Anonymous
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self-criticism and public analysis, new collective experiences. It is unlikely that our objectives in the long term will grow significantly on a social level thanks to 15-M, though independently we may convince certain people in the process. This struggle travels other paths such as the constant effort to open spaces, edit materials, analyze, to do workshops and talks, etc, that we in no case should abandon just to be part of 15-M.

nothing, struggles in the universities, nothing . . . In fact, the only change people assumed as their own was when the PSOE won over the PP in 11-M, and they did it by voting![1] It reinforced the illusions of democracy.

In the third place, the 15-M movement has managed to get people out on the streets to speak collectively and publically about politics, of some of the social and political problems that surround them. This is something that has not been seen for a long time. Most of the conversations are in tune with questions of reform, of minimal changes, but as we said before, it starts somewhere. In some way it has breached in the logic of "don't get involved in politics", disillusionment and "you can't do a thing", the three little gifts that Franco, the transition and democracy gave us. What cannot happen is that we criticize people for not leaving their homes, and when they do, we criticize them for not demanding social revolution. That makes no sense.

If things are attained during the struggle in the streets, we think that when this is all over, perhaps it will be easier to convince people that assemblies in the workplace can happen, that heading out into the streets to protest serves a purpose, that you can win a strike or do away with a city ordinance: by means of solidarity, direct action, etc. Of course, if what is won is attained exclusively by political maneuvers, voting, referendums, etc (something rather improbable if there is no pressure from the street) the only thing to come out empowered is the democratic system. That is where the questions exists, and that is where we anarchists must be.

We will see how all of this ends, but the anarchist movement will emerge empowered if its practices, its forms of facing reality and some of its points of view are extended and take root in the collective ideology. The anarchist movement will also be stronger if our participation in the 15-M movement translates into, via criticism,

[1] On March 11 2004 a terrorist attack occurred in the Madrid metro shortly before elections. The right-wing governing Popular Party initially blamed Basque separatists but as it became clear that the attack was the responsibility of Islamists, many Spaniards linked this to the PP's role in bringing Spain into the Iraq War. Massive demonstrations against the PP resulted and three days later the Socialist Party [PSOE] won at the polls

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7. The end, at last.

We finish up, finally, going through one last reflection. The 15-M movement had a beginning and will have an end. Being realistic and keeping in mind how few us anarchists and our experiences are, it's rather improbable that our participation will be the real component that determines the development of the movement and its end. Still, we have a margin and the capacity to participate in and provide for the movement, so that it is not limited to a one of civic reform or a small piece of whatever issue. This proposal falls in line with that extraction, the one of trying to go a bit beyond. We do not have much hope that the 15-M movement will radically change the nature of actual society, nor could it even if it wanted to, and everything seems to indicate that it does not. Even if it attains its objectives, everything will translate into a reform of the democratic system or a temporary strengthening of the welfare state. Still though, this is no excuse to stay at home. We believe we must be there and participate, because if we do moderately well, it can be beneficial for anticapitalism and anarchism in the mid to long term.

In the first place we think that the democratic system and capital are what they are, and that every party, in the end, is the same. If the 15-M movement prospers and is able to reform the democratic system, ending with 'bipartisanship' or one party rule; with time, the smaller parties will end up showing their true cards because the democratic system and capital are like that.

In the second place, there is a positive aspect to all of this, whatever happens. A month ago, the general sentiment was "What a bunch of bullshit this is, but what can we do? Can't do a thing, etc". Today there are many people that believe they can change electoral law, that its lawful to jump over what the Electoral Board says when it is unjust, etc. It starts somewhere. If the 15-M movement continues and gains things via mobilizations and assemblies, and this process more or less works, independent of the result, it's an asset to exploit. In this country, nothing has been won for a long time: entering into NATO, nothing, prestige, nothing, the Iraq War,

banners and tags. In either case, we should have reflected on whether all of this is our fault, of having failed to see that during all these years we are not the same as the rest, although, to our favor, it must be said that the decision to leave out circle-A's seems to have been discussed. The theme of the circle-A is of little importance, what matters are the messages we want to give and if we have to let go of putting A's up, no big deal. In the end, as a comrade rightly said the other day, we have nothing to sell (which is true when we behave as such, which is not always the case). Worse than the case of the circle-A's, which as much as it can hurt is still understandable, is that of feminism which is finding certain opposition as much in the camps as on Twitter, with ugly gestures and well out of line comments.

This text was written in Madrid, so many of the descriptions and reflections may not match the reality of other locations, especially given the heterogeneity of the 15-M Movement. Even so, we think that it could be useful as a point of departure for reflection for all the comrades involved in the assemblies, regardless of the site. The text was written and corrected hastily so that it would be ready before the convocation of village and neighborhood assemblies on May 28. Keep this in mind while reading it and excuse any mistakes that it may have.

— Some Anarchists from Madrid[1]

[1] This text was translated so that English-speaking comrades could see some of the debate occurring among anarchists and libertarian communists around orientation towards this new movement. The text was translated by OliverTwister up to the start of the section titled "Fight Against Monsters", and the rest by a comrade of the group in Spain that wrote the text. All notes except for number 5 are added by OliverTwister to help English-speaking comrades.

Anarchist vanguardism: Two words that together may seem to be a contradiction but are not at all. Some Marxist currents consider themselves to be the vanguard or to pretend to be, even when no one pays any attention to them. We anarchists refuse to turn into a vanguard no matter what, but if we allow ourselves to stray from this we will end up falling into vanguardism. If we try to move much more quickly than the rhythm of the situation, we run the risk of separating ourselves more and more until we are alone, far from reality and from what is actually happening. Further more, neither does this ensure being "ahead" of the rest as you could have taken the wrong path. We anarchists do not want to tell people what they should and should not do on the basis of a better understanding of some sacred book or of the revolutionary canon, but that does not imply that on occasions we end up believing ourselves to be better than the rest and that they should "follow our example", especially when we participate in conflicts of this sort.

Symbolism and speech: So that our participation may be efficient and that we can collectively build something worthy it is necessary that we leave aside symbolism, proper codes, fetishized words as well as marketing the property of our movement-ghetto. It's the same as our above comments on the theme of discourse. This does not mean to tone down what we say or fool people, it means to abandon magical words and weighted ideas we typically use. Concepts such as active abstention, direct action, mutual aid, revolution, etc, don't need to be initially understood by people who are not familiar with their use. It's no use being enclosed by them. It is more useful to try and explain them in a plain and simple language, without anarchist technicalities and intellectualism. The same is true for aesthetic of the propaganda, which is usually as uniform as it is far off from most people. A clear example is the problem that arose with the circle-A's in the Sol encampment. Since no political symbol or flag was permitted, many people from the assemblies perceived, with great or little reason, that the circle A's should not have a place there either. Considering that circle-A's are not political symbols but rather entirely to the contrary, some anarchists took it very poorly. Others, giving an example that horizontalism and consensus are respected only when it interests them, kept using circle-A's on

daily delegation of power. If we don't stay clear, we'll end up in the hands of those who seek to turn the assemblies into transmission belts that limit themselves to approving or accepting the proposals baked at home.

Fight against monsters: Participating in assemblies where there are people ready to do whatever it takes (manipulate, lie and, most of the time, act stupid) to get their position out is very complicated and frustrating. Anyone who has had to swallow this can say that it's fucking bullshit. First, for everything you have to swallow. Second, because not everyone around you can see it and if you accuse someone you end up being the one that raises suspicions. Third, because you end up confusing what are simple failures and poorly thought out errors with actual intentions to manipulate (brushing up on paranoia) and, lastly, because without noticing you end up doing or seeing yourself as obligated to do similar things as them. These days we have heard things such as "take over the commissions", "attain positions of power in the assemblies", "disperse ourselves throughout the assemblies", "pretend not to know one another" and other charming ideas, on the part of comrades that we don't have any kind of doubt or suspicions for, and those that, of course, we will not judge. These kinds of situations are like that. The frustration, the rage towards the manipulators and finding yourself against the wall and the sword make you say and do things of that style. Against this there is no other cure other than to be constantly attentive, to self-criticize and to know how to criticize and make sense of criticism, all without hysterical accusations or stupid victimization. We must assume that one moment or another we will get our hands dirty whether we want to or not. It happens in the best of families.

"Don't be afraid, just play the music" (Charlie Parker): Linking up with the previous content, we must be aware that to participate in the 15-M movement is to enter into territory unknown by most of us. We assume we will screw up quite a bit. Us anarchists are not, nor do we want to be, perfect. We have every right in the world to make mistakes. Refusing to act out of fear of becoming a reformist, or still worse, fear that some imbecile tags you as a reformist or vanguardist is as absurd as to renounce thinking for fear of being wrong.

0. A word to begin . . .

Let's set the record straight. The signers of this text are anarchists, anti-authoritarian communists, anti-capitalists or whatever label you prefer. That is, we are for the abolition of wage labor and capital, the destruction of the state and its replacement by new forms of horizontal and fraternal life in common. We believe that the means to do this should be as consistent as possible with the ends they seek and therefore we are against participation in institutions, against political parties (parliamentary or not) and hierarchical organizations, and we are committed to a policy based on assemblyism, solidarity, mutual aid, direct action, etc. Because we are convinced that these are the most effective means to lead to the revolution. We say this to remove any suspicion, and to mark the lines that we are basing this contribution on. Now, just because we are for a social revolution to destroy capitalism, the state and which involves the abolition of social classes (along with so many other things) does not mean we think that this can happen in the short term, from sunset to sunrise. What we have raised here are ends, i.e., situations that, hopefully, we will arrive at after a long journey and a considerable development of the revolutionary movement. To think otherwise is to be Utopian, is an exercise in delusion and immediatist fantasy. A revolutionary approach must translate into short-term strategy in a series of proposals to address the reality that confronts us with situations that involve issues such as the abolition of wage labor, the establishment of libertarian communism, the social revolution . . . issues which today, obviously, are not even remotely on the table. This intervention can not simply repeat monotonously the raging need for revolution and abolishing the state and capital. Being an anarchist does not mean to be a badge that chases everyone else, repeating over and over again how bad the state is and how good anarchy is. And yet, following the 15-M movement in recent days we have read online texts and commentaries close to immediatist delirium and, even worse, we have heard positions from comrades and friends that slide into the abyss of anarcho-badgism which, with

all good intentions, are trapped in the maximalism of the great slogans of the long-term proposals, etc. We know what we're saying, all the comrades writing this have been in these situations and, worse, have often contributed to their extension. Let us also be clear that this text is both critical and self-critical, and that it serves primarily to try to keep ourselves from falling in those traps. To wrap up, it should be noted that this text was written hastily, to the rhythm of events, with the aim of coming out before May 28, when the Popular Assemblies in different neighborhoods and towns Madrid have been called, so do not be surprised to note in some areas precipitation and urgency. We'll stop there.

In summary, this text is intended as a reflection and a proposal to break the impasse in which we have been anchored for a long time, to get rid of burdens that drag and immobilize many of us. It is, in essence, a reflection to try to clarify for us how we can contribute to and participate in what is happening around us.

6. Tactical Questions

The text is becoming long and we want to close it with some some reflections — we'll try to be brief — about certain tactical aspects that we've seen, and that we'll continue to see, in the coming days.

Violence/Non-violence: As we mentioned while describing it, the rejection of violence is a basic point that the May 15 movement agrees on. The initiators (Real Democracy Now!) took it upon themselves to express this in the most disgusting way possible: marking themselves off from the incidents that happened on the demo and pointing out everyone who didn't. This shouldn't be very strange, given the media bombardment on this issue these last years. Through the police, media like La Razón or Público did not hesitate to give alerts about the danger of the "400 nihilists [antisistema]" that were trying to control or split the movement. A week later, nothing. It seems that the great majority of anarchists have assumed (with more or less of a problem) that nothing happens because someone declares themselves non-violent. Violence and self-defense is a question that will always be there, but it is completely secondary. If we stop thinking of it as something that can be useful or not, beneficial or dangerous depending on the circumstances and we transform it into something irrenouncable, or we throw a tantrum to get the May 15 to sing the praises of violence we will completely lose our orientation. Today non-violence is called for, other days will call for other things.

Assemblyism: We hear a lot of the criticism that the assemblies are not true assemblies, because there is no real horizontality, because there are those who seek to manipulate them, etc. This all makes sense, because they are real assemblies, with normal people, among a fight between different sectors to "control" the situation (consciously or not). Horizontality, equality, the efficiency of the assemblies, their communication, their sanitation, is not something that comes because people people meet in a plaza and talk amongst themselves. Not even close. It is something that has to be fought for against the manipulators, politicians, and intoxicators; we have to construct it despite the years of demobilization, conformity, and

We have already discussed in the last point what we think would be an interesting way to participate in the assemblies, we won't spread ourselves too thin. Of course we would like to discuss how in each neighborhood some issues and proposals could strike more deeply than others (for example, in some zones immigration raids are more frequent than others, in some sites the public health is worse then others, etc.) We will have to see in each concrete case what is most necessary and most important, there are no magic formulas here.

1. The 15-M movement: basic coordinates

And what is happening around us is obviously the movement called 15-M, which in the last week has emerged as a bull in the china shop of national politics. Whether we like it or not, and we want it or not, the 15-M movement has broken all expectations and has surprised everyone: police, politicians, journalists, organizers, ordinary people, citizenists, leftists and, of course, the anarchists. At first everyone was off-sides and, since then, everything has been a series of more or less successful attempts to take positions on or within the 15-M. We will not even begin to analyze its causes or to review the various conspiracy theories or poisons that have emerged in its wake, these are not important for what we want to discuss. We will try to provide what we understand are the basic coordinates, or at least the most important ones, in which what we call the 15-M movement is moving, to see if an anti-capitalist or anarchist participation in it is possible (and if so how). Naturally, it will be a fragmentary, partial and incomplete description. We do not care, things are going too fast.

The first thing to say is that the 15-M movement is a real social movement and as such, is extremely heterogeneous and contradictory. It contains everything, and everything is in different doses. That is, anything we say here should not be taken as absolute defining characteristics, but rather as tendencies, nuances, etc. Expressions of a movement under construction within which there are struggles, tensions, and constant change.

That said, because of its social composition and the slogans that are most commonly heard in the meetings and working groups, as well as the opinions of people who are constantly publicizing it on the Internet (twitter), we could say that this movement is, most of all, a citizenist and openly democratic one. Or rather, it is these types of approaches to political and social reforms (electoral reform, real democracy, greater participation, criticism of mainstream political parties but not of the representative system or political parties in

general . . .) that, in general, gather around more people and raised hands.

However, this content is expressed in assemblies that reject any classical representation (for example, becoming another political party) and who deny any precooked political ideology, symbol or form (from parties to Republican flags, including the circle-As). There is a slogan that is making the rounds on twitter: "This is not about left or right, but rather up and down." The movement, for now, positions itself mostly on self-organization, (non-violent) direct action and civil disobedience, though it does not use these magic words.

Non-violence is, in fact, one of the fundamental coordinates of 15-M, which, undoubtedly, is collectively assumed without discussion. We'll get into that later.

All this does not detract from the fact that inside the movement you can clearly see a "power struggle" between different "factions", organized or not. Members of leftist political parties, members of social movements, anarchists, ordinary "outraged"[1] people that come with their own world view, etc. all struggling in the inside at all levels, from the ideological or practical orientation of the movement, to control (and in many cases, manipulation) of assemblies, committees, etc. In many committees and groups we are seeing everything from accidental loss of records, personality politics, people who cling to the spokesmen, delegates who try to stop debate in general meetings, commissions that jump over agreements, small groups who want to keep the refreshment stand, etc. Many, sure, are the result of inexperience and egos; others seem to be directly taken from the old handbooks for manipulating assemblies.

Around this struggle is also all the people who come there. People who come to participate, to listen, to be heard, to provide food or other materials, to see what happens, or just to take some pictures while acting like tourists in their own city. Under the tents of Sol one has the feeling of being in a bazaar in which nothing is bought or sold.

On the other hand, one of the great problems of the occupations is the difficulty of participating in them fully, not everyone can go to

[1] The participants in Spain are known as los indignados [the outraged].

5. Neighborhood Assemblies: Hopes and Localisms

In large part this text was written while considering the popular neighborhood assemblies that have been called for May 28, which should explain its urgency, its precipitation, and a large part of the errors that it may have.

The extension to the neighborhoods is a logical extension because the occupation in Sol is unsustainable in the long term and because many of its characteristics only allow for a limited participation, as we have already noted.

Speaking with many comrades, we have seen that some have many hopes in the neighborhood assemblies. The idea is "there's nothing left to do in Sol, let's go to the neighborhoods". Let's not deceive ourselves, if the May 15 movement continues its pull, the neighborhoods are going to be Puertas de Sol in miniature, with all of its good parts as well as its defects, including the party activists who are there fishing, the citizenists, etc. In some neighborhoods and villages in the south of Madrid, the proportion of activists may even be higher than we find in Sol. The ballpark may be smaller and less overwhelming, but the heterogeneity, the problems, contradictions, and conflicts will be the same or even greater.

We believe that the leftist activists, along with all of the common folk that are in support of the four basic reforms, will try to convert the popular assemblies into foci from which to promote the slogans and demands for which they have been fighting in Sol, with which to collect signatures, to advertise for the demonstrations and to build support in the neighborhoods (neighbor and merchant associations . . .) with an eye towards the strategy that they have in the medium-term for carrying out the legal changes — and little else. The citizenists may try to push a bit more towards specific neighborhood problems, establishing links with whatever neighbor associations they can, boosting their social centers and offices of social rights where they exist, etc.

even if we are capable of beginning this process, it will be a long and difficult road. We believe that, with time, we will all learn and take more things away. One way or another, we anarchists must participate in the assemblies of May 15 as a laboratory in which to experiment, make proposals, make mistakes, learn, and begin all over again.

the center every day, not everyone can stay overnight, not everyone can participate regularly in commissions, etc. This can certainly help create informal leaders, cliques, weird and strange biases that the people, who are not assholes, are going to notice, will discuss, and will act accordingly. In fact, one possible consequence of who is taking the brunt of the occupation (and also who is more accustomed to go and propose activities) is the progressive ghettoization that the occupation has suffered during the weekend. Compared with the atmosphere of encounter and protest during the most intense days (especially on Friday, given the expectation of a ban from the Central Electoral Board) over the weekend the thing lost steam and one could notice that the atmosphere of protest had become much more playful, even though the committees, subcommittees and working groups continued to operate. At times, #acampadasol seems to be reproducing the worst and most banal of ghetto squats: concerts, drum circles, dining, performances, clowns, etc. at the expense of its original appearance, which contained markedly more of a character of protest, politics and "indignation" (as pro-democratic and limited it was). On twitter, which we should not forget played a large role in the rise of the 15-M movement and the Sol occupation, the discontent of many people who are not happy about this drift is beginning to creep in. A clear example of the discontent that took place the weekend was the discussion for or against alcohol — on Saturday one of the assemblies had to leave Sol because of the number of wasted people — and the subject of the drum circles, which on Sunday even forced the postponement of a meeting where no one could hear (although it must be said that the drum circles, like alcohol, had plenty of supporters).

It is obvious that the 15-M movement is not a revolution, it is not militant, and those who disagree based on the hashtag #spanishrevolution with which it initially spread should realize that this was a mix of marketing, humor, and hope. Nothing more.

The last point is that we wanted to make is, for us, perhaps the most important, along with the marked assemblyist and horizontal character (with all its defects, which are many): the tremendous change of attitude that we have seen around Sol all week. Let's recap. After the initial mass demonstration on May 15 and, especially,

after the eviction of the first occupiers, people have taken Puerta del Sol en masse night after night in a way that none of us had ever seen. Protests against the war, although some were more massive, did not have, even remotely, the continuity, participation, attitude and environment we've seen this week in Sol. It is as if, suddenly, passivity and the habit of each person minding their own business had broken down around Kilometre 0.[2]

Going to Sol or its neighboring streets to distribute pamphlets is a pleasure, people come up to ask you for one, they take them with a smile, they ask questions, they thank you . . . The first days, if you formed a small group to discuss something, people would perk up their ears to participate, to listen. It has been normal to see the most varied sorts of people discussing in small groups. The working groups and the general assemblies are massive events of between 500, 600, and 2000 people (seated, standing, getting close to hear something), etc. And, apart from this, there is a permanent sensation of a good atmosphere, of "this is something special". All of this reached its culmination on the night of Friday-Saturday, when people began the day of reflection. Listening to more than 20,000 people shouting "We are illegal" and taking pleasure like children in ignoring the law is truly breathtaking. However its clear that this intense atmosphere, of participation and of real politics began to decay beginning on this night. In part because of the adrenaline rush of Friday night, in part because of the decision to "not be political" on Saturday and Sunday, the weekend has had a much more festive tone, more like a circus than the previous days. Even so, we truly can't remember anything like it.

[2] Locations in Spain are generally marked based on their distance from Kilometre 0, located in Puerta del Sol.

Work/Unemployment: Take advantage of the assemblyist example of Sol by taking it to workplaces, debate and talk in assemblies about workplace conflicts and about our problems as unemployed workers, propose that the assemblies become a point of assistance if we have a problem at our workplace. Visit and denounce the workplaces that produce workplace accidents . . .

Immigrants: Try to involve immigrants, who are definitely underrepresented in the first place, let people know what happens in the CIEs,[1] let people know and propose mechanisms for action against immigration raids, organize ourselves to offer legal information through consultations, workshops, etc.

Health: Try to involve workers and users-sufferers of the public health system in the struggle against its deterioration and inaccessibility, avoid being led to fight each other ("the problem is the lazy workers" or "the problem is the seniors that are always going").

Gender: We must figure out how to push back the giant wave of anti-feminism that is in the air of our society, and that has been expressed several times in the occupations. It could be interesting to try to emphasize or debate about sexist violence.

Organization: Try to improve the functioning of the assemblies. Fight for a real, not just formal horizontality. Avoid the formation of cliques of specialists or of perpetual representatives. Avoid turning ourselves into a clique of specialists or perpetual representatives.

These issues and proposals are clearly limited, a result of our haste and of our own inexperience in this kind of movement. We have to improve them, refine them, and share them. And above all, we have to build them together with the people that are going to the assemblies, in a process that will change the proposals just as it will change those who take them up and put them into practice and who will probably go from few to many. We do not think now that just because we go with four concrete proposals instead of the same old anarchist story that we always do, that people will accept them as if by magic. No, we are not proposing magic, we must be clear that

[1] Centros de Internamiento de Extranjeros [Foreigner Internment Centers] are detention centers in Spain in which undocumented immigrants are held prior to expulsion

that this could be a good way to avoid the power struggles that will happen in the assemblies for high-level questions (laws, etc.) without at the same time quitting a movement that still has the potential to show a lot of fight. To put ourselves in a war of attrition to combat those proposals or to continually and openly confront each and every leftist, citizenist, or normal person who just wants a couple of changes is not going to get us anywhere. We must be conscious at every moment of where we are and where it will be possible to go. If we do not continually do this exercise of analysis and reflection we are going to get nothing but disappointment and considerable frustration.

Of course, by participating in the 15M movement we will always run the risk of ending up as grunts, doing the dirty work of the left and the citizenists. We believe that today, given our scant support or power to call for action, this risk will always be there, in any real mobilization that we take part in (strikes, anti-development conflicts, etc.). This is a risk that we can't see ahead of time, and it is definitely something that, to a degree, is unavoidable — the only thing we can do is remain vigilant, not to stop going just because of emotion and to try to evaluate exactly when our participation is becoming limited to being the workforce for others, which is when it will become necessary to quit the field

To bring this section to a close, we see it as necessary to specify some lines of action that have occurred to us as examples of what we have in mind. They are neither the only ones nor the best ones, in fact they are fairly vague, they are just some examples of what have occurred to us or what we have heard during the days in the assemblies. We should all try to work together to complete them, clarify them, and criticize them, etc . . .

Housing: Organize ourselves to resist evictions and real-estate bullying. Propose occupation as a temporary alternative in the case of evictions that are not stopped. Put pressure on landlords that take advantage of their tenants. Put pressure through direct action on bank branches which hold the mortgages of families with problems to renegotiate them or simply to make the conflict visible. Make it visible through flags or similar things in the balconies of houses that are being squeezed.

2. What's not at stake. A strategic vision.

That said, what can we as anarchists do over there? For any anarchist who is at least somewhat connected to reality, fortunately the great majority, it's clear that we must be there, that there is something to be excited about. What none of us knows too clearly is what we can do, what we can contribute, and what we can expect from the May 15 movement. This is logical, given the heterogeneity and contradictions that it contains. In this section, we will try to express how and in what sense we think it could be interesting to participate in and contribute to this movement. We say "strategic vision" because it is a general vision, which we will try to annotate later with concrete proposals and some tactical considerations.

The largest part of the process currently developing in the May 15 movement consists in trying to find the slogans and political demands that are going to define it. This process is occurring in the working groups as well as the commissions themselves. In the former there is more debate and ideological struggle, while in the latter, in which those debates become concrete, is where we see tricks and skulduggery. One doesn't need to be too sharp to see where the trouble lies: commissions such as those of Communication, Internal Organization, Assembly, and Politics are where one will find the greatest number of politicians and party activists [políticos] per square meter. Meanwhile, in commissions such as Infrastructure, Food, or Respect, the cuts seem to be much milder. To be clear, we are not saying that this is the only thing happening in the commissions, but that some of the things we have seen or have been told are tricky.

As we said before, the demands with the largest echo on #acampadasol are those of political and, to a lesser degree, social reform, with a major citizenist content: reform of the electoral law, a law of political responsibility, greater participation, a law for payment on account of mortgages, etc. The members and militants of left-wing

parties (IU, IA, etc.)[1] and social movements are trying to tack the ship to the left, so that it will take up classical left-wing demands (from a basic rent and debt relief, to the nationalization of the banks), even though in the front are those who want the movement to be as neutral as possible (for example, twitpic.com) and they base themselves on a basic #consensodeminimos [minimum agreement].[2] In our opinion, we think that the most likely situation is that the final objective of both sides will be, whether through a citizens' initiative or through the action of a political party — probably IU — to present a proposal to the Congress and to ask for its approval through a referendum. In this sense, both sides are putting a lot at stake to determine the contents of such a proposal and certainly how it will be carried out, but in a given moment they converge in certain basic points.

Obviously, we anarchists are convinced that if some of these reforms were achieved, even if they changed some of the "defects" of the system that infuriate people the most, this would not change anything essential. The problem is not corrupt politics, but politics as a separate sphere of life; the problem is not the lack of government transparency, it is the government itself; and the problem is not the bank or the bankers, but capitalist exploitation, whether large or small.

That said, we think that the anarchists are not and should not be in this struggle, that of grandiloquent demands and politics that are stuck in the sky. We should not enter this game, although if we want to be in the assemblies we must assume that we will have to put up with it and confront it face to face. We have lost nothing on this

[1] Izquierda Unida [United Left] is the third-largest party in Spain and descends from the Spanish Communist Party, which re-adopted classical Stalinism after a period of Eurocommunism. Izquierda Anticapitalista [Anti-Capitalist Left] is a Trotskyist party that was originally a current within the IU but broke off and in 2009 contested the European election but did not gain any seats.

[2] While editing the text, the Sol occupation has approved four points that make up the so-called #consensodeminimos. We won't evaluate this, as we think it does not change the essence of what the text says, we expected something like it sooner or later.

4. Some objectives and possibles axes for action

This proposal to participate practically and concretely has several objectives. One, obviously, is to improve our conditions of survival within capitalism. Although we know someone will call that reformism, for us it is simply necessary. Another objective is to signal and deconstruct, during the process, all of the contradictions and miseries of capitalism, democracy, the unions, etc. Not through elaborate and prefabricated discourses, but through debate and reflection about what is facing us, something much more complex and arduous than just publishing books written in another moment and another place. Yet another is to seek to create and extend a culture of struggle in the population, a collective sentiment that we achieve results through struggling alongside our fellows, solving problems problems with the people who are affected, through solidarity and mutual aid, without delegating our authority to professional mediators or representatives — a sentiment of "today for you, tomorrow for me" that soaks through the population and that displaces "each one for themselves" and "at least it's not happening to me" that is devastating our society.

Finally, if something has become clear to us this week, it is that although anarchists have a lot to contribute, we also have a lot, a huge amount, to learn, from the people we meet in the road as well as the situations which we must face. Participating in the assemblies is the perfect opportunity to clarify ourselves, our postures, and the way in which we communicate these to our fellows. This is normal. The best way to realize our faults and incoherencies (which we certainly have a lot of) is by trying to explain and share our posture with those that don't know it.

We sincerely believe that this can be a good way to break out of the tramp of an intervention based on ideology, which tries to seek approval for specifically anarchist long-term principles or objectives, something which, as we've said many times already, is not something that is or could be in order today or tomorrow. We also believe

chessboard. The May 15 movement is not an anarchist or anticapitalist movement, which means that the maximalist anarchist demands are out of place. It does not make sense to fight for the general assemblies to take on things like generalized self-management, the abolition of prisons, or even something as simple as the indefinite general strike, because it is obvious that the people who are there and the people who are following it with excitement and sympathy are not interested in that. Assuming (and it is a lot to assume) that for some strange reason, or through skulduggery, we were successful in convincing the general assembly or the neighborhood assemblies to accept as their own one of these slogans, the most likely result would be for the May 15 movement to quickly deflate, lose the majority of its supporters, and end up as a strange popular-frontist cocktail of leftists, citizenists, communists, and anarchists. That is, exactly what we have always criticized and where we have never wanted to be. In politics there is a term called "to vote with your feet", which means that when you do not like how things are going in one spot, you simply go to another. Something similar happens in every assembly, there are many people who, when they dislike something or feel uncomfortable, they stop talking, hang their head, and stop going, without showing their discontent.

Why does all this happen? Well, because real movements tend to be fairly complicated. They have their own composition, their idiosyncrasies, and their developments, and above all, because one can not expect people to become anarchists overnight. Not a single one of us has become an anarchist quickly or painlessly, but rather through mistakes, illusions, incoherencies, disappointments, debates, frustrations, flabbergastings, and with pounding our faces into the pavement (sometimes literally, with a cop on top). It can be pointed out that, in these occasions, people and things can change with a dizzying speed. We're sorry, but we think that it's simply not going to work.

We must be conscious of the representative role that the commissions play relative to the people who make up the demonstrations. This was seen most clearly in the Political Commission, which at its height could bring together 350 people in its two subcommissions (short- and long-term). It is clear that the assemblies are open and

that everybody could participate in them but it is undeniable that in the end the subcommissions became separated apparently by temporal stages. This separation is really marked by two very different viewpoints, the "reformist" and the "revolutionary", between those that are asking for concessions and legitimizing the power structures with small (or large) legislative reforms, and those that want to draw a road map for a rupture with the model imposed by capitalism.

This is a big mistake since "revolutionary" or radical measures can happen in the short- or long-term, the important thing is to be clear about the current context and the steps that we want to take. To cite one example, in the Short-Term Commission they are considering changes in the Spanish Constitution, and in the Long-Term Commission agreements such as the general strike. We do not think that a change in the Constitution (which needs the approval of three-fourths of the Congress of Deputies) is much more possible in the short-term than convoking a general strike (which is more of a tool of struggle than an end in itself), as complicated as this might be in the present day.

We think it is necessary to reflect on our involvement in the commissions, to try and make them more efficient and channel the use of energy in the right way. It's not worth anything if 200 people with a "similar" outlook come together and mark a course that is totally unacceptable for this movement (as of today) and then let the short-term demands be a plea for strengthening the welfare state . . . In this reflection we need to criticize ourselves and directly consider acceptable short- and long-term proposals which put us on the road or help us take steps to a real social revolution, that is, if we don't starve ourselves as a group of people who are above the moment. We need to display a certain intelligence and make a real calculation of the illusion of change that is in the air these days in the Puerta del Sol, to see if between us we can get this change to go a bit further than four quick fixes in the façade of democracy.

So, what options do we have?

It's clear that many of us have considered doing something, or have found themselves doing it almost without realizing it, that we could call "lowering the discourse", that is, sweetening our proposals to see if a spoonful of sugar helps them down. For example, playing

shout without a pamphlet that explained it? We only made people uncomfortable, who looked at us as though we stumbled in from the wrong film . . . Everything has its own time and place, and if we don't know how to adapt our discourse to the time and place, it will not go well for us. Adapting discourse is not the same as lowering it, it is making the message adequate to the context and the code to the receptor; it is giving our opinion about what people are discussing, rather than what we think they should be discussing . . . And it is giving this opinion in their "language", not in our "dialect", full of technical terms and idioms which are comfortable for talking amongst ourselves, but which create barriers and confusions for anyone who doesn't know how to operate them.

[1] On May 4, 2011, police in Barcelona arrested Patricia Heras and other activists associated with the squatting movement on obviously political and trumped-up reasons. Faced with years in prison, Patricia Heras chose to commit suicide.

about soccer and another one comes and starts talking about something-or-another, maybe the plot of an Iranian film, it wouldn't make any sense. Does this mean that we should abandon anarchism and become democrats? Of course not. Should we hide? No. Should we display for the world that we're anarchists? For us, this doesn't make any sense if it doesn't go beyond "being an anarchist". To call yourself an anarchist means nothing in itself, it says nothing: neither good, nor bad. In our opinion it is not about either hiding ourselves or putting ourselves on display, but about practicing anarchism in a particular context. For example: of all the chants that some of us or our comrades chanted on one of the first days of in Sol only a couple of slogans extended even minimally beyond our circle: "The people united, function without parties" and "A, anti, anticapitalists". Why? Not because the chants are a big deal, which they are not, nor because they are ingenious, which they also aren't; we think that it was because, in that moment and in that space, they were chants that touched at least part of the people that were there. Whether we like it or not, the people there were not against the national police, nor did they want to smash the State . . . the work goes much deeper . . . If we limit ourselves to chanting or proposing decontextualized slogans in the assemblies, we are falling into pure and simple (in the worst sense of the word) propaganda, instead of participating.

Certainly, on many occasions we fall into inertia, just like everyone else. Instead of thinking about what we are capable of or what we want, we end up doing whatever is easiest: to "struggle is the only way", to "from north to south, from east to west . . . ", "death to the state . . . ", etc. This is an out-of-place discourse, in our opinion, and therefore ineffective. In the Anarchist Bloc on the demonstration of May 15 something similar happened: after a first phase with chants (whether good or bad, useful or not) that were at least related to the events of the day (democracy, capitalism, crisis), we passed to a remix of chants from our ghetto (from prisoners to Patricia Heras, including murderous cops), we slipped into self-referentiality, into sticking to ourselves . . . Unfortunately, nobody there know who Patricia Heras besides the four of us.[1] How did it make sense to

a cynical semantic confusion-ism by speaking of "direct democracy" instead of "anarchy", putting up with everything that we have to put up with to keep history in time, etc., etc.

Another option is to abandon the field as reformist. As we see it this is simply absurd. Basically because neither in the current moment nor throughout history do revolutionary movements arise out of nothing or emerge by themselves; it is the revolutionaries and the events themselves that with their force and tenacity are sometimes able to pull the social movements from being the reserve of parties and opportunists.

Although we will talk about this further on, we want to be clear that our idea is not to convert the May 15 movement into a mass "revolutionary movement", something just as absurd as believing that anarchy will come tomorrow if we wish for it hard enough. Nor are we saying that we need to be there until the end. For us its clear that, if we don't do things right, at a certain moment we will have to leave or, just as likely, we will be driven out. But it seems obvious that this moment hasn't arrived yet, that there are still opportunities to contribute to and participate in this history, above all with an eye to the call for popular neighborhood assemblies.

This should make it clear that we are not dreamers who have been blinded by the May 15 movement or who have closed up shop "due to revolution" (more marketing), but are simply anarchists that have seen a clear opportunity — the first in many years — to participate in a real movement of considerable size.

3. Towards a concrete and practical anarchist participation

In our opinion, what's at stake in the May 15 movement is to ensure that it becomes a point of departure to stimulate the everyday struggle for basic and concrete aspects, a struggle that is carried out through horizontalism, assemblyism, direct action, direct participation, solidarity, etc. which all form part of the basic coordinates of the May 15 movement. The assemblies must not be simple sites from which we ask (From whom? How?) for laws, reforms, and referendums (Which ones?), but must be spaces in which the people debate about their own problems, search for solution, and decide for themselves how to carry them out. They must become points of encounter, of communication, and of real participation — small (or large) nuclei of solidarity and resistance.

It's clear that an important part of this process is to decide which problems and which solutions to discuss — what content, to put it differently, will be expressed in the assemblies. This could be the other task that we set for ourselves, seeking for the questions that the assemblies discuss to be questions of class, gender, etc. that would deepen, through practice, to the critique of the State, of capital, and of wage labor.

To put it differently, we propose a practical and concrete participation from an antiauthoritarian perspective and forms of functioning, about basic questions of class and other equally important oppressions such as patriarchy, racism, etc.

To complement this practical contribution we must also contribute our point of view and our discourse, once again without falling into maximalisms such as "Revolution Now!" or anything like that.

As we see it, to work for people to take up our discourse is not, and should not be, to go and harp on about our life-long anarchist principles and slogans. These slogans, in our opinion, would be out of order. Not because they do not make sense or aren't true, but because they are not in the wave of what is happening, they are out of the context. This is like if you are speaking with a coworker