting them into practice. We also learnt that it is one thing to plan a local event in the context of a one off action day and completely another to start a committed and continuous process of discussion and long term co-ordination between radical groups. Of course we had to find out that many groups don’t want or can’t participate in this long exchange process. This is based on both a group’s perspective - how important a group thinks it is to act transnationally, but also it is a matter of capacities and



possibilities - which is influenced by the situation each group finds itself in. We hope to see many of these groups and projects again, either within Beyond Europe, or organising alongside us.

The past years have shown us the current limits of our organising. These are limits we want and need to overcome. In Greece the movements have come to the realisation that struggles that stop at the national level will not bring about real change, because only overthrowing the Greek government would not bring about long-term change within the complex European wide situation. In Germany activists are falling into the trap of "there are no struggles" and many have stopped looking for them. In England antiauthoritarian, anticapitalist groups face problems developing practical interventions and links to wider society. In any case, alone we are weak, only by acting locally but thinking globally can we proceed; only through co-ordinated international activity can a society beyond state, nation and capital be achieved.

What we want – Discover, Exchange, Discuss, Act

We need to (re)occupy the principle of solidarity and fill it with left-wing, emancipatory and radical content. Solidarity has to be freed from the isolation of single-issue campaigns; it has to be revived and updated by purging it of both its reactionary and nationalist blinkers. We also have to take it back from its recuperation by capitalism: by solidarity we don't mean "charity" or "investment".

We have to discover the links between capi-

talist processes within Europe and beyond. Information must be gathered about state-institutions and companies that act transnationally: what are their functions and how are they involved in organising the flows of capital and power which produce the current management of the crisis and austerity? Furthermore we have to understand the local situation in each different country. How are austerity politics influencing and changing daily life? How are people getting organised against wage cuts and rising unemployment? Are classical defensive struggles transforming into offensive ones? And, how do they do this? It is also clear that during these social attacks social relations change. As the reproduction of our lives enters into crisis, existing patriarchal structures which are central to contemporary capitalism are exacerbated. Against the background of strengthening fascist organisations, particularly in Greece and Hungary, and growing racism and nationalism in the so called Western countries, we have to coordinate also on the issue of reactionary answers to the crisis. For example: in England a new rise of antifascist initiatives are emerging to intervene against right-populist and fascist propaganda. This experience will be familiar to Greek comrades who had to face new threats to refugees, homosexuals and themselves since the sudden growth of the fascist Golden Dawn. German activists have had similar experiences during the racist pogroms in the 90s. We want to share successes, mistakes and analysis with our comrades in different countries so that they can act effectively when facing similar issues.

Together we have to develop the weapon of critique whilst simultaneously engaging, slowly

and carefully, in a discussion about where we are heading. Can we exchange our theoretical and practical expertise in ways which comrades elsewhere can understand and make use of? For example, on how to criticise the nation and the formations of national unity? And most importantly we need to collectively discuss topics that concern us all: for example what is the nature of contemporary Europe? (How) do we want to overcome it? What do we want to do next? And of course we need to start taking further steps and move slowly into discussion with comrades in other continents.

We do not want to remain a theoretical circle only. Our interaction has to find its expression in practical issues, since no relevant change was ever carried through by writing texts alone. We can't develop our collective political power sitting in our bedrooms. We can keep our standard solidarity recipe, of course: that is, when something happens in one place, in other places we go out with banners, or light our usual flares, and take several photos which we spread through our channels. This is better than nothing and still one way to refer to each other. But we have to go beyond. The European General Strike N14 was another experiment in making the idea of solidarity broader and more concrete. Whilst there are problems with big international action days which can happen, if done in the right way these can have positive and long-term effects. Other continuous practices could be through strengthening self-organised projects and providing practical support including distributing their goods and products on a bigger level (for example VIO.ME, the self-organised factory in Greece). It is important that we also exchange our knowledge about projects of commoning and socialisation in their different forms and continue developing direct democratic processes. Ultimately, there are many ways to expand practical solidarity that we have yet to find.

So, there are many things on many different levels that we want and that need to be done in common.

Horizons

The horizons for this platform are not, and hopefully will not ever be, completely determined. We do not want to limit our imagination – we envision beginning modestly, exchanging discussion papers and hopefully moving on to coordinated activity and beyond. Everything is open. The way this project develops is for us to decide - alongside the dynamics of movements and struggles that will emerge around us of course! This project starts small – with four groups in three countries. It is clearly not representative, or even inclusive of all the of the great projects we see taking place, and we hope that more groups that share a similar perspective to us join this networking process. If you would like to find out more about getting involved, please contact us.

It is clear that if we do not try to get organized in this way, if we do not intensify our exchange processes and develop a shared analysis of the international functioning of this system, we won't be able to develop our own agenda. We keep working on the basis that the doctrine "There is no alternative" is only the ideology of those who do not want to see real change. In these times of austerity and popular revolt, we have to bring our forms of organization and action to the next level. We say that we have to understand the situation and to act - to take our radical critiques of state, nation and capital, and our promotion of self-organisation and the building of counter-power out of our political milieus, into our neighbourhoods and far beyond.

Beyond Europe, November 2013

Beyond Europe Groups

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