

BREAK ON THROUGH OVERCOMING CRISIS-CAPITALISM

A CALL FOR ACTION: »M31«, »BLOCKUPY« AND BEYOND
WRITTEN BY INTERNATIONAL AUTONOMOUS COMMITTEE
AGAINST CAPITALIST NORMALITY

Subprime crisis, credit crisis, bank crisis, petrol crisis, financial crisis, Euro crisis, state debt crisis, Greek crisis, Irish crisis, Portuguese crisis... Social crisis, immigration crisis, housing crisis... Actually there is only one crisis. Capitalism is the crisis, a way to manage the world...

Precarity is the norm, temp work, low salaries and unemployment for all! No more archaisms like social security, health insurance, pensions, the progress is on its way. It already went to the southern world in the great times of colonialism. Nowadays the South goes further North every year...

Barbed wire, uniforms and camps of fortress-Europe humiliate, exclude and persecute thousands of women, men and children. Racism is not hidden anymore, it has become a public and profitable business, sometimes a national sport. Police and armies are in the streets, with their guns, cameras and helicopters. Control is everywhere, in your ID chip, and in a DNA file for the luckiest. Terrorist laws are used to legitimize repression. Resistances must not grow up.

The media keeps the lid on the pot that is starting to boil over: games, shows, dreams and games again. Breaking news: protests result of the action of professional agitators and young immigrants. Back to normality. The communication agencies are doing their best to convince us to keep up consumption, while we can hardly pay rent and food. The snake is eating its own tail.

Tons of petrol wasted in the oceans, billions of plastic bags decorating the lands, Ibiza in the North pole and Fukushima mon amour. Animals becoming extinct show the way to the future generations...

Capitalism creates great opportunities!

This call is no deep theoretical analysis, nor just a wish for another ruthless riot. In this call, we want to concentrate on the existential crisis of late capitalism, characterized by neoliberalism doctrine and the »no alternative» ideology – and what this can mean for the whole system, that we want to get rid of. We want to take a look at the reactions of this crisis-capitalism: how its supporters want to save it, how the fascist want (again) to benefit of it. Finally, we want to think about our past and present experiences, in order to formulate a radical answer for the liberated society we aim for.

CRISIS AND REACTIONARY FORCES: BLINDNESS, BUTTERFLIES AND FASCISM

Neoliberalism won the battle of ideas in the seventies, and then the political power in the eighties. In United States, Europe and South America, one song was everywhere: there is no alternative to capitalism. The Soviet Union and the “real existing socialism” fell down and the end of history was announced by the great defenders of the system: the whole humanity was about to be free and capitalistic, the states were supposed to become tiny structures assuring only the peace of the society and the freedom of entrepreneurship. Today the glorified free market functions anything but normal. Even its big-

gest fans call upon the “redundant” state and cry for rescue-packages and support. What a surprise! Was there something wrong with their ideology and way of governing the world?

We could think so by hearing all these journalists, intellectuals and politicians talking about the death of neoliberalism. Not to forget the voices in the anti-crisis protests. But on the other hand, we see that the measures against “the” crisis are the same as before, they are just more aggressive. Look at Greece! Cuts in the public services, attacks on social rights, privatizations, repression, nothing new... “We” are in crisis, so let’s continue the same way, but further. Crazy logic, supported by the same discourse: before it was TINA to capitalism, now it’s TINA to state intervention. Before we had to be competitive to fight against foreign economies, now we have to be competitive in order not to die – by the way, who is about to die? Us or the economic system we are living in? In this big mess, no one asks the question of the goal of all these austerity measures: why are “we” doing this? To question capitalism is too dangerous, it could change too much. The media prefer to tell the people to make sacrifices in order to go back to normality, in order to make sure the economy is growing again and the traders can play with billions.

After all, the thesis about the “death of neoliberalism” has to be considered dialectically; indeed, the ideological base of neoliberalism is falling, when even its own convinced supporters are beginning to doubt. The unquestionable dogma, the belief that this form is the right one to keep capital stable and intact, is fading or being doubted in its absoluteness. Nevertheless, the crisis-management from above still acts in the neoliberal framework and tries to prevent its mechanisms from getting knocked out by themselves. The more its death is claimed, the more it is being defended harshly, and again the more its death is claimed. Where will this chain lead to? For now, neoliberalism is not yet in a coffin being buried, but rather fighting a decisive battle to save the face of capitalist world order.

And some people take part in this battle! Some social-democrats and green parties want to change the system: they have noticed the big failures of financial and economic system. For sure they voted the billions rescue-packages, but with the aim of rebuilding a capitalism under state control. Some of them call for future nationalization of bank and

limitation of the top-managers wages, claims that are also supported by most of the old and new communist parties. They want a change, whether it’s radical social democracy or – the newest trend for “alternatives” - green capitalism: it’s a change that doesn’t have anything to do with emancipation. Full-employment, thirteenth month wage, bio supermarkets, bicycle madness or increasing gardens have never brought people to autonomy, freedom and happiness.

*BEFORE IT
WAS TINA TO
CAPITALISM, NOW
IT’S TINA TO STATE
INTERVENTION.*

While the neoliberal and the reformist liberals are playing their big game, other actors are trying to react to the crisis.

In Hungary, fascist squads are built up in the population; in Greece the neonazi actions (in coordination with police) grow every week; in Italy fascist social centers like Casa Pound are opening in different cities; in France in the next elections a new and more subtle version of “Le Pen” will make its reappearance. The crisis always have been the opportunity for right-wing ideologies to spread more offensive propaganda against the “foreigners” supposed to be the main reason of all problems; whether formulated in “racial” madness or covered in “cultural” differen-

ces. Except this usual racist point of view, fascist forces are more and more claiming for the break-up of Europe and a return to the old national State, as a barricade defending their phantasmic white identity.

Between neoliberal management, its reformist make-up and fascist agitation, how can we find a way to formulate a radical answer for the emancipated society we aim for?

1. FAILURE OF ORGANIZATION AND STRATEGY: THE "ANTIGLOB" MOVEMENT

Without a doubt we can say: we do not have "the" movement that gives a strong answer or struggle against today's society. Over the last decade in the western world, the only big international movement that was focused on economical and social matters was the anti-globalisation one. It brought about a critique of the new world order, gained momentum in a lot of countries, created tons of events and gave birth to a lot of different organizations and networks. The main common denominator to most of the people involved in this movement was the critique and opposition to neoliberalism, and the question of the (third world) debt was important part of this critique. Today debt and financial crisis are a worldwide issue, which proves that the anti-globalisa-

tion movement was, at least partly, right in its critiques and analysis.

So, how can it be that we didn't hear from this movement over the last three years? An easy answer would be to speak about the repression, which for sure has been increasing: improvement of control technologies, preventive arrests, European data bases, huge cops mobilization... But the characteristic of strong movements is not to be afraid or defeated by repression. We think that the explanation of the "disappearance" of the anti-globalisation movement has to be found somewhere else, we mean in its forms and organization, in its strategies and practices. If the social forums were planned by "the" movement, all the protests were counter-summits organized in reaction to the meeting of the decision-makers (G8, IMF, European summit). The movement couldn't really bring its own agenda on a practical level, it has failed to create international campaigns fighting effectively against what it was denouncing. Probably this also results of the inability to create connections with existing social struggles. Then the way to organize these counter-summits was quite centralized or hierarchical, the assemblies were not really free, though of course calling themselves directly democratic. Let's think of the BlockG8 project in Ger-

many or the Climate Justice Action network in Copenhagen. It happened often that some people decided for everyone what kind of action should be held and how the camps and discussions should go on. A consequence of this were the never ending discussions on the “allowed” level of violence, whose conclusion was always rejecting radical actions. And this conclusion brought occasionally some people to collaborate with the cops to stop the “trouble makers”. Do you see a better way to destroy confidence and create division?

2. ON THE “NEW MOVEMENTS”: INDIGNADOS AND OCCUPY

Since one year, new movements have occurred. Starting from an intensive use of “social networks” and the will to take the streets, the “indignados” dynamic spread all over Europe, evolving to different forms depending of the country. These movements grew in an unofficial part of politics, they are mostly not related to parties and stay low organized and heterogeneous. Politically they are not easy to recuperate, because there is a defense-reflex against “ideolo-

gies” and any form of clear demands or inputs. Although they erupted in an undeniable political situation and are being recognized as political, they want to guarantee their broad base by claiming being “unpolitical”. This claim and the will of being open to anyone can lead to problematic situations that we have to care about:

*NOW THAT THE
MAJORITY OF THE
SQUARES HAVE BEEN
EVICTED, HOW CAN
THE MOVEMENT
CONTINUE WITHOUT
ANY PHYSICAL
PLACES?*

in Germany some conspiracy theorists tried to integrate the assemblies and in Greece some fascists came to wave the national flag in the “indignated protests”. Excluding these points, it is a fact that these movements have brought

a lot of different people together and that they achieved in most countries mass protests, and in a few places like Greece, Spain and Italy, interesting direct actions.

Nowadays the enthusiastic beginning of these movements has passed and the question is: will they last? Their organization take mainly place on Internet and in the occupied squares. Now that the majority of the squares have been evicted, how can the movement continue without any physical places? People in Spain and Greece answered this question

by developing the movement in a neighborhood assemblies dynamic. Another development in United States and Spain consists in squatting empty houses to create living places which can also serve as meeting places to organize struggles. These dynamics, maybe less visible than occupying squares, open new possibilities, they fix the processes in the local and daily lives of people and makes a long-term work possible. These spaces are opportunities to develop a global critique of the capitalist system, to get in touch with “common” people and to meet radical comrades. It is what we are seeking in this movement.

3. OUT OF ISOLATION !

In the last three years, since the beginning of “the” actual crisis, we discovered some differences between the radical movements in Europe. In Greece you have a growing organized anarchist and anti-authoritarian milieu, with all its limit, but always trying to be part of social movements. In some northern European countries like France or Belgium, you will find an isolated and divided radical left, acting often in the dark and focusing on limited one-point-campaigns. In

Germany, some campaigns or massive actions have brought some results. But considering the question of international solidarity or struggles, activists have globally been unable to make connections with the situations in other countries. By looking at the radical scenes and movements in Eu-

rope, we can not avoid to point limits and formulate critiques. We see our deficits and we see they are numerous.

First in terms of understanding the local situation in other countries. The austerity measures have been voted in Great-Britain more than twenty years ago, we could learn from it, try to understand what have been the protests against neoliberalism in the eighties and why they have failed to break the government reforms down. Another example is Greece, a lot of European radical activists “dream” of the Greek situation, some of them even call up the social destruction to happen - “Let’s worsen the crisis!” - in order to experiment the “unavoidable” insurrection that will come in reaction. To answer to this silly slogan we have to say that social misery has been a constant characteristic since two hundred years in Europe and that it has produced just a few broad revolts, but many

A LOT OF EUROPEAN RADICAL ACTIVISTS “DREAM” OF THE GREEK SITUATION

fascist regimes. Moreover the insurrectional moments in Greece can not be understood without a look at the evolution of the Greek society and of the anarchist milieu since, at least, the end of the dictatorship in the middle seventies. Finally, we can surely learn from the street fighting technics in Greece, but we should also learn from the male chauvinism and the sometimes violent fight inside the radical scene. We could multiply examples, the anti-nuclear movement in Germany and its thirty years history, the social centers in Spain and their ability to sometimes create strong connections with the inhabitants of their neighborhood... Globally, we hardly know and take inspiration of what is going on abroad.

This conclusion also counts for the local level, to a lesser extent. Many groups and projects are confronted by internal problems or political limits that have been discussed and faced hundreds times by other groups in different times and places. But nearly every group starts to deal with these problems from nowhere, ignoring what has been discussed, thought and experimented before. The groups gathering people from different generations can gain a lot of time and maturity, but we have to ask the question: why are we mostly unable to create a history of collective dynamics and

subversive experiences, while these are some of our main concern?

We do not have the answer to this question but we can point some leads to try to explain this important limit of our side. One of it is the lack of perspectives and ambitions in a lot of radical circles. For many political people to take part in some squat activities, to show up once in a while in a (antifa) demo or to drive a bicycle seems to be enough, as if being part of the milieu and reproducing its habits was a reasonable and sufficient political objective. To make it clear, to have political spaces to live, discuss and party is really important, as keeping the streets nazi-free, but it can not be our ultimate aim in this society. Furthermore, these habits, concerning our ways of living, being dressed, talking, even eating sometimes, limit us. We are many to have contacts only in the milieu and to act strictly according to our "radical principles". In a lot of cities, this strong identity destroys any possibilities of cooperation between people. Instead of searching a common critique on capitalism, based on exchanges about local political situation, social movement or personal experiences, many groups prefer to wallow in the same routine. On one hand, this influences even our ways of thinking. Let's see all these anarchist newspaper

which completely miss any historical or practical thoughts. "This world is disgusting and we want to get rid of it" seems to be the only "analysis" to write for many radical activists... A bit poor and depressing if we may say. On the other hand, this routine develop closed-minds and create divisions: any groups which try to act differently, be it by having an "official" name or trying to build continuity or act strategically, are strongly rejected by large part of the radical scene. We wrote above about the neoliberal dogma, but we have to notice that lots of political groups have their own...

In conclusion, we can say that these ways of thinking and being have important effects on our possibilities. We do not dare to be curious, we do not dare to try to invent new forms and content, new actions and discourses. The Indymedia network is slowly dying since years because of his inability to find new ways of existing. In Greece we needed two years to think to use ropes to smash delta units. In Wendland, we are still using the old-fashion wooden barricades, while digging tools are way more efficient to block police transports on forest roads. Have you often been surprised by the books and magazines you found in European squat's info shop? And so on and so on. We have lots of knowledges and experi-

ences to share and to learn about but we globally do not try to use them, to broadcast them inside and outside our scenes. To do so, we should try to look further and try to anticipate, we should also, mainly, get ride of some of our milieu habits and dogmas. Capitalism is shaking, people are moving, times are getting interesting! Maybe is it the good moment to leave isolation and to run into the world?

4. ON OUR WAY TO THE NEXT LEVEL!

Be it struggles against the rotten dictatorships in the Arabic world, workers struggles in China and India, social protest in Israel, the occupation of Wall Street in New York or the virtual attacks of the Anonymous, a lot of common people no longer see the system as unquestionable and untouchable. Many gaps are being opened, that still have to be filled. And as we have seen it in the past and nowadays, a lot of different or even opposite things can feed the peoples revolt.

In the actual situation, we should not be afraid of our radical positions against capitalism. As the occupy movement shows it, the austerity measures brought and will bring a lot of people to criticize and to maybe rise up against the system. The gap between the radicals and a lot of "normal" people lie probably more in the conviction that capitalism cannot

provide freedom and happiness, and that these ideas can be achieved by other ways of living than the capitalist one.

The question is how to develop our radical perspectives outside of our milieus. We could try to build again a political party, the “good one” this time. We could try to fight in the frame of (or against) the national state, it is closer to us and easier to hit. We could try to create the fifth international, gathering all the oppressed people from the world in a supranational structure. Or we can try to think and to act strategically. We can try to develop local and international perspectives and campaigns. We can try to elaborate long-term struggles and to organize the means to lead them. We can learn from the experiences abroad and from the history – and sometimes history is not that long time ago. Check out the 12th February (and many other) general strikes in Greece, the No-TAV movement in Italy, the Tahrir square occupation in Egypt, the Ungdomshuset defense in Denmark and the anti-castor campaign in Germany. The only common features to all the-

*IN ORDER TO SHOW
SOLIDARITY THERE
ARE ALWAYS A
LOT OF TARGETS
THAT ARE MORE
SENSITIVE, AND LESS
PROTECTED, THAN
EMBASSIES.*

se relatively successful moments were their (at least partly) insurrectional character and the fact that a lot of different people joined forces. If you consider this, it is clear that the only way for the people to achieve political victories is to accept the different points of view and ways of action, to manage to work and walk in the same direction than people you could criticize. In other terms, we need “moderate” people as much as they need us.

Beyond opportunities of insurrectional moments, an important objective for us is to be able to create new international solidarities. During the uprising in the Arabic countries or the ongoing social destruction in various states of the eurozone and the world, the radical left could not find a common language, direction or idea of a concrete content, we globally couldn't find a way to help or even show effective solidarity to the people fighting. Capitalism is everywhere, the decision-centers can be a thousand kilometers from the place where the impact devastates society. Even “your” government, the one which fucks you up the most (whatever if it's some bankers or politicians),

is probably not in your country, the miracle of Europe! So if we want to fight effectively the domination, we should better understand how the beast works, where we can hit it, and be able to broadcast this knowledge. For the moment the exchange processes between the struggling people in Europe are still underdeveloped: in the radical groups some have traveled to Greece or Tunisia, a bit of riot-tourism, but just a few groups experimented with more organized collaborations. As mentioned above, we definitely miss the tools and spaces to coordinate resistances on a European level and to transmit our own history and experiences.

Furthermore we have to see the link between capitalistic processes within Europe. Information must be gathered about how state-institutions or companies who act transnationally, are active in different countries in order to maintain capitalist order. Greece is being sold out to international capital: OTE company to Deutsche Telecom, Thessaloniki Waterworks to Veolia Environment, Athens airport to Hochtief, the highways, the ports, the train company and many other things will follow. In order to show solidarity or in case of - let's be ambitious - international campaigns, there are always a lot of targets that are more sensitive, and less protected,

than embassies. Let us think about "the" crisis, migrant repression, ecological disasters and so on. Many structures and companies may be named in this topic, it is just a work of research, in order to discover the links between different countries, and afterwards a work of coordination in order to take action. Then, regardless if these actions take the form of occupying institutions, direct actions, counter-information guerrilla or blockades, ideas and prototypes of resistance can be many and various... However, it is clear that if we do not try to get organized in this way, if we do not intensify our exchange processes and adopt a global point of view on the system, we won't be able to develop our own agenda, we will keep on waiting for the next spontaneous movement, with the risk of waiting too long and confirming the myth "there is no alternative" to capitalism. In these times of austerity and popular revolts, we definitely have to bring our ways of organization and action to the next level.

... From Berlin to New York, from Tunis to Athens, everything becomes possible. Solidarity must be anti-national and concrete. The current situation gives us the opportunities to talk - between us, with other people, with colleagues or neighbors; the opportunities to discuss ways of challenging capitalism. The objective remains the same. Confrontations on local and international levels must be spread. So that the situation never goes back to normal. So that the ideas and practices connecting us to each other become actual bonds. So that we pass from ungovernable to unforgettable, and reach the system change we aim for.

After a rebellious year 2011, 2012 offers a wide range of opportunities to take our lives in our hand and fight : a first attempt will be the European day of action against capitalism on March 31st. Different actions will happen in different cities and countries, and a mass mobilization will take place in Frankfurt, in the city of the European central bank, in the center of the "beast" as our German comrades write. On the 1st of May, peoples over the world will take again the streets. While from the 16th May on Frankfurt will be a second time in the eye of the storm: groups in Germany plan a European-wide mobilization to organize a big city-blockade, in order to continue the pressure on the actual crisis-managers. But there are not only the so called "events" or "global action days" which are important. Regularity and perseverance are the words! Be it attacking the ECB (European central bank), squatting your local construction site or intervene in a radio station for counter-information reasons: actions can and should be taken everyday - and night - to overcome this murderous and authoritarian system!

Break on through together!

International Autonomous Committee against capitalist normality

<http://iacommittee.noblogs.org>



