

France: Federate - We do need to federate in times of multiple crisis

Friday 29 May 2020, by [Se fédérer](#) (Date first published: 28 May 2020).

To see the list of signatures and more information on this new initiative, see the French version [Se fédérer — Un appel pour travailler ensemble en ces temps de crises](#).

FEDERATE

So many of us think and feel that the current system has had its days. But our voices are scattered, our calls are dispersed, our practices are crumbled. So much so that sometimes we question our strength and give in to helplessness. Dispersal may sometimes have its upside, distancing from centralizations and hence from compliances. Nevertheless, the fact stands: we do need to federate, now more than ever, at this time when an economic, social and political crisis is starting to unapologetically discharge its gigantic and brutal violence. If, allegedly, “we are at war” [appraisal of the COVID19 situation by French president Macron on March 16, 2020], a social war it is indeed. Attacks are already coming down, relentlessly: blackmail over employment, the challenge of freedom and rights, state lies, state violence, bullying, police repression focusing on working-class neighborhoods, widespread surveillance, class contempt, racist discriminations, unspeakable indignities done to the poor, the weak, the immigrants. For a growing part of the population, standards of housing, health and nutrition, sometimes of mere subsistence are catastrophic. Time has come to turn the disparaging classifying stigma back to those that established it. What is “extreme” is actually the staggering inequality, further aggravated by the current crisis. What is “extreme” is this violence. In this system, our lives will always be minor to their thirst for profit.

We are through with mincing words outlining the oppressive reality of this society. For decades, “capitalism” was a taboo word, hinted at as an unquestionable imperative, as self-evident as the air we breathe – an increasingly stale air nonetheless. We are now able to appraise capitalocene as a destructive and deathly era, an era of deadly attacks to the planet and all things living. The issue is not up for only questioning some neoliberalism, to be simply countered by returning to a more “acceptable”, “green”, “social” or “contained” capitalism. In its sheer brutality, capitalism cannot be controlled, amended or improved upon. Like a vampire or a black hole, it sucks everything in. It has no morals; recognizing only individualism and authoritarianism; it admits no other principle than profit. This voracious logic is cynical and murderous, as is any unrestrained productivism. To federate is to respond to this logic by the collective and its embodiment in the multitude, as well as to assert an opposition to capitalism, without ever considering compromise.

But we are not only, and not even primarily, “anti”. Untied to any ready made project, we are increasingly theorizing, imagining but also practicing credible and tangible human living alternatives. Bringing them together is essential. What already unites these experiences and hopes is a vision of common goods; no more based on possession but on usage, on social justice and on unbiased dignity. The commons are made of resources, goods, collective activities and schemes of existence. They make it possible to strive for a good life, by changing the reference criteria: no

longer market but sharing, no longer competition but solidarity, no longer antagonism but the common good. These proposals are sound and envision a different world, freed from the pursuit of profit, of time viewed as lucrative and of commodified relationships. Sharing, discussing and proclaiming these proposals is more than ever necessary and invaluable.

However, we also know that this will not be enough: we are aware that the power of capital will not quietly allow a contradictory collective force to establish. We anticipate the inevitability of confrontation. This makes it all the more imperative to organize ourselves, to forge links and enact solidarities both locally and internationally and to turn such mutual organization, as well as the autonomy of our efforts, into an active principle, an enduring and relentless gathering of forces. This implies promoting all forms of true democracy: solidarity brigades as already developed in working-class neighborhoods, assemblies, open cooperatives, action and decision-making committees in workplaces and living spaces, zones to defend, free communes and communals, critical analysis communities, socialization of the means of production, of services and goods... Today's healthcare workers are calling for a grassroots movement. The underlying perspective is as powerful as it is straightforward: those who work daily in healthcare are in the best position to determine public health requirements, conjointly with end-users groups and patients, without self-proclaimed managers and experts. The idea can be expanded. We have the legitimacy and capacity to decide our lives - to decide what we need. Self-organization is a way of taking charge of our own affairs. Federation is a counter-power.

We have no fetishism for the past. But we do have in mind the Paris Commune Federates, people who really wanted to change life, to give it meaning and strength. Their momentums, their backgrounds, their convictions were diverse, republican, Marxist, anarchist, and sometimes all this at once. But their courage was same - as was their "consult for all" effort. Like them, we have our differences. But like them, faced with the fierce urgency, we can overcome them, refrain from revisiting everlasting divisions and come together as commune. A cooperative for achievement, endeavors and actions would give more power to our shared practices. Informal coordination or structured force for us to decide. Faced with the dominant discourse, as insidious as it is pervasive, we need to join our forces, in order, if not to silence it, at least to counter it. We need to federate to put into practice a concrete and hope-raising alternative.

Once gathered our initial forces, we intend to set up a meeting with modalities decided collectively.

To join this call: appelsefederer.riseup.net

P.S.

- Fédérate. 27 May 2020:
<http://sefederer.mystrikingly.com/blog/federate>