

**DISCUSSION  
PAPER** *for a new*

# **BREA KOUT**

**INTO** *the*  
**FROSTS** *of*  
**FREEDOM**

**REFORMGROUP** OF *the Reformgroup South-East*

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# THE TIME TO ALWAYS ASSURE OURSELVES OF OUR OWN CERTAINTIES HAS TO COME TO AN END

**To some our words might sound harsh.** This happens easily if it's the people you love that are at stake, those with whom we have discovered many liberating thoughts in the past, those with whom we have tried out ways of changing both ourselves and the world. Shared attempts, that, as small as they may have been, we still hold more than close to our hearts. If one or the other critique hits you, try to keep this in mind and don't immediately jump into a defensive position. We want to keep going together, otherwise this text would not exist.

We want to take the effort to overcome our differences and join forces. We want to have a collective debate at the beginning of the meeting to find out what ideas, critiques and proposals there are concerning the question of "What's Next?", and how we can practically tie them together in a discussion. If some of the positions really are mutually exclusive, we should state this and

draw conclusions from it: this could also mean splitting from each other. There might be a point when our common ground falls through our fingers like sand or when common discussion leads nowhere anymore except to the same sad desert. The comrades who prepared the congress made it clear that they don't want only experts meeting in circles on certain issues, and no panels. We would like to add, above all, no putting next to each other all the little inconsequential contradictions in some unrelated fashion, only to discover them again and again. Nearly 20 years after the text "3:1 — class contradiction, racism, sexism" introduced the problem of triple oppression to our circles, we can no longer rest in constantly describing anew that there is no single contradiction that determines every other contradiction. That knowledge alone is not enough. The problem stems partly from the splitting into single-issue politics and the development of specialization that stems from it, as well as from not piecing these jigsaw pieces back together again to form an overall picture. But somehow that still isn't everything.

We will only manage to scratch the surface of a few difficulties here. Also, we are too few to do even that in a comprehensive way. At the congress in Hamburg there will be more of us and if things go well we could in some moments develop something like a collective intelligence. Only in this way can it function to include all the many different experiences and perspectives. But a weekend is too short to really sort out a comprehensive strategy. What is a critique that keeps up with the time? How do some of us fool ourselves by simply stating "Destroy everything!", ignoring the fact that state and capital do not want to abolish sociability as such, but wish to smash all uncontrolled collectivity into little pieces so that the fragments can be reconfigured afterwards by the logic of capital and the state. Transformation. How do others of us, in no less one-sided manner, fool ourselves with ever more elaborate and overly-complicated decodings of these processes, yet avoid to act according to our own findings?

The aim of the congress could be to agree on two or three questions that we will all discuss in the coming year. Linked to that, to develop a concrete structure for this discussion that would lead to a proposal for organizing ourselves: local and supra-

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regional meetings, loads of discussion circles, critical feedback of the discussion of our actions, agreement on a channel for the debate. How do we generalize the discussion? How do we spread our ideas and the texts we find important: to come to a common basis, to collectivize our knowledge, to make it possible to discuss about the same topic in the first place? Our idea is, for example, to regularly publish texts and discussion papers coming from these circles — and other circles as well — in our own media. We are of the opinion anyway, that we should invest more time and energy into creating our own ways and means of expression, instead of becoming chummy with the coverage of the bourgeois news.

Such a proposal to organize also includes thinking about potential comrades. There are various people we meet in the streets, but whom we do not find in our structures. They do not relate to them. Our self-organized structures are often closed and appear to be elitist. One has to have “proper knowledge” about a lot of things, know the codes and adhere to them, to be accepted. Also, we assume that there are people we would like to have in our discussions that do not feel attracted to the term “autonomen”. We are swayed back and forth as well: the autonomen are characterized by a far-reaching removal from society into our own bubble — yet at the same time, paradoxically, the autonomen are characterized by lively contacts to the Green Party and the Left Party, by press conferences and being entangled with the NGO-government complex. On the other hand, the autonomen still stand for a certain determination and irreconcilability against the state and capital, for confrontation in the streets, visible to anyone as part of the black bloc or invisible during the night. They stand for strategies of provocation and a perspective of bringing the social reality to a head — and yet they are always on the search for the entirely

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different entirety, too. For the creation and combative re-appropriation of relationships, free spaces and structures, that defy state control as much as possible, with the perspective of building from these threads a different social fabric. If it is still these things that people link to the term “autonomen”, then we like it.

And, despite the great discontent that we always share through our self-critique; compared to other political forces, the autonomen and anarchists are in pretty good shape. In the conflicts about war and peace, globalization, GM technology, antinuclear, etc. our positions can be found in the center of the struggle, not only in the streets but also as regards to content. In certain fields, that are not unimportant to everyday life and survival — collective living and working, the struggle against the gentrification of the neighborhoods we live in — we are present and share experiences of collectivity and cooperation: that it simply works best to confront the sad and isolated monotony of this exploitative society together. And to organize for this is what we discuss about here, as the system cannot be an alternative for us. The perspective of a life-sentence in wage labor, followed by a lonesome sickness and death is simply too horrible. And — which other place other than self-created collectives should there be for all the losers that the system produces? The management of misery and welfare facilities of the state? The research centers or sociologists or reservations? We think that the point is still to confront things from below. To understand ourselves, to live and to really be a part of the social struggles to come, to personally, with our whole lives, throw ourselves into attempts to topple the ruling conditions of the current reality.

This promises a lot of discomfort. Many of those we are talking to, do not think that it's wrong what we do, but they think they cannot do it or they might not want to do it. But, even if it is right that we will probably get ourselves into trouble and yet cannot escape contradictions, it is nevertheless true as well, that saying farewell to your own ideals will neither save you from exhaustion or from having your life enter contradiction with capital. All living beings act in opposition to their exploitation. We take that as a given. But as much as we are thrown into this opposition by the conditions around us, we can still try to influence the place, time and forms of the conflict.

Although we do not invent the confrontation, the question remains: How do we position ourselves in it, while not acting has consequences as well? How do we pick up the gauntlet that the agents of capital throw down to us again and again? These are the conditions we come across, the social war we act in — whatever the decision will be. That's what its all about. Therefore we think that the slogan “Be as radical as the conditions are!” still is appropriate. Yet, to examine the actual conditions, in the attempt to really understand the recent social attack, we stand in our own way at certain points. We have got stuck in analyses, which are basically right, but which have been left behind by current developments. This leads us to run up against the nearly deserted bastions of the enemy — like the idea of progress, for example — or to ensconce ourselves in niches and become easy to handle for the state as only delinquents. As the black bloc, but also as the D.I.Y. hippie or intellectual conference hopper. Being unpredictable always needs new active steps to be taken. At this point we have to ask ourselves, besides having different evaluations about the objective conditions of social struggles, whether we are still willing to take these steps, whether I, you and we are actually ready to radically change the ruling conditions. Which ways and options are there to confront the system appropriately, mainly in practical ways?

We find our inspirations these days above all in the idea of insurrection, which we picked up in recent years from the things happening in France and Greece. The experience of an insurrection is not new in history, but it somehow escaped our consciousness and our tactical considerations, so that we have to invent it anew. When we think of insurrection we think of much

more than the purely military dimension. While insurrection is a strategy that includes political violence, it is more than just an escalation of militancy or multiple riots. It includes the idea of living in opposition to all forms of rule in our struggles- finding our liberation through living it. Closely linked to the idea of insurrection is a shift in perspective, an orientation towards different goals.

It is about drawing practical consequences from the numerous critiques of recent years, to attack capitalism not in its historically consolidated forms, but as a fragile fabric of social relationships. To aim just wide of the bulwarks of power, aiming right beside it, aiming at what keeps the business running — to target circulation, not the institutions. It is all about shifting the parallax view in which we think about society, and with whom we establish bonds. To talk to the people, ignoring the representatives that allegedly represent them, even though these representatives are right next to them. We think that it is an open question, why we do not hear anything from a lot of the people, why they do not take their lives in their own hands. We are no sociologists. We don't want to do a survey or redefine bad conditions into revolutionary ones. We want to try it. The secret is to really begin! Why should the impossible be more impossible today than in former times? Finally it could be, that the people do not refuse to fight with us because of violence and reverie, but in fact because they distrust us, because often we just talk like politicians as well. We have to develop a way to look at things that enable us like Janus to look at the back and the front at the same time, to make an experiment possible that is simultaneously defensive and offensive: To defend what we have reached without implementing a new establishment. To change the world without taking power — and to free our thinking again and again for the question the Greek comrades brought up: “And after we burnt everything?”

What we usually do is not wrong. Nazis have to be fought off, house-projects defended, the social war that invades our lives more with every single passing day, has to be put on the agenda. It is consequential and necessary to practice solidarity with refugees and prisoners, to build up our own magazines, public kitchens, legal support structures, etc. All this and a lot more is appropriate and good. It is our discussions and our strategies that are not good.

But this doesn't have to mean that our strategies and discussions are bad. Often they are just insufficient, as we don't test them in reality enough.

Our strategies do not change at the same speed as the reality of society does, often we lag behind the changing conditions: The spreading acceptance of poverty, of double standards not only in the South, but in the realities our own daily life. In a society, in which a new colonialism legitimates racist encroachments not only at borders, where war integrates political violence in a very different way today than the way it did during the Cold War. The facade of hypocritical social peace has crumbled away to a great extent. In the middle of this spreading disappearance of perspective, the pig system continues to exist relatively undisturbed. Without making any promises of the future to the masses of people, the system just endures. And us, we are stuck right in the middle of this forlorn way of being — and are far more part of this schizophrenic, fucked-up society than we really want. And this is what we need to talk about, if we want to change this sense of being lost, without following false dreams ourselves, whether it is the autonomous niche or just another revolutionary subject.

# ROLL BACK THE ROLL-BACK

**To those who could remember times before King Kohl,** the word “roll-back”<sup>1</sup> is a comprehensive term. We talked a lot about this term in those times, painting the devil on the wall as we often do, long before the force of actual changes could be perceived. Now that we have really gotten this far in things, our critical nerves seem to be deaf. Attempts to understand the deep impact of the attack of Thatcher and her lot are rare, especially if we are talking about the general discussion amongst comrades — that which we actively share in our common understanding — and not only in books and the analyses of experts about the general state of the world. The attack was aiming and is still aiming at the destruction, silencing, and forgetting of all fundamental social opposition — a *tabula rasa* for the coming social engineering of a devastated world.

While the reactionary forces turn our lives and already our perception upside down, they cannot force us to completely

dissolve into work and consumption. Luckily enough, there are historical examples, but also things we experience again and again that enable us to think in other ways, to talk differently to each other, and even to collectively act in ways that are different to the ways that job-centers, insurance companies and social workers want us to act. But this “other” does not come to us because of some sort of particular cleverness, but is realized as soon as and only we put ourselves into confrontations: with the state, the family, the boss, the room-mates, the consumerist society, the nuclear industry, relationships of love, the world.

To interpret the findings gained in these confrontations “privately”, to think that because of personal skills or traits, IQ or cadre schooling, we are able to see through the system more than others, is part of the roll-back, part of the individualizing process, part of corruption. Historically, this interpretation repeatedly lead into the dead end of vanguardism. Far too often our thinking — as is typical in capitalism — is focused on the product, while the process of production is edited out. The question, how is it that I understand something that is seemingly not clear to others, or that at least doesn’t play any role in their lives, is often not thought to be born from conflict, but instead to be only the possession of certain static character traits, knowledge as private property. Yet it is a fiction to think of human beings even for a moment to be separated from their actions in relation to others. A very functional fiction for capitalism, as it offers the individualized core necessary for the statistical decomposition and social-technocratic recomposition of society. A process usually used in the service of power.

We are used to thinking of ourselves as entities, not as relations. We think an awful lot about identities and how we have become what we are. Meanwhile, what is happening between us is the most important thing. If we vehemently insist that capitalism should not be thought of as an institution, that we have to focus on how it functions, the same is true for us as people. If power is floating and operates right through all of us, then also our liberation depends on our ability to bring our thoughts and actions across the blockades that hold us in what we are used to. Certainly, we are all someone in each moment, but maybe this is just not so important.

Social security is another thing where the autonomen and society are not far away from each other. Traditionally the image of the autonomen was built on the maxim “Live wild and dangerous!” What was a breakout from the all-inclusive welfare state that was politically cast in concrete in the 1980s — a state maintained against real-existing socialism — looks different today. Reports of comrades today seem like fairy tales: they didn’t give a shit about formal education, inheritance, and jobs in the 70s because revolution was around the corner, and only this counted. Somewhere on the way then this revolutionary here-and-now perished, congealed as it did into stickers and lifestyle, yet with the “why” and the “how” of it not yet understood. Anyways, it was not in Stammheim, and only a little bit in the fear of it. Part of it stems from the experience of defeat that the comrades conveyed to us, or that we experienced ourselves. But a lot of this has to do with the general privatization that grabs at our wishes and transforms our needs, much more than proud autonomous individuals would usually admit.

And so, the tiny little secrecies of private consumption and other compromises with the establishment — be it the career, the little happiness of a couple, the accumulation of knowledge that is not shared with the collective — became habitual. The exception, that in the beginning served to strengthen the norm, became the normality of the individual getting by, the intellectual career that is kept apart from the general discussion, and it is this career for which so many things can be profitably used afterwards. To have existential angst for one’s livelihood is a reaction not so different from the rest: It’s everyone for him and herself — alone or at a maximum in pairs.

# **FALLING BACK TO EARTH**

We propose to turn away from self-referential subculture, or to put it in a positive way, an opening towards whatever kind of people in society that could have an interest to confront the current conditions and stand up for liberation. What we talk about is an opening to concrete people and not to institutions like churches, unions, or parties.

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### **How this can be done:**

**Without** 1. turning to numb populism — to pick on issues indifferently with regards to themselves but only with the goal of trying to raise our profile and to seek consent like parties do;

**Without** 2. once again developing romantic ideas about revolutionary subjects — which we abstractly admire, while in any decisive moment they will always be people other than us, always living in other times at other places;

**Without** 3. getting stuck in the various versions of over-objectified approaches about chances, dangers and the probabilities of change in society — that is, adopting a perspective of the state, of management, of scientific or economic policy counseling, without having anything to decide in reality — that is: without forgetting ourselves

**To be able to talk to all different kinds of people in society,** we need to know where we stand and what we want. And we need to make proposals, of how we can imagine achieving something. For ourselves, but not exclusively for ourselves. Maybe, to formulate it in the autonomous tradition, to introduce to the “politics of the first person” the second and the third persons again — and to do this it seems necessary to say goodbye to politics in its usual sense.

Instead of “making politics” we should sharply criticize the legitimization of exclusion that is commonly called politics. Stagnating since the French revolution, it is always those positions that are “taken seriously” politically that clearly disassociate themselves from the *hoi polloi*, from those without property, as soon as they start to act in their own interest and become a threat for the compromise between the different factions of owners. To protect private property, to secure the validity of treaties — this is what politics exist for, and this is why it is accepted also as a practice of those who do not belong to the elites. Unions were officially approved in Germany only after England had shown by example to the so-called social reformers of the ruling classes that unions were a good weapon against the luddites. And the first thing these new unions did was to exclude people from the funds of mutual aid, if they were caught stealing. They fought against the struggle evolving from the daily experiences of the working-class against wage labor and promoted instead the spreading of a positive identity of the worker, of the workers-class,<sup>2</sup> as industrious, honest, loyal. Such politics can be thrown overboard without hesitation.

To overcome our isolation has often been on the agenda in an abstract sense. Be it in discussions about the social attack — how we could get in touch with struggles at the work place and Monday demonstrations<sup>3</sup> — be it the search for ways of cooperation between blacks and whites in the struggle against the border regime, deportation, and illegalization — moreover against the chauvinist and imperialist roots of this situation and the colonialism that has recently been renewed through wars. Meanwhile, to state the importance of these concerns doesn't seem to motivate us sufficiently to eventually tear down race, class, or gender-related borders in our daily lives. But the social confrontation, inside of which we do not sufficiently manage to overcome our isolation,

does exist. In this confrontation again and again we realize that we are not prepared well enough, overwhelmed by events, in a thousand ways too rigid, too traditional, too impatient, too blinkered, too much captured by the perspective of the enemy. It is from understanding these problems, which only become obvious when we enter these confrontations that consciousness, language, and possibilities of actually shared change emerge.

We should take the opportunity to practically work on this language. Right now, this means to, and with all our conditions and limitations, throw ourselves into discussion with the “common people”, all of us. To learn again to express ourselves, to explain what we really mean by “Make Capitalism History”, how we intend to start this together, and why we think that it is therefore unavoidable to destroy the institutions of the state, starting today. To take the time to grasp and describe this as precisely as possible. Instead of adapting our message to some target groups in a statistical study, we should try to make our ideas understandable, to have real conversations with people. To dynamizise our thinking and learn to move, to act instead of documenting — to think more in verbs, instead of losing ourselves in arguing about subjects and objects. To learn to love the questions, to better be able to reject the wrong answers. It certainly looks like social conditions will continue to be aggravated. At the same time the question, whether we politically bet on impoverishment or enlightenment, on revolution or reform, becomes more and more academic, as neither one nor the other will be listened to, or would be capable in terms of strength to throw overboard the captains or take another course in a different way. But there is the exception of those, who, though they might still sound like Leftists, accept the framework of the ruling conditions and are ready to actively contribute to the recovery of capitalism.

In some time soon we will have to listen to several proposals that are nothing but “the same thing painted in green”. Because we have “to do” something, you know, because time is running short. All of a sudden the progressive destruction of the planet is said to be an argument for the continuance of capitalism. This is so absurd that we actually see a good opportunity to put this point on the agenda and to attack the framework of capitalist exploitation as such — and to be generally understood in doing

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this. We don't have to persuade anyone anymore that our way of life is harmful. And we assume that more than just a few people would be ready to draw consequences from this knowledge! We don't need an ecological turn of politics, but the end of ecology. No more techniques of delay to ensure the plundering of the planet a little longer, but an understanding of nature that brings humans back to the earth, back into the world.

What we lack is a shared understanding of our situation, of ourselves in the situation. Only a collectively-situated understanding of the misery can create a starting point for a departure from it. Whether we welcome the crisis or fear it is relevant only in how far this leads us into acting or into resignation. So what could it be that leads us into acting today? At the moment, we are most excited about a series of ideas that revolve around the term "insurrection." There are several texts written about it, mainly from France and Italy, and, on the other side, practical attempts that flash up such as the revolt in Greece, as well as in other social struggles all around the world.

It is far from our minds to appropriate those struggles or to put them in a ranking. We are not saying that those fighting would share a common aim or theory. Nevertheless somehow we can relate to it, because in all these conflicts we come across people that don't want to make the old mistakes anymore, who don't want a new leader or a different state anymore. Who decide in assemblies and councils, not willing to be silenced in elections anymore. Sometimes these people are terribly in the minority — and in the bourgeois media it will always look like this — yet sometimes they are not.

We think that today positions of self-organizing, direct action, and solidarity in many places are to be found in the center of political struggles and not on the edge anymore. Often this is simply because all the other bullshit from parties to NGOs

# OR FEAR IT IS RELEVANT ONLY IN HOW TO RESIGNATION.

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discredits itself as an instrument of liberation, as soon as they have the opportunity to unfold a little bit. Unfortunately due to wars and authoritarian regimes the situation is so rough in many places, that seemingly nearly all discussions are quelled in blood. If violence exceeds a certain dimension, it is not only the muses that fall silent.

Groups like the anarchists Against the Wall in Israel/Palestine somehow fight on the threshold of a war, in which social experiments are about to become impossible — and even this can hardly be understood in Europe, if at all. Not to speak about tragedies like they happen in conflicts like Rwanda or Chechnya. Maybe our understanding will grow with the militarization of our own societies. Anyways, we should rather be careful with judgments about emancipatory movements in outright war-zones, as most of us did not walk a single meter in the moccasins of those affected. And also nobody could want that to happen. How we can get together despite these different backgrounds is damn tricky, but a nevertheless necessary task.

We don't really manage to think about ourselves and the others in a non-paternalistic, shared, and combative perspective. When reading texts from more moving times, one realizes that consciousness does not develop in a linear manner, but that it goes up and down together with struggle. This starts already with our relationship towards learning. Our problem is not that we lack knowledge, but that we lack shared knowledge. And this problem is aggravated by the transformation of society along the lines of the value-form. Who has still time for the world outside of refining one's curriculum vitae?

We need to develop a shared practice that enables us to acknowledge the experiences of the Others while trying the same time to here and there anticipate a world where we already left domestication, the general trimming, the path of colonization.

And we need places where we can experiment with such actions, everyday and everywhere. We need to develop forms of practice that enable us to permanently act in everyday life and tangibly attack. About the ways to reappropriate more knowledge and skills in the practical terrain, we should absolutely talk elsewhere.

# TAKING THE INITIATIVE

**In the first place, not many people know what to do** with the term “insurrection” in Germany. This is not really a surprise, given the huge list of failed attempts, be it the Munich Council’s Republic or the uprising of Rosa Luxembourg and others in 1918. Certainly, the main reason is German history, that supplies us with some healthy distrust of the population. But still, dealing with this history can lead to either sheer powerlessness or the urgent desire to act. While the deadly continuity of racist attitudes as experienced in Rostock-Lichtenhagen<sup>4</sup> and fascist gangs is getting stronger again and is really very depressing, to use it as an argument against the uncontrollability of social struggles is paradoxical. While it might be anything but logical to think of an insurrection in this country, what would the alternative be? Just to continue — no! Eco-fascism — no! And we also don’t want to talk about communism without people — from most of those blethering about such stuff right now we don’t even want to know whose dictatorship they want to erect.<sup>5</sup>

What we can certainly build on are our self-organized structures. We have no other choice than to try to create the conditions for more people to get the opportunity to grow and develop. The discussion on aims is then already part of the ongoing permanent discussion. We realize that the atmosphere is changing, that people are discussing more again, and that the interest in anarchist ideas is increasing. Also, people that are getting socially left behind at the moment, and who are moving around outside of autonomous circles, are considerably annoyed and angry. And these feelings are not alien to us, even though we usually come from a different background. Often the first point to meet is in hatred of the cops, and often the reasons are tragic.

One thing is clear: Insurrections cannot be organized, riots can be organized. Insurrections will not come because we urgently wish them to come and they will not come more quickly if we wish more urgently. The coming insurrection will not become more likely if we prepare ourselves for it, although maybe things might take a more emancipatory route if we do prepare. How can we get beyond the gesture of being ready for confrontation to structures and tactics that can carry us beyond our military weakness? How can we better understand the processes of growing unrest in society, and start to exchange thoughts about how we can disrupt capitalist logic, massively shake up the conditions, and our own lives as well?

We have to invent an education, that we — and this is the important point — share for the insurrection to come: Besides sharp analysis, to be able to assess the situation and the mentally and technical offensive capabilities which could enable us to really attack, we need vast amounts of productive and defensive structures to enable us to live up to the escalation of the situation. That will ensure our survival, as we diminish dependencies on



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the establishment and at the same time develop our defensive abilities to weather the attack of the reactionary forces that will inevitably occur as soon as we actually become a threat. In the term “insurrection,” the question of organizing, including the question of direct confrontation, is much more directly put than in the defensive approaches of the various single issue struggles. What does an insurrection mean today, seen against the background of the extremely different arming of our time, or more precisely: of our nearly complete disarming? The history of insurrection is stained in blood and saturated with defeats. But still, developments in recent years encourage us to think that an insurrection in our sense, that the perspective of a new combative internationale, is possible.

So, what do we mean, when we talk about insurrection? Some will object, that lots of the things spoken about in this paper are nothing new. Maybe it is as simple as that, and many of the discussions that autonomous circles had in previous days are just not known anymore, and that also the terms in which comrades expressed these thoughts were forgotten. Or that these thoughts are discussed these days under this term, because the debate has been kicked off other in other countries in the name of insurrection. Some of it might sound like the organizing debate of the 1990s, e.g. the critique of the self-referential nature of the autonomen, but something has changed since then. In the architecture of power some new and refined levels were installed. Quite a few of these former critics of the autonomen seem to constitute themselves as the neo-reformist camp these days — and, while keeping the rhetoric once developed with a critical intention, fill up the (often paid) jobs that unions, NGOs and the Left Party offer, as their former critics can be used as stem cells to renew their organizations. With the discussion about insurrection we want to position ourselves against the expansion of realpolitik

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within autonomous circles. Against the new stage of recuperation, the integration of those activists, to which those in power could after all, if necessary, “talk sense to” in their sense; who want to be taken seriously as mediators and spokespersons. Who, when it comes to the crunch, will always be ready to disassociate themselves from uncontrollable elements. We reject any state — also the ones hidden, garnished as a world federation of workers self-management, as Karl-Heinz Roth recently proposed.

In many countries this development has progressed much further already, maybe that’s why the critique of it developed much earlier there as well. Groups like the Disobedienti in Italy, the Lefties in Greece, or the professional movement managers in the UK and the US take care that autonomous forms of organizing are established as being respectable in the parlors of power, they feed the language of the movements into the discourses of the elites, so when the talk is about revolution today, this doesn’t have to mean more than the formation of self-managed slaves. We think that discussing this development is overdue.

# THE INSURRECTION AS THE ART OF AVOIDING PARALYSIS

**An insurrection is not a riot and not a revolution**, and it is more than the straight line from one to the other. More than anything else it is a beginning, a break from the fatal deadlock of a destructive order. To revolt is an important experience, and presumably we will have to participate in many insurrections to test the explosive force of our theory and practice. The chance that we and others change increases by the time things start to move, if the ruling conditions get thrown around and suspended — at least temporarily: orders are not followed, the monopoly of violence is out of order, the flows of production and transport are consciously disrupted, the smooth functioning of authorities and management is blocked, and most importantly: the **GENERAL DISCUSSION** about “How to go on?” is finally beginning among everybody, and is kept open by all means.

To aim again and again, that everyone gets up from the couch and goes away from the TV, away from the computer, and comes out to the street, as it was read on a banner that some people held in front of a camera in the occupation of a Greek TV channel during the December revolt in 2008. A demand that is not directed anymore to a government or some other representative, a demand to everyone, also to ourselves. *Just do it!*

We use the insurrection as a practical opportunity to set the conditions and ourselves in motion and to create situations that block capitalism and its agencies. Not as an end in itself, but to make space and time for other, direct forms of organizing. Many of us know how much is possible all of a sudden in a strike, even if it only at the university, if only people have the time to sit and think together, instead of rushing from work to discussion, and back to shopping and feeding the kids. If the supermarket is plundered by us, we could finally concentrate on things other than earning money. Also thinking about how we could organize the whole story, including food, housing and taking care of things differently than with wage slavery and private property. Anyways, the euphoria of fighting in the streets — yet most of the time it's more the thought of it — should not tempt us to think that direct confrontation is the thing itself. It is the beginning, and this is great, but it still will only be the start of everything.

An insurrectional situation can emerge, it can be escalated, but not created. Because the rising tension in society cannot be put down cartographically — and it also should not be. The insurrection is the farewell to any masterplan for society, the renunciation of statistics and risk calculation. What will come out of an insurrection is up to all of us. An insurrection is the epitome of an open situation. The challenge will presumably be to again and again summon up the patience and the tolerance to again and again find specific answers to the questions raised by an insurrection, and to not use the power gained in the insurrection for the advantage of a small group.

It is impossible to separate an insurrectional situation from its locality, to distill its neat and tidy elements, to transfer them 1:1 to other situations. The situation in Greece is different from the situation in France, from the situation in Germany,

from the situation anywhere else. We very much liked the proposal to think of the insurrection not quantitatively, not like a virus spreading, but more along the idea of resonance. Like a musical theme that can be heard by many different ears but still is understood, that is specifically interpreted and transposed in many melodies, each of them unique but still part of the same song, the same abandonment of the eternally uniform Hänschen Klein.<sup>6</sup> Free Jazz in its best sense.

# NOTES

1 The term “roll-back” (in English) is used in Germany to describe the economic and cultural counter-offensive of neoliberalism and privatization spearheaded by Chancellor Helmut Kohl in the 1980s, whose “reforms” were in the spirit of Ronald Reagan in the United States and Margaret Thatcher in Britain.

2 Usually in German, the term “working-class” is phrased as “Arbeiterklasse”, which translates literally as “workers-class”, emphasizing the identity of the working-class as workers. The actual meaning of working-class would be given by the term “arbeitende Klasse”, a term non-existent in actual German.

3 “Monday demonstrations” were popular demonstrations, originating in East German demonstrations for systematic change every Monday, that later were revived around popular causes throughout Germany, attracting wide support.

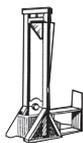
4 After the Wall fell in 1989, there were a number of highly-charged racist attacks in Germany, including attacks with molotovs against immigrants and their housing in the Lichtenhagen district of Rostock.

5 This “communism without people” was in German “kommunismus ohne Bevölkerung”, which is in reference to the the Antideutsche, who speak about communism in abstract terms yet are hostile to the general population of Germany.

6 This “Hänschen Klein” is a children’s song in Germany, somehow equivalent to “Home Sweet Home” in English.







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## WHAT IS A CRITIQUE THAT KEEPS UP WITH THE TIME?

How do some of us fool ourselves by simply stating “**Destroy everything!**”, ignoring the fact that state and capital do not want to abolish sociability as such, but wish to smash all uncontrolled collectivity into little pieces so that the fragments can be reconfigured afterwards by the logic of capital and the state. Transformation. How do others of us, in no less one-sided manner, fool ourselves with ever more elaborate and overly-complicated decodings of these processes, yet avoid to act according to our own findings?