

4th and 5th of April 2008

# call for two european days of action for squats and autonomous spaces



On Friday the 4th and Saturday the 5th of April 2008, we call for two days of demonstration, direct action, public information, street-party, squatting... in defence of free spaces and for an anti-capitalist popular culture. Through these two days, we want to help creating more visibility on autonomous spaces and squats as a european/global political movement. We want to develop interconnections and solidarities between squats and autonomous spaces. We want to keep linking our spaces with new people and new struggles. We want to build step by step our ability to overcome the wave of repression falling on us. We call for decentralised and autonomous actions of all kinds, depending on what people feel as the most accurate in their local context. You'll find below the political content we wish to give to these two days.

## We are everywhere...

For centuries, people have used squats and autonomous spaces, either urban or rural, to take control of their own lives. It is a tool, a tactic, a practice, and a way for people to live out their struggles. For decades, squat movements across Europe and beyond have fought capitalist development, contributing to local struggles against destruction; providing alternatives to profit-making and consumer culture; running social centres and participatory activities outside of the mainstream economy. Demonstrating the possibilities for self-organising without hierarchy; creating international exchange and solidarity networks. These networks have changed many lives, breaking away from social control and providing free spaces where people can live outside the norm.

Among other things, these places provide bases for meetings and projects, for the creation and distribution of subversive culture, for the non-monetary based exchange of goods, resources and knowledge, for experimenting with new ways of living, for collective debates, for recycling and construction, for agricultural activities, for the production independent media.

Whether one speaks of urban squats or of purchased land, of negotiated or re-appropriated rural land, of restored factories or self-built buildings, these spaces are refuges for rebels and outlaws, poor and homeless people, radical activists, illegal immigrants. Social centres are crucial to us as part of a movement for social change.

## All over Europe, repressive agendas are being pushed by governments

They are attacking long-standing autonomous spaces such as the Ungdomshuset in Copenhagen, Koepi and Rigaer Straße in Berlin, EKH in Vienna and Les Tanneries in Dijon, squatted social centres in London and Amsterdam, Ifanet in Thessaloniki, etc. In France, squats are taken as a priority police target after the anti-CPE movement and the wave of actions and riots that happened during the presidential elections period. In Germany, many autonomous spaces have been searched and attacked before the G8 summit. In Geneva and Barcelona, two old and big squatting « fortresses », the authorities have decided to try to give an end to the movement. Whereas it is still possible to occupy empty buildings in some countries, it has already become a crime in some others. In the countryside, access to land is becoming harder and communes find themselves hamstrung by legislation on hygiene, security and gentrification by the bourgeoisie and tourists. All over Europe, independent cultures are being threatened.

Several months ago we saw running battles in the streets of Copenhagen and actions everywhere in Europe in an explosion of anger at the eviction of the Ungdomshuset social centre. Since then and a few other big resistance stories that happened during the last months, we've managed to renew the meaning of international solidarity.

We are motivated by the same passions, we feel the same determination, face a common enemy in repression, and are united across borders by our desire to build a world of equality and self-determination. Unaligned and ungovernable, islands of uncontrolled freedom we want to continue to act in solidarity, and strengthen our international links, no matter how many kilometres there are between us.

### Issues beyond the actions

We also would like these days of actions to enable discussion processes, to be a way to show various possibilities & strategies, to be an occasion to share skills. These are some of the issues we would like to push :

- what do we expect from and understand by autonomous spaces and where they stand, that is, in the scale ranging from 'alternative' to 'confrontational', in the pursuit of radical social change?
- share information on the scope and details of activities that take place in autonomous social spaces: question productivity and production of goods and services; and encourage exchanges of knowledge particularly between the town and the countryside.
- share experiences, inspire each other, find out what others do in terms of collective life, activities, alternative economic exchange systems...
- share various ways of getting spaces all over Europe: illegal occupations, Do It Yourself constructions, wagenburghs, buying collectively, free contracts...
- share practical resources and a feeling of solidarity between:
  - different types of autonomous spaces' users (either current or potential): co-operatives, people without papers, activists, travellers, immigrants, urbanites, rural dwellers, small farms;
  - different ways of using spaces: activities for the community, meeting area for groups, living spaces;
  - enable the forming of common strategies when faced with suppression by the state and eviction:

### Who are we, how can we collaborate on this project, and make it happen?

At the moment, we are a group of people involved with various autonomous spaces around Europe, who decided to start discussing this call. We'll meet various collectives in the coming months and see how people feel about this project for European days of action, and how they want to get involved. Its success depends a lot on our capacity to create a bigger international working group. This would mean everybody who wants to take part into it would care about starting debates about it in various spaces, creating and distributing some propaganda materials and organizing reports and interconnections during those days. We would also like to organize a physical meeting about all this in the upcoming months. Get in touch!

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# In 2008, squat fortress Europe!