

4. Communication and Education

Sometimes it seems as if the (radical) left in Germany recruits itself mostly from white middle-class sociology students (like me, hehe). What this leads to is an acute academic intellectualism. When reading flyers, manifestos, books or simply talking to us, people simply do not understand. And even within the scene, those who can talk the smartest gain the highest esteem. We have to break it down into simple bits, pick people up where they are and give out our radical, little folk zines. Thanks UK for this piece of D.I.Y.!



6. Modesty and Self-Reflection

I believe modesty and critical self-reflection like this would do us quiet good. All too often there is self-glorification, the hallucination of false unity and in order to achieve this the formation of alliance for exactly this sake: Pushing your brand if you are Attac or solid' or satisfying your ego or personal career if you were summoned to be the "movement's leader". However an undogmatic, open and public culture is completely absent here in Germany. Mainly because it would challenge the mentioned privileged and their political practices.



8. Autonomous Spaces

Compare an autonomous center in Germany with a social center in the UK. When stepping into the Common Place in Leeds I feel a warm and welcoming atmosphere and the attempt to be inclusive to the neighbourhood and the local community. Maybe also a space to charge up, if you're emotionally fucked. An autonomous squat in Germany: Smokey, dark, black, dirty, lame tags and graffiti all over. The neighbourhood mostly wants to get rid of this "dirty blob" and the extremely rigid norms of a restrictive subculture wears out activists and newcomers alike. Maybe we need a norm to question all norms?

"Wrong life cannot be lived rightly". Says Adorno. And so does the great part of the (radical) left in Germany. Radical everyday alternatives as practiced in workshops and the build-up of the Camp for Climate Action have a hard time here. But isn't that exactly what we need? Similar to a reflection on COP15 I would say: What if... we mobilised 100,000 people to act more locally in trans-local solidarity, to provide much needed help to create new and support existing anti-capitalist ways of production, approaches of relating to each other, of actively resisting and creating autonomous spaces for all to skill-share and educate each other in order to imagine and approach the utopia of a liberated society? In the end this is what this whole article is about. Striving towards our utopia of a political culture and practice.

Glimmers of Hope

And if it was not for all the glimmers of hope that I personally often find in the UK and in you activists: The political culture and practice that I experienced in Copenhagen the last weeks would force me to look into a bleak future. With few exceptions there was everything but a move towards the goals formulated in this article. But I guess everybody can do the balance themselves. Lastly it remains to be noted that of course none of the statements above is absolute. Maybe I have dramatised and exaggerated. But for me the tendencies are clear. Of course it's not black and white. UK is no paradise and Germany not hell. If you drop by: Get in touch and check out the anti-nuclear resistance, GMO-field squatters, occupations of animal-lab construction sites or woodland protest-camps against airport expansion or coal-fired heating-pipelines. To name just a few nice little projects. So... Be on the watch, wherever you are. First published in Shift Magazine #8 (<http://shiftmag.co.uk/>)

5. Setting up Temporary Spaces of Resistance

While we are at it. Have you ever seen a private business pulling up a marquee with a caterpillar on a Camp for Climate Action? And Dixie toilets? And essentially important Diesel generators? I have! Climate Camp 2008 in Germany. And all this shit was organized by self-declared experts. How about self-organisation? D.I.Y.? Collectively erecting this space of resistance? Pre-figurative politics in infrastructure? Little chance you get this over here. I am really happy to know that there are alternative over there in the UK, like the Activist Tat Collective...



7. Connecting Struggles

"Radical ecology?" "No, sorry I am an Antifa." Get what I mean? Lately I have been on an activist permaculture course in Devon. Queer-feminism, radical ecology, anti-racism, anti-capitalism and so on. It was all there. Shared passionately by all. Of course we have our preferences. But how absurd would the common German practice seem to pick whatever hot topic there is (Globalisation, G8, climate change) to push your own label-identity-politics or personal movement-esteem. Even worse if you don't even have a connection or passion to the issues itself anymore.

