



Counter [G8/G20] Mobilisation in France – Call of Dijon: Deauville we won't drink your troubled waters

2011, “the” latest crisis is in its third year, in Europe the financial and banking system crisis has become the States’ crisis. After injecting billions into banks and big firms, governments now say they can no longer assume their debts and have arranged austerity plans with the help of international institutions (IMF, European Bank) : lowering wages, social aid and pensions, massive layoffs, privatization of public services, destruction of social rights ... Although revolts are developing in several countries, such as Greece, Romania, England, Italy, France, Tunisia, Algeria... social destruction policies have not stopped and their effects are striking. Exploitation and increasing inequality, repression of migrants and development of control techniques, gentrification and ghettoization, are being supported by well-oiled media propaganda and strong security policies, trying to maintain the system and avoid outbursts.

Preliminary discussions

Late November 2010, a meeting took place in the self-managed space ‘Les Tanneries’ to discuss the possibility of organizing resistance to these two summits. This meeting took place after a “militant reflection tour”, dealing with counter-summits, was held in a dozen cities, mainly in France and Germany. We were a little more than 80, from different countries, to discuss our desires and thoughts on the upcoming G8 and G20, on a common anti-capitalist and anti-authoritarian basis. Until further meetings, here is a summary of what we discussed and the conclusions we have drawn.

Not going to Deauville : enlarging the counter-summits horizons

While some people have expressed a willingness to go directly to Deauville to challenge the G8, many of us do not want to gather at the location of the summit. The first reason for this decision is that we do not want to go to the exact spot where the repressive forces await us, to the location they have chosen and where they will be extensively prepared. The counter-summits in Strasbourg, Copenhagen and Brussels have been instructive: we do not want to be used, again, as a real-scale practice for law enforcement entities. The first international counter-summits have been innovative in bringing to the public space a theoretical and practical criticism of capitalism, producing sometimes unmanageable situations for those in power.

These initial confrontations have succeeded in exposing the illegitimacy of official meetings and forcing them to leave the inner cities and retreat into fortified camps. However, since Genoa, the management of protests by the police has considerably evolved, while our techniques have only undergone slight changes. Nowadays, too often, we have become subjected to oppression rather than accomplishing impacting actions.

Without wishing to belittle what has been done on these occasions, we have to acknowledge the fact that the official NATO summit in Strasbourg and the G8 in Heiligendam occurred without significant problems for the official meetings. Deauville is a bourgeois seaside resort that is sure to be militarized and the population will be hostile: the possibilities of effectively blocking the G8 (or the G20 in Cannes) seem slim.

Furthermore, we have no desire to take part, once again, in the big media scheme and political instrumentation which ensues. We do not want to waste any more energy in giving too much importance to summits that are already losing credibility on their own. The system is crumbling down, we can trust the professionals for that, let's prepare for the next step. Our future doesn't depend on Deauville nor Cannes.

However, we believe it is still necessary to radically contest what the G8 and the G20 represent: capitalism and the violent, unequal and individualist societies it generates. These summits are the official spaces of organization and legitimization of global capitalist policies whose effects we are fighting against daily . We still want to mobilize ourselves on an international scale against these institutions, but we feel we will have more impact by relying on local struggles, and multiplying the points of rupture and resistance.

Convergence time

If we question the traditional counter-summit form, moments of international convergence always seem indispensable. One of the main interests of counter-summits has always been the opportunities to meet, exchange ideas and practices, and to live together on an equal basis.

These shared moments feed our struggles and our possibilities for action, our thoughts and desires. On the other hand, counter-summit camps are usually marked by time pressure, the urgency of a week that goes by, and repressive pressure, police omnipresence. For these reasons, many participants at the meeting in Dijon decided to put their energy together to organize a long term village, to be held during the summer. Several venues have been suggested, with the common characteristic being places where struggles are happening.

Convergence sites are likely to be held in Deauville or nearby during the G8. On our side, we want to organize a meeting and living space that does not carry this urgency, allowing us to really develop and strengthen our networks, beyond borders, beyond the partitioning of struggles or political circles. This village will be an autonomous space to take time to reflect on theoretical and practical issues but also to (re) learn to work together and coordinate our strategies and actions. Finally, the idea will be to share a common life, to exchange practices and alternatives that we carry out in our every day battles.

Uniting struggles, choosing places

This is another conclusion of the meeting: the importance of joining people together in struggle has been repeatedly mentioned. The movement against pension reforms that has just ended in France has left a bitter aftertaste; many wanted to continue fighting against government policies. Many other struggles are taking place everywhere, in France and Europe. The policies people are opposed to are the same, whether they are carried out on a local, national or global level. Struggles such as the Greek revolt of 2008, the anti-castor action in Germany, or in the municipalities of Oaxaca and Copenhagen show that our strength is always multiplied when it is connected to that of local populations. On the other hand, bringing anti-capitalist issues and positions into local struggles can help broaden perspectives. That's why we want to broaden the criticism and the protest against the G8-G20's global policies and their local impacts in places, cities or assemblies where they are usually not present. A self-organized caravan, open to all, will leave from Lyon soon and go through roads, towns and cities of France in order to participate in the creation of mobilization against the G8 and the G20.

To avoid repeating the same mistakes, so that in France the mass of police forces in Deauville becomes an advantage rather than a problem, we call for the organization of decentralized actions during the G8, in France and in other countries. Without discouraging those who have chosen to go to Deauville, we call for the creation of groups in all regions of France and the world to organize locally and to carry out decentralized actions in the places and on the topics of their choice.

Blockades of economic flows or attacks against symbols of the state and capital, events or occupations, temporary autonomous zones, distribution of texts and words... the possibilities are many and we are everywhere.

The success of this strategy against an omnipotent system depends on the capacity of local groups to act. With this perspective, we hope that the long term village during the summer will be the extension of this dynamic, a place of convergence for local, regional and international self-organized groups, and a space that will allow us to analyze the results of actions against the G8 and consider the next international mobilization, beginning with those against the G20. These three moments (G8, village, G20) are an opportunity to experiment a new phase in our movements, to move to another stage in the development of collective strategies and tactics against international institutions. It is finally an attempt to increase our capacity for action and our opportunities for reflection and self-organization.

Start organizing locally, spread this call and come share your ideas:

The next international encounter will be held on the 4th , 5th and 6th of February in Paris.

