



European Elections

The European elections are taking place in the context of increasing austerity. Every day we are subjected to the effects of the crisis brought about by global capitalist transformation. Governments, states and supranational structures, such as the European Community, deny rights and attack living conditions, acquired in years of struggle, in order to prop up capitalism and ensure that the corporations and banks do not pay the price for the situation they themselves created. Some of the problems we face include:

- Unemployment, related in particular to privatisation and outsourcing.
- The privatization of basic social services, with the consequence of an offer guaranteed only to those few who can afford it, and a low quality of services.
- Social atomization, in which everyone is forced to be responsible, creating competition between individuals in the daily struggle for existence.
- Jobs and other aspects of life are becoming more and more precarious; rights are denied daily.
- The consequence of this social model is the comeback of the patriarchal family, which imposes a subordinate role in society on women.
- Immigration is used as a pool of workers to exploit and enslave for the benefit of the bosses.
- Ruthless methods of production that cause devastation to both our lives and the environment.
- A society based on debt, in which the conditions of our existence are owned by the banks.
- Bureaucratization of society that guarantees the continuity of the political institutions and economic interests of the rich at the expense of the working class.

It is in this context that we are being asked to participate in the charade that calls itself a democracy. The only choices presented to us are ones that will continue the policies that benefit corporations, financial institutions and politicians. One of the main debates is about the role of the European Union itself. Some look to it as a way to resolve the crisis and maintain unity amongst people. Others argue that we need to retreat into our own borders in order to take back control of our own economies and political institutions. However, neither solutions will do anything more than reinforce the power of those who oppress us.

The European Union

The European Union has meant another layer of power over populations. Its main purpose is to serve the needs of corporations and financial institutions and is therefore an obstacle to the emancipation of the working class. The majority of the laws that people are now subjected to come from the European Parliament rather than the individual states. The EU does not need to respect local conditions and instead imposes their own vision for Europe based on the needs of capital. The vast majority of regulations have been to enhance the power of capital over the people. Very few policies have been directed at improving the social conditions of European populations. We have seen the way in which the EU has presided over the attack on the Greek



people and the raid of western capital on the assets of Eastern Europe. Any attempt by people to resist the encroachment of this superstate has been firmly resisted by individual states. For example, the state may refuse to allow people to vote on whether or not they want to remain within the EU or, if they do let them vote, the rig it so that the country remains in the EU. This was the case in Ireland, France and the Netherlands. In addition, the EU has created fortress Europe, closing its borders to the rest of the world, as well as trying to be one of the many self-appointed world policemen.

Withdrawal from the EU?

Given the way the problems created for us by the European Union, you might think the answer is to withdraw from this Union. However, the idea that the working class would be better off outside the EU, ruled by their own State, is a dangerous illusion. It is especially dangerous because of the fact that this is the position of the far right parties who are not remotely interested in resisting state power. Instead, their aim would be to install an even more authoritarian regime with even more repression.

Firstly, capitalism is global. The power of international corporations and banks, the major cause of the problems facing us, will not disappear if a country withdraws from the EU. The global processes which are at work, the movement of production and money across borders, motivated by the search for profits will continue. International institutions such as the IMF and World Bank will still have the power to impose austerity and policies that are against the interests of local populations. Human needs will take second place; it doesn't matter whether the country is within or outside the EU.

Secondly, the retreat behind national borders, a move driven by the xenophobic ideology of the far-right, will have serious consequences for the spirit of co-operation and solidarity between the working class of Europe. Ordinary people have a history of supporting each other regardless of national origin. This tradition will be undermined as people put what appears to be their self-interest over mutual aid. It may not lead to actual war, but it has already led to a mentality of competition and conflict that will only further undermine the effectiveness that comes from a united European working class. A divided working class will benefit those who have caused the problems we are facing in the first place, such as austerity and repressive measures.

Many who support withdrawal from the EU seem to think that we can return to some kind of Golden Age of prosperity. However, this is another illusion; this Golden Age never existed. They forget that their own state has never been their friend; it has always been the instrument of imposing the interests of a small minority on the majority. All states operate by taking power from the people. It doesn't matter if the State is a few miles or thousands of miles away; it will still be out of our control, operating in its own interests.

The Anarchist Alternative



Anarchists reject both the options presented to us: supporting the EU by voting in the European Elections or campaigning for withdrawal. This is because of our basic critique of what the State represents. The European Union, like all states big or small, is based on the giving up of power to a minority who use this power in the interests of the corporate and financial elite. In addition, the internationalism that the EU represents is the unity of this elite against the European working class. We propose both an alternative method of organising society as well as an alternative internationalism that extends to the whole planet.

Anarchists oppose the top-down approach adopted by the State and leftist parties. We need to promote non-hierarchical forms of organisation and methods of organising. The future organisation of society that we envision will be one of that is bottom-up based on groups which federate with each other and co-ordinate on an international level, independent of any current statist structure whether national or at a European level. This will include all areas of economic and social life such as the production, distribution and consumption of goods and the provision of services such as health and education. We need to take control of our own education such that it helps to promote our emancipation from authoritarian ideologies such as religion, nationalism, and cult of the leader.

In order to achieve this aim of complete political, economic, social and cultural transformation we need to build on and strengthen the international networks and co-ordinations that we already have. We need to take concrete action where we live and work but which contributes to a global strategy. Devising such a strategy to fight successfully against the global forces of oppression and exploitation is not an easy task. However, it is a necessity and there are a number of steps we can take. These steps can be taken by all of those who want to create a new society, no matter country they live in. We are all facing similar attacks so we can have a common strategy which can be adapted to local conditions.

- We have to fight back against borders working as human filter but let capital move across. Our proposal is to abolish all borders within countries and between countries which are limiting free movement of people.
- United fight against the banks by a universal refusal to pay debts.
- Civil disobedience against all repressive laws which take away our human rights.
- Strengthen and extend the current struggles against the increasing precariousness of living and working conditions.
- Resist all attempts to divide us according to race, sex or age.
- Co-ordinate struggles that are against common employers across borders.
- Resist privatisation of public services
- Promote alternative networks of production and distribution
- Extend international solidarity for those being criminalised as a result of social struggles.



The fight against austerity and the solutions proposed by politicians, both pro and anti-EU, will not work and, if anything, will make matters worse. They want us to validate their actions by putting an X on a piece of paper, thus giving them the power to act on our behalf. However, we know that they will not represent us and will continue to support the rich and the powerful economic institutions of capitalism that are making our lives a misery. The only way that we can resist the attacks as well as begin to gain control of our lives and our society is to build movements and network that defy borders which we control independent of the politicians and institutions of the state.