

BUILDING COUNTER POWER, SEIZING OPPORTUNITIES

IL IN TRANSITION

Introduction

Getting out of the bubble and into the scuffle of social conflicts. The Interventionist Left started their work with this ambition almost 20 years ago. We wanted to become a radical left embedded in society, to be visible and approachable, fight for political hegemony and organize counter power.

A lot has happened since then. Today, the Interventionist Left is one of the largest radical left structures in the German-speaking world. We are represented by local groups in over twenty cities. We have succeeded in developing from a loose association of local groups into an interregional organization based on principles of direct democracy. Block G8, Ende Gelände, Blockupy, Feminist Strike, Summer of Migration, NoG20, Rheinmetall Entwaffnen, Deutsche Wohnen and Co Enteignen¹ are examples of the many struggles we are and have been involved in. With blockades, occupations and direct interventions, we have contributed to establishing mass disobedience as a legitimate form of action.

At the same time, the current outlook for the future of the world is grim. The left is on the defensive in all parts of the world. The right-wing project of closed borders, division and denial of the climate crisis is booming. States are becoming more authoritarian internally and more belligerent externally, whether they are led by supposedly progressive parties or right-wing anti-democrats. Neither have viable answers to the multitude of crises the world is facing.

¹ A campaign that aims to socialize large chunks of the privately owned housing sector in Berlin.

What we need right now is a left-wing alternative that provides hope and orientation. But we have not succeeded in channeling the successes of the movements of the last decade into one common pole of resistance, to fight for fundamental change. Capitalism remains securely in the driver's seat.

Therefore it is high time to reevaluate our strategies and practices. What do the political developments of recent years mean to us? What opportunities and objectives do we have for changing the world? What are the strategies of interventionist policy in the current situation? We have racked our brains over these and other questions and have argued about them on many occasions. Nonetheless, many of our debates are still in their early stages. This paper represents the results of our discussions. It is an update to and an expansion of our "Zwischenstandspapier" interim paper "Die IL im Aufbruch" from 2014.

One of the next steps is organizing a process of orientation in the radical left. Our reflections are therefore first and foremost a starting point, an invitation to join the debate to anyone who, like us, is driven by the longing for a different, a liberated world. This is why such a big part of this text is devoted to our analysis of the current political situation. We are documenting the current state of our discussions, that hopefully provide orientation for the coming debates. The following chapters are an update to our strategy and practice. We learn from our mistakes, hold on to what has worked and discard what has not. For us, this is an essential feature of undogmatic politics.

Anyone looking for simple answers in this paper will be disappointed. A new reformism that, in the face of the shift to the right and the climate crisis, only dares to address what is within the immediate reach of current institutions is too simple. Superficially turning to the working class once again, a move that all too often leads to dogmatism and authoritarianism, is too simple. The type of identity politics that clings to identities instead of questioning them and of which little encouragement for the common struggle for a better world can be expected, is too simple. In contrast, we want to be a radical left that continues upholding the possibility to change everything, even in times of darkness. A radical left that is organized and present in everyday life, that recognizes opportunities and seizes them decisively. That expands small ruptures into large ones and takes the bet on revolution. We continue holding onto this aspiration and promise.

We organize ourselves for this reason. Organizing overcomes individual powerlessness and creates self-empowerment. Organizing enables new, collective ways of relating that we need for a society beyond capitalist competition. By organizing ourselves, we leave the chaos of the present behind us and fight for a better future. Come along with us!

I. Analysis

1. A world of crises

Wars, the pandemic and the climate crisis, combined with poverty and growing social inequality, the shift to the right and crises of social reproduction: we are living in an age of permanent crises.

The climate crisis threatens the livelihood of all human societies. Heatwaves, floods and desertification have been a bitter reality in the Global South for a long time now. The devastating effects of climate change become impossible to overlook in the Global North as well. Ecological instability and social inequality have grown as a consequence, and so have violence, exclusion and isolation. This changes the conditions for left-wing and radical left-wing politics. Even if the climate crisis can no longer be stopped, every tenth of a degree of global warming means the difference between life and death for millions of people. There is no shortcut and the fundamental issue is more urgent than ever: the abolition of capitalism has become a matter of survival. There is no prospect of liberation or overcoming exploitation in the 21st century if this condition is not met.

At the same time, wars such as the Russian aggression against Ukraine or the Gaza War endanger the lives of millions of people. The geostrategic conflict between the USA and China, which is currently carried out as an economic war, carries the potential for a global escalation. The false hope of an era of peace is shattered. Power blocs have long again been vying for global influence. The EU and Germany are increasingly involved in this, although they like to hide behind rhetorics of democracy and human rights.

In the context of power politics and against the backdrop of the massive crises, state intervention in the economy has gained in importance again. In Germany, this includes the "special funds", which have been used several times to mobilize large amounts of capital, partly to cushion the repercussions of crises such as the coronavirus pandemic, partly to finance the expansion of its military by providing 100 billion Euros for the German military.

In belligerent states, we see the introduction of war regimes, i.e. ruling by decree, the dismantling of the welfare state and a general increase in authoritarian measures. This also reinforces aggressive-authoritarian masculinity and traditional patriarchal structures in societies. The population is urged or forced to take a clear patriotic stance. Voices that speak out in favor of peace and international solidarity are marginalized or suppressed.

The logic of war, the militarization of society and friend-foe distinctions are not limited to states directly involved in wars. The so-called "New Era" has gripped all of Europe: In Germany, rearmament, the export of weapons to crisis and war zones, nationalism and militarily conceived geopolitics dictate the public discourse.

Conventional capitalism is working less and less: Large portions of global capital cannot be utilized as investments in the means of production anymore. Capital therefore seeks new areas for profitable investments on the capital markets, without a viable new accumulation regime having emerged. Thus, capital flows primarily into the privatization of land or resources, in the financialization of areas of life such as housing, health, care services and social security for senior citizens and digital communication. This leads to an increasing amount of people losing access to clean drinking water, healthcare and even food. As a result, impoverishment, hunger and the amount of refugee migration are on the rise globally. The ruling class's strategies for adapting to the global multitude of crises appear to be chaotic and divided. They shift between a supposedly progressive green-capitalist modernization in regard to civil liberties on the one hand and an openly authoritarian, right-wing conservative to fascist concepts on the other. As contradictory as these strategies may appear, in both cases a small minority isolates themselves and their exponentially growing wealth, while the majority has to bear the consequences of the crises. Yet, neither of these two strategies addresses the obvious contradiction between the interests of global capital and mere survival for humanity at large.

Hope cannot come from above, but solely from revolts, struggles and movements from the bottom. Black Lives Matter, #niunamenos or Fridays for Future are global movements against the unbearable conditions. Their protests have been joined by more people than ever in the last decade. Additionally, many struggles do not transcend national borders but are similar in form and content.

In the global movement cycle of the early 2010s, we could see a common framework: The uprisings and movements of the Arab Spring, the Spanish Indignados, Occupy or Gezi related to one another in their demands for real democracy, their practice of occupying squares and permanent assemblies. In Germany, during the Blockupy actions against European austerity policies, we articulated this as follows: "They want capitalism without democracy - we want democracy without capitalism!"

The current movements also have a common denominator, although it is much more difficult to grasp: Everywhere, matters of life and survival are central. Movements against femicides, against racist murders, against the failure to take action against the climate crisis are united in their focus on survival as their central demand. What starts as a stubborn "no" to the murderous status quo includes the utopian notion of a better world. Despite the unequal conditions and contradictions, our struggles here, "in the heart of the beast", are part of the global movement cycle: in the climate justice movement, the (queer) feminist movement, the anti-war movement or the anti-racism movement: the aim is always to go beyond national boundaries and adopt a transnational perspective of global solidarity and liberation.

2. Solidified power at the center

The global crises are now also being felt directly here in Germany. But despite summer heatwaves and deadly floods, despite the shift to the right, growing social inequality and austerity policies the left seems to be paralyzed, inhibited, but above all invisible. Apart from waves of outrage and short-term mobilizations, there are barely enduring protests or resistance. The disorientation and division within the left as a whole contribute to this. The central, underlying causes are the paradoxically power-stabil-

izing effects of war and crises, which coincide with the impact of neoliberal individualization, from which we, as the radical left, are not immune. The fragmented left finds it increasingly difficult to respond adequately to the acceleration of political events and to develop counter-proposals to the conditions of everyday life.

Colonial exploitation, cheap natural resources and fossil extractivism have made the capitalist centers of the West rich and powerful. This is what made the class compromise in industrialized societies possible after the Second World War; it enabled large sections of society to participate in consumption and prosperity. To this day the imperial mode of living can only be realized in a small part of the world. Its cost is neo-colonial exploitation and the unrestrained consumption of resources and fossil fuels. Of course mainly the rich and wealthy are those who benefit, while social inequality is also growing within the capitalist centers. Many people here perceive changes in these conditions as a threat to their way of life; partly because change under the prevailing power relations does not occur at the expense of the rich, but rather of the majority of the population. This mechanism presents a huge obstacle to broad-based resistance against border regimes, institutional racism and for serious climate policy.

The unignorable moments of escalating crises such as the Ahrtal flood, the coronavirus pandemic or the current wars have paradoxically contributed to the stabilization of existing power relations. By successfully addressing the need for security and stability, social contradictions in these situations could be leveled out in favor of seemingly general interests or clear friend-foe distinctions. The invocation of a community of fate has caught on. Varying degrees of affectedness and responsibility no longer play a role. Spreading crises converge with the accelerated attention economy of the digitalized public sphere. Political debates become increasingly moralized, one wave of outrage follows the other, countless political uproars are strung together at ever shorter intervals. But what is burning today is already forgotten tomorrow. What remains is the perception of an all-encompassing crisis and a profound sense of insecurity, which at the same time encourages to retreat into the private sphere, to a lack of solidarity and commitment to the security promises of those in power.

At an individual level, far-advanced neoliberal subjectivization presents a major obstacle to solidarity, collectivity and thus to the development of social counter power. Subtle or open mechanisms of disciplining and sanctioning with the simultaneous reduction in social security set people back to their very survival. They are forced to fight their struggles on their own. This coincides with the omnipresent pressure to take advantage of their own opportunities for self-development and -realization - supposedly in line with personal well-being and appropriate self-care. Through this poisoned but powerful promise of freedom, people subject themselves to the logic of personal responsibility and competition.

A radical left that wants to shake up social relations is therefore faced with a central challenge: to spread the critique of neoliberal subjectivization while simultaneously developing counter-models of collectivity and comradeship that are tangible.

3. Cracks, fault lines and areas of conflict²

Even if the power relations here seem relatively stable: The contradictions of capitalism are also at work in the "heart of the beast". Recognizing these cracks and rupture lines to understand their dynamics and deepening them further is the task of a social radical left. Rupture lines become areas of conflict, which then give rise to concrete struggles that we want to advance and develop in such a way that they point beyond the existing conditions. The most important lines of rupture that offer opportunities and necessities for political intervention and further development of our practice are outlined below.

False promises of neoliberalism

For large sections of society, the promises of neoliberalism – freedom, self-realization, prosperity and consumption - are no longer being fulfilled. Social guarantees and infrastructures have been dismantled, Hartz IV (now "Bürgergeld") has been introduced, trade union organizations weakened and many areas of life are commodified. More and more people have less and less: less pay, less social security, less money for food and housing, less participation in society. Instead of realizing themselves, they experience relegation and devaluation. They struggle from crisis to crisis with insecure jobs in the low-wage sector. Women, inter-, trans- agender and nonbinary persons and migrants in particular are pushed into precariousness.

Social and spatial inequality has increased massively. Expensive cars and luxury districts characterize the inner cities. At the same time, poverty and homelessness are on the rise and entire districts and regions are left behind. The latter are often regions in eastern Germany, but also western German cities and rural areas are characterized by precarity and poor infrastructure. "Blooming landscapes" have remained an empty promise - in eastern Germany, but also elsewhere. Cuts and privatizations destroy public infrastructure. Additionally, individualization, pressure for optimization and the need to adapt to new situations even more quickly lead many people to feel overwhelmed and lonely. More and more people long for an escape from the dynamic of acceleration and more community.

More equality and more personal freedom were the promises of neoliberalism. There have also been steps towards liberalization and the recognition of different ways of life and measures for more gender equality. However, people experience every day that more visibility and diversity may only exist if this fits an economic logic. Neoliberal recognition policies do not eliminate social inequality and oppression. Patriarchal, queer and trans-hostile violence and homicides continue, as do right-wing and racist murders.

Not even with regard to its hard ideological core, the functioning of the economy, the state and public finances, can neoliberalism keep its promises in times of permanent crisis. Whether it is corona aid, the energy crisis or the necessary investments in climate protection: the state requires significantly larger budgetary funds than it is allowed to spend according to the debt brake and the austerity policy that has been preached for decades. This does not only lead to tangible conflicts within the ruling class.

² We frequently use the terms fault lines, ruptures and cracks within our lingo. We refer to the varying degrees of contradictions within capitalism that, when made visible and experienceable, can expand and deepen. To some we refer to as large rupture lines, while other contradictions may start as fault lines or cracks with the potential to grow. They are interconnected and as a whole form a threat to the system that is capitalism.

When a snap of the fingers is enough to mobilize astronomical sums as "special funds" for armament or economic stabilization as if out of nowhere, it no longer seems credible that there is supposedly no money for social and societal needs.

This undermines consent to neoliberal rule. It offers a variety of points of departure for left-wing class politics that advocates for social solidarity, social security and the actual realization of opportunities to challenge existing relations of power and domination.

Struggles for social reproduction

Social reproduction means all the activities and areas that are necessary to restore human life and human labor power as the basis of capitalist production. The organization of social reproduction is closely intertwined with the hegemonic ways of life and relationships - and thus in particular with the prevailing gender relations. This affects us all fundamentally in our everyday lives: it is about food and drink, housing, illness and recovery, care and support, energy and mobility, education and training. These are questions of life and survival.

Social reproduction is clearly in a crisis since neoliberal policies have been pushing capital valorization in more and more areas of life and public infrastructure. Social institutions, such as daycare centers, hospitals and retirement homes, are increasingly affected by economization and privatization. The rate-per-case system (Fallpauschalensystem) in hospitals is a well-known example. It leads to a deterioration in care and increases the pressure on employees. And there are many such examples: even now almost a sixth of all employees in Germany work in the healthcare sector.

The socially necessary care work remains patriarchally organized. Despite all the feminist struggles of recent decades including their indisputable successes, unpaid care work in everyday life is still predominantly carried out by persons with a female socialization - often as an additional burden to paid work. Those who can afford it, outsource the additional burdens of everyday life to others, often precarious migrants. However, this merely shifts the problems between the classes, because the care workers' own reproductive work in their families and their countries of origin does not disappear.

Resistance to these conditions is growing. The hospital movement of recent years has provided important impulses for unionized labor disputes. The struggle for the working conditions and wages of nursing staff is directed against the capitalist exploitation of care work as well as the massive gaps in the financing of healthcare and nursing. It is also a feminist struggle. The employees have organized themselves, developed new forms of self-empowerment and created perspectives for socialization. Struggles in this field always have the potential to go beyond immediate demands. They show cracks in the system that enable the challenging of not only the working conditions in the health care sector but also of the organization of our society as a whole.

In the strikes on March 8th, these new struggles against the exploitation of care work have been united with the general feminist critique of the heteronormative nuclear family, the gendered division of labor and patriarchal and anti-queer violence. The common denominator is the questioning of male domina-

tion as a whole, i.e. the entire patriarchal-capitalist social order. Unfortunately, the feminist strike that has moved and organized millions in Argentina and Spain has had limited success in Germany.

The crisis of social reproduction is also evident in other areas of social infrastructure, such as the increasing capitalist pressure to exploit housing, food, water and energy supplies. We all feel this in the form of exploding rents, increased costs of energy or food and increasing displacement from city centers. As a result, participation in rent policy struggles has grown, especially in Berlin and other large cities. The demand for public ownership and grassroots democratic management of housing, i.e. for expropriation and socialization, has gained broad support and even the ability to achieve political majorities. We aim to transfer this concrete anti-capitalist perspective of socialization to disputes over energy and water supply.

Struggles in the climate crisis

The climate crisis is no longer abstract, no longer limited to the Global South, but can also be felt right here. In the hot summers, access to cool living spaces becomes an existential question, especially for the elderly. Periods of drought make energy and water scarce. The number of victims of extreme weather events and floods has increased drastically. The risk of pandemics and new pathogens increases. By now, the climate crisis is at the center of social debate. This applies to the incipient distribution struggles of climate adaptation, but even more so to the struggle for the necessary and radical restructuring of the economy and infrastructure. This will be a central battlefield in the coming years and decades.

Society, and even individuals, are divided. A large part of society is fundamentally in favor of taking serious action against the climate crisis, as the mass demonstrations by Fridays for Future have shown. Under the current social conditions, however, this position enters into competition with social interests and calls into question the continuation of the established way of life. Who will bear the costs of insulating buildings or replacing gas and oil heating systems with heat pumps or district heating? Can buses and trains ensure our mobility if the private car has to disappear? Can the gain in time and quality of life outweigh the loss of consumer goods? These questions are even more pressing for employees in the fossil fuel industries, such as in automobile production and their supplier industries. Many of their jobs will inevitably disappear in an ecological structural change. Precisely because these jobs have been secure and above-average paid up to now, the fears of social relegation by the employees have a real basis.

A mass social movement against capitalist climate destruction is nevertheless possible. This requires a class struggle escalation attacking those responsible for the climate crisis. Instead of denying the necessary ecological conversion and job losses in the industrial sector, we must demand and enforce that the costs of this are borne by fossil fuel capital and the rich.

There are not only fears of decline and change, but also a desire for a different way of life. Many people want streets and cities that are not clogged by cars nor polluted by their exhaust fumes. They want to reduce their working hours, to be able to carry out self-determined care work, to experience a sense of community and to slow down their lives. From here, an alternative idea of the good life can be developed. Such a radical socio-ecological transformation is tied to the long-term interests of the majority

of people. Yet this social alternative is not a feel-good program: given the climate crisis, its implementation needs the antagonistic intensification of the struggle against fossil capital and its political allies. We will not just be given a future worth living.

Migration, border regimes and (anti-)racism

For centuries, global capitalism and its imperial world order were based on the exploitation and subjugation of people in the Global South. Their livelihoods have been systematically undermined and destroyed in the process. The permanent crises of the present - above all the climate crisis, but also the increase in geopolitical conflicts and wars - are exacerbating this situation even further. Millions are on the run, global and regional migration is on the rise. However, the people who cross borders on often life-threatening routes are not just victims: by fighting for their share of global social wealth and their right to a safe life, migration movements practically challenge the existing order.

The escalating, often deadly violence at Europe's borders is intended to defend this order and the unequal distribution of wealth. Yet the capitalist economy of the countries of the North is always dependent on new workers. The result is a complex and contradictory system of closed borders, disenfranchisement, control and exploitation that is largely organized along racist lines. At the same time, migration is the "mother of all societies" and the immigration society is a reality in Germany that can no longer be denied. This has given rise to at least two areas of conflict in this country, where cracks and fault lines of domination are becoming visible.

First, the expansion of "Fortress Europe" - from Frontex to deportation prisons on our own doorstep - leads to a reorganization of the political spectrum. Leftist-liberal and supposedly progressive parties and actors are increasingly adopting right-wing positions and putting them into practice. Here, in particular, there is a huge contradiction between the humanist rhetoric and the reality of dehumanization at the borders. This policy is based on an alliance of fear with large sections of the population. Many people mistakenly believe that fending off migration can mitigate the threat of restrictions to their own standard of living - and accept violence against the "others" and their deaths in exchange for an illusion of their own security and prosperity. In contrast, the advocates of the universal validity of human rights and the right to global freedom of movement often seem to be in the minority. But this division is neither clear nor stable. There are opportunities for new alliances and new struggles. We want to lead them offensively - together with all those who have become alienated from the double standards of "Western", "European" or "green" values, who are campaigning locally against deportation and disenfranchisement or who have organized themselves as affected refugees. They are all ready for the conflict against Fortress Europe.

Second, it is social racism itself that constantly gives rise to new contradictions, areas of conflict and struggles. Whether it is institutional racism on the job and housing market, racist police violence, right-wing agitation in the media, attacks and assaults or everyday racism: attributions, discrimination, exclusion, threats and violence remain part of everyday life for many people in this country. The public dismay following the deadly attacks in Hanau has done nothing to change this. The white-dominant soci-

ety and its parties blame immigrants, residents of migrant neighborhoods in large cities and Muslims for social problems.

At the same time, social production and reproduction in this country would collapse without the work of migrant workers. Whether in care, agriculture, logistics or the emerging platform economy, the proportion of migrant workers is particularly high in these areas with high workloads and precarious employment. It is no coincidence that it is precisely in these areas of the economy that new forms of strike and protest have emerged and an increasing collective political self-awareness has developed among employees. Class struggles and anti-racist struggles overlap in these disputes. Here, just as in the struggles against everyday racism and racist violence, we see a further rupture line that needs to be deepened by fighting confidently and uncompromisingly against racism, exploitation and for a migration society based on solidarity.

4. Two capitalist hegemonic projects

In today's neoliberal capitalism, we observe two competing political projects. They are vying for hegemony and supremacy. At first glance, their plans for dealing with the global multiple crises appear distinct and their values diametrically opposed. The bourgeois-liberal project of "green" modernization stands against an openly authoritarian, at times, fascist project of fossil backwardness. The former wants to modernize capitalism with a new accumulation regime, i.e. with new technologies, changed production methods and flexible working conditions, in order to reconcile it with the migration society and climate protection. The latter relentlessly clings to the old industrial society and aims to turn the clock back decades in socio-political terms. It aggressively defends the unequal distribution of means of production and resources between North and South, citizens and immigrants and between genders.

At second glance, there is a great deal of overlap between these two hegemonic projects. Both want to preserve the capitalist mode of production and way of life, as well as the global imperialist relations of exploitation. Both are intertwined with neoliberalism in different forms. The transitions are fluid and political actors move between the lines, complicating clear affiliations.

As a result of the strong right-wing formation of recent years, a modernized fortress capitalism emerges as a compromise between these two capitalist hegemonic projects. It aggressively distances itself from the outside world and increasingly resorts to an authoritarian form of politics on the inside. At the same time, there are still concessions to a liberal way of life and the rules of parliamentary democracy continue to apply. There are signs of a society that undertakes just as much climate protection and modernization as is feasible without major resistance from fossil capital and its henchmen. At present, there is no strong left-wing bloc that can intervene in this balance of power - but this can not and must not remain the case. To intervene effectively, we need an understanding of the similarities and differences between the supposedly green-progressive and reactionary projects.

The green modernization

The project of "green capitalism" promises to successfully solve the climate crisis through ecological modernization and at the same time open up new profit opportunities. Through this approach, the capitalist way of producing and living could be maintained in the long term and the ecological foundations of life would be preserved. The core of this false promise is to decouple economic growth from resource consumption through technological progress and ecological structural change. The project of green modernization therefore does not have to ignore or completely deny the causes and consequences of the climate crisis, as the right-wing project does. For this reason, international institutions such as the UN, WTO and EU predominantly support this perspective.

In the capitalist centers of Western Europe and North America, the project of green modernization is closely linked to "progressive" neoliberalism. Agreement is primarily achieved through recognition policies that take up aspects of demands coming from social movements, but weaken and reinterpret them in a way that they are compatible with the capitalist logic of exploitation. Thus, modern capitalism portrays itself as a defender of individual liberties and liberal values, which play a central role in the self-image of the green-progressive bloc.

However, the rescue of the capitalist narrative of progress into the 21st century cannot work in practice: A system that is fundamentally built on the maximization of profit and permanent growth must also subject natural resources to private control. It cannot respect ecological and planetary boundaries. The decoupling of economic growth and resource consumption remains a theoretical notion that does not stand up to empirical scrutiny. There is no and there cannot be a truly green capitalism.

The defense of liberal values and the supposed progressive politics in this project remain hollow. After all, capitalism and the imperial way of life cannot be maintained without closed borders, racist inequality, armament and repression. This stands even more true in light of the already inevitable consequences of the climate crisis.

The current failure of the German government to meet its own minimal standards clearly demonstrates this. Small improvements that cost nothing, such as the abolition of §219a, or half-hearted liberalizations of citizenship law are contrasted with a practice of closed borders, social budget cuts and the assertion of Germany as a dominant political power. Hidden behind phrases such as "European solidarity", the right to asylum is undermined. There is little left of "feminist foreign policy" apart from arms deals with dictatorships. Climate targets are missed year after year and the fossil fuel infrastructure expands.

Any hopes of a green modernization of capitalism are therefore in vain. A real socio-ecological transformation does not come from above but must be anti-capitalist.

The formation of the right

Conservatives and market radicals, right-wing and even fascist forces have formed an independent right-wing project - in varying constellations depending on the country - that fiercely competes for hegemony with the progressive-green project. In Germany, this development has been delayed but has now fully arrived with the electoral successes of the AfD and the CDU's shift to the right under their current leader Friedrich Merz.

Despite the multiple crises and increasing insecurity, the right-wing project promises that everything can remain as it is through a mixture of isolationism, climate denial and the defense of patriarchal privileges. For this false promise of stability, the racist, sexist, anti-semitic and anti-queer attitudes that have always existed in the population are purposefully mobilized and radicalized. In traditional and social media, the right wing is presenting itself as a supposedly resistant voice. They benefit from the fact that large parts of the media and party landscape adopt right-wing narratives, thereby normalizing their misanthropic positions.

After the "summer of migration" in 2015, the main focus was on racist agitation. In recent years, an anti-feminist and queer-hostile "culture war" has also gained importance. In this attempt to roll back the progressive, socio-political achievements of 1968, anti-semitic undertones become ever louder. As a result, a right-wing social bloc was created and broadened across opposing interests.

In Germany, it is the AfD that plays the central role in organizing this right-wing bloc. It has been able to establish itself as a right-wing party with a solid voter base, expand the financing of right-wing structures and network the right-wing on a national and international level. The AfD is a rallying point for extreme right-wing actors and an interface to openly activist neo-Nazis. At the same time, the transitions to parts of the established conservative parties and media become increasingly fluid. The likelihood of parliamentary alliances and even government participation grows.

Neoliberals and right-wingers do not merely share individual ideological ideas. Their cooperation goes beyond temporary alliances. This was particularly evident with the corona-denying "Querdenker*innen"³. Here, neoliberal ideology takes an authoritarian turn: self-centeredness and an individualistic understanding of freedom lead to aggression against any collective solidarity. In this way, the diffuse union of authoritarian libertarians and conspiracy theorists has expanded the basis for the right-wing project. In addition, religious fundamentalists have been able to greatly expand their structures in recent years and are increasingly forming alliances with parts of the right-wing bloc.

The threat posed by the right-wing authoritarian project begins long before the AfD joins the government. The racist, anti-semitic, misogynistic, queer and trans-hostile fantasies of violence do not remain in the virtual space of social media but lead to real, often deadly violence. This was clearly demonstrated by the murders in Halle in 2019 and Hanau in 2020. The police, secret services and military remain a magnet for right-wing authoritarian characters. They are breeding grounds for racism and Nazi terrorism. Right-wing networks still exist in the German security apparatus, which has never been consistently denazified, posing a major threat to migrants in particular. The state can therefore not be relied

3 A broad movement of "critics" that started protesting against the measures taken against the Covid pandemic and soon included protests against "woke" politics. The literal translation is lateral/unconventional thinkers.

upon to fight right-wing structures. It barely shows initiative unless it deems its monopoly on the use of force threatened. For anything else, a strong anti-fascist movement would have to force the state. Despite the self-righteous portrayal of Germany as a country that has learned from history and is now reformed, anti-Semitism comes from the "center of society". It is neither reducible to the past nor an isolated case, nor is it a problem imported through migration. Anti-Semitic conspiracy narratives form ideological bridges from the extreme right to the so-called "Querdenker", from reactionaries to parts of the peace movement.

In Eastern Germany in particular, right-wing and fascist structures, parties and individuals are deeply rooted in society, while a (leftist) liberal civil society often barely exists. The threat of a regional right-wing hegemony is already a reality in many areas. One explanation for this is the experience of decline and devaluation that many citizens of East Germany had since 1989. The far right was able to cleverly build on this with a politics tailored to the East. The state-based anti-fascism of the East German Regime was, although in a different fashion, just as superficial as it was in the West. Racism and authoritarianism lived on beneath the surface of socialism and internationalism. After the collapse of the DDR, there was understandable skepticism towards left-wing positions and organizations. This was another reason why the right had it relatively easy in East Germany. Today, we have to take these particularities into account when formulating a strategy and practice for our anti-fascist politics.

The threat from the right-wing authoritarian bloc is acute and real. Broad anti-fascist alliances are necessary to counter this. At the same time, the green-progressive project itself is part of the problem because it allows itself to be driven by the right. Effective anti-fascism only works in the long term with a left-wing, anti-capitalist perspective.

5. The situation of the social left

The situation on the left is contradictory: time and again, there are impressive mobilizations by the climate justice movement, Black Lives Matter, Migrantifa, Deutsche Wohnen & Co Enteignen or against the AfD. More young people are influenced by feminist, anti-racist, ecological and other left-wing struggles than we would have hoped a few years ago. At the same time, these movements often remain selective, develop only short-term shifts in discourse and are rarely able to assert their concrete demands. Above all, they are unable to change the lack of strategy and weakness of left-wing and radical left-wing organizations.

The coronavirus pandemic, with its omnipresent risk of infection, lockdowns and restrictions on the right of assembly, has prevented many people from taking the streets in protest and resistance. Like society as a whole, our own structures and those of our allies have suffered under the conditions of social isolation. This has exacerbated the neoliberal isolation of people. At the same time, the coronavirus crisis has exposed deep contradictions in the social and radical left, which have prevented joint positions and effective practical interventions.

Similar helplessness and contradictions were evident in the assessment of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine and the subsequent inflation and energy crisis. What does an anti-militarist stance look

like that remains antagonistic to German and Western militarism without denying or unwillingly supporting aggressive Russian imperialism? With whom do we stand in solidarity and what does this mean, for example, for our position on arms deliveries? How do we reconcile the demands for affordable energy and the need for radical climate protection? The Interventionist Left has argued a lot about these questions and found too few answers.

The division in the Left Party is the result and most severe expression of the contradictions in the social left. Between nationalist and vulgar anti-imperialist provocations and bland reformism, the emancipatory forces in the party found themselves in an increasingly difficult position. With the separation now complete, there may be opportunities for a movement-oriented reset. For the IL, the Left Party has always been an important strategic ally, but never a space for political intervention. Our project is and will remain the independent radical left organization.

Trade unions and associations have opened up to social movements in recent years and for example, sought cooperation with parts of the climate justice movement. Overall, however, they remain in their established, social partnership-oriented paths. They are therefore selective partners for alliances and cooperation but largely fail to act as a driving force for radical change.

In the radical left, two forms of politicization have been particularly popular in recent years. First, power-critical identity politics: The latter deals with the various dimensions of discrimination, above all racism, patriarchy and queer- and trans-hostility. The focus lies on one's own positioning and morally correct individual behavior. As a result, identity politics typically has an instructing character, but creates few collective approaches to overcome oppressive relations.

Second, a large number of "red groups" have emerged, with varying degrees of regional strength. They serve the widespread need for political orientation and ideological clarity. Their dogmatic Marxism-Leninism focuses on the growth of their own organization and a radical habitus. They do not see the diversity of the revolutionary left and movements as an opportunity, but primarily as a problem to be overcome through unification and the correct ideology. Consequently, they often appear as a homogeneous bloc and copy their revolutionary role models of the 1920s in terms of ideology and aesthetics. Their choices of alliances usually remain selective and instrumental.

What identity politics and the red groups have in common is that they offer orientation and supposed clarity for the diffuse challenges of the present. Both tendencies - albeit for different reasons - reject the search for a common ground, which often makes the alliances, that are nevertheless necessary, difficult. Parallel to these developments within the social left, the competition for attention and political positions is increasingly taking place on social media. A few left-wing publicists and influencers use the virtual battlefield to provide impulses for politicization. They offer opportunities for identification and help marginalized positions gain visibility. At the same time, the fleeting nature, individualism and often abbreviated debates on social media represent limitations for processes of collective change. So far, large parts of the organized left have struggled with platforms because they provide a poor environment for long texts and anonymous groups. We want to rise to this challenge by developing more of our own channels and formats that strike a balance between collective speech and the necessary personalization. In doing so, we will not forget that it is not the virtual space that ultimately decides, but the very real street.

The big questions are on the table: how do we need to reformulate the strategies of the social and radical left in the face of multiple crises? How do we not only identify areas of conflict but also become capable of acting within them? How do we update our tactics and forms of action? What is missing for mobilization successes to also lead to material successes? What are collective forms of organization for the 21st century? In short: How do we build social counter power?

II. Revolution, Transformation, and Rupture

A world in flames, the normalization of war, social crises and a society facing severe upheaval: Life will not remain as it is. Many know it, everybody can feel it. How do we live? How do we organize societal production and reproduction? At whose expense? Due to the climate crisis, these questions become a matter of survival. We are certain: The upcoming changes cannot be superficial, they must be profound and radical. That necessarily means a revolutionary rupture with capitalism and its inherent relations of power and domination. Even though "Socialism or Barbarism" was a slogan of the 20th century: Considering the present planetary crises it is as pressing as ever.

Yet, the mere desire for revolution is not enough. We need concrete strategic approaches for the radical changes we envision. We discuss these on the following pages. They encompass the navigation towards a revolutionary rupture, the relationship between long-term transformation and short-term opportunities, as well as the build-up of counter power for a left hegemonic project with socialization as a central pillar.

1. The revolutionary rupture

Our goal is the revolutionary rupture with the status quo. We are fueled by the everyday rage over the oppressive structures of capitalism and the desire for a world that entails a good life for everyone, according to their needs and capabilities. Such a world will not exist without getting rid of capitalist private property, without abolishing classes and exploitation, without overcoming patriarchal and racist oppression and violence. Without breaking with capitalism and its profit logic, there can and will be no solidaric answers for the existential crises and threats of the 21st century - not in Germany and Europe nor globally. A radical democratization of all aspects of life is needed to stop the systematic destruction of our basic foundations of life.

The democratic control over the environment, production and reproduction is blocked by private ownership over the means of production. Radical democratization must therefore start here - and ensure that all areas of society are covered and that all people receive the same rights, regardless of nationality or origin.

The nation-state and its institutions are a fundamental obstacle to this democratization. In the former, the interests of the ruling class and capital are aggregated, on the costs of the global south. Its borders serve control and expulsion and are, in consequence, always bloody. Abolishing the nation-state is,

therefore, a necessity - as well as abolishing the European Union, which serves capital interests and organizes Fortress Europe.

We understand revolution as a process in which the bourgeois state and its institutions are overcome in multiple steps. Thereby, parliamentary politics and majorities might, at best, play a secondary role in this. The system cannot be radically changed without breaking with its rules. Any such attempts have failed. Parties such as Die Linke, Syriza or Podemos exemplify this. Even if we recognize the importance of parties for a left-wing hegemonic project and as a point of contact for left-wing politics in everyday life and work together with them in concrete struggles and campaigns: Our objective is the long-term build-up of societal power outside of the state through the linkage of revolutionary organizing and social movements.

Revolution goes beyond the overthrow of the economic and political order. It means profound changes in our subjectivity and our social relations in everyday life. Today, neoliberal individualization and indifference toward suffering in other parts of the world are omnipresent. It seems difficult to imagine how we would engage with each other and determine our lives in a liberated society. This makes it all the more urgent to change our relationships and ourselves on the way there - so that isolation in supposed sovereignty becomes collective freedom in solidarity and interdependence.

This path requires patience, imagination, a fighting spirit, collectivity and the willingness for revolutionary change. In the history of the left, there have been and still are many defeats and wrong turns. The left experienced withdrawal and cynicism, treason and counter-revolution, militarization and brutal violence - from the murderous state bureaucracy of Stalin to the reformist containment of social democratic and green parties. We are aware of the historic failures of the left. Yet we are determined to learn from them and do things differently and better.

2. Opportunities, small ruptures and the power of the street

Revolutionary processes cannot be drafted on the drawing board. Nor do they fall from the sky. They result from decades of continuous work for change in the here and now, as well as from the spontaneous struggles of social movements and the utopian desires of those who rebel against the status quo. In our strategy, we refer to both: The transformative shift in the balance of power as well as acting in the short-term dynamic of concrete opportunities.

With opportunities, we mean time windows in which seemingly stable processes become erratic and volatile. Moments and events in which, for a narrow time frame, there is much more to win but also to lose than initially expected. Such opportunities cannot be brought about by force. Yet, in times of growing instability, these opportunities emerge in higher frequency. The last years showed that the courageous interventions of activists can make a real difference. An example are the nationwide protests against the election of Thomas Kemmerich as minister president of Thuringian in 2020. However, this example also shows that we have been primarily capable of acting spontaneously, especially when it came

to defensive struggles. We could prevent the worst outcome but seldom utilize these moments to advance the societal left as a whole. Important prerequisites for the latter are the analysis of societal developments, a good sense of societal situations and sentiments, close ties to relevant actors and affected groups, and the capacity to coordinate decisive interventions. To pass on knowledge and experience, a cross-generational organizing project is essential.

The challenge for revolutionary politics is combining short-term opportunities with long-term transformational strategies. The latter achieve material success, serve as examples of the feasibility of left ideas and permanently ground them within society. They enable the adoption of emancipatory social relations and provide a practical perspective beyond the tristesse of contemporary capitalism. The productive interplay of opportunities and long-term strategies makes small ruptures in the system possible. Small ruptures are key milestones in our politics. Thereby, we mean changes that systematically enhance and broaden our scope of action and societal counter power: (1) They shift the horizon of the possible (2) They achieve a real improvement of living conditions (3) Within them, people organize in structures that are capable of acting and asserting themselves. Only by connecting these dimensions, political achievements may become fault lines within the system. Ruptures exhaust or even break the existing rules to make the unimaginable imaginable, without shaking the fundamental conditions. Not every reform we accomplish against the state is a small rupture. But, the latter is the foundation for successful revolutionary processes. The campaign "Deutsche Wohnen und Co. Enteignen" is an example of politics that point towards a small rupture: The referendum regarding the expropriation of large real estate groups makes expropriation and socialization as real prospects graspable. Its realization would mean significant improvements for renters and has in fact enforced short-term material concessions. The project is more than just a campaign because it also provides a frame for organizing tenants and urban activists in lasting structures that are capable of action.

The relation between opportunities and transformation in moments of uprising is especially complex and far-reaching. Uprisings are a specific form of opportunity. At times they mark the difference between today and tomorrow. They develop a highly symbolic and motivating power and are capable of destabilizing power relations. But they are threatened by repressive violence and the logic of military escalation. Therefore, organized structures and a societal foundation are important to pursue an emancipatory project that can reach beyond short-term dynamics.

Uprisings unfold their actual revolutionary character when they cross the boundaries of a purely social or political conflict and encompass all societal areas. In those situations, means such as blockades, sabotage and political strikes are especially important. Additionally, previously established self-governed structures can outgrow themselves, pointing the way to real change. Uprisings without such material and structural foundations remain a flash in the pan. A revolutionary uprising is a struggle fought by an overwhelming majority against the minority of the ruling class.

With this in mind, we aim for moments in which the power lies on the street. Even though it sounds truly challenging: We must recognize opportunities and do what seems impossible - otherwise opportunities will either flash by or be seized by reactionary forces. This requires us to be rebellious and ready to dare breaking with the status quo as revolutionary subjects. Yet, it is also dangerous to lose ourselves in the hope for these moments, aimlessly looking for opportunities. Such an approach can wear us

down and lead to resignation. Especially in times of dynamic crises, we must handle both as subjects and also as an organization: Being open to dynamic situations while simultaneously pursuing the long-term transformation with the necessary perseverance.

3. Counter Power between majority and minority

One reason for the current crisis of the societal left is the absence of counter power. We understand counterpower as the capacity to disrupt decisions and policies of the ruling class but also to implement our own solutions. This requires the interplay of groups across the left. The plurality of movements and organizations is not a problem that can be solved through the leadership of one organization. We place our bets on the strengthening of left movements as a whole, to connect and foster trust among them. Our task, as the organized radical left, is to perpetuate the experiences of the movement and lift them to a new level. That distinguishes us from individualistic-moralizing approaches within the left. Advocates of the latter exhaust themselves in instructions for personal behavioral change, without developing an idea of collectively overcoming oppressive relations.

Dual power develops in political struggles. When people come together not only with joint convictions but also with a shared material interest, these struggles become especially powerful: At strikes at the workplace, in conflicts around basic needs such as housing, health, care and energy, or in struggles against discrimination, for self-determination and jurisdictional equality. In these struggles for social equality and freedom arises the belief of being able to change one's own living conditions. They enable us to appeal to broad parts of the population and, thus seek for majorities supporting radical politics.

But: The radical left is structurally in a minority position in the capitalist centers. This affects the relation to the Global South, but also the relation to many interests of the majority of society here. Both dimensions are aggravated because the capitalist promise of perpetual progress reaches its limitations in the wake of the climate crisis. The material preconditions for global justice dwindle. The desire for security, authoritarianism, and closed borders grows and is driven by right-wing narratives - on the costs of people in the Global South, but also of migrants and Women, inter-, trans- agender and nonbinary persons here. In contrast to the green modernization project or the reactionary project, we do not promise anyone the endless growth of material wealth nor that their own way of life can remain unchanged. Anyone who does this deceives themselves and others - and (sub)consciously positions themselves on the wrong side of the barricade. We need to step into conflict with the majority society over that, if we want to seriously fight for global climate justice and against the emerging fortress capitalism.

Nevertheless, we are convinced that the conditions here are not without potential rupture lines. Therefore, we do not retreat into a supposed radical position of pure criticism, even in the light of our minority position. That is because the rupture lines can be deepened by radical but conveyable politics. Climate Crisis, pandemic and war: The Global North is not an isle of stability anymore either, in which the life of most people could continue undisturbed and untouched. Here too, contradictions lie in the hegemonic mode of producing and living. Here too, the question of who will pay the costs of the crises arises. We live in the midst of a planetary crisis. Under these conditions, a revolution is the only possibil-

ity to ensure a good life for everyone. Instead of abiding by moral indictment, we must intervene - assertively and radically. For that, we need to seek alliances with the affected people and those still adhering to humanity and solidarity.

In doing so, we continually reevaluate the choice of our means. When it comes to the socialization of social infrastructure, for example, housing, our goal coincides with the interests of the vast majority. Yet, even there, a militant escalation may be necessary, depending on the situation. On the other hand, even from a minority position, a broad and conveyable project might be sensible. The Seebrücke⁴ may have never been capable of gaining majorities. Nonetheless, it gave many people a point of entrance for concrete solidarity. A context-dependent tendency towards accessibility and the struggles of the many does not mean a rejection of militancy. Black Lives Matter has shown this impressively: Even people who do not directly suffer from police violence can understand when a police station burns. The better we manage to create new connections and make excluded voices audible as well as approachable and tangible in concrete struggles, the more freely we can choose our means.

4. Socialization as a directional demand and strategy

The unconditional commitment to global justice and the radical democratization of society are therefore often material contradictions. A transformative project can help meet this contradiction: A shared vision connects struggles and actors toward a societal block. Such a project is also an indicator: Who is included and considered in the struggle for justice? What kind of utopias are developed? Here, too, we see our task as uncompromisingly representing the interests of minorities and the oppressed without abandoning the aspiration toward a project that is capable of winning a majority.

A transformative left-wing hegemony project is currently barely recognizable. Nevertheless, struggles for the socialization of housing and other social infrastructures point towards the outline of such a project. Socialization as a transformative demand and strategy is central to the build-up of a left-wing hegemony project. It may lead out of the helplessness of the left, because it shows the possibility of a solidaric future, even under the conditions of global crises. That distinguishes a left-wing hegemony project from "green" capitalism as well as the right-wing project. The latter two only provide responses to the crises for the cost of closing borders, and ever-increasing militarization and oppression.

Socialization means the comprehensive democratization of production and reproduction by liberating it from the control of state and capital. The former operates on three levels: (1) a change of the property structure from private to collective ownership; (2) a change of the political control from privately dictated to democratic (3) a change of the intended purpose from profit maximization to the satisfaction of needs.

⁴ Seebrücke is a decentralized international movement founded in 2018 to protest the European politics of fortification and the criminalization of migration and civil sea rescue.

Nationalization does not automatically equate to progress. Experiences with state-run companies show that they often operate under the same conditions as private capital. Socialization is thus an important transformative demand because it replaces the dualism of state or market with collective ownership. When employees, users and tenants administrate themselves and consider global interests as well as the society as a whole, the revolutionary potential of socialization is realized.

Currently, capitalism prevents democratic decisions over climate-harming production, and enforces permanent growth, emissions and resource consumption. An economy that is socialized and based on climate justice operates according to the actual wants and needs of the people, not according to constraints of growth or profit. It must be compatible with the planetary boundaries and the globally just distribution of resources.

Socialization of social reproduction is an important component of a feminist and solidaric economy, in which the care economy is strongly enhanced in status and justly distributed. Socialized, democratic administration also allows enforcing antiracist principles. Structurally racist functions would be replaced and explicit racism fought. That does not mean that the strategy of socialization solves all societal problems and oppressive relations such as patriarchy and racism. Neither does it automatically dissolve global inequality. Socialization is a starting point enabling a new way of living, producing and encountering each other.

Socialization is, from our perspective, suited to function as a central axis of a left-wing hegemony project, because as a strategy it improves living conditions and pushes back state and capital in the socialized areas for the benefit of democratic self-administration. As a transformative demand, socialization has a utopian excess. It shows how we imagine a society after the revolution. All the stronger is the resistance by state and capital against socialization projects such as Deutsche Wohnen und Co. enteignen. This strengthens our conviction that it is not enough to solely speak about socialization. We must put it into practice and fight for it - together, disobedient, and in solidarity.

III. Update of our strategic orientation

In the struggles of the last years, we have primarily achieved discursive successes. Left-wing forces have managed to increase the support for progressive positions in many areas of society. This enabled us to win individual concessions, such as the abolition of §219a⁵, i.e. the abolition of the ban on advertising abortion. At the same time, material successes were rare, real counter power was barely developed. Instead of creating small ruptures, buzzwords from our struggles are symbolically taken up and appropriated by the supposedly green modernization project. The global rise of the right shows how willingly these concessions are nullified to stabilize the ruling class. All the more reason to develop the ability to defend our successes against attack.

In this sense, from a radical minority position, we want to combine short-term capacity for action with the long-term organization of counter power that does not remain symbolic nor pleading. Shifts in discourse remain a relevant part of our practice. Yet they must be measured by their potential for small ruptures and real change. We need to systematically expand the organizing and disrupting elements of counter power, if we want to advance a left-wing hegemony project. Only then can we enforce changes. In the past, our approaches often remained unconnected. Areas of tension emerged time and again: between winning majorities and fighting as a radical minority, between being anchored in society and the necessity for escalation, between rebellion and transformation. In the future, we must therefore improve in putting our different strategic approaches into a productive relationship with each other.

To determine this relationship, we need productive debates, within and outside of our organization. In the following sections, we therefore update our strategic and tactical compass. We did that for the first time in our "Zwischenstandspapier" in 2014⁶. Some of our approaches are still valid, others have been added or gained more relevance in our organization. The result is not a finished program, but a mixture of evaluations, new agreements, challenges and the collective seeking for answers to open questions.

1. Fighting Together

The struggle for a future of solidarity must be fought together on many levels and in many different ways. We will only be able to shift the balance of power and successfully raise questions of power through the cooperation of various left-wing forces in a social block. We are a long way from that. To create such a block we are active in a multitude of movements and struggles, often in the form of alliances. In the last few years, the character of these alliances has changed. Out of typical summit-alli-

5 §219a of the German criminal code forbade to advertise abortions. This also included informing on abortions as a medical service by doctors.

6 Our interim paper "IL on the move"

ances or alliances against the far right that were mostly composed of delegates of organized groups, hybrid forms have evolved with many individuals and few organizations. There are various reasons for this, some of which are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. Established actors of the societal left are significantly weakened. This coincides with political subjects that are rather involved in the short-term and as individuals, than in the long-term and collectively. Partly in response to this trend, other organized collectives have emerged that show little interest in building broad alliances. This challenges our practice in alliances.

In the past, our practice in alliances was often focused on campaigns coming to a head. We struggled with creating structures and places of solidarity that outlast short-term peaks in mobilization. Long-term organizing, which incorporates material interests to a greater extent, and the creation of sustainable (in-fra-)structures have become increasingly important for us to build counter power. Nonetheless, to converge and accelerate political struggles, moments of escalation are still necessary. These moments can be seeded in prepared campaigns, but also emerge during opportunities that require courageous interventions. Strengthening the spontaneous ability to act, while simultaneously being anchored in the long-term is the tension that we have to operate in.

Strategic Alliance Orientation

In the last ten years we repeatedly succeeded on the local and inter-regional level to participate in, or even initiate, broad alliances. We could repeatedly realize our ambition of bringing together various actors and being a point of connection for a broad spectrum of left-wing actors. In this way, we were able to organize effective interventions such as Blockupy⁷ or Unteilbar⁸ through the interplay of various left-wing forces. But, the strategic orientation for alliances becomes more complicated and challenging due to societal developments and the restructuring within the societal left.

Self-critically, we have to acknowledge that, within alliances of established groups, we have too often taken on the role of a project manager: Often we are rather occupied with maintaining alliances not meaningful political interventions and taking left-radical politics to the streets. It becomes increasingly common for us to be the only radical left-wing group in alliances. Civil society actors have disappeared during the multitude of crises. Other partners in the alliances have withdrawn, were partly integrated into the green modernization project or pursued a different political approach regarding alliances.

Newly emerging spaces offering politicization and organization often pursue a different approach to alliances. For the so-called "red groups" that have gained relevance in the last years it is more important to lead struggles, rather than strengthening varying actors in their entirety. They focus on their own self-assurance as a radical force by distinguishing themselves from moderate left-wing forces and supposedly turning towards the working class. Apart from a lack of willingness to make compromises, we

7 Blockupy was an anti-austerity alliance that included groups and organizations from Germany, Spain, Greece and other European countries. The alliance organized protests from 2012 to 2016, most of which were held in Frankfurt a.M. with the explicit aim to use civil disobedience to disrupt and block the daily business of the European Central Bank and other financial institutions.

8 Unteilbar was a broad anti-right alliance consisting of about 100 groups and organizations that organized large protests from 2018 to 2022. The largest protest was held in October 2018 in Berlin with about 240,000 participants.

have made the experience that they primarily enter alliances when they are able to dominate them. The other tendency are contexts with a strong focus on identity politics and the critique of power relations. Some of them are partly unwilling or unable to negotiate political differences. Diverging political positions are only perceived as lacking awareness or being morally problematic.

This distinction between the so-called "red groups" and contexts with a focus on identity politics got visible around the organization of the feminist strike. It also accompanies us in other struggles. Considering these changed conditions, we renew the promise of our political approach: We take a stance for a pluralistic left that finds its point of departure in the vitality of movements as a force for social change. It comes together in common struggles instead of appropriating movements and instrumentalizing them for its own organizational interests.

Our practice in alliances is also complicated by the shifts among the ruling class. The Green Party and (environmental) NGOs have largely committed themselves to the project of modernized fortress capitalism. As a result, they have become political opponents in some areas of practice. As in Lützerath⁹, for example, it is important to deepen the fractures within this block and not to abandon its social basis. Other organizations such as trade unions may be more open to social movements but tend to be caught up in the distribution struggles of the economic transformation and see their own power dwindle.

Working in alliances will continue to be a substantial part of our practice in the future. Particularly in the East of Germany and in rural areas, left-wing politics are unthinkable without them. Facing the rise of the right it is a matter of survival to come together in alliances. Here we must develop the ability to secure successes against reactionary attacks and prevent further deterioration. In the future, we want to take a closer look at the merits of a specific alliance and withdraw ourselves before it becomes an end in itself. At the same time, a multitude of crises affect an increasing amount of people - whether it is poverty, drought or people fleeing war. Traditional alliances reach their limits here. We look for alliances and forms of organization that bring together and involve those who are affected and those in solidarity with them.

Campaign platforms

Within alliances, we encounter fewer delegates from groups and increasingly more individuals. Over the years, this development has evolved into a distinct political form that we call campaign platforms. We have contributed to the emergence of platforms such as Blockupy, Ende Gelände, the Feminist Strike, and Deutsche Wohnen und Co. Enteignen. Our politics mostly consists of a combination of organizing and working within alliances. These political spaces are often used for concrete political projects. They do not require being part of a group and provide a low threshold for participation. For many people, they are a (first) offer to organize themselves. This enables important emancipatory experiences that go beyond traditional meeting spaces in alliances. In fact, throughout the last years, many of our comrades

⁹ Lützerath was a hamlet in a lignite region in the west of Germany between Aachen and Düsseldorf, that had to be eradicated to make way for the expansion of the opencast lignite mine Garzweiler II. In an attempt to prevent that, Lützerath was occupied from 2020 until its eviction in January 2023. About 2000 People joined the protest and tried to prevent the eviction.

have politicized themselves within these campaign platforms, have then joined us or have done a significant part of their political work in these spaces. These platforms create a stronger organizing element in our campaigns. This is necessary for building counter power and therefore greatly benefits us. With and through campaign platforms we have therefore achieved a lot.

Yet these platforms also challenge us. Conflicts are innate between individuals, for whom the platforms become the first or primary organization, and delegates of groups. This is because discussing positions that are determined outside the alliance tends to be the exception and often leads to perceived or real hierarchies. As an independent organization, they also become a place for strategic discussions and decisions for some of our comrades. Positions are then no longer worked out together within our organization, but rather brought back to our notice. This shifts the place of political determination and practice to the platforms. The fact that we as organized left-wing radicals are not identical to the movements is lost in the process. This difference is prone to become blurred in the new form of alliance.

The open character simultaneously is a strength and potential weakness. It is difficult to involve and retain large numbers of activists, some of whom just loosely associate with the platform. That is because the projects, their practices and structures have formed in the wake of a specific moment in the movement. The political spaces created are volatile in comparison to conventional political organizations. Resilient and lasting relationships are rare. We recognize these platforms as organizational forms of their time: Considering their low entrance and exit barriers, they match broader societal tendencies. At the same time, they cannot replace the commitment in traditional political organization. We must ensure that we do not simply use platforms to build up our future allies and thereby conceal both the weakness of the level of organization within left-wing movements and the crisis of the left.

On top of that, more political links are needed between the mostly monothematic platforms. An overarching interpretation and strategic orientation is necessary. The latter has to manifest itself through concrete connections in common struggles and events. Lately we have not lived up to the challenge of this task.

Organizing and campaigns

To build up societal counter power that enables revolutionary processes, we must become better in creating long-term and left structures. These must last independent of movement cycles and enhance our social base. Based on this insight we have expanded a practice in the last years that is often referred to as organizing. So far we are mainly active in neighborhood initiatives, tenant organizations and struggles in the health sector.

The point of departure are struggles that are rooted in the everyday life of people and depart at material interests or a shared desire. The experiences with the multitude of crises of our time generate contradictions. They arise in conflicts around (un)paid care work and labor as well as struggles in regards to housing, health, the care industry and energy or in struggles against discrimination, for self-determination and jurisdictional equality. Here the objective is to expand the fault lines into whole areas of conflict, in which people politicize and organize themselves. In that way, counter power can be built up through self-empowerment and committed social relations.

Increasingly more left radical groups turn towards this strategic approach. At many places initiatives emerged that focus on long-term organizing, e.g. in neighborhoods, and reject campaigns as a mere reaction to events. Such long-term work at the base is important as a transformational strategy. It accomplishes real achievements, proves the feasibility of left-wing ideas, creates social anchoring as well as solidaric social relations and shows an alternative future. At the same time, we see the threat of mimicking the role of social workers and our practices therefore becoming a sort of damage control. In order to give organizing processes hope, perspective and real ability to assert oneself - to create ruptures - we need campaigns that come to a head. They open up perspectives beyond organizing and direct organizing processes towards collective disobedience.

We see a good example for a productive relationship between campaigns and organizing in the campaign Deutsche Wohnen und Co. Enteignen. The Referendum is based on organizing tenants in the houses of large real estate groups for years, and therefore on the potential of real political power. At the same time, the campaign is a good example of the challenges when working towards counter power. Right from the start, the initiative aimed to further advance the organization of tenants. The urban political movement in Berlin should be in a better organizational position than before the campaign, even in the case of electoral defeat. Its visibility however, is owed precisely to it operating in institutionalized political processes. Without the prospect of actually enforcing its goals on the level of the state, the popularity of the campaign would have been unthinkable. The situation of Deutsche Wohnen und Co. Enteignen describes our strategic search very well: We have to learn to build up counter power ourselves, to increase our independence from parties and parliaments.

Spaces of solidarity

Spaces of resistance that address people's everyday lives and needs and organize solidarity despite all adversity play an important role in building counter power. In social centers, tenant assemblies, neighborhood stores, or poly clinics solidarity is experienced, shaped and lived. In contrast to the usual logic of individualization, isolation, competition and exclusion an idea of what could be emerges. Ideally, these places are the material foundation for revolutionary subjectivities and the coming post-capitalist infrastructure.

So far, our practice in this regard is severely underdetermined. But especially in times of exacerbating crises and extreme individualization and isolation, it is important to organize spaces of resistance. The debates around social centers were briefly rekindled in the wake of the European Financial Crisis and the lived examples in Southern Europe. Beyond individual contributions to the debate regarding seed forms¹⁰ and Commoning, there has been little collective communication since. Our own role in building these structures is not settled, even though we help to shape, found and use them almost everywhere. In addition, we often experience that comrades pursue setting up these structures, for example a poly clinic or housing projects, disattached from the political practice in our organization. Occasionally the

10 New, alternative forms of interaction emerging within the old system.

time spent on these initiatives competes with the time used for our own organization. To some degree, because our kind of strategic understanding is of little use in these meticulous build-up processes.

What role do spaces of solidarity play in our strategy? According to what criteria do we weigh our support and how do we attain the necessary resources? How do we prevent the retreat into niche projects and the mere cushioning of welfare-state budget cuts? How can places of solidarity be asserted against powerful interests and protected from attacks? What is the relationship between solidarity and protest at these places and what possibilities to link them are there that do not undermine their function in regards to solidarity nor significantly endanger the existence of these spaces? These questions need to be solved in the coming years. In the face of a defensive situation and escalating crises, they are a matter of survival for the radical left.

2. Fighting Disobediently

Disrupting and actively resisting societal normality is the starting point for deepening the fault lines in power relations. Disobedience is the prerequisite for a radical upheaval of the status quo. For that, we rely on a politics of self-empowerment of the exploited and oppressed. Such politics is not concerned with the legality, but rather with the legitimacy of its own actions and thereby disputes the state's monopoly on the use of force. As we have already stated in our interim paper from 2014, the possibility and communicability of mass disobedience as a potential radicalization of the many is especially important for us in this context. Nonetheless, we have also experienced that some forms of action are reaching their limits. To build more actual counter power in the coming years, we have to assess our experiences and further develop our forms of action: Has our practice become ritualized at some point? Have we thereby forgotten how to act decisively in open situations? How can we connect actual disruptions with broad political resistance in the new strike movements and thereby radicalize these struggles?

Civil disobedience

Actions of mass disobedience were and are a central component of our practice. Openly saying what we do - and doing what we say. Encouraging each other, fighting resistantly and radically. Not to be intimidated by the state and its institutions. We can live up to this ambition: Mass disobedience has been established and has become an independent practice in many social movements. What only a few people used to do is now en vogue. That is a good thing. In the climate justice movement in particular, mass actions have radicalized the movement. They have given strength and courage not to give up and continue fighting, even if the escalation of the climate crisis cannot be stopped.

Yet the last few years have also shown us our limits. Due to the periodic character of actions, they became ritualized. The actions were easier to control, and thus, less powerful. The focus on discourse as well as the wish to appeal as broadly as possible have pushed the radicalization and self-empowerment of those involved, and hence the formation of resistant subjectivities, into the background. The actions

became large-scale choreographies that were often limited to sitting blockades and the smooth execution of those. We want to lift this restriction on our ability to take action.

That does not mean mass blockades cannot be a tactical instrument anymore. In many cases - whether it is blocking a Nazi demonstration or the headquarters of a corporation - they are still a radical practice to perform mass action. Yet in fields such as the climate justice movement, that has broadened and grown while receiving large support at times, we think it is necessary to adjust the means to disrupt more effectively and be less controllable. We are not alone with this realization. The drawn conclusions differ significantly, though. Some have largely discarded their political contents in favor of addressing as many people as possible. A radical left critique of society falls by the wayside, the political antagonists are no longer named. Others, like the last generation, focus on creating incalculable moments rather than doing mass actions. With the determined actions of a few, they disrupt the everyday lives of many people. They count on convincing broad parts of society of the urgency of the climate crisis through an orchestrated sacrifice and subsequent repressions. Pursuing those in power to give in with such a strategy? This bet does not seem to pay off. It misses the simultaneous organization of mass support and a political communication that provides a left alternative to the status quo.

We agree on the necessity to adjust actions more towards the direct disruption of operating procedures in companies or everyday life. This also means expanding the repertoire of mass civil disobedience beyond sitting blockades more frequently. In that matter, the choice of means cannot be detached from the societal power balance. Both in the choice of targets and in our claim for legitimacy, we struggle for communicability. Yet that does not mean to please everyone at all times. Rather, it must be about forging new links between different levels and forms of action, giving space to the new and unpredictable, developing militant subjectivities, driving forward the radicalization of social struggles, and also making ourselves more capable of taking action in the long run. We no longer want to solely sit in front of power stations or factories while the capitalist catastrophe continues. Together with the many, we must disrupt, appropriate, and dispose.

Open Situations

In our search for ruptures and fault lines, we keep coming across the unexpected or the unknown. In the age of crises, this tendency is massively increasing. The last few years have only given us a first impression: A pandemic that turns our every-day-life upside down within a few days and massively limits our ability to act; the climate crisis that becomes a real threat in the Ahrtal¹¹, raising questions of practical solidarity; the election of Thomas Kemmerich as Minister President of Thuringia through the votes of the AFD as a first glimpse of future dam breaks; or new, digitally initiated forms of mass mobilization and turmoil on the streets. The latter are currently often influenced by conspiracy theories and are openly right-wing, and yet also bear the possibility of being protests against poor working conditions, rising energy costs, femicide, or racist police violence.

11 The Ahrtal is a valley in the south-east of Germany, that fell victim to a major flood in July 2021. The flood left a trail of destruction killing 12 people and destroying several buildings and large parts of the infrastructure.

There is no magic formula for these spontaneous and dynamic situations. In the past, we were not always able to keep pace with the developments nor to communicate sufficiently to use these situations as political opportunities. We were primarily able to act spontaneously when it came to defensive struggles. We could prevent the worst but seldom use moments to advance the societal left as a whole. In many other situations, we were surprised and allowed ourselves to be surprised. Hence, one task for the future is developing, stronger than before, a form of determined attitude and radical subjectivity to be able and willing to act spontaneously in such situations. This requires courage, spontaneity and conviction as well as intuition and the ability to weigh chances and risks. We can use our strengths for that: Our experiences in organizing processes, mutual trust, our knowledge and networks with various actors. At the same time, there are questions that, especially in open situations, must perhaps be answered anew or at the very least very consciously: With whom do we fight, with what means and what does militancy mean for that? Instead of giving ideological answers in advance, a concrete analysis of the given situation and what potential objectives it entails is needed. That is the only way to meaningfully determine what applies more than ever: With all means necessary.

Strike

In many areas of capitalist reproduction and production, especially in the precarious service sector and public services, the contradiction between the capitalist pressure for exploitation and the needs of the ones employed there has escalated in recent years. In particular in the care work and labor and the public transport sectors, but also the educational sectors, powerful strikes and protests emerged - the seeds of a new strike movement.

The refusal of labor is a powerful material lever. Hard-fought grassroots strikes of workers can be more than a fight for wages and labor conditions. They disrupt capitalist normality and can create spaces for collectivity, politicization and organizing. Struggles can connect and foster practical solidarity. To use this lever beyond collective bargaining, political strikes must be enforced as a possibility in the medium term.

Together with other networks and groups we have supported and accompanied labor struggles in solidarity throughout the past years, for example in the health sector, public transport or at Amazon. We were able to contribute to the politicization of strikes, but could barely get out of the support role. The full-time structures in the trade unions are a regular obstacle to that. Simultaneously, we have tried to also establish social strike as leverage in social movements, for example in the feminist strike and climate strike. Although this strengthened the idea of political strike in the movements, the concrete implementation has barely been successful so far. A broad societal base to give political strikes the necessary impact is still lacking.

When refusal and disruption develop at various points in society, it gives rise to a real potential for counter power that must be built up and brought together. Our perspective is clear: we want to create stronger links between different strike moments, politicize collective bargaining strikes and strengthen the material and social basis in social strikes - from wage strikes to rent strikes to metropolitan strikes.

3. Fighting in solidarity and organized

For us, organizing ourselves means to weave networks of solidarity and collectivity, developing a common attitude and culture of comradeship. This involves friction and conflict but also the promise of fighting together for liberation from the oppression that pervades us. Building such relationships of solidarity is not merely another aspect but permeates through all of our politics: How do we become revolutionary subjects together? How can a perspective of global liberation be organized transnationally? How are politics at eye level possible in the context of inequality?

Transnational

In a global system of exploitation and oppression, the struggle for liberation must also be global. From a decolonial perspective we want to learn from the struggles of this world, question and cross the national boundaries of our political action. We especially want to set ourselves in relation to uprisings and revolutionary projects, like the self-administered structures in North and East Syria/Rojava and the Zapatista region. The destructive role of Germany is obvious: weapon supplies and military missions to support dictatorships on the one hand and the destruction of livelihoods in the Global South through the German economy model and in Southern Europe through European crisis policies on the other hand. We understand revolting against this imperial devastation and organizing the broadest possible resistance not merely as an expression of solidarity. We are at the heart of the beast. From that accrues a special responsibility but also the power to act.

Neither our analyses nor our strategies would be complete or even sufficient if we do not overcome Eurocentric ideas and integrate the perspectives of our comrades from the Global South. It is our task as the organized and radical left to create spaces of critical and solidaric negotiation and reflection. Moreover, we must ask ourselves the question of how we provide resources and practically support organizing processes, for example when our Eastern European comrades forge transnational and feminist alliances under the most adverse conditions - not as a charity but as a way to self-position us within these struggles. At the same time, the growth of local counter power is important for a left-wing hegemony project, globally and locally. It is not about the question of whether the focus is international or local - the two dimensions are inseparable. Capital operates across borders and relations of exploitation are transnational. The same applies to the emergence of cracks and fault lines in the capitalist system.

The crisis protests against European austerity politics were an important experience for us. Within the context of Blockupy, we have fought our struggles for a moment on the European level. Yet it has not worked out to initiate a more binding and transnational organizing process within the framework of Commune of Europe. A significant reason was that the determination of our politics continued to be nationally grounded and internationalism was rather thought of as a north-south solidarity. The platform Transnational Social Strike was also founded in this period. Despite crises protests tailing off, the platform succeeded in maintaining transnational structures. It is where we encounter many of our former companions and new comrades once again, mainly from Europe but also from other parts of the world. Here we will primarily look for linkages between our struggles to develop an outset for a transnational

practice in the next years. We also seek to forge closer ties with those asking the same questions as we do and sharing a political understanding with us. Additionally, we will consolidate and intensify processes in which we learn and exchange ideas with our comrades from the Kurdish liberation movement who already operate transnationally.

Radically antiracist

Antiracist struggles have not been this diverse and visible for a long time. They affect all dimensions of societal life and are part of global struggles for life itself. It is not just about a reaction to racist murders. It is about the interplay of institutional and everyday racism that permeates all spaces, including left-wing spaces. They are struggles of desire and rage against the state order that is enforced by cops with deadly violence in everyday life, against humiliation, against categorization. Based on the experiences of these struggles, there is a broad controversy about identity and class politics. We reject the false juxtaposition of "economy" and "culture", "class" and "identity". Racism cannot be reduced to an attitude or a discourse nor an instrument for the exploitation and division of the working class. Racialization is produced through images and language, as well as used by the capitalist system and institutionally organized through the distribution of rights and access. Racism is a comprehensive social question, produced in structures and inscribed in individuals.

Radically antiracist practice fights the unequal global conditions, acknowledges the interconnectedness between global and local labor divisions, defends the right to freedom of movement and supports those that practically enforce this freedom. It also affects the conditions among us, in the Interventionist Left and the societal left at large. Taking the post-migrant reality as a point of departure, the antiracist movements question the normal state of society. In doing so, they challenge their white German comrades in the radical left and make it clear: Racism is not only the problem of a few, even though it affects some more than others. To live as free and equal people we must become others. Therefore we engage with the way racism inscribes itself into us and our connections: with varying experiences regarding the police and other state institutions, with the interweaving of political ideologies and economic relations such as racism, capitalism and neoliberalism.

One thing is clear: Whoever wants to overcome the racialized and oppressive relations is dependent on including the knowledge of those oppressed. We have a critical perspective on the concept of (passive) allyship that is propagated in parts of the left. We counter this with the active relationship of comradeship. That is because the racist state of normality can only be overcome if racism also marks the struggles of those not immediately affected because they do not want to be part of a racist society. BI-PoC and migrants have always been comrades in social and emancipatory struggles. We neither want to stand voiceless alongside the struggles nor dominate them. Knocking over the literal paddy wagon, fighting in solidarity, in inequality but at eye level, that is our aspiration.

Living comradeship

Within our joint organization, we encounter each other as comrades. We share a political desire for radical political change. A long breath is needed for that. We want to enable each other to become political subjects with such a long breath. We are aware of the adversities of everyday life, the isolation and individualization, the exhaustion and the impositions that are forced upon us by the social conditions. For us, to be organized together therefore also means to promise each other to walk this path of the long breath together and collectively oppose (our) powerlessness.

We work towards a culture of seriousness that is necessary for this path. This has something to do with (self-)discipline but nothing with militant toughness. Seriousness also means being caring, warm and connected. It does not mean that, in false mindfulness, we stop letting each other make mistakes, as is suggested in the neoliberal ideology. Neoliberalism leads to the moralization of the political and places the problem in individual misbehavior. The unfulfillable demand for self-optimization leads to isolation, individualization and retreat. Instead, we want a form of collectivity in which critique and self-critique are not understood as an individual pressure to change but as an expression of solidarity, liveliness, kindness and commitment between comrades.

One aspect of comradeship is our attempt to address structural discrimination within the organization. To this end, we have created various formats in the last years and comrades have taken these on themselves. Gender-separated spaces, the internal self-organization of BiPoC and exchanges about discrimination experiences in regard to class origin are instruments for making discrimination addressable. This makes it possible to meet in inequality but at eye level nonetheless. We have collectivized the experiences with criticism of masculinity and articulated a minimum standard on that base. An important step for us as an organization was to develop a guideline for dealing with sexualized violence and creating approachable structures on the foundation of solidarity-based partiality with those affected. We are aware that neither a guideline nor coming together in certain positions can replace the political stance and responsibility of any individual comrade. It remains a constant task to fill the guideline with life and sharpen our understanding of how we want to deal with patriarchal violence and perpetrators or the concrete meaning of solidarity-based partiality. In cases of sexualized violence, we want to take collective responsibility. This includes the possibility of making mistakes when doing so. To learn from mistakes and good examples as well as being able to negotiate different assessments, we need an exchange within and outside our organization. This is the only way to create renewed and resilient networks of solidarity.

Networks of solidarity are also tied between different generations. Several generations of struggles converged into the founding of the Interventionist Left. That has always meant a concurrence of different experiences and political traditions. We view these differences in knowledge and experience as an opportunity to learn from each other. Yet in the last years, we have engaged too little in how knowledge can be collectivized and experiences made accessible. Partly because of that, we strive to expand our educational work. We hope that this will enable us to evaluate struggles, strengthen our analytical skills, better position ourselves within the societal left and develop a shared historical consciousness. This will help us to remain calm in turbulent times when events rapidly accelerate and conflicts escalate.

Especially in times of increasing repression, solidarity is more important than ever. The criminalization of political protest, the shattering of left-wing groups by the application of terrorism paragraphs and the expansion of police authority are a taste of the fierceness of conflicts to come.

Of course, the boundaries of the organization are not the boundaries of comradeship. Our promise also applies externally: On the basis of shared goals, we meet in solidarity in the movements and struggles, despite all the differences in experiences and backgrounds. The path to revolution can only be taken together and in the plurality of the many. Especially in times when the wind is rough and the horizon dark, a radical left is needed to show that a completely different, a better world is possible. So we set out to search, discover, try out, fail, improve and win.