

On the conditions under which we fight and the current state of the anarchist movement in the German-speaking region – the creation of a revolutionary platformist organization

Originally published in German in December 2018, as the first edition of the anarcha-communist publication series „Kollektive Einmischung“.

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Introduction

Salud! With this document, you hold our first published document in your hands, the kickoff of our organization, the beginning of the creation of a new anarchist-communist organization for the German-speaking region. We are curious and hopeful about the effects of this document on the anarchist movement in our region. In 2019, we will see how fertile the ground is for platformist ideas in our movement and how much our approach can contribute to preparing the anarchist cosmos for the great tasks before us.

This document is the beginning of a call to all interested anarchists: the time for waiting is over! The societal conditions are getting worse every year, worldwide as well as at our front door, and we are too weak to make enough of an impact. That is why this call appeals from the beginning to our well-inclined readers who take our paper to heart: if what you read speaks to you, if you think the ideas in the following lines match yours, or in short, if the following text outlines an organization in which you are interested in participating, don't hesitate! Contact us and let us build „die plattform“ together!

Even if your interest does not reach that far at first, but you wish to deepen the debate on the issues we raise, please respond to our text with your own. Most importantly, we will present as many lectures as possible to present and discuss our ideas in as many places as possible throughout the German-speaking region in April, May and June of 2019. Please contact us early if you, your group, or your political space is interested in organizing an event with us. We are eager to start a conversation with you. But not to worry, it is (mostly) not so emotional going forward.

In the following text, we address roughly three subject areas:

- On the conditions in which we fight – assessment of the status quo
- The state of the anarchist movement in German-speaking countries – an observation
- Toward new shores: the creation of an anarchist communist organization for the German-speaking world: build die plattform!

It should be clear that even in the long version of our document, many questions remain open and much can only be touched upon, remaining unfinished. Nevertheless, we are convinced that we have provided a good basis to reach those who think, feel, and (want to) act like us. After all, the comrades who join in the course of the year will determine die plattform's more detailed analysis, strategic orientation, structure, and mode of expression. Now we don't want to keep you in suspense any longer; we hope you enjoy reading and discussing.

Initiative die plattform – December 2018

On the conditions under which we fight – assessment of the status quo

We consider an analysis of the societal conditions and systems in which we live to be of utmost importance.

The analysis pin-points the starting point for our strategies, which methods we use to achieve the social revolution, how we organize ourselves, and much more. However, we do not at this point want to put forward a detailed analysis of all present societal conditions. We view a detailed investigation as one of the tasks a platformist organisation should undertake.

However, it is important to outline the starting points and societal dynamics that form our current context. The fact that we were all socialized in Germany and have lived there for years and decades necessarily leads to our position and view of the current conditions.

While we keep global developments in sight we will focus on the circumstances in Germany.

Class analysis

Capitalism is a societal system of organized exploitation of the wage-dependent class, which does not possess much more than its ability to work. Or, to put it in a different way: To the wage-dependent class belong all people who do not live off the work of others or their own assets.

They are oppressed by the capitalist class which owns and/or controls cooperations, factories, real estate and other resources. Each class has its own interests which are mutually exclusive.

Private ownership (of the means of production, resources, and essential goods) lay the foundation for the oppression and exploitation of the wage-dependent class. The state secures these ownership structures by means of institutionalized, direct, and indirect violence.

Although these findings, which are more than one hundred years old, are still up-to-date, there are differences in detail compared to the past situation: the class relationship is much more fragmented today than it was back then. For example, the franchise concept produces a multitude of small bosses who, under their power of employment, have people who they can also lay off. At the same time, they can also be replaced at any time and are therefore also wage-dependent, just with a slightly larger piece of the cake.

Likewise, the immediate violence of the repressive organs against wage-earners continues to exist. However, much of the mastery works more subtly. This state-capitalist system applies strategies to appease any apparent class antagonism on the surface before people even get the idea of taking to the streets and fighting against their oppression. Techniques of pacification include division and destruction of social relationships, legitimizing domination through alleged co-determination, distraction of social conditions through consumption (goods, services, certain drugs) or the still long hours spent pursuing wage labor, the legally and socially anchored social partnership principle, a comprehensive propaganda message of no alternatives to capitalism and domination, and finally a comprehensive repressive apparatus.

However, the structural exploitation and oppression and the mutual competition of the masses through wage labor is maintained in the interests of the ruling class.

Brief analysis of capitalist functioning

Capitalism is based on the private ownership of the means of production. The means of production (factories, plants, machines, raw materials, land) are in the hands of the capitalist class. Since the wage-dependent class by definition has no means of production, it can not independently produce goods for its own needs. In order to meet their needs, the wage-earning class must therefore sell its labor power to the capitalist class and compete with each other for the ability to do so.

The wage earners receive only a small part of the value they created (by producing goods or offering services) as a wage. The difference between paid out wages and the actual value of labor (surplus value) is sacked by the capitalists as profit. Thus, most of the wealth worked for by the wage-dependent class remains in the hands of the capitalist class.

The material wealth of society is produced by the wage-earning class, but remains the property of landowners and proprietors of the means of production.

Under capitalism, production and consumption are controlled by the market. The companies are therefore also in competition with each other in such a system. Capital has to generate profit, it has to be of economic value to survive in the market. Companies must reinvest part of their profits in order to defend, expand or develop their market share; in short: to stay one step ahead of the competition.

This can take various forms, e.g. to open up new consumer groups, (supposedly) to offer better products, to produce more cheaply (for example, to introduce cheaper production techniques, or to reduce location costs or labor costs), to buy up competing companies, or to merge with them. Regardless of the strategy, all companies are under pressure to ever increase their bottom line. Therefore, the companies do not primarily produce what is needed by the consumer, but what promises to render the most profit. At the heart of capitalist functioning are therefore not the needs of people, but profit maximization and capital utilization.

Although capitalism produces an enormous amount of wealth, the existence of private property and the exchange of goods through the market exclude a large part of the people from this wealth. The supply and living conditions of the people are secondary in capitalism: producing ecologically and socially sustainably does not work in capitalism due to the competitive nature of the system and its compulsion to generate profits. The consequences of this global economic and social system are poverty, environmental destruction, existential insecurity, miserable living conditions and wars. These realities can not be considered separately, but are all part of capitalist logic.

Patriarchy

As one of the most powerful repressive structures, patriarchy continues to exist worldwide. Patriarchy is the world-wide dominant system of oppression and exploitation of women of all ages, physicalities, classes, sexual orientations, skin colors and religions at all levels of social life. It permeates and affects all areas of life: from the position of women in society, through various forms of exploitation to our everyday relationships. Each person is assigned one of two sexes (male or female) - even if their physical characteristics are not clear. This division of the sexes and their forcible assignment is the basis of patriarchy.

Women (as well as all other non-cis men) hold a lower social status through the assignment of the female sex. They are rendered subordinate to men. This is accompanied by gender roles, the gendered division of labor which assigns reproductive activities to women and grants men power over women. In order to maintain the patriarchy, women experience psychological, physical, sexual, political and structural violence.

Patriarchy is closely interwoven with other exploitative and repressive mechanisms such as capitalism or racism. Thus women are oppressed not only because of their sex, but also doubly exploited by the capitalist division of labor: in wage labor and reproductive work.

Women are in comparison to men in lower paid and more precarious wage employment. In addition, they take on the majority of domestic tasks, such as raising children, caring for relatives, cooking, cleaning, emotional care and relationship work. This work is less (professionally as well as privately) recognized in the patriarchal social order and paid less than other areas of work. Non-white women are also additionally oppressed by racism. Patriarchy can only be seen and combated in connection with capitalism, racism and all other mechanisms of repression. Even though improvements have been repeatedly made and realized in the German-speaking region in recent decades, patriarchy continues to be effective in all areas of society. The evaluation of these developments is contradictory. On the one hand, women have made strides in achieving legal equality on paper. However, such advances do not always translate to improving lived daily experiences. In addition, certain fundamental rights, such as the unconditional right to abortion or the right to earn the same wages for the same labor are still lacking.

At the same time, we are experiencing a backlash in the fight for equality, characterized for example by the promotion of regressive domestic roles for women. The fight against patriarchy is not just a task for women - men are also called upon to engage in the fight and to reflect on themselves and their role in patriarchal capitalism (collectively). Only together and collectively can patriarchal structures be overcome. The abolition of gender-specific oppression structures (such as wage labor and reproductive labor) or the achievement of equal roles within society can be important steps in this struggle. Our position in the fight against patriarchy remains the abolition of gender as it forms the fundamental hierarchical structure of our society.

Social situation

Particularly noteworthy here are the following developments: Growing economic and social pressure on the wage-dependent class in Germany, as well as attacks on our fundamental rights.

Until the 1980s, the state's welfare systems grew and functioned as a safety net to a certain extent – although it was not accessible to all people of the wage-dependent class in Germany. Since then we have been witnessing the progressive dismantling of social services. Reasons for this include the increasing influence of neoliberalism (= capitalism without social components by the state) as well as intensified global competition and increased class struggle from above since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Part of this development is privatization, the curtailment of social benefits, the linking of social benefits to the fulfillment of strict requirements, and thus a creeping erosion of the insurance concept of state social security systems. The attacks on the social security systems cause a material need and social exclusion of more and more people of our class.

At the same time, fears of decline and adjustment pressure are spreading. The intensified global competition leads to an increase of the actual wage working time and the requirements in the workplace despite clear productivity increases.

Sustainable forms of protest and resistance are scarcely common, and where they exist, they are largely limited to the individual actions of single persons. These actions remain invisible to outsiders and have little effect. However, they pose the potential of being connected to collectively struggle for our interest in different sectors.

Another factor in the growing social and economic pressure on the wage-earning class are gentrification processes and generally rising rents - in some regions to a considerable extent. The revaluation processes of entire neighborhoods, with the concomitant displacement of those living there, not only result in the loss of their homes, but also in the loss of all aspects of the familiar living environment and can also damage the social relationships associated with them.

Last but not least, we are experiencing a drastic attack on fundamental social rights: Stricter monitoring and control measures are increasingly subjecting people to governmental violence and control mechanisms. The removal of the presumption of innocence, the extension of preventive repression measures and tightening of the surveillance / police task laws and (minimum) penalties are an expression of the current development.

The role of the education system

The educational system plays a central role in the enforcement of power relations. School as the most important educational institution is part of the class society: The capitalist class has numerous opportunities to promote the educational success of their children: It can offer their children individual support (such as individual tutoring or music lessons, language study, expensive learning materials) and send their children to (better equipped) private schools.

Due to their financial situation, the children of the wage-dependent class have much more difficulty accessing such support systems. Even basic equipment such as learning materials (books, exercise books, pens, etc.) are not a given matter for the worst-off in our class. In addition, the three-tiered school system still strongly classifies all children according to their class affiliation: Children from a more affluent family often attend disproportionately high schools that prepare them to attend university (Gymnasium), in contrast to children from a materially disadvantaged home whose education often exclusively enables them to take up manual labor, denying class mobility.

School serves to discipline children. It attempts to shape children into obedient adults, as adapted to our oppressive societal system as possible. In addition, school accustoms children to view each other as competition in capitalist society. Today's education system does not serve the interests, needs and individual strengths and weaknesses of children. Instead, there is a standardized curriculum that rewards those who can meet the demands made. Those who can not or will not are punished and rejected. The three-unit school system educates children as specifically as possible towards the required basic skills of the capitalist economy (and thus for the capitalist class). It is not about ensuring that each child attains as good of an education as possible, but that all the different levels of skill and education and thus all tasks of the capitalist economy are covered. (Versatile) education as a value in itself is not the focus.

Parliamentarism

A not insignificant part of the wage-dependent class in Germany does not expect parliamentary elections to make positive changes to their social situation. Nevertheless, the belief that social changes can only be initiated by parliamentary means through party organizations is firmly anchored in the population.

The political parties and institutions offer no solutions to social issues and problems, but at most fake solutions such as more democratic consultation of people or higher economic growth. So far, this circumstance does not lead to a greater growth of social movements that act outside of and against the parliament.

Instead, voters move from one party to another, fleeing to passivity, or turning to reactionary, authoritarian social ideas. We consider fundamental social improvements through any kind of parliamentary democracy impossible. This includes the conquest of political power centers by a leftist / socialist / communist party.

All parties are involved in the capitalist system and must act according to the logics of capitalism. By means of laws and ideological integration of the population, they receive the framework

conditions of capitalism within. For example, leftist governments such as "Syriza" in Greece also had to comply with capitalist constraints through austerity dictates. At the same time, the political parties ensure that the state framework is constantly adapted to the crisis situations that capitalism produces on a recurring basis. Externally, all parties are subject to the competition between different capitalist states.

Even if we reject parliamentarism, it is important to realize what is happening at the party-political, parliamentary level. Parliamentary decisions always have an impact on our living conditions. This concerns, for example, social cuts or the tightening of the repressive apparatus. The parties are not able to contain the alternative for Germany (AfD). On the contrary, the AfD, as a racist (in some, increasingly influential parts nationalist) party receives massive legitimacy through elections. With the instability of parliamentarism, as well as fascism as a way out of capital in times of crisis, we must always consider both and prepare ourselves early on.

Global shift to the right

First, we must state that there has always been a not inconsiderable part of the population in the German-speaking region who held individual racist, fascist or social-chauvinist attitudes right up to a closed fascist worldview. These attitudes were at times taken to the public, sometimes pronounced only in a private context. At the social, institutional and political level, there was a continuation of the National Socialist ideology in many areas of the reestablished German state after 1945 – of which a not to be underestimated degree survives to this day.

And there were phases in Germany's past after 1945 when several aspects of right-wing violence coincided at the same time: an occurrence of right-wing violence that went beyond the usual degree in frequency and severity; open incitement and rejection of minorities and non-Germans by a larger part of the population; an accumulation of reactionary demands and discourses in public; an accumulation of authoritarian-restrictive legislative changes (for example, in the area of asylum and repression / surveillance).

We are currently in such a phase again - in Germany, but also in many other regions of the world. On a global scale, a clear strengthening of right-wing extremist, authoritarian-nationalist and fascist parties and movements can be observed. In many states authoritarian-nationalist to fascist parties form the heads of government (Brazil, Austria, Poland, Turkey, Hungary, USA etc.). States such as Turkey or Hungary are developing into fascist regimes as a result of the authoritarian reorganization by their governments. In states such as Egypt, France, Tunisia or Turkey, the state of emergency has been imposed for extended periods of time in recent years. In France and Turkey, this state of emergency was used by governments to adjust legislation so that the legal state of emergency has become the normal legal status in many areas.

With regard to Germany, however, some differences compared to the last few decades can be seen: With the "Alternative for Germany" (AfD) a racist, in parts nationalist party has established itself at EU and federal level and at all state parliaments up to the municipal level. It manages to ensure that part of its inhumane demands are implemented by the ruling parties. The public discourse has shifted to the right - from the CDU / CSU to the Left Party, but also in the media and other social institutions. At the same time, the right-wing to nationalist movement is bigger and broader today than in the past. It acts more effectively: this becomes clear in a greater dominance in the media and in public space as well as a wide distribution of its ideas. And last but not least by the daily violence in everyday life and on the street.

There was an enormous uprising of right-wing activities and influence as a result of the sharp increase in the number of asylum seekers from 2015 on in Germany compared to previous years. A dialectical dynamic established itself and thus an activation or strengthening of existing right moods resulting from increased media coverage and online discussions. However, this was only the trigger for the shift to the right and the additional strengthening of the right. The causes can be traced back to several superimposed societal lines of conflict:

- a) Parts of the population reject the liberal-cosmopolitan values (which they perceive as socially dominant) and the increasing diversity of identities and lifestyles in favor of a homogeneous, traditionalist and nationalist concept of society.
- b) Economic reasons, such as growing economic inequality, recurring "economic crises" in capitalism, the complexity of a global economy, the dismantling of social security systems (such as the Hartz legislation) and other social achievements. These developments result in increased pressure and exclusion mechanisms as well as widespread fear of relegation for certain parts of the population.
- c) Lack of contact of the majority German population with migrants and different cultures (especially in East Germany). As a result, there is no degradation of racist or xenophobic attitudes and resentment. The blanket rejection of the "stranger" / "other" remains unquestioned. At this point, Islam, as an enemy of the (new) right since the 1990s, has gained an increasingly important role in this dynamic.
- d) The feeling that the existing parties and institutions act contrary to the interests of the population, a political dissatisfaction, which favors the move to right-wing attitudes in Germany. If we want to counteract the shift to the right, it is not enough to actively fight it. We need to analyze the causes of right-wing popular acceptance and based on them develop effective strategies.

Ecological situation

Current climate change is causing people's living conditions in almost all parts of the world to deteriorate: increased floods, periods of drought and storms are directly and indirectly endangering people (including the worsening of food and nutrition and loss of livelihoods).

But climate change is not a catastrophic natural phenomenon. It has its origins in the fatal social conditions of capitalism - as well as the exploitation and destruction of nature through the ruthless use of resources, contaminating industrial processes and the endless growth of (plastic) waste.

The pursuit of short-term and maximum profit, anchored in the logic of capitalism, contradicts the long-term preservation of (ecological) livelihoods. At the same time, many people are forced by their economic dependence to participate, contrary to their interests, in the resource-intensive and destructive conditions of exploitation. Ecological exploitation is closely interwoven with other forms of exploitation; They cause and reinforce each other: Through the ecologically destructive capitalist mode of production, global warming is increasing - as a result the grounds of many small farmers become unusable. As a consequence they lose their livelihood and are forced to flee to larger cities to work in large factories, which further fuels climate change. Another example is the exploitation of animals in factory farming, which also has negative effects on climate change. Compared to the majority of people in the global South, we in the German-speaking region are still comparatively less affected by the negative effects of climate change, although developments such as insect killing also bring fatal effects here.

The preservation of the environment is a global task in the common interest of humanity - therefore it is also our responsibility to fight locally against the causes of ecological disaster and in solidarity with people worldwide.

Technological change and digitization¹

¹ We have to use the German words "Technik" and "Technologie" in this part because in English there is only the word technology

In the analysis and evaluation of past and present innovations, we distinguish the terms "Technik" and "Technologie" in the style of the „capulcu collective“: “Technik” means the usefulness of objects. In contrast, “Technologie” inherits the violent "attempt to subjugate all dimensions of society"².

If we start from this distinction, we must check every innovation for its usefulness and its effect. Innovations may be suitable for us: when they (physically) take over or facilitate difficult, time-consuming, harmful or monotonous working methods; if they are harmless at the same time in terms of environmental impact and production costs; and if they do not create profound dependencies. Some innovations have a double-sided character: on the one hand, they can be emancipative when used correctly. On the other hand, in capitalism they are credited with negative mechanisms, such as surveillance and spying techniques (e.g., cell phones), which severely limits their emancipatory capabilities.

It seems important to us to not just condemn all technical innovations per se, but always to check them for their (emancipatory) usefulness or, if possible, to adapt or further develop them.

Technological innovations designed in capitalism carry the capitalist logics of profit maximization, exploitation or competition in themselves and convey them into our daily lives. “Technologien” that offer a wide range of applications and can potentially penetrate into all areas of our life were and are, for example, the assembly line technology (division of the production process into the smallest individual steps, rearranging these individual steps for maximum efficiency) or currently many forms of digitization using algorithms (artificial intelligence). Digitization has already penetrated almost every area of our lives. It is already creating great pressure for people to adapt to the machine, for example by letting workers specify what they should do when, how and at what speed in logistics³. Or by making specific information accessible or withheld in private life⁴. So-called "smart city" technologies or the "social credit system" in China are other examples that are already used today⁵.

The dangers of these new technological inventions lie in the creation of dependencies and a new level of heteronomy; Isolation and thus progressing desolidarization of individuals to each other; an unprecedented level of surveillance and social control that will further increase the already existing social pressure to conform. Digitization is sold to us as an alternative and necessary. In doing so, it does not solve socially relevant problems (such as climate change, housing shortage, energy problems, care problems), but rather contributes to their aggravation. Through its mode of action, it does not yet economize on (completely) developed areas of life. For the ruling class, digitization offers even more profit and the expansion of its rule over the lower class - for the wage-dependent class, digitization means, above all, more heteronomy and fragmentation of social relationships.

The extent and negative consequences of digitization in the coming years on our everyday lives, wage labor and our social relationships can only be guessed at up to now.

2 capulcu – „Disrupt! Widerstand gegen den technologischen Angriff, 2017 (not available in English yet)

3 For example the amazon warehouses, where employees get their routes by computer algorithms

4 Examples are Google-Search or Facebook

5 capulcu, 2017

The current state of the anarchist movement in German-speaking countries - an observation

Generally speaking, we note that there are currently no radical mass struggles or revolts in the German-speaking region that have the potential to challenge, let alone overcome, the prevailing conditions.

With the exception of the resistance movement against the clearing of the Hambach Forest occupation⁶, our impression is that the social protest movements of recent months such as "Seebrücke"⁷, "#wirsindmehr"⁸ or the protests against the new, authoritarian police laws and the new right-wing Austrian government all stay within the legal frame (as prescribed by the state) not only on the level of action but also on the level of ideology – save the actions of a small number left-wing radicals.

The people (especially young people and the moderate left) are back on the streets in larger numbers, which we welcome, of course. At the same time, however, there are neither major strikes nor more radical, law-breaking forms of action carried out by a larger number of people. Although more people are taking to the streets again, there is no tangible organization of people to make stronger and more effective protests possible. Thus, it remains symbolic protest, which is not able to achieve fundamental changes.

Also the anarchist movement fails (or is too weak) to radicalize the protests. It should be our goal to participate more perceptibly in the respective struggles and thus win new comrades for our cause. For, as a result of these social dynamics, we have seen an increasing public interest in anarchism in recent years. But the anarchist groups and connections do not manage to use this potential and to include these interested people (permanently). What are the reasons for the weakness of anarchism in German-speaking countries and beyond?

Lack of strategy

Contrary to the common claim of developing strategic action within anarchist organizations, we can only observe this with individual activists in German-speaking countries. Apart from a few exceptions, there are no strategically active groups and no cross-group strategies within German-speaking organized anarchism. Moreover, approaches to establish strategic action are even rejected or opposed in some groups, so that the hedonistic concept of "whatever we feel like doing now" can be pursued. What is there are individuals who realize their strategically thought-out projects within the structures. As a result, the success and failure often depends on whether or not there are strategically active persons in the structures in the respective city. However, we see a strong connection between arbitrariness and lack of strategy. It is hardly possible to derive and develop a strategy without a clear basic anarchist concept.

6 Hambach Forest is located in the German Rhineland and was to be deforested to make place for coal mining before the forest was occupied by eco-activists

7 Nationwide movement to create safe harbours for migrants fleeing to Europe across the Mediterranean sea

8 „we are more“: name of several protests to counter right-wing mass-mobilisations in 2018

Lack of goals and clear profile

Another point is the communicability of anarchism. Arbitrariness, lack of concept and profile can not be conveyed. Neither inward nor outward. We believe that if we want to achieve a relevance within society that contributes to the social revolution - and we want nothing short of that- then this can only be done with a clear strategy, clear goals and a clear concept. Without a basic anarchist approach and without a strategy and goals derived from it, it is impossible to ask ourselves if what we are doing is right and how it brings us closer to our goals. If anything is arbitrary, everything we do is somehow correct - according to the motto: "Everything we do is better than doing nothing and everyone who does something is moving something". Unfortunately that does not correspond to reality. We can do so much and think of ourselves as good guys all we want - this alone will not be enough. On the contrary, this system and its repressive devices work highly efficiently, strategically and purposefully against us. We are doing the ruling class a favor if we attempt to face their oppressive regime without strategy.

Lack of organization

With the successes of the anarcho-syndicalist grassroots trade union "Freie Arbeiter*innen Union" (Free Workers' Union, FAU) in labor struggles and member recruitment as well as the increased establishment and prolonged activity of anarchist groups and publications, we have seen in recent years a new upswing in organized anarchism, especially through the "Föderation deutschsprachiger Anarchist*innen" (Federation German-speaking anarchist, FdA). The relative positive development of anarchist groups and FAU is partly due to each other, because with the more continuous (propaganda) activities of the anarchist groups, the FAU can better focus on their core business of trade union work. Nevertheless, this should not obscure our view: There is still a strong tendency in the German-speaking anarchist movement not to organize itself (permanently) into groups accessible to the outsiders. A larger number of anarchist people do not organize themselves permanently and continuously. Here we see great potential given away. Despite their increased lifespan, the anarchist groups remain small, are constantly affected by personnel changes and can thus only pursue longer-term and ambitious projects with difficulty. At the same time, the risk of a renewed collapse of the organized anarchist movement is constantly present, caused by the strategy lapses already described (as was the case again and again in recent decades).

Unreliability

Another problem is the, in our experience, widespread unreliability in anarchist groups. After every meeting, after every congress, after every plenum, in which the wildest plans are reconciled for hours, in the end only a fraction of the discussed is implemented - and that also predominantly by the "usual suspects". Even the concrete naming of responsible persons helps nothing, since if the implementation does not take place no one is held responsible. The anarchist basic principle of free agreement means voluntarily and self-administratively assuming tasks and implementing them in a binding manner. Certainly difficulties and complications can arise in the implementation of tasks that were not foreseeable at the beginning. Here it is the responsibility of the person in charge to identify these difficulties and, together with other comrades, to solve the problems within the framework of the anarchist principle of mutual assistance.

For us, responsibility is the direct consequence of the anarchist principle of free agreement. We demand no obedience to the cadres, but ask of the comrades to take their own free decisions seriously. We realize that there are no perfect revolutionaries. We are all shaped by this system and therefore bring our shortcomings into the organization. Nevertheless, we still consider it the ideal to formulate and integrate anarchist values into our lives and to adhere to them as closely as possible. To advance the social revolution, we need organization. We do not need a party that demotes people to mere phrase-repeating sheep. We need the cooperation of revolutionary individuals, who bring

their individuality and thus their different strengths and abilities united into the fight on the basis of basic anarchist principles. It should also be clear that it is enormously difficult to break unreliability and the sometimes lack of seriousness without anarchist basic concept and strategy. After all, we notice at most in individual projects that something is not going as intended. An appropriate feedback can not take place solely because there are no formulated and verifiable goals.

Misunderstood autonomy

In addition to unreliability, other shortcomings have spread in the anarchist movement:

- A misunderstood notion of freedom, which puts the individual rights and freedoms in the foreground and assesses the entering into voluntary agreements as compulsion and thus negative. Under these conditions, clear agreements, reliable execution of tasks and mutual relying on solidarity are inconceivable.
- Spontaneity can be a strength in certain situations in order to be able to adapt quickly to (unexpected) events and changes and thus to act more aptly. However, spontaneity can also mean not wanting to commit oneself and thus keeping all possibilities open. However, when it comes to reliably planning and pursuing longer-term goals, the spontaneity of "not-willing-to-commit" widespread in the anarchist movement can lead to an inability to engage in more complex, unmanageable actions. We usually do not consider spontaneous action without preparation possible, or only barely so to a limited degree. Therefore, the idea of being able to react spontaneously is often a sham.
- Anarchist practice without fun factor is today unthinkable for many activists. Even if fun has an important function to prevent burnout and therefore should not be completely lacking in anarchist practice, anarchist practice should be based on the strategy that is appropriate for achieving the goals set. Revolutionary struggle should not be confused with left-wing hedonism.
- A widespread attitude in the anarchist scene is that it circles around itself, one's own scene or one's own spaces. Instead of acting in society, it is primarily the own scene that is served. For the majority of society, the way in which anarchist topics and discussions are mediated is hard to connect to. Instead of being present on the street, in the neighborhood, at work or in non-scene locations, only the four walls of the local autonomous center are used.

Attitude to society and the revolution

The social revolution and the building of a liberated society can only be realized together with the majority of people in society if this social transformation is to take place in an anti-authoritarian way.

This insight is still under-lived in the anarchist movement. It continues to be strongly influenced by subculture. For all the positive effects that subcultures offer they are also isolated from the rest of society. To put it bluntly: Instead of interfering in society, it is fighting against society. In doing so, we isolate ourselves and lose touch with people's lived realities. Many discussions revolve around ourselves. This is sometimes necessary to self-critically review our viewpoints and to develop as a movement. But: How can we achieve a liberated society if we do not want to act within society, but look down on it from our supposedly safe and opposition free ivory tower of the anarchist scene? At the same time, there is a widespread belief in the anarchist movement that there is little hope of revolutionary change. This aspect should not be underestimated. Because despite a critical and serious consideration of current social conditions without slipping into reverie, this lack of hope has not to be underestimated effects on one's own (collective) practice: the own activities (as a group) are (unconsciously) rated as less effective and meaningful. And the danger of retreating from anarchist structures becomes much greater.

The question arises for us: How do we want to convince other people to join the anarchist ideas if we are (also) unconvinced of their realization?

The lack of an open, solidary criticism among each other

On the one hand, anarchist communities have a not to be underestimated charisma due to their special positive atmosphere and familiar closeness.

On the other hand, unfortunately, there are significant weaknesses when it comes to criticizing each other. This does not primarily concern substantive arguments, but personal criticism of behavior, task completion or interpersonal conflicts - even and especially when this criticism can be painful. It is not uncommon that there are problems within the group, but they are not openly communicated. This can affect differences between different people; however, a lack of criticism of unreliable behavior also leads to a lack of consistency that reinforces unreliable behavior. A superficial, harmonic-safe atmosphere is at the expense of an openness in the mutual solidarity criticism, which is able to clarify contradictions and problems, instead of holding them until they explode.

Public invisibility and bad external communication

In general, anarchism has always been bad at presenting itself to the public. In addition, some anarchist circles claim again and again that actions would speak for themselves. Therefore, these circles do not even bother to convey their actions to the people (through the media). The processing and visualization of our activities in society is regularly neglected.

Where are the anarchist youtubers and rappers? Where are the anarchist video sites? Where are the sensational medial actions? Where are the people holding their faces into the camera as organized anarchists?

The publicity tools of the anarchist movement are getting old. New forms of public relations are included too little and without strategic considerations. And when they are applied, they too often get stuck in the "anarchistic bubble". Of course we are aware that there are good reasons not to document everything for the public and to always consider security aspects (against repressive state institutions or Nazis). Here we need to strike a balance between safety and maintaining a public image, which can feel like tipping on a tightrope.

Towards new shores: The creation of an anarchist-communist organization for the German speaking region: building die plattform!

Organizational practice

We want to leave behind the mistakes and inadequacies of the anarchist movement in the German-speaking countries described above. The local organized anarchism must evolve if it wants to gain social relevance in the foreseeable future.

Therefore, we see the need for a specific anarchist organization with a unified theoretical foundation and practice, from which the common goals and strategies are derived. The organization should be federalistic. Collective action with shared responsibility forms the basis of reliable and binding cooperation.

In addition to working in the organization, we see active participation in social movements and initiatives as an important component of political practice. In the following, we want to illustrate the individual aspects in more detail:

- **Unity of theory and practice:** Only with a common theoretical basis of all persons and associations involved can avoid arbitrariness in content / profilelessness as well as intra-organizational contradictions. Here, theory and practice interact and influence each other: From the common theoretical foundation our (activist / acting) practice grows. And the experiences of our practice flow into the further development of our theoretical foundations. This process is

designed to ensure that our practice is thoughtful and, at the same time, that our theories are always adapted to the (changing) realities.

- **Common goals and strategies:** Shared objectives are born from shared views, analysis and practical experiences. Only on the basis of a theoretical and practical unity can common goals be worked out, pursued and achieved. These goals are the basis for collectively-based, coordinated tactics and strategies. Overall, these goals and strategies within the groups of the organization ensure that the organization does not lose itself in contradictory, mutually bracing actions. In this way, all the forces of the organization are gathered, aligned with our goals and thus the full potential of our abilities and organizational cooperation is exhausted.
- **Federalist construction:** We reject centralist forms of organization because they produce structural hierarchies, subjugation and heteronomy by making decisions by a few, but all others are affected without a say. The ability to think and act independently is destroyed. Instead of centralism, our organization should be built according to the principles of (anarchist) federalism: the union of small, decentralized units that direct their actions toward the achievement of common goals. The basis of the joint cooperation of our organization is the voluntary agreement. By means of delegated persons of the small units (in our organization these are the local groups), who are equipped with an imperative mandate, decisions are taken to higher levels (federation level). Each member of the organization has the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. However, federalism only works if the members take on tasks and implement them responsibly and swiftly. By combining the idea of independence and sovereignty of the individual with the voluntary commitment to work towards shared goals, there is a balance between autonomy and unity.
- **Collective action with shared responsibility:** Our goal of building a liberated society can only be implemented as a collective process. That is why we act collectively within our organization. Individual solitary inconsistencies contradict this principle. As members of the organization, we have a shared responsibility for all our activities. This means that each member supports all the activities of the organization. And that all members of the organization take responsibility for the success and implementation of the tasks of each member. Only shared responsibility gives rise to the collective freedom that makes an anarchist society.
- **Active participation in social movements:** There are good reasons for us to engage in progressive social movements and social base initiatives. In the first place we are not opposed to social movements that only want to fight for reforms, but decide in any given situation if and how we want to participate. We do not want to "convert" these movements to anarchism. Rather, together with many other people, we can collect experiences of collectively divided struggles and achieve concrete improvements to our living conditions. In these movements, we can promote existing anarchist elements such as grass roots democratic organizational structures, living solidarity, collective self-responsibility or anti-minority approaches, and defend them against the influence of parties and other authoritarian groups. Thus, nonhierarchical, participatory approaches and criticism of domination - important anarchist principles - can be anchored in the population. On the other hand, basic social movements can enrich our theory and practice if we learn from our experiences inside grassroots movements, evaluating them collectively, and incorporating them into our organization's wealth of experience. When it comes to combating reforms through social movements, we want to make it clear that this can not lead to reformism. We stick to removing capitalism and all forms of exploitation, oppression and discrimination. Reformism means that the current system can stay as it currently is and only needs to be improved. For reformists, reforms are the only goal. We, on the other hand, see achieving reform as a school to gain the strength we need to abolish capitalism - or, as Malatesta put it,

We will take possible reforms with the very spirit one uses to snatch enemy occupied territory in order to keep moving forward."

We are just as opposed to the way that Social Democracy has taken in its history as to authoritarian communists: While the (traditional) social democracy wanted to take over government power in a legal way in order to introduce socialism by means of legislative reforms of the state, authoritarian communists want to do this by means of a revolutionary overthrow followed by state and party-backed "dictatorship of the proletariat" as a transitional phase. We reject these ways because they will not lead to a liberation of the people. The established state structures and functionaries have always developed in history into a permanent institution with its own privileges and resources. These are contrary to the needs of all other people. The wage-dependent class is again suppressed and exploited. The liberation of human beings is possible only through the immediate overthrow of the ruling class and the establishment of egalitarian relationships and structures oriented to the needs of the wage-dependent class. We can only achieve this upheaval if we build social counterpower.

At this point, it is important to point out our distinction between power and domination: Domination means the oppression of and power over people. Mostly, rule is exercised through institutions or laws and norms. The state plays a central role in this. He exercises power in various ways: for example, by means of direct violence (by police, military, etc.); through discipline by schools, offices and authorities; or through its legitimacy through parliamentary democracy. Another central aspect of domination is the unequal ownership of class society. Domination always acts destructively.

On the other hand, power has to be considered in a more differentiated way: power flows through society as a whole and all relations of relationship. Power can concentrate in certain places and manifest itself in relations of domination, but also open up capabilities and room for maneuver. Therefore, power can be described as the totality of all balance of power in society. Capitalism constantly determines concentrations of power and produces relations of domination. Our task is to build a grassroots movement which overcomes these relations of domination.

Anarchist-communist basis

We draw a line between ourselves and individualist-anarchist tendencies, because we believe that only collectively and organized can we realize our goal of a liberated, classless society for all people.

Instead, anarchist-communism in the tradition of Peter Kropotkin (1842-1921) is our ideological basis: this concerns both the image of liberated society (our goal) and the path to it (our strategies). We assume (as Kropotkin did back then) that mankind has the technical knowledge and skills necessary to build a world of prosperity for all. This liberated society is characterized by a egalitarian and self-governing social order without hierarchical structures and laws and without any forms of domination.

Private ownership of means of production has been abolished. The socially created and accessible social wealth should be generated by a voluntary-responsible and solidary manner. Income and produced goods benefit all people according to individual needs. Distribution is based on individual needs rather than work, social status or other privileges. According to the communist principle

"everyone according to his abilities, everyone according to his needs"

can be worked, distributed and consumed. Accordingly, the free development of each person is another important aspect of the liberated society.

The path to a liberated society, organized on an anarchist-communist basis, is determined by strategies of class struggle and the development of self-governing social and productive structures free of domination.

Anarchist-communism is one of the most important anarchist currents, but has no own supra-regional organization in the German-speaking world. We would like to change this with our organization.

Widespread notions that anarchist-communism merely means collaboration between communists and anarchists within an organization are wrong. Anarchist-communism arose from the anarchist movement. It represents an independent, anarchistic current with a comprehensive theoretical concept and a lively practice of class struggle. It distinguishes itself decisively from authoritarian-communist forms such as Marxism / Leninism. The anarchist expression of communism thus always means the rejection of the state and parties. With our platformist-oriented organizing approach, we would also like to address those communists who want to leave an authoritarian organization behind or who have not yet seen an organizational alternative.

Anarcho-syndicalist unions play an important role in the class struggle and building a liberated society on an anarchist-communist basis. Therefore, our relationship to anarcho-syndicalism is based on solidarity and mutual support in the struggle against the ruling class. The concept of anarcho-syndicalism alone offers significant opportunities to reach and organize the wage-dependent class. Anarcho-syndicalism thus has enormous revolutionary potential. However, it also runs the risk of leaving the revolutionary path (for example with a large membership increase of new comrades in a very short amount of time).

For this reason, we see the need for an explicitly anarchist organization that complements and also influences the syndicalist movement.

Anarcha-feminism

For us, anarchist-feminism and anarchist-communism are our essential foundations. Anarchism is not a "boy's club".

Rather, the fight against patriarchy is synonymous with the struggle against capitalism and all other forms of power and exploitation. Unfortunately, the term anarcha-feminism is currently poorly developed. It is currently only for "anarchists who are in any way feminist". We want to help change that - theoretically as well as practically.

We believe that it is fundamental to engage in collective struggles that attack patriarchy in its functioning and everyday manifestations. In the German-speaking region, apart from theoretical work, dealing with our gender socialization is usually the only form of confrontation with patriarchy - of course an important element in the fight against patriarchy, but not the only one. In the vast majority of cases, offensive struggles remain on an individual level or merely express themselves in virtual space.

Feminist strikes or collective "reclaim the night"-actions could be tactics that offer a new anarcha-feminist perspective. Class struggle and the fight against patriarchy are two conditional factors, as women are exploited in multiple ways. We find it important not to lose sight of fundamental rights such as (legal) gender equality in the fight against patriarchy.

We also want to create internal safety and awareness structures for dealing with sexualised violence, experiences with discrimination, boundary violations and emotional problems. We consider it essential to create an emotional home in which we are not alone with such (social) problems and can strengthen each other.

Our relationship to other anarchist currents and organizations

We are still firmly convinced that (almost) all methods and approaches of anarchist struggle have their justification and usefulness. Only in the presence of (almost) all anarchist currents, approaches and tactics will we reach the social revolution. This includes syndicalist tactics and goals such as labor disputes and labor exchanges as well as insurrectionalist acts of resistance or lived anarchist structures in the presence such as municipalities, collective farms and solidary economics, exchange-free projects and networks, and so much more.

A platformist organization, as we propose, does not currently exist in the German-speaking countries. So we see ourselves as an extension of the anarchist struggle and in no form in opposition

to other anarchist approaches. Even towards approaches that deliberately reject organization. Although we would say that there is currently nothing more important than the organization and constant formal association with like-minded people in the struggle against the ruling class and for a liberated society.

Therefore, we will fuel criticism and discussion about individualistic tendencies in the movement. Just as there may be situations in the struggle in which we must clearly oppose all too individualistic manifestations of anarchism to certain aberrations, such as individual, isolated from movement discourses (terrorist) acts (in the tradition of "propaganda of the deed") and denounce unconfirmed solo passages.

We see the FAU and the FdA as natural allies.

Our attitude towards social revolution

We are convinced that the establishment of a classless society free of domination is possible and feasible - perhaps not today or tomorrow, but in the future and through our active involvement. The anarchist ideas, values and visions have the power to win the wage-dependent class for the social revolution.

That is why our most urgent task is to maximize the ideas of anarchism in the wage-dependent class; By demonstrating solidary, non-dominating projects, we can demonstrate that the liberated society is viable and can be organized; and by sharing the fight against exploitation and oppression and a dignified life together with the people of the wage-dependent class in our environment. This means that we are not limited to the anarchist scene, but actively contribute as an organization, to promote class consciousness and to work actively within society.

For this we develop common strategic and substantive ideas, from which we enter into the social struggles: wage labor, neighbourhoods, education ... much is conceivable.

We think that there is no such thing as a revolutionary subject. More precisely, that within the wage-dependent class there is no definite social group that drives the revolution and mainly carries it. The class struggle against the ruling and possessing class as well as the creation of awareness among the oppressed and the propertyless for their situation remain important foundations for the achievement of libertarian communism. The irresolvable contradiction between the rulers and the ruled remains. While we would favor a peaceful revolution in any case, we do not believe that the ruling class will voluntarily cede its privileges and property. On the contrary, they will try by all means to prevent the social revolution. It is our job in such a situation to beat back the reaction and pave the way for the social revolution.

Our organization should be characterized by a sense of responsibility

We are not concerned with the kind of discipline as in the military, as a construct imposed from above, but as a self-imposed procedure of all members involved. So it's about a process that comes from the inside of the active, who then consciously opt for an organization that has a sense of responsibility as a basis. It is an attitude to our struggle in which it does not seem tiresome for the active to perform certain tasks, but they recognize the need for it and therefore develop a dynamic for it.

Of course, there will always be necessities that are done more out of sense of duty than out of dynamism and enthusiasm for the cause. We do not want to build a performance machine modeled on the capitalist system. It must also be possible to fail and then start again. Nevertheless, we see the value and the need to achieve our goals, that we stick to the mutually agreed agreements and perform assigned tasks reliably and swiftly.

If members are unable to comply with the agreements, they should report this back early so that another active person can step in. There are different reasons why unreliability arises. But who, for example, has little time and then puts himself under pressure, because he takes on a certain task, which he then can not comply, should take on fewer tasks and work on his self-assessment. If it

happens frequently that a person is unreliable at different levels, it is time for the person to ask themselves if they can be part of a responsible organization such as the platformist federation, or if they would rather engage in looser, more non-binding contexts.

Our organization should have a clear formal structure

Each organization has important, often repetitive tasks, such as managing finances, a website, or maintaining an e-mail address. For these recurring tasks, clearly defined tasks and responsibilities should be created in our organization. Because without reliable completion of these regular tasks, each organization is virtually unable to act. To avoid the same people doing all these tasks for the organization, as many active members as possible should be qualified for all tasks. We accomplish this by making visible all the skills available to each person in our organization and by communicating these skills with each other.

It is clear that all tasks are understood as a collective process of the whole group / organization. This prevents a hierarchisation based on specialization or dependence of the organization on individual activists; as well as putting too much pressure on individuals. It also most closely matches our anarchist notion of enabling ourselves and increasing self-organization. It is also important to filter out and differentiate exactly between tasks that can be done by virtually anyone after a short period of familiarization and tasks that require more in-depth skills. For example, managing a cash register in a local group would be a task that could (after an introduction to the structure) all perform. Holding a speech at a demonstration, however, requires a higher level of training and testing. Some tasks are more intimidating than others. But we also think that our outdoor activities should have a certain quality. It's not disastrous when mistakes happen. But at least some energy should be invested beforehand to turn comrades into capable speakers before they are unleashed on humanity. Rhetoric seminars are just as conceivable as repeated lectures in front of one's own group for practice. Nevertheless, we do not want to disguise that there is something like "cadres" here as well. Let us first discuss two theses from the generally recommended 23 theses of anarchism:

"17. Many anarchists associate cadres exclusively with Leninist politics. That is unfortunate. After all, a cadre is just one person who prioritizes political work, and there is a difference between activists who do (or can do) and those who do not. Leaders do not deserve privileges, but their experience and commitment must be acknowledged - not for their own sake, but for the movement. Cadres must also prepare for revolutionary situations, historically one of the greatest weaknesses of anarchism."

„18. Stubbornly avoiding discussions about leadership roles harms the anarchist movement. Leaders exist in every social group, whether or not they are named as such. But only if this fact is taken into account can the authoritarian and manipulative aspects of a lack of balance of power be contained. Otherwise, it expresses itself in those inscrutable and uncontrollable ways that are characteristic of many anarchist groups."

We want to take this thought into account. Instead of an often quietly tolerated "authority" of cadres, we want to consciously name these assets among us who have plenty of time and skills that are important to our cause. For example, anyone who is good at making speeches, pulling people along, and giving charismatic content should be able to do one of those things transparently. That does not mean that others should not train and try themselves. But it means recognizing and emphasizing the abilities of the respective assets. Linked to this, it must always be possible, according to the open criticism, to replace the post of a person by another person.

Quite in the sense of the imperative mandate, only that we see no problem in it, if a person also carries out a certain role for a longer time. Important in this question is the transparent structural definition. For certain important tasks we propose - as practiced in the Kurdish movement - that one non-male and a male person co-inhabit a post. This is how we live up to our basic feminist

understanding that organized anarchism should not be a men's covenant in which women, lesbians, inter- and trans-people are denied important tasks and positions. Behind this principle of mixed gender occupation, it does not fall back due to "material constraints". Everything about tasks and capabilities we see as a collective and not individual process. Here it is important to be in a constant, living process within the structures.

Our organization needs a clear profile

This means building up a structure that, at all levels, inside and outside, simply and clearly identifies the cornerstones of our organization. New people should actively deal with these cornerstones as a framework for organizing in advance and then decide on a membership application. Too often today, joining an anarchist group is mainly dependent on whether the interested person shares general anarchist views. This may be explained by the small number of organized anarchists organizing themselves. On the other hand, a deeper discussion of interested anarchists with concrete goals of the group, strategies, tactics (used forms of action) or a fundamental analysis of existing conditions does not take place - also because many anarchist groups in the German-speaking region are not clear on these questions themselves. We provide a clear profile with the framework conditions of our organization (such as common theoretical and practical unity, unity of goals and strategies). This clarity about what kind of organization I join and what its principles are also avoids later conflicts.

Platformist? - yes, but not without a critical eye

The habitus to have found the one right path

Platformist structures have a certain habit of cultivating a specific attitude, saying "our way is the right one, our strategy should be your own, everything else is not working". This does not apply to all organizations that belong to the platformist spectrum. However, it is certainly a phenomenon that can not be dismissed. As anarchists coming from synthetic-anarchism, we are enriched by many aspects of platformism. However, this does not mean that we claim that other approaches and strategies have no justification.

Platform - but not in the sense of a union of all anarchists

We fundamentally disagree with the idea of uniting all anarchists in a single platform-based organization under a theoretical foundation, common practice and strategy (and many current platform organizations also reject it). Not only because we think it's impossible, but also because that thought is fundamentally wrong. Anarchism is a versatile and differentiated worldview. It is constantly changing, evolving, and that's a good thing.

The danger of losing the dynamism of "openness"

Platformism may tend to block the creative flow of different approaches and thoughts through too much unity. But we do not want "equality" in all questions, even if they arise out of a sense of responsibility. We want to preserve principles and increase our sense of responsibility through our sense of responsibility - do not rot in our ivory tower of pure doctrine.

Unity in all things?

We also do not strive for unity in all things. We do not need an agreed consensus on every question to which everyone has to comply. Anyone who has this claim will quickly realize how crippling it is to have to discuss each question in detail to everyone's satisfaction. In addition to agreeing on fundamental issues, we also need mutual trust that our comrades will act in our favor on most issues and matters, even without collusion. We hope, even through the greater certainty of each other, that we achieve our sense of responsibility and unity with our principles, to find even more mature confidence as an organization of people struggling together.

No chance for weird developments

Individual platformist organizations broke up the anarchist movement by claiming to unify everything, by setting up parliamentary elections and turning to Marxism. We are aware of these dangerous developments and will meet them through the development of a strong anarchist policy. At this point we are still at the beginning of our argument.

Outlook

While in other regions of the world, for some decades, platformist federations already struggle for a liberated society along with social grassroots movements, there was an organizational-strategic void left to the anarchist tradition here in the German-speaking region. We have set ourselves the goal of filling this void. With the establishment of a platformist organization, organized anarchism differentiates itself once more in our region. At the same time it gains clarity, profile and organizational power. New perspectives of a revolutionary, anti-authoritarian movement open up. Let us use this moment of departure and shape it together. Let us raise organized anarchism in the German-speaking countries to a new level. Let us build the anarchist-communist federation together.

Long live die plattform! Long live libertarian communism!