

EUROPE

Barcelona European meeting: Look each other in the eyes whilst building a path as you walk

Monday 19 February 2024, by [DONAIR Gonzalo](#) (Date first published: 16 February 2024).

Ghosts of all kinds roam Europe. Monsters from the old and new world who love chiaroscuro. For years, Europe's borders have been bleeding and barbed wire has sprung up. The European Union (EU) today is a great laboratory of security neoliberalism. Now it also wants to return to being a global actor in the midst of the chaos of world governance. Militarisation, austerity, extractivism, privatisations, precariousness, deregulations, transoceanic trade agreements and complicity with genocidaires like Netanyahu.

For decades Europe lived off the profits of primitive capitalist and colonial accumulation. For years the EU pretended to be the good cop of blissful globalisation. But today the geopolitical board is moving under their feet and the European elites see their traditional global weight in danger. Old and new powers are vying for the throne and its scarce resources to confront the climatic collapse of late capitalism.

It is time to reinforce external aggressiveness on all fronts. It is time to speak the "hard language of power" to defend that "European garden" of which Josep Borrell, Vice President of the European Commission, spoke. Because the interests of the elites that govern European capitalism are not going to defend themselves. Because for electric cars to circulate in Berlin, Paris or Barcelona, pressure to mine in the Global South must increase. And surely new mines must open in European territory.

Attacks without limits against a territory and against those who inhabit it. Attacks that generate and will continue to generate popular responses. Resistance against a neo-extractivism painted green; against the attacks of capital disguised as a change in the productive model. Climate urgency as a critical background for those at the bottom and as an alibi for those at the top.

And meanwhile, the extreme neoliberal centre has been embracing the reactionary and xenophobic agenda of an extreme right that, along the way, has changed its traditional Europhobia for an ultra-conservative and chauvinist Euro-reformism. Why leave the EU if they can co-govern it as they already do in several Member States? Machismo, homophobia, racism, Islamophobia, criminalisation of protest. The popular majorities, with all their diversity of dissidence, have become dangerous minorities. An open war against the world of work, public services and life in common. New battles in the war of capital against life.

Who has the right to have rights in this Europe of markets, war and barbed wire? Those above are clear about the question and its answer. How do we, of the anti-capitalist left, respond? The answer can only be in unison. But such unity requires spaces for meeting and discussion because

international attacks require internationalist responses.

However, the absence of international and internationalist coordinating spaces in the radical left camp is a reality as palpable as it is worrying. There are the remains of the Party of the European Left on which part of the heritage of Eurocommunism pivoted. There are proto-electoral groupings around the new left that has emerged in recent years in several European countries. But none of these spaces have the intention of going beyond their own specific electoral and institutional frameworks. We need something more. And we are not the only ones. In addition to political organisations, there are dozens of social and union actors throughout Europe who advocate anti-capitalism and anti-militarist, eco-socialist, anti-colonial and feminist internationalism.

With the modest but determined intention of contributing to laying a stone on that long road, on February 3, Anticapitalists and the CUP (Candidatura d'Unitat Popular or Popular Unity Candidacy) convened and co-organised in Barcelona a European meeting of anti-capitalist and alternative left organisations to reflect together on the current moment and debate about the alternatives that we can implement to change Europe at its core.

Delegations from 16 political organisations from 13 European territories [1] discussed with representatives of other nearby social organisations about the consequences of growing global militarisation and the role of the EU, as well as about possible eco-socialist responses to the project of green capitalism of the European elites. Two round tables where shared characterisations were updated, concrete proposals advanced and existing differences discussed, such as those that have revolved during the last period around the characterisation of the conflict in Ukraine after the Russian invasion. And perhaps the main conclusion is that more face-to-face spaces and camaraderie like the one generated there are necessary to continue the exchange without the cold and violent distance of social networks that do nothing to contribute to the debate between comrades.

And since struggles and resistance are not built in the abstract, but on shared agendas, the participating organisations picked up the baton of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement to promote, in the respective platforms of solidarity with Palestine in which they participate, the call for a demonstration on February 25 or during the surrounding days, with the aim of launching the initial experience of a day of protest on a European scale. Additionally, the European meeting of organisations in solidarity with Palestine that will be held in Barcelona on March 16 and 17 was reported to the meeting.

And just as important as the formal discussions were and always will be, the informal exchanges that occurred during the meeting were also productive. The emotional and affective dimension of camaraderie is a pillar in the construction of revolutionary organisations. As is its potential international coordination. Navigating the permanent dialectical tension between ambition and prudence, the participants of the European meeting came out a little closer to taking the next step towards a space for exchange and coordination between anti-capitalists from all over Europe that must continue growing, but that is already starting to walk. But, like the collapse of capitalism or the old empires, it will not simply happen: it will depend on the militant push that those who participate in that space want to give it. Because the path is made by walking the walk.

GONZALO DONAIR

P.S.

- IVP. SUNDAY 18 FEBRUARY 2024:

<https://internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article8419>

- Translated by David Fagan for International Viewpoint from Punto de Vista Internacional:

<https://puntodevistainternacional.org/mirarse-a-los-ojos-para-construir-camino-al-andar/>

Footnotes

[1] CUP (Catalonia), Anticapitalistas (Spanish state), Adelante Andalucía (Andalucía), Alternatiba (Basque Country), NPA, Gauche Écosocialiste, Ensemble (France), Gauche Anticapitaliste (Belgium), People Before Profit (Ireland), SolidaritéS (Switzerland), Socialistisk Politik (Sweden), Bloco de Esquerda (Portugal), Marx21 (Germany), Campaign for Socialism / Labour Party-Unions (Scotland), Anametrissi, DEA (Greece).