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Blockupy Frankfurt

From Frankfurt to Europe

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The big, colourful and determined demonstration on Saturday the 19th of May was a fantastic conclusion to the three days of “Blockupy Frankfurt”. Anticapitalist language and consciousness appeared throughout the demo in slogans, stickers and leaflets.

The severe and blanket repression by the German police did not stop the mobilization. On the one hand, their aim of preventing possible blockades was not achieved, for on Friday the whole centre became a theatre of dozens of actions and sit-ins.

On the other hand, it was evident that their main aim was both symbolic – to defend the head-quarters of financial power from a possible siege; and political – to prevent a possible unification of the protest movements across Europe. It was a political message, delivered by the German police: protest is permitted only within the boundaries established by those who are in power; every other form of protest will be countered by whatever means necessary.

Blockupy Frankfurt has been seen by many organizations and networks in Europe as an important moment in the continental mobilization.

The mobilization was indeed important and has had results. But it certainly fell short of what was possible and what was needed. The German left (and even more the European left) had a strong presence only in the demo on Saturday, underestimating the action days of Thursday and Friday (when only the most militant sections took part in the actions, and the apart from the radical left there little sign of the trade union and political organizations). Their absence limited the impact of the actions and facilitated the police repression.

Blockupy was mainly composed by young people, students, precarious workers from different parts of Europe. As in the USA with Occupy, or in the Arab revolts, this phase of the crisis is characterized by a new generation in revolt. A generation whose present and future are more and more uncertain and precarious. A generation that in the last few years has come to understand that the wealth and sense of comfort promised by globalization and by neoliberal ideology are mere illusions. Now the illusion has shattered and the young people are in rebellion – against a system that excludes them from decision making processes.

They do not identify with the parties who are too distant from their real needs and often accomplices of crisis and austerity politics. They do not feel represented by traditional trade unions that are still incapable of confronting the challenges imposed by the transformations of the labour market. But nevertheless, they don't keep quiet, they organize themselves and represent themselves, take to the streets and experiment with new forms of politics, of protest, of organization and of strikes.

Frankfurt has not only been a space for protest but also for relaunching European networks, trying to go beyond the model of the European Social Forums – largely in crisis – starting from the struggles and social movements, focussing on the critique of capitalism (sometimes in a fully conscious way, sometimes in the rather “instinctive” way of the “99%” that is protesting) and on the clear and firm refusal to pay the debt and the austerity policies – as also “Atenei in Rivolta” and the campaign “Rivolta il debito” are doing in Italy.

The slogans were certainly not those of “growth now” wanted by the European socialdemocracy and its confused allies, but much more radical ones.

From Frankfurt to Europe

We want to start from here, to invest in the building of an European (but not only), anticapitalist space, to participate and contribute to the creation and consolidation of transnational networks capable of developing a common language, contents, aims and agenda – starting with Italy, to build both a big, broad movement against crisis and debt, and at the same time a new anticapitalist space, capable of developing international networks that focus on the need for a renewal of class struggle.