

On Known and Unknown Self (dis) Organisation.

Asylum Strike, PoCs in Germany, Anti-racism and capitalism, NoBorders from below or Asylum solidarity?

Strike, Commune, Occupy ?

the Asylum Strike is a historical moment of self-organisation where the undocumented and illegalised have manifest as a force on their own terms and shown the ability to go on the offensive against the state and racism in the heart of Western Europe and therefore on these same terms against international capitalism. At the same time it shows some glaring problems in how we organise and how we can look beyond the spectacular limits of current politics and strategies, especially with regards to racism. This text will not go into detail of wider issues such as how the “communisers” who seek invisibility and free association beyond nation and gender have made no attempt to understand those communities and individuals that are forced into invisibility – who are forced to leave their identities and homes in order to survive – and why we might seek visibility and how revolutionary consciousness and becoming requires articulation in terms of firstly identity then nation and in maturity in class consciousness and organisation. Neither will we look in depth at how the Asylum Strike and the Psychic Strike relate to the Human Strike. It is understandable that those who have no direct contact with international terrains of resistance and are closeted by the activist bubble are unable to see how they end up reproducing the classism inherent in neo-liberalist situations they arise from. What’s more worrying is how those who actively engage in fighting racism succumb to the same eurocentricity and racism too.

The focus of this text are the direct organisational problems around the O-Platz camp and is thus in part to respond to certain notions such as PoC in Germany and the statements "Its not all about racism" and "The laws are based on capitalism, not on racial discrimination" by some people. First of all it is racist to separate capitalism from the racial/negro slavery precondition and its continuity through denied racial(race based) discrimination likewise the racism without the discourse of race.(The continuity of racism without the discourse of race been suggested by many such as Etienne Balibar).



Psychical and Physical organisation

We enter into discussions on the real psychical problems of the camp (a different manifestation of course of the physical problems - police and state violence, destitution, poverty) and this is the area we feel we have the power and responsibility to intervene as it is our floor as workers - psychic workers. In a spectacular environment, splits will always congregate around 2 poles and the spectacularisation of the O-Platz protest camp is no exception. Thus the splits around the camp can be described - although in different directions - around concerns of old activists/ new activists or supporter/refugee or citizen/non-citizen or indeed Black/white. The major groups we would identify as those around the Asylum Strike as Voice Refugee Forum, Karavane for the Rights of Refugees, Reclaim Society and " leftist supporters", nameless independent supporting networks.

No Borders from Above

We should declare of course at this point that the major part of the Voice Refugee Forum in London in 2006 has gone on to join the union of psychic workers. We have always supported Voice as an autonomous refugee-led organisation. The events around this also involved similar debates around racism and whiteness - identity politics, class politics and No Borders (which interestingly, is now creating a long-term program in Berlin for the first time). It was problems with what we termed Anarcho-Racism - combined with Bakuninist-Leninist organising in the London Action Resource Centre - that led to a complacent attitude towards fascist infiltration in the Peoples Global Action (as LARC was a PGA info-point) and to the expulsion of Voice activists from the LARC and the subsequent loss of capability and organising power of the Voice in London. Those that expelled us from LARC then went on to form No Borders London in the LARC. Our situation was worsened

when we rehoused ourself at Limehouse Town Hall which was totally unclear of its political positions despite being home to political groups eg the Spacehijackers - something that is endemic in broad leftist organisations and networks. However that is not to say we supported the BakunistLeninists when they tried to expel LHTH from the London Social Centres Network. On the contrary – our position has always been that groups and individuals as nodes in networks should be understood on their particular strengths and weaknesses in their own situations in space and time in the class struggle.

No Borders Berlin Reloaded from below

Thus in Berlin today, it is a very different No Borders from the London manifestation - a No Borders from below - that is although not a direct part of the asylum strike but rather the preparation process started in October 2011 to build infrastructures long before the asylum strike came. These infrastructures are even still in the building and the different identity fights be it Voice, Karawane, Reclaim Society etc have even slowed down the infrastructure building process that has been to benefit the undocumented directly. It is the aspect of refugee leadership – ie Proletarianism – that should take a lead in empowering the groups and individuals and the physical situation in the camp and outside of it. It is only the experienced refugee activists themselves through whatever means who can self-empower through a daily process of infrastructural access and longterm 24/7 political participation courses in the context of human rights etc -some will take the form of daily legal seminars in multiple languages for free likewise other daily aspects of feeding, living, shelter etc.. for hundreds of participants - the self-organisations that are unnamed and perhaps unnameable.



Black Power and Women's/Feminist Liberation: Identity Struggle or Proletarianism?

We therefore know just what is at stake when we read of how Reclaim Society has attempted to overrun the No Borders Berlin initiatives - of how "supporters" have over-ridden the decisions of refugees - of distrust between new activists of the caravan and the older more established refugee self-organisations resulting in the inability to develop a constant programme of self-education and empowerment to build on the basis of the camp. It is not surprising to see the issue of gender – rather than of Women's/Feminist liberation, which in itself created awareness of the multiplicity of gender - being brought into discussions on racism and decision-making in refugee structures. We have ourselves, as a psychic workers union, since our last conference been embroiled in debates around identity struggle vs class struggle. We have attempted to clarify our position but will do so again here - we do not see Black Power or Women's/Feminist liberation as identity struggle. They

are worker based struggle.

On the non-existence of Human Races: Citizen, non-citizen or Asylum-dependent persons?

With refugees we see the situation not about black/white citizen/non-citizen but a worker based position too. What is the only work an asylum seeker can do in Europe today? It is political work. No other work - paid or unpaid is permitted. So what is this labour for? It is to constitute oneself as HUMAN BEING - ie to access Human Rights. This is the labour position of the so-called "black man" or non-citizen. It is also the general psychic labour of the working class in general and those whose poverty in particular denies access to the basics of food water shelter - who thus constitute the vanguard of the psychic workers. Those who have asked why we create dialogue with workers who are not theoretically rigorous can be answered easily - our comrades are rigorous in poverty through no choosing of their own (ie they are rigorously oppressed).

Wir sind nicht das volk: people of colour and apartheid tactics

From the above it should be clear that rather than engage in the spectacular polarisations we have always sought political clarity. Whenever we have used the terms black/white it has been as historical terms in the context of white supremacy and the Black Power movement. Black, it should be noted, has been used to unify African and Asian groups resisting white supremacy in the "UK" as a point of unity - ie black unifies all so-called non-whites. Thus we cannot understand at all why we would want to legitimise the term "white" by creating a position as "People of Colour". For us this is akin to the political engineering of the apartheid regime in South Africa that divided people as White, Coloured, Blacks and Indians. Similarly if we support those who organise as refugees or asylum-seekers or indeed against residence laws we do so in a context of self-defence. We must recognise our position in the historical context - in the matrix of space time and class - and defend ourselves.

Anti-racist racism and anti-sexist racism are like anti-capitalist capitalism!

In this context the reproduction of racism through anti racist discourse is like reproducing capitalism and its cliches through being anti capitalist - racism in itself is only an enemy in that it is a structural basis, like sexism, of Capitalism. This structural basis of racism makes racism a pre condition for culture for capitalism as the system of racial slavery cannot be denied to have given capitalism its base. Racism like racialised sexism(unlike the sexism the white women which is partly about her not having the privilege of the white man) blocks us („inferiorly racialised subjects“) from resisting capitalism since we have to be human beings before or independent of any class or position . Racialised or racial sexism should also not be omitted. This is because the Black woman in the race context is condered non human. In other words it is the white/black polarity that forms a structural and historical basis for capitalism: the reality of slavery, work and commodification. But in resisting this we must not simply create another spectacle or polarity with white. It is no surprise that the term PoC has remained untranslated in its Atlantic jump from the US to Germany. Volk der Farbe seems to reveal all too clearly how reclaim society has managed to reproduce neoliberalism from below. While Noirism and Negritude were more useful historically, it was superceded by the Black Power movement. However, being more specific about colour or indeed nation, only plays

further into the spectacle. The rendering of the term today of Black as Asian and African as it is in the UK is wildly inaccurate and the real problems faced by refugees in North Africa attest to this as well as by communities in England which have been pitted against each other on “national” grounds. National boundaries are just as colonial as racial ones and in putting forward a positive position, we reject them all. The Black consciousness movement however did unite humanity against racial/race based discrimination across all continents on earth.

Ne noirceur jamais

To effectively attack the spectacle we must thus reject politics altogether and present our positions as workers. The term workers too we are critical of and use it only in the context of self defence against the bosses. In our own psychic strike activities, drawing on Marx’s use of the term work, we have identified 3 forms of work: 1 as oppression of workers, 2 as self-nourishment of workers and 3 as a site of organisation of workers. It is in this context that as psychic workers we reject calls to creativity or enterprise or any other reform of work. It is in a similar context that we reject reforms of racism or Blackness. Following the use of Negritude we can see Blackness as 3-fold: a site of oppression, of self-empowerment and 3 of organisation against racism. It is through self-organisation at the site of oppression – and in conjunction with other self-organised workers (in the broadest sense of the word!) that we can begin to attack the totality. The confusion/conflict within the No Borders Berlin declarations around human rights can thus be resolved trialectically: 1. we must defend human rights 2. we must attack the limits of human rights 3. we must develop a theory of class power rather than depend on human rights. The nobordercampBerlinreloaded from below thus can be understood as talking about the human rights that are not written in any book.

The Visible Committees

PoC is a Reclaimsociety apartheid tactic and so-called antiracist strategy which enables whites to attack Blacks in 'non-white safe spaces.' Whites use the discourse of PoC to enter non white spaces on the claim that they are politically no longer whites but PoCs since PoC is claimed to be a markerless position. So any white person can position as PoC and enter a non-white space. According to the words of some commentators PoC [...was firstly positively used within the /U.S.-American/ context to mark the shared racial oppression between, for example, “Black Americans”, “Latino American”, “Asian Americans” and “Native Americans”. It marked new forms of collective organizing against white supremacy. PoC is not a marker of 'appearance' (cannot necessarily be “seen”) and has to be politically filled by those who feel empowered by it...] <http://cosasquenoserompen.noblogs.org/post/2013/04/15/its-not-all-about-racism/>. However this point of view that „PoC is not a marker of 'appearance' (cannot necessarily be “seen”)...“ addresses actually a term to exclude Blacks. Since the notion of Blacks was obviously a visible marker addressed by racist for elimination. Thus resistance led to the Black consciousness movement for all people to be seen as human beings, whereby Black liberation movements like the Black panthers would address „Blacks and other people of color“ in the human family and not vice versa. This exclusion of Blacks can likewise be visualised in the writing style of the example above (“Black Americans”...) which excludes Blacks from their presence in the Latino/Asian/Native American context. This makes people or readers blind to the fact that there are also „Black Latinos“, „Black Asian“ and „Black Native Americans“. If the author of the poc definition had written 'Afro American' instead of „Black American“ then all the different categories listed could have included Black people within them. Instead, it leads us to a form of highly covert racism which one may find difficult to see.

Anti-racist Racism: a German Critical Whiteness & PoC Version

The use of PoC in Germany, aimed at markers that cannot necessarily be seen, is feeding into white supremacy and racism and is an insult to the Black consciousness movement's achievements. It is also part of the role of racist mechanisms to destroy this. In the German context, PoC creates a multiple positioning of escapism and unwillingness to face the situation that the PoC is based on the Negro/Black consciousness movement and struggle to include the other people of near Black colour into the human family. PoC can position as black (implying a Black marker) or as white (implying a white marker) and they can also position independent of markers (the usual understanding in Germany is to be markerless). This markerless position is to deny and likewise continue racism – that is, race-based discrimination - on the basis of racially-based markers, without race and reproducing whiteness and racism on the basis of claiming antiracism through 'PoC and Critical Whiteness,' German-Aryan style.

Abolish Mastery

Needless to say – the real enemy – whiteness which is the basis not of slavery but of the mastery that pervades the psychic make-up of the Capitalist – remains untouched or at best reformed as “critical whiteness”. And here we get to the root of ruling class culture and the obsession with visibility/ invisibility that the Communisers of the Eurocentric left in are also infected with. The psychic and spiritual basis of Capitalism – that continues into secular capitalism – has always been based on the monotheistic worship of a Sun God. Modern physics is no different – it is key to the spectacle. Instead of reproducing in inverted form and trying to escape the material reality of slavery and racism through psychic inversions of white/black or visible/invisible, we must find theories that are grounded in the material reality of the struggle in situ.

Asylum Strike = Psychic Strike + Human Strike!

To these ends, the psychic workers union therefore presented a Proletarianist Trimensional Situgraphics. We were very glad that the situgraph was received well by the refugees at the reception tent at O-Platz who approved of our idea and assisted in installing it in the meeting tent. To accompany this we also present the following text. Please note that in referencing a text from 1919 (“What is Dadaism...”) – and indeed “A constitution for British soviets” which is from 1920) we do not indulge in nostalgia or reform. Rather we anchor this position at the time of the historical defeat of the proletariat and its rebirth through the positions of the Ultra-Left. We also mark this point as a formal move away from unionising and towards setting up psychic workers councils



What is Proletarianism and what does it want in Germany?

Proletarianism is:

- 1) The international revolutionary workers councils taking over in all industries - including the psychic industry to include political artistic financial etc ie non-productive - abstract etc work ;
- 2) including the non-existent ones and the already expired ones. Including the production especially that is not paid and too poorly paid to even constitute the worker as a human being;
- 3) including unemployed sectors - especially starting with housework and reproductive work.

The Trimensional Proletarianist Situgraph is:

- a) Available for all meetings at the camp;
- b) A means for all individuals to plot their perspectives;
- c) In each trimension - namely Time, Space and Class;
- d) Individuals can do so with reference to or independent of groups;
- e) All letters on any trimension can be added to and all additions are open;
- f) The situgraph thus draws a picture of the situation to openly see where the perspectives are powered and where they are not;
- g) Action can then be taken to address blanks in the map;
- h) These actions may take the form of new organisations or networking with individuals;
- i) These new organisations may even be limited to one member;
- j) Or even no members at all.

Independent Psychic Workers

Translations in German and other languages soon.