



Avalanche

Anarchist correspondence

April 2018 ————— issue **13**



Uruguay

Anarquía

periodicoanarquia.wordpress.com

Chile

Contra toda autoridad

contratodaautoridad.wordpress.com

El Anárquico

periodicoanarquico.wordpress.com

Sin Banderas Ni Fronteras

sinbanderas.nifronteras@riseup.net

Cimarrón

revista.cimarron@riseup.net

Argentine

Rebellion (Buenos Aires)

publicacionrebellion@riseup.net

Alta tension

boletinaltatension.blogspot.com

Mexico

Negación

negacion_anarquica@riseup.net

Italy

Tairsia (Salento)

tairsia@gmail.com

Brece (Lecce)

disordine@riseup.net

Finimondo

finimondo.org

Spain

Infierno

revista_infierno@yahoo.com

France

Paris Sous Tension (Paris)

parissoustension.noblogs.org

Du pain sur la planche (Marseille)

dupainsurlaplanche.noblogs.org

Avis de tempêtes

avisdetempetes.noblogs.org

Belgium

L'imprévu (Bruxelles)

imprevu@riseup.net

Fawda (Bruxelles)

fawda@riseup.net

Germany

Attacke! (Norden)

attaque@riseup.net

Fernweh (München)

fernweh.noblogs.org

Chronik

chronik.blackblogs.org

The Netherlands

Roofdruk

roofdruk@riseup.net

Switzerland

Dissonanz (Zürich)

dissonanz-a@riseup.net

Austria

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revolte.blackblogs.org

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Upprorsbladet (Stockholm)

upprorsbladet@riseup.net

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returnfire@riseup.net

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mtlcounter-info.org

USA

Plain Words (Bloomington)

plainwordsbloomington.noblogs.org

Trebitch Times (St Louis)

trebitchtimes.noblogs.org

PugetSoundAnarchists (Pacific Northwest)

pugetsoundanarchists.org

Conflict MN (Minnesota)

conflictmn.blackblogs.org

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Contrainfo

contrainfo.espiv.net

Tabula Rasa

atabularasa.org

Act for freedom now

actforfree.nostate.net

Voz como arma

vozcomoarma.noblogs.org

Publicacion Refractario

publicacionrefractario.wordpress.com

Por la tierra y contra el capital

porlatierraycontraelcapital.wordpress.com

Sans Attendre Demain

sansattendre.noblogs.org

Aus dem Herzen der Festung

ausdemherzenderfestung.noblogs.org



Editorial

April 2018

Each project one engages with comes with expectations. Expectations for something that is not already there, for something that goes beyond the sum of the components. I would even say that they form the main part of what motivates me to put my energy in a long-term project. This sounds evident, but in practice is far from it. A lot of times we are motivated by other factors; the certainty of habit, the contentment of social approval, the accomplishment of learning or applying skills, the affirmation of belonging, the affection of mutual support etc. Rather than a confirmation, the expectations I'm hinting at are about a transformation. But at the same time they are intentional. To imagine the potential of a project and to find ways to realize this potential, is something different from hoping for positive side-effects or assuming results will follow necessarily. In *Avalanche* we have wanted to focus on these projects that come from an understanding of the social environment and a projection of own desires in that context to construct an autonomous path aimed at an insurrectionary intervention. As one starts and advances on that path, hypotheses are experimented with. Expectations are satisfied or frustrated.

The same is true for the project of *Avalanche*. The international correspondence contained in *Avalanche* was imagined to contribute to several dynamics; between anarchists across borders to have common reference points to facilitate a discussion that sharpens perspectives and deepens affinity, to transmit experiences in a less fragmented way (more coherent than the echoes of actions and repression) so that they become a shared history and a resource to take inspiration from, to motivate other anarchists to explore a project of direct action and self-organizing, to invite those who don't have an inclination to communicate about their projects and experiences to reflect and share. Written down these expectations seem overly ambitious – even pretentious, surely for what is only a publication. But we would also not be content with direct, practical results, with boxes to tick, with a pragmatic approach.

Even so at times we have to evaluate, to look back where we come from and to get a sense of the direction to take. And *Avalanche* has had its merits. I'm not going to write down a list of my satisfactions and frustrations with this project, everybody can think of their own and they will be different. There is one crucial factor in this project, and that are the contributions about ongoing projects of struggle. To put it blunt, there are few and not only received contributions but also projects. Specifically looking at autonomous struggles by anarchists aimed at intervening in their social surrounding with direct action and self-organizing, lately there has been a scarcity. This assessment – if it is shared – can be a starting point for a reflection, debate and – possibly – new projects. But in the meantime, to keep *Avalanche* with its intentions going in such a context seems a misdirected effort. And so this will be the last issue of *Avalanche*.

In no way does this mean that the aforementioned intentions of this project have become irrelevant or obsolete. Despite, or rather because of, the fact that increasingly more people are constantly connected through devices to – digital – others, a substantial exchange or discussion is still the exception. An ongoing dialogue starting from and strengthening affinities is an urgency when reductive identities are imposing themselves more and more. Other projects of correspondence will take on these challenges. Also projects of struggle will be formulated again. Reinvented, as we are not tempted to hit the repeat button. Nor are we afraid to go back to the beginning and attempt, again. For those who conforming to this society is a nightmare, subversion will always be a matter of life.

*Battling the winds arriving over the ocean,
longing for the mountains.*



On the struggle against Bässlergut and on insurrectionary practices

January 2018 - Switzerland

This small text, that intends to give a little insight into the struggles against Bässlergut and some considerations about specific struggles in general, has been written by myself as an individual. It is my thoughts and my history that you will find in here. The text is obviously not talking about the whole complex of the struggle. Others probably would give more space or value to other aspects.

It's a Friday night and once more some people gather on a clearance in the forest and start their way to a nearby prison in Basel, a small, rich city in the small, rich territory of Switzerland. It's the 11th of September 2015 and the group runs towards Bässlergut, a prison in the suburbs of Basel. Around 30 people can be in deportation cells, another 43 cells are there for serving sentences in it. Arriving at the walls, fireworks are set off, slogans are shouted and a banner hung at the fence. On the banner it reads "Director Arsehole – Politics fascist", a slogan shouted by an inmate during a previous visit like this. The prisoners are shouting back and bang against the barred windows, as always during these rebellious visits, that happen once in a while. Before the group disperses in the forest, a pole with a surveillance camera on top on the parking lot is destroyed. In the aftermath of the prison demo the call to resist the planned construction of another prison next to the old one spreads.

This took place a week before an announced demo against a military training called "Conex15" in the Region of Basel, at which the scenario of a collapsing Europe is supposed to be simulated. "Economic crisis", "sabotage and looting of oil-, gas- and grain-depots" or "refugee streams" are just some of the keywords of this. The demo is heading towards Bässlergut once again, where it is clashing with the police, trashing everything on its way that should be trashed and can be destroyed quickly – even though just for a short amount of time, few days or weeks after the facade of social peace shines again.

Since then, two years have passed. In spring 2017 they started to build another prison right next to Bässlergut. There they plan on imprisoning 78 people. The two different types of imprisonment – sentenced prisoners and those awaiting deportation – will then be in separated buildings. In the following years, the "reception centre", which is right next to Bässlergut, will be turned into a "federal asylum centre", combining different parts and forces of the asylum machinery in one administrative authority. The "federal asylum centres" will be build in numerous parts of the country and in a lot of places there is resistance against them.

One example for this is the city of Zürich, where they were testing this form of camp management since early 2014 – here, a radical and direct struggle against it developed itself. Actions, sabotage and occupations happened in other places as well, even before they opened the camps.

So, in these two years it wasn't just the authorities working on their repressive project. Besides the call for resistance against Bässlergut II (after the before mentioned prison demo), a leaflet and poster called "When the enemies of freedom get a move on..." was published in early 2016. This put the developments of Basel into a wider context, in which similar prisons and camps will appear, in Europe as well as in other parts of the world. In this context, this one specific prison and detention centre is just a small, local picture of the ongoing, world wide war of the ruling order. Here an extract of the text: "...it's no problem to find more and more examples for the war waged against the migrants that has caused the death of thousands already. Unfortunately, this war waged in the still young 21st century by far isn't the only one. The different newly imposed surveillance laws in a lot of countries, the improvement of military and police infrastructure, the construction of different jails all over Europe, cities turning into open air prisons and the increasing repression against those who chose to resist, all this is part of the same blow of those in power. A war that became so normal that it simply doesn't need explanations any more – webbing the net of the society of

control thicker and thicker, stabilizing the power of privileges; everybody in their place, registered, transparent, for being able to reintroduce the order and disarm disturbing elements at the smallest sign of losing control or once things step out of the row.”

An attack onto a local project of power (like Bässlergut in this specific case) must, from an anarchist point of view, be looked at as an attack on these internationally relevant developments and should contain this view, if possible, in its approach. To fight a local project of power is nothing but a tool to make an abstract, globally intertwined, historically grown and at times too confusing system visible by pointing at a concrete manifestation of it. A specific struggle is, in the first place, a beginning.

The nights catch fire

The Bässlergut is used as a prison only since 2000 and has been confronted with criticism since then and for that evolved as a reference point for the local resistance against the massive practice of deportation, the European border regime, as well as the incarceration and punishment of people through the state in general. At this point it has to be mentioned, that one cannot talk about a generally spread hostility against this prison in Basel or against authority in general – and that the prisons of Basel and the whole of Switzerland have not experienced any uprisings or resistance during the last years. Therefore, this struggle can't be described as an intervention into an existing social tension. Such a tension is simply not there, or at least not visible.

Still, with the history of the last years in mind it was clear, that the expanding of Bässlergut won't be possible without any troubles. Even if the struggles against this prison, as well as the different logics it stands for are as old as the prison itself and the calls for resisting its expansion spread early, the struggle got much more intense since the start of the construction site and attacks on the responsible grew in number. What started off with smaller interventions such as punctured tires of cars, developed towards the spread of arsons onto cars of the companies involved in the construction of the building. One could see in Basel in the last few years, that on the same weekend a civil police car, a car of Swisscom (a local telephone company) and a drilling crane of the responsible construction company Implenla catch fire in different places.

The destructive attacks on the responsible actors certainly have been a central element in this struggle, but the forms of resistance have been far more diverse in the last year. With posters “against the state, its borders and prisons” people were called to “come together with friends and accomplices, to organize, to make plans and to put sand into the gears of all those, who seek to keep us as passive spectators of their expansion of power and attack them” and “despite the propaganda of power, which intends to make us believe that they are

almighty and untouchable” the poster states, “that revolt is possible, that the fire of freedom is alive, as long as there are individuals who confront their own oppression with joy and dedication”. A list of responsables is being published, more in the internet than on the streets. In the whole city, slogans and stickers against Bässlergut appear. In different occasions, there are discussions and encounters around Bässlergut and our possibilities of resisting. As an intervention against the day of national celebration, the prisoners are visited by a wild demo and the walls of the construction site are painted with slogans. In May, a demo of 200 goes towards the site, but is stopped by police. A few days before the demo, an excavator of Implenla is set alight, the media talk about the attacks, the mood is recognizably incited. The attacks, as well as the media campaign of defamation are going on. The authorities are under pressure, but are incapable of showing results. A special unit is introduced by the police. The question is not if they will hit, but when. At the 5th of October 2017 six houses in the regions of Basel-Land, Basel-Stadt, as well as Zürich are raided. In some cases police confiscates computers, mobile phones and clothes, some people are taken to the police station, interviewed and forced to give their DNA, but allowed to leave after this procedure. (Taking DNA is omnipresent in Switzerland – even in case of smaller crimes such as shoplifting it is possible for the police to take it from you. When it comes to subversive acts, the taking of DNA is standard. In case of resisting the extraction, the authorities are allowed to use “appropriate” force. The repression apparatus is always trying to expand their database, especially when it comes to potential rebels and their acts. A match of your DNA and the DNA taken from a crime scene is often enough evidence for a conviction.)

The people affected by the raids are accused because of the demo in May – for “violation of the public peace”. It's clear that this is not actually about the demo, at which basically nothing happened besides a few property damages through spray-paint. So the authorities reach out to connect the people attending this demonstration with different arsons and attacks. In the best case (for them), they would have found something incriminating at one of the places searched or the DNA taken from the accused leads to some sort of clue or evidence. Otherwise, this is to be understood as a warning and another menace to those who give life to this struggle or seek ways of contributing to it.

On the 30th of November 2017, cops search the anarchist library “Fermento” in Zürich. “In the shop window of the library one could see calls for crimes and offences against companies and private persons, which supposedly can be seen in connection with recent arsons against the building of the PJZ (police and justice centre) and the prison Bässlergut in Basel” the “Anarchists of Fermento” publish after searches. The PJZ is being built in Zürich at the time. It is being met with resistance, verbally as well as physically, since its announcement. Also here the construction company Implenla is

involved. In Zürich there were arsons against excavators and other cars of the company this year as well.

Insurrectionary practices

Such a struggle, that intends to go beyond attacking and stopping this singular manifestation of power, that invites to fight in a self-organized way with the means of direct, active critique, apart from representation and delegation and seeks to strengthen these aspects, can't depend just on the voice or force of one single organization or similar structures. Such a struggle, that calls for the destruction of the entire order by pointing out a specific aspect, lives from the creativity and initiative of the different informal groups and individuals, that follow their own paths and ideas and still direct their decentralized attacks towards a common goal, by which they can complement and coordinate. As we said before, offensive struggles that aim at a specific objective are a tool to make critique visible and to propose methods for making this oppression tumble and potentially shatter it. The visibility of these struggles certainly is strength and weakness at the same time. In Basel, this was clearly the case. In year 2016, different cars and containers were set on fire and also other methods of direct attack came to practice. In some cases there were communiqués published, in a lot of other cases the unknown persons rather chose to let the flames and shards speak for themselves. None could really know, who exactly attacks what exactly and for what exact reasons, but still these acts brought a certain tension into this usually really appeased city. So, one can only speculate about the reasoning for the attacks, but what became pretty clear was that even if the local media had to report about the series of arsons, they never made it to connect these incidents with a certain matter. The investigative authorities had no lead.

In 2017, again burning cars and other attacks occurred. A lot of these incidents are connected to the struggle against Bässlergut, as those who still remained unknown stated on the internet – in other cases the connection was clear because of the chosen target or the chosen means of attack – concerning the forms of attack, creativity doesn't seem to be the strongest attribute of the anarchist world... The connection is there. Even if the police is still without a clue, they can connect one public demonstration with the attacks against the same prison. To catch those who carry out attacks at night is, if certain security measures are considered, pretty complicated. To film a public demo and identify those attending it in the aftermath is relatively easy. This is neither supposed to be understood as a point for maximum clandestinity in our struggles, nor against communiqués in general. These times might come at some point. But as long as we have the possibility to spread anarchist ideas, to agitate and to openly call for direct, destructive attack or to exchange thoughts and reflections on this type of struggle, we should continue to do so – be it via the communication about actions carried out or through the

international correspondence, as it is done in this publication. The bigger question is how to bring visibility and dispersion, clarity and diffuseness together. Visibility and clarity, so that everyone around can understand what is being fought for what reasons. Dispersion and diffuseness, because resistance shall not have a centre, neither in terms of organization nor in terms of the targets of attack, but should (and has to) spread – for that the attacks come from all sides, with all means, from everywhere and nowhere at the same time.

Making circles

In other contexts, where one might find a more widespread hostility towards the structures of power the question of the danger of specific struggles might be a little less relevant. And it should be clear that it is a bad idea to align our struggles along their potential dangers. If we decide to be a potential (or even actual) threat for the existent, then we actively take the risk of receiving strikes ourselves. This doesn't mean that we shouldn't try to understand the dynamics of repression, to foresee its strikes, to confuse or, if possible, avoid it. The following considerations might still be taken as a point to reflect and improve insurrectionary theory and practice. Let's stay at the example of the struggle against Bässlergut in Basel. Last year the arsons have targeted a very small number of companies that are involved in the construction – and in most cases, the attacks were put into the context of the struggle via communiqués in the internet. Attacks against the police, politicians, political institutions or companies, structures, that might not be directly involved with Bässlergut but still are part of maintaining the apparatus of control, punishment and deportation as a part of the whole complex of oppression remain rare. Capacities are limited and for that it is hard to be present with ideas and acts at every corner in which we recognize the mechanisms of oppression and power. This could again lead into the black hole of disorientated confusion.

Specific struggles on the contrary are being fought for avoiding this very trap. In Basel, we struggle against the Bässlergut in the first place, and not against the wall between USA and Mexico. The construction of this prison is in the focus of this struggle and for that, those who are responsible for its building should be in the focus of attack. But around this centre one can see a number of different, but still intertwined circles. The Bässlergut is a building with cells, with inmates, with guards and fences, that has been put there by the politicians, that has been built by companies and after that maintained, supplied, organized and guarded by other companies. It is part of a wider context, it is part of a social relation of domination and submissiveness, of participation and acceptance, which itself is being nourished, produced and reproduced by sometimes clearly identifiable actors. It is this social relation that keeps the system running and which needs to be subverted and destroyed in the end.

Not everyone sees him- or herself or his or her friends under the direct threat of being imprisoned or deported, but absolutely none can withdraw from the grip of power entirely, which has integrated and absorbed everything and everyone (justice, work, religion, technology and its endless possibilities in the future, cities, money, family, school, gender, property, nation, media, consume, production, medicine, data, militarism, science, energy supply or whatever – power is simply everywhere, there is no outside of it). Prisons play an important role in this, but even if prisons were abolished it would be only because the judicial authorities would have found more effective and socially more appropriate ways of threatening and punishment. But it would change nothing about the fact that all of us are forced to live in this monotonous, well structured society, that keeps us trapped under the same laws, the same values, the same lies, the same disturbing reality, the same emptiness and the same uniformity. Society would condemn us to continue this one path and to apply our dreams and desires to this reality. Maybe it is exactly this what makes society the way it is. So, if we don't fight for the end of this civilization, the destruction of power in all forms and the possibility of self-determined experimenting, for the complete reappropriation of our lives in all their pride as well as the dark sides, for what then? For a little bit less racism, for more "humanity", the destruction of one single prison, for a better survival, against the plundering of a plundered planet, against the greed of the greediest, the self-organization of the existent? Well, have fun with that.

But we where at our struggles. To stay focussed on the objective without neglecting the attack onto the circles, the social dynamics around, perceiving them as integral parts and requirements of the chosen objective is the crucial tightrope walk we have to handle. As well as to broaden our critique as to inspire the most different individuals to act. Simple example: If there would have been more attacks against surveillance cameras in the city or companies that profit from the ongoing armament of surveillance and repression, in addition to the ongoing attacks against profiteers of the prison building and if these attacks would have been put into context of a struggle against the prison society in general, the field of struggle would have been expanded. The struggle would have been more likely to be able to point out the social dynamic of oppression and, at the same time, call and incite for the onslaught onto a concrete, not yet existing building that is a symbol for this dynamic. Maybe people, who are really upset with all the surveillance cameras around would understand, why

other people fight so vigorously against a prison. Maybe these persons would not make a difference between these two forms of control and oppression any more... Maybe, maybe... we for sure can go on like this forever. In the end, the attack onto the Bässlergut actually is an attack onto this stupid wall between USA and Mexico, because it is an attack onto the world of domination.

It will never be over!

Anarchist critique has been pointing at Bässlergut for years already and will continue doing so. Anyway in which direction these struggles will develop we can say already that this prison is not only telling a story of total, even if sometimes subtle oppression, but one of the radical resistance against it as well.

Realistic voices might state that this prison will be built anyway and it would for sure be between hard and impossible to convince them of the opposite. But this can't be the starting point and by far not the motivation for rebellious, anarchist hearts. The resistive seed has been and will still be sowed, the longing for a different, completely different world as well as the possibility of direct attack most people should have recognized. What others do with it can neither be in mine nor in others hands. The question that should concern us is, where and how we sow these seeds of rebellion how to cultivate and grow them. It's never impossible that ideas actually spread, that people actively decide against continuing to obey, to stop waiting and to start here and now to define and to influence the circumstances of their own lives and their surrounding. If anarchy can not be a simple opinion, no philosophy about some possible, better future and much less a programme, a clearly defined goal, it can be a journey of constant discovering and shaping your diverse and chaotic self in confrontation with a hegemonic truth or authoritarian dynamics. Under circumstances without any authority it would be much more possible for all of us to shape ourselves and the world around us with our ideas and imaginations.

Living under the severity of the existing circumstances, formed by state and capitalism, is not the end of our freedom-loving existence or anarchy. They will search their path, even under these nauseating circumstances. And they will find it. This way or another.

A strong embrace to all those who are on the run.



When concrete deserts become intelligent

Smart control and the technification of the city

November 2017 - Germany

The way Munich has changed in the last years is leaving its traces: With full force the poor and inopportune parts of society are being chased out of the city by rapidly increasing rents, while luxury-buildings keep rising, one after the other. The extend of this restructuring is going far beyond single construction-projects and the term of gentrification seizes only a partial aspect. Though with the influx of richer people the creation of more industrial and economic branches, more police and justice capacities and the extension of transport and telecommunication infrastructure goes along. However the militarized restructuring of the metropolis goes not unanswered: vandalism and arsons on cars and bureaus of real estate companies, construction sites and building firms are occurring more and more often. This rage also seems to extend against the luxury buildings of the rich and from time to time on the security and police cars guarding them. While new layers of paint are shining on the recently buffed high gloss facades, newspapers awarding money for tips helping the investigation against arsons, while diggers are rolling on to the last undeveloped spaces. This text published some months ago tries to raise the question on this topic, which is the motor behind the restructuring and showing the direction it is heading in. The rampant growing tech-industry is recruiting more and more yuppies, while expelling the excluded to a position of being an isolated, unaware, functioning cog in the machine of urban economy. Instead of only guessing, which possibilities of revolt would remain for us in the upcoming scenarios of power, we should be clear in the here and now, who and what should be attacked.

Always higher, faster, better ...

... capitalism strives after a permanent growth in profits. It must therefore always optimize its mode of operation and gain access to new key markets. At the same time, control over citizens – the stressed out, the consumers – must be maintained, which means

their daily lives must be subjected to always intensifying, always expanding surveillance, quantification, and external direction.

Once every corner of this planet, every human being, every chunk of raw material, and every species becomes integrated into the economy's logic of exploitation, once each person considers each other person as a competitor in the race for profit, little by little, new spheres will be opened for the accumulation of capital. Each aspect of social life must be subjected to an improvement in efficiency; through the comprehensive implementation of internet, chips, and information technologies, a more "perfect" organization of daily life shall become possible. A market that is not just opened up to the selling of millions and millions of "smart" gadgets, but as well to the profits made through the archiving, analysing, and processing of the millions of data points to be made from each citizen. Because the "smartification" of life is already permeating every aspect of life: "intelligent" technologies aren't only used in the work and the private arena, but also in the context of an increasingly flexible mobility, in each sphere of communication and also in the field of power supply. The whole space of society, and especially the city, is becoming a field of always-on devices and chips, that are connected through Wi-Fi, collect data non-stop, and more and more also evaluate that data automatically and act accordingly. The internet of things and so-called artificial intelligence become part of the city – in traffic, malls, in your home, traffic lights, at points of sale, street lamps, cameras, and refrigerators.

Urban, green, and smart

The human being becomes reduced to a wandering data producer, whose informational excretions and user choices get saved everywhere and mined effectively. Presumably everything should get more practical, because we don't have to do anything by ourselves, except operate a smartphone and organize everything with apps. Selling and also exploitation of data through

devices that are always on and automatically connect themselves to other devices, and the exploitation of data that is taking place via up-to-date software from the offices of information technology (IT) specialists, form the basis for the new accumulated wealth of a few IT companies. A new way of life is established, a new “self-evidently” appealing modern organization of daily life – associated with a certain stylishness, which at the beginning only the rich can afford, but in the end will establish itself throughout the whole of society. Symbiotically, the parts of the city which are already exclusive to the rich are shaped by this and foster it. “Urban, green and smart!”- this is how they describe not just the rich areas, but the city as a whole, when they bid to host IT companies and tech expos.

The omnipresent exchange of data provides for a nearly gap-less view into the daily boredom of society – its small routines, habits, and norms – and this is what politics and police are especially interested in. It’s not just those who behave abnormally who stand out, those who don’t follow trends or who even consciously try to avoid them. The whole population provides a much more precise image of all its movements and habits; this is why it can also be more easily managed and organized from the top down. In the long run, not only can the black sheep be identified, but also huge crowds of people can be controlled and indirectly directed. In the transformation of mined data into statistic, a means is created to administer millions of people, to regulate them and, through permanent precautions and preventions, also manipulate them. The smartification of daily life not only aims at the economic success of the IT giants, but also at the optimization of wage labour, at crime prevention and a frictionless ruling, and an administration that is invisible, decentralized, and possessed of an ecologically conscious image.

Together more intelligent?

Let’s have a look at the European Union’s project “Smarter Together” which plans for the construction of a smart city in certain quarters of Vienna, Lyon, and Munich. In Munich, the project is concentrated in the quarter of Neuaußing-Westkreuz and Freiham, and it will, in the end, affect 50,000 people living there, as well as those that move there in the future. Setting aside that the project tries to emphasize its eco-friendliness and its openness to engagement by the population, it also stands for comprehensive implementation of car-sharing, share-bikes belonging to MVG, and a plan to increase online sale of MVG tickets. Thus it will affect nearly all aspects of mobility in the city. Additionally street lamps shall be installed everywhere that only work when people pass by, and furthermore, these people shall be listened to via Wi-Fi (their IP address); these lamps will most likely eventually be equipped with cameras. This new Wi-Fi network is the smart city’s core concept. Furthermore, in this quarter, smart-meters will be installed (to be followed by others through

out the city) which document the energy consumption of a home (in real time), evaluate how many people live there, when and in which room which electronic devices are used. Since today nearly every activity is connected to an electronic device, an individual permanent surveillance in real time is theoretically possible. This is a project of population control at an enormous scale, which also includes surveillance on the streets and the overhaul and acceleration of mobility.

That this project also contains a renovation and a heightening of the neighbourhood’s value shows that, in the end, this project of the city is about capital investment, increasing the value of the quarter at the same time as it subjects life as a whole to “economization”. Thus an innovative experiment into how far one can go already now in the gap-less technological control and administration of the population... The companies that profit from this project and that develop it (SWM, MVG, Siemens, Fraunhofer, TUM, Securitas, Toshiba...) and those that provide the power concepts behind it (IBM, Google, Siemens, Microsoft, Amazon, Telekom, Bosch) overlap not only in their interests but also in their location – Munich. Step after step, the push for the smartification of the city shall transform it into a new Silicon Valley, a laboratory and an economic power engine. It is already obvious at this point that this process will change not only infrastructure, but also the composition of the inhabitants. The gentrification and displacement process will accelerate fast, since the presence of attractive smart employers increases the influx of yuppies and rich IT scum. The construction of new smart yuppie quarters and the offer of new living and working concepts, focusing specifically on flexibilization (that is, the merging of work and leisure time, of home and office, of working colleagues and friends, and as well the moving between different cities) is another charm. Local IT start-ups are financially supported by the city and by the state, and the presentation and real establishment of the hip and trendy AirBnB-Deliveroo-smoothie lifestyle plays its part so that slowly but surely all poor city dwellers will have to move. Finally the space will be empty for the nouveaux riches and their lofts. So it is that not only the composition of the inhabitants changes, but also the dominant way of living, inhabiting, and consuming in the city – in a direction always towards the richer, trendier, smarter.

Total control

But for current concepts of domination like the smart city, the significance of technology is not only economic, nor is it as just one among many control methods, for it also has an ideological aspect, namely the ideology that sees technology as cure for everything. Not only as means, but as a goal in itself, a compartment which through the omnipresent implementation has omnipresent power. Statistical method sees data, ready to be mined, in even the smallest aspects of life that is possible to extract/exploit, something that is also be-

ing attempted by means of linking computer systems, increasing their calculating power, and decreasing their physical size. Digitalization makes it possible to add all this data together, which thanks to chips and the internet, can put a number on everything. In the logic of domination, this data is then evaluated with computers, filtered and put into statistics – to finally draw an exact terrain, in which regulation, punishing, culling, and optimization is possible. An always-present everything including but soft domination, thanks to the all apprehending technology, that has everything in view and can influence everybody – at best in advance/preventively.

The power of this technology crystallizes less in the figure of the technocrat – of the specialist, who is the only one that has the knowledge, the permission, and in the end also some feeling of responsibility, to maintain the technological city and to change it – but in the material city itself. The material environment, containing fibre-optics, antennas, chips, and networks which is not only everywhere – and therefore totalitarian – but also, in the double sense, is dictatorial; it is a material dictatorship. On the one hand it operates through mild but relentless coercion, a constant pressure on everyone to always be connected and on duty, receiving and following orders, listening and being obedient, proceeding towards the next work task, the next schedule, the next news. Through the gapless self-disclosure one offers everything – and is therefore far more suspect, when one tries to hide something – habituated to the permanent presence of bugs in one's pockets and therefore just ignores, that all movements, relationships and talks, that happen in the net – meaning via or often in the attendance of the devices – are stored, analysed, calculated, and predicted.

The technological material environment becomes to an ever greater degree the fundamental means by which the state exerts its basic function: social control. The exertion of power is less dependent upon singular people in uniforms than it is upon the entirety of a compartmentalized and omnipresent network, such that those who operate it have more of a maintenance role than that of an executive decision-maker. And through constant, continuous production. And unquestioned, continuous purchase. And development of power made manifest in technology, that which has always been totalitarian, since it always strives to get into every as-

pect of life and into every living being (to be capable to decide over life and death – but we don't have to point fingers at nanotechnology or nuclear technology to see what technological totality means). Therefore the project of the smart city is a colossal step in the direction of installing new technology in every area of urban space, and therefore in our daily lives and in front of our homes – and to weave this technological web even more tightly, more profitably, to capture all of our movements. At the same time already now the soil is prepared to advance the project of the smart city across the boundaries of specific neighbourhoods, through the expansion of screening and cleaning processes, so as to displace the unproductive, the untamed, and the delinquent confounding factors and thereby create the perfect framework for frictionless and sustainable profiting.

User or confounding factor?

When the social control in the city on the one hand aims to push through each technological trend and each project of value increase without resistance, we have to use the opportunity to question the technological trends and projects and to reject them collectively. Accordingly, we have to find possibilities to claim the streets and move there together in a way that is impossible to control and so to fill it with our own creativity, unruliness, and offensive projects against the capitalist city. To reclaim the street means to also attack the managerial control structure and instruments and to interrupt the flow of the commodities. The techno-society and the continually extending technological appliances are not only dependent on information, and engineers but also on its fibres, antennas, warning systems and switch boxes, its cable pathways and its vehicles. Why don't we develop the skills necessary to sabotage or interrupt this hostile-to-life technocracy through sabotaging its systems and infrastructure? As we make a small break, and then a bigger one, with its social control and technological domination, and explore new possibilities and paths? As we attack their construction projects in the city, make the streets uncontrollable, and cause short-circuits within the machine society?

Against the smart city! Against the technocratic city and their yuppies!

Let's sabotage social control!



What are we waiting for?

Days and nights of revolt against misery

January 2018 - Tunisia

“They stole our revolution!” This was the first thing H. said to me after a phone conversation about the unrest and explosions of anger that rippled through Tunisia during the second week of January 2018. At first I didn’t understand what this statement implied. Then I started noticing articles on mainstream press about the approach of the anniversary of the 2011 revolution. Through the very dark and manipulative logic of comparison, mainly fuelled by western outlets and politicians, Tunisia continues to be regarded, as a successful outcome of the “Arab Spring”.

In this context of recuperation I now understand the words of my friend. The state and the media consider the anniversary of the revolution as January 14th, the day the Ben Ali regime fell. This is a political date. A date when a precise political goal was achieved, that certainly served any Power that followed the overthrow. But for H. the anniversary is the 17th of December, the day when in Sidi Bouzid a fruit vendor self-immolized after being harassed by the police, the day of rupture when for many the unknown started. A shedding of the shackles, when unpredictable and wild revolts spread all over Tunisia, an intersection of hopes, desires, reasons and feelings that fiercely refused their imposed conditions. Prisons were burned, police were attacked, goods were looted, neighbourhoods self-organized, people of any age and gender took to the streets, took what they needed. However this power vacuum was soon filled by new power-thirsty contenders. Although the riots, looting and some forms of self organization did not stop after the 14th, the character of the street presence rather transformed when the battle for the throne started. This manifested in protectionism of property and a the appearance of militias, who fought police and security forces.

Although after the fall of the Ben Ali regime there was a succession of several opposing governments, they all maintained an allegiance to multinational interests that country has been embedded in since colonial times and strengthened a police state focused on fighting Islamic

terrorism. These main interests not only kept putting the people’s needs in the background, but also gave the reasons and tools to potentially crush any act of popular unrest and anger.

Over the weeks of unrest in January 2018, I had the occasion of talking to comrade H. about the situation in his city from his perspective. An attempt to understand the context, demystify the lies and try to find a perspective.

What do you mean “they stole your revolution”?

The anniversary of the revolution is on the 17th of December. Politicians are taking this position [of using the January 14th date] especially in the capital and the bastards are really fixed on this. They won’t change it.

They are recuperating this revolution. On the western media they talk about Tunisia as the success story of the “Arab Spring”. The one that is on the path to democracy, international collaboration, praised for not falling into a civil war.

It’s true that Tunisia did not descend to the level of civil war that other countries did. Tunisia is not on the right path, but perhaps you can say that it’s better off than other countries, like Libya and Syria. I don’t like this comparison, it’s just used to hide other problematics and oppression.

Tunisia’s government seems very afraid to fall into new social unrest. I mean they have a huge budget for security services, largely playing on the threat of terrorism.

This is still a police state. This has never changed. Now they can do it more openly because of the accepted fight on terrorism. They passed so many new laws, finding a new reason and way to repress the people. 1% of the Tunisian population is in prison. The prisons are overflowing, many prisoners are still waiting without a trial date in sight, with many people who got arbitrarily picked up by the police and locked up. Only because they don’t

like your face or your family or something. You can stay months, years, without a trial.

We were talking about the revolution and how things had and hadn't changed since then. What do you mean?

The State has settled in more, they are giving a lot of money to the ministry of internal affairs, they know how to deal with protests better, both on the side of [preventive] control and the response on the streets. Politically they play it by giving out some crumbs, like giving a few hundred dinar [Tunisian currency, 0.35 euro is 1 dinar] to 300 families after a protest. But for sure more cops, more military. They actually even just got a salary increase.

What was the spark of the last days of revolt?

Over the last seven years, around the date of the anniversary, there are always riots. It's like a routine. The people scare the government, the government gives some crumbs.

What was different this year then?

In the city that I live in the people that were in revolt in the last week were all kids. A new generation. All neighbourhood kids. No older people, no students. You know, brothers, cousins, neighbours that decide to go and do something. Some of them with freedom in their heart, but others because they don't want to go to class. But it's really young kids, like 13, 14, 15 mostly. Some older ones too, but mostly minors. During the revolution they might have been 8 or something, probably they have someone in their family that took part in the revolution. But now, they have taken these last revolts into their own hands.

What happened over the last days?

Well, some pretty hard demos. It would maybe start from the fact a group of kids would go to protest in front of the governor's office, but he wouldn't give them time or listen, and so from there they would block main intersections and when the police arrived, they would build barricades, set tires on fire, and fight with the police using stones mostly. This would continue until the cops would suffocate them with tear gas. The kids were wild though. But they were heavy with the tear gas, seriously wounding people, almost killing them. Like shooting 25-30 canisters a minute. Bastard cops! This happened for 4 or 5 days. In other cities like the capital it was different, there were more demos organized by leftist groups. But here in the inland of the country, this is what happened. Here there are no groups that people can find and organize together with.

The revolutionaries from 2011 are not there?

People from the revolution are not on the streets, the kids are the ones risking. There is little exchange be-

tween generations. Perhaps these older people are working or have just come out of prison, they might be close to the kids with some words or some practical things, but they are not present in those moments. They are calculating, what they would lose, afraid of going back to shit.

But those who gave their blood during the revolution, got prison or fuck all, or jumped the boat to Europe. Most of those who are now benefiting from the revolution were not on the streets then. The government does not give anything to those who are actually fighting, but more to the peaceful people from the neighbourhood that saw some unrest.

This happened in your city, but you were telling me that in other cities they went further...

In the town of Tela, they kicked out all the cops. There is really no police anymore. There are some military forces that are protecting a few strategic places, but there the soldiers do not really act against the citizens, so they are also seen differently by the people. Also in the revolution this town was, and for the two following years, without police. It is quite an exceptional situation for this country because elsewhere the most of the people think that without the police people would start stealing each other's scooters or something, but there they don't have this fear. People there feel better...more free, more dignified without the police. This is a town of miners, they are poor, but have this will to self manage their territory.

How is it in the other parts of Tunisia?

Well on the first days it was spread a bit everywhere, then in some places it died down, but in others you still see that people are angry. But they came heavy with repression, they know how to do it now. For instance in my city they arrested 30 kids, and they gave 15 of them an immediate sentence, which was really high, like two years. This had never happened before, a prison sentence for people rioting during the anniversary protests. Then to some families they gave some money, and this is how they calm the hearts and spread fear.

What is your impression of why people are fighting? Are there those that want to fight for more than just for crumbs?

It's a strange situation. The courage of seven years ago has been bought and repressed. Some people are living a little better, but they also realize that when there is an uprising they get something out of it. So you get the feeling that it is all a bit calculated and that we are trapped in this game, which blinds us from a bigger picture. But people, before the revolution were dirt poor, especially in the inland of the country, so yeah, a few crumbs for people that were almost starving is actually something significant. During the revolution, everyone, men, wom-

en, kids, elders, everyone, were on the streets, fighting with nothing to lose. This was why it was so strong. It did not stay in a small group. But now, those who are working don't give a fuck, or even worse, become snitches, on the side of the State, these kids arrested yesterday are because of snitches. But the problem is that there are many people who would fight who are currently in prison.

The State seems to also use a very common and current legitimation for its armed security apparatus, which is the threat of Islamic terrorism.

This is something that started just after the revolution and was convenient for the state, they used it well. Immediately after the revolution, thousands of people broke out of prison or were let out, they say that the new government was behind this [Channouchi, January 15th – February 27th 2011]. All the more radical Islamic political prisoners were then freed and armed with weapons mostly from Libya. They were being used to crush the revolution, both as militias and as an excuse to implement very harsh security laws. After the fall of this government, these people went into hiding in the mountains or became Daesh foreign fighters. These Islamic fighters took up weapons, they control the contraband routes from Algeria, sometimes attack police officers and soldiers, never the people, at least in my region. There are many young people, mostly people that believe in sharia law. It is a pity. Some of these fighters took this path because they felt like they wanted to fight but had no other choice. There is still very religious people here.

The budget for security service, anti-terrorist and minister of internal affairs is bottomless, it seems...

You are right, there is always lots of money for repression, and never for food. People are being picked out from the streets by the police. Anyone they don't like is subject to these laws. They picked up a cousin of mine, who drinks and is definitely not a good muslim, accusing him of ties to terrorist groups. They do whatever they want. Lock up, torture, anything, the terrorist scarecrow is the perfect excuse.

How are people effected by what is happening in other countries close by?

Libya is next door, people know about the mess going on there. Everyone talks about this, and mostly people say 'perhaps we didn't take our revolution far enough, but at

least we are not in such a fucked up situation', compared to other countries. The adults are talking about this.

It is strange to see how Tunisia was the spark of the revolutions that gave the inspiration and courage to many countries to fight, some of those countries ended up in a bloodbath, and now these are countries contributing to hold back Tunisian revolutionaries for fear of end up in civil war. A very disturbing house of mirrors...

This is why people start believing in the promise of democracy, they believe that some politicians are changing, acting more sympathetic, talking about being against corruption. They start to forget that they are all shit, no matter what they call themselves.

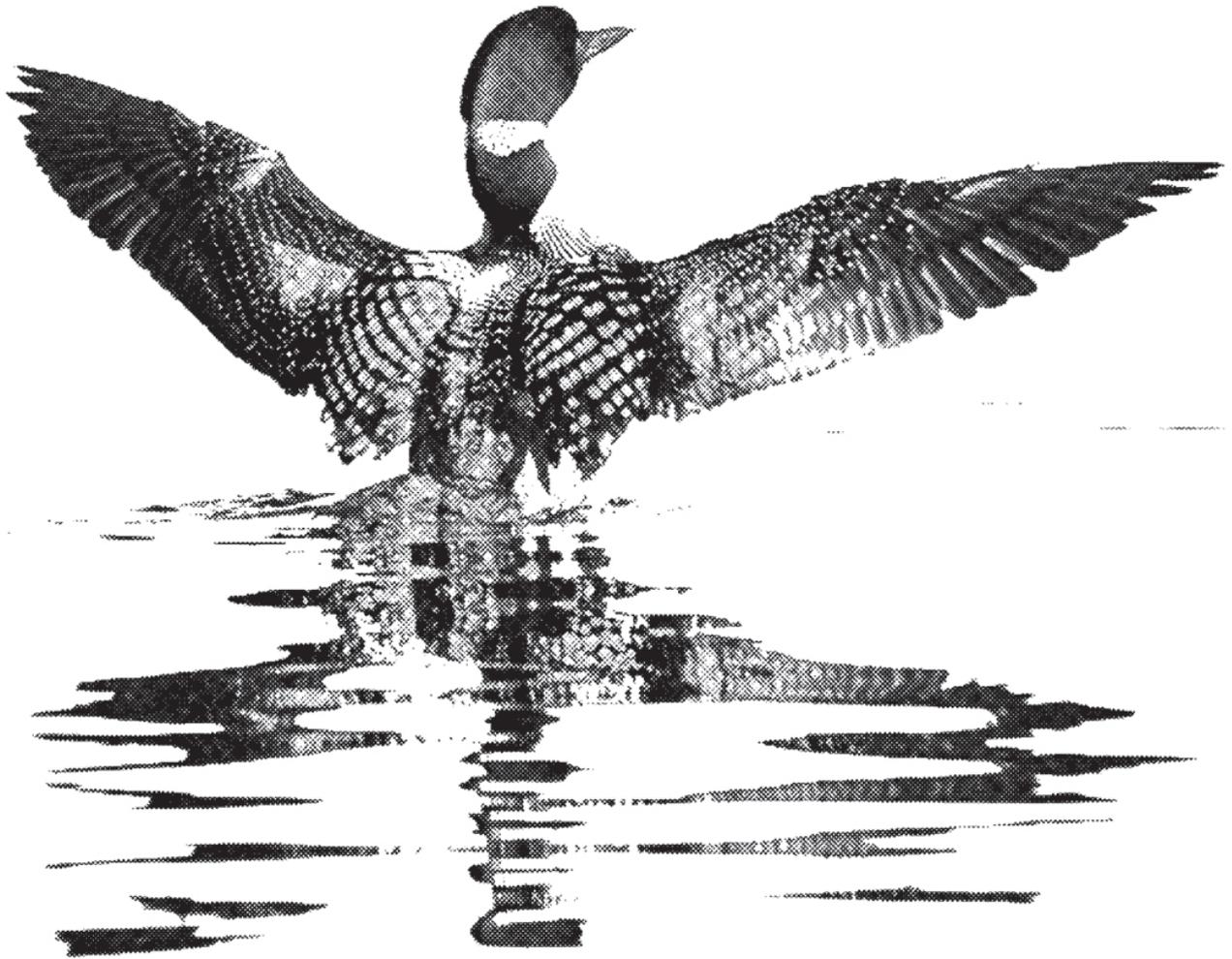
But even worse are the international multinationals that have absolute interest in keeping things stable, but that is also an economic topic, something that never changed from before the revolution, that comes from the French occupation. But these corporations also endorse this huge security apparatus, showing that it is very important for them that things remain stable.

The real danger, it's the capitalists. Something that changed is that people start liking or respecting more rich people. I see that from my time in Europe, things are starting to look more like each other. The capitalists want control. Still the house of mirrors...

What is going to happen in the next days?

In my heart I want to believe that things will grow and people will wake up. But there is a big media campaign talking about lootings on shopping streets and burnt down police stations. They are really creating a negative hype against those who riot at night as gangs of delinquents. But they are fighting the cops, not stealing from their neighbours. They are just saying these things because they want to justify the police's violent intervention.

Somehow I think that from the last seven years the state has learned a lot about how to control, calm down and crush unrest. It is up to us to also find new way and new determination to fight for freedom. Not let them get too much ahead. The experiences that we made during the revolution are important, but something went wrong, in the sense that we are not living in freedom now. People here know how to fight, but are also tired of struggling for survival. And if you are tired you either rest, or you've had enough and you take your life back. How to open this way?



International Day of Solidarity with Marius Mason
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4 - *Switzerland* - **On the struggle against Bässlergut and on insurrectionary practices**

8 - *Germany* - **When concrete deserts become intelligent**
Smart control and the technification of the city

11 - *Tunisia* - **What are we waiting for?**
Days and nights of revolt against misery