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SOLIDARITY CAN DEFEAT FEAR AND OPEN SPACE FOR ALTERNATIVES

Second open letter to the people of Hamburg

Dear people of Hamburg, we are writing to you once again now that the G20 summit is over. We are people involved in many different networks, coming from all over Europe and even further.

First of all, we would like to thank you for the warm welcome we received. We know it was not easy: Hamburg was placed in a state of emergency long before the G20 delegations arrived.

Everyone who was in Hamburg knows the police struck first. A week before the summit, they made their strategy clear to the world, carrying out an unprovoked and brutal attack on the Entenwerder Park Camp, ignoring a Constitutional Court decision.

Over the following days this repressive escalation continued. The police attack on the "Welcome to Hell" demonstration was not just unprovoked, against what was still a peaceful event. It was an attack on the right to assemble freely, on the right to demonstrate, on democracy - just like the many attacks on journalists, are an attack on the freedom of the press. Targeting peaceful protesters and street medics, with batons (often on heads), pepper spray, water cannons and even live ammunition, the police acted as an occupying army, trying to make Hamburg a city of fear and chaos.

The Federal Government of Germany and the Hamburg Senate are politically responsible for creating this situation. The Mayor of Hamburg made the commitment that the G20 would be "a Festival of Democracy". He is now claiming that there was no police violence during the G20. It seems the Mayor thinks he lives in Orwell's 1984 rather than in real 2017.

The summit was imposed on Hamburg and its residents echoing the brutal imposition of G20 policies on unwilling populations all over the world. The world they want to force upon us, whether painted with right wing populism or with straightforward neoliberalism, is a single world of authoritarianism and violence. What we experienced in Hamburg is just a taste of it.

Their G20 Summit was a real failure. It was politically bankrupt, revealing an unwillingness and inability to address any of the major challenges of our times: the catastrophic consequences of climate change, the life conditions of millions of people migrating, growing social inequalities and economic chaos.

The few decisions taken by the G20 only worsen how these issues are handled, aggravating ecological disasters and many people's living conditions, and reducing social and civil rights for a large majority

of the world's population. Even the neo-colonial and neoliberal Compact with Africa, mainly initiated and promoted by the German presidency in order to prevent in the long term the increasing migration from Africa to Europe, will most likely only boost the existing rampant corruption.

And even how they managed "public order" during those days turned out to be a total failure: At some point, state repression became so harsh and unacceptable that we decided to resist. Our ways of protesting and resisting were diverse, and this is part of our strength.

Not everyone did everything; and not everyone agrees with all the tactics that were used to resist. There have been and will be heated discussions about this. But notice that we live in a society that debates day-in, day-out, the meaning of burning cars and the looting of shops but is mostly silent about Aleppo and Mosul, thousands of deaths in the Mediterranean this year and every year, and the millions of death from climate-change induced famine.

Our ruling classes are responsible for almost all the tragedies of this world. It is important to realise that during those days, the G20 leaders were the most dangerous people in Hamburg.

Imposing the G20 Summit on the city of Hamburg was an arrogant attempt to show their power, to terrorise you and all of us by the massive deployment of their militarised apparatus, and to impose a false image of social pacification through the use of brute force.

We also came to Hamburg to stand in solidarity with you against this "state of emergency" logic. So they applied the same strategy to us. They denied some of us the right to enter Germany without any credible justification. On Saturday 8th of July, they started a massive "hunt for foreigners", targeted as the easiest scapegoat for clashes and riots. Most were released in the next 24 hours because of the total lack of evidence against them; but some are still in jail.

Solidarity is the real alternative to the nightmare of their world. For a few days in Hamburg, all together with you, we defeated the police "state of emergency" and we showed in so many ways that another world is not only possible, but that it already exists in our daily practices.

If reactionary politicians try to paint a picture of "chaos and violence" and to criminalize an entire protest, what we saw in Hamburg during these few days is something entirely different. We have experienced a massive solidarity. Whatever we needed, the wonderful people in Hamburg, their churches, their theaters or their football clubs provided it: from places to sleep, showers, water, food and shelter to ways of escaping police kettles, but also comforting hugs and smiles and more importantly a huge presence in the streets saying a loud and powerful NO to the G20 and its authoritarian policies.

If they won't dare organize another summit like this in a big European city again, it's not only because they fear "riots". It is mainly because we showed that, when we are joyful (with Wednesday's dance demo or Friday's Youth against G20), creative (with the 1000 Figures performance), courageous (with Thursday's "Welcome to Hell" demo), ambitious and determined (with Friday's blockades), full of alternative ideas (with the "Global solidarity summit"), and lastly many, diverse and united, all marching together in Saturday's huge "Solidarity without Borders" demo, they can't stop us!

All of this makes us much more powerful than they are: **thanks to you, people of Hamburg, together we were able to defeat the fear. Together we showed that we can change the present state of things radically, and turn this world of injustice upside down. Together we stand in solidarity with the left movements in Germany, with the Rote Flora in Hamburg and other structures under attack now; and together we demand the immediate release of our imprisoned international comrades and all NoG20 activists.**