



29-S

In solidarity with the people arrested
in Barcelona during the General Strike

Last 29th of September we were thousands. Youngsters and adults, students, workers and unemployed, migrants and "locals", meeting up in the street, empowering the picketers, facing the cops, attacking the symbols of Capital, of misery and luxury... Making our rage to be respected.

Now, the same ones who generated this rage, the same ones who organise our daily anxiety, those who produce unemployment and labour exploitation, those who fill up the neighborhoods with raids and police abuse, those who military occupy other countries, torture and deport, are pointing on us and accusing ourselves of being "violent".

But we answer to this saying: "THE MOST VIOLENT ACT WAS GOING BACK TO NORMALITY". It wasn't the police attacks, nor the burning barricades, nor the shop lootings, nor the squatting of the bank... The hardest, most traumatic thing, was having to be back to the routinary submission after one day of revolt. Because for one day we stop putting our heads down in front of their abuse, we got united and demonstrated that together WE CAN, that if we move with strenght, the world they've built on our backs starts trembling. For one whole day we tasted the flavor of rebellion... AND NOW WE WANT MORE.

Poster found on the walls of Barcelona few days after the riots

Reasons for a General Strike

In the last three years unemployment in Spain reached historical numbers: according to the last official report from January 2011, there are already 4.696.600 unemployed (20,33% of the working population) and 1.328.000 homes where none of the active members of the family has a job. Institutional studies calculate an estimated "relative poverty" rate of 20,8% of the total population, meaning an oversaturation of all charity and social help systems.

Since the start of this new capitalist crisis in 2008, the spread of precarious working and living conditions, the increasing of prices from basic goods and services, the generalised political corruption scandals, the massive evictions of defaulted families (200.000 homes in two years) and the police repression against political and social movements has grown as never before in the history of Spanish "democracy".

When the so-called "socialist" Spanish government approved a new labour reform, aimed to destroy workers' rights while empowering employers' liberty to exterminate job places even more, finally the two main countrywide unions (the ass-licking sell-outs of CCOO and UGT) decided to react calling for a General Strike on the 29th of September. That was, for the singularity of the event, the perfect day for all the exploited and oppressed sectors of society to show their unrest in their own way.

From the *Assemblea de Barcelona* to the *Moviment del 25-S*

The 29th of June of 2010, two weeks after the labour reform was presented, the *Assemblea de Barcelona* was born in a citywide open meeting for all social and alternative movements in an attempt to create a resistance tool to answer the social cuts imposed by the government. Composed by neighborhood associations, grass-root unions, workers' committees and individuals meeting up in public squares and giving voice to many different people, collectives and political ideas, one of the outcomes of the *Assemblea* was the call for a pre-Strike warming up demonstration in the center of Barcelona on the 25th of September.

Today at 20h the old headquarters from the Banco Español de Crédito have been liberated as a way of stating that the strike of the 29th of September has to be the start of a continued fight cycle aimed to stop with the abuses we are suffering from banks, government and the unions CCOO and UGT. The banner hanged on the facade makes it very clear: banks suffocate us, employers exploit us, politicians lie to us and CCOO and UGT sell us out.

Excerpt of the first press release of the *Moviment del 25-S* (25-09-10)

Around 2.000 people marched in this demonstration, declared illegal by the police, and participated in the squatting of the building of the Spanish Bank of Credit during a very carefully planned action that took authorities by surprise. Empty for more than five years and located in Plaça Catalunya, the main economical and touristic core of the city, the *Banco de(s)crédito* opened its doors to diverse cultural and political activities for five days. What was called the *Moviment del 25-S* managed to concentrate lots of different people, bringing back hope to the social struggles and creating a big expectation for the coming General Strike of the 29-S.

*This is an invitation to fight together, wild and social STRIKE
This is not crisis, it's called Capitalism*

Banner and graffiti on the facade of the squatted bank

29-S: La vaga general

We've seen a huge cloud of black smoke [...] I tell you, a city out of control today, in hands of vandals [...] They are throwing rocks on us and calling me fascist... [end of transmission]

Live report in the center of Barcelona from *Intereconomía* tv channel journalist (29.09.10, 19.59h)

The 29-S, Spain was facing its seventh General Strike in history since the transfer from a fascist dictatorship to a democratic one in 1977. Starting from 28th of September's night, all over the territories of the State groups of picketers tried to stop and shut down all economical activities during 24 hours while encouraging "esquiroles" (strikebreakers) and precarious workers without rights to leave their jobs and join the actions.

*A picket of 80 people closes down the establishments of El Born.
A picket is proceeding to close works that were still open at this time around Barcelona's Born market. They make graffitis and throw firecrackers while shouting "Strike, Strike, General Strike".*

Web teletype from the *Agència d'informació 29-S* (29.09.10, 00.06h)

In Barcelona, thirty neighbourhood pickets, organised through local *assemblees de barri* and coordinated in the *Assemblea de BCN*, managed to shut down in most part of the city the business that were still open and not supporting the walkout. Groups of strikers cut main streets and roads with flaming car tire barricades, sealed doors of offices and shops, occupied universitarian campus and carried out other sabotage actions during the first hours of the General Strike producing clashes with police and strikebreakers. In the quarter of Gràcia, the well known nazi book shop *Europa* was looted, smashed and closed down by morning picketers.

Thanks to the effort made by independent media collectives, counter-information websites and pirate radios all around Catalunya, the united information agency of the 29-S managed to keep a live radio stream during the whole day, updating their website through an online teletype system and defying the complete silence from the mainstream media about what was going on in the streets.

Barcelona, La Rosa de Foc

29-Savage!

Graffiti found on the walls of Barcelona (29.09.10)

Surrounded by strong police presence, the Unitarian Picket planned by the *Assemblea de BCN* at 12.00h in Plaça Catalunya gathered around 8.000 people in front of the squatted bank. While waiting for all the neighbourhood pickets to make their way through the city and the massive riot squad lines, the occupiers of the bank cut the street with barricades and closed the doors of the building: a very controversial decision taken to avoid a possible eviction of the place based on "hosting suspects of comitting illegal acts". Finally the demo started moving through the center of the city leaving

barricades, spraypainting shops and attacking bank offices and other symbols of corporate Capitalism. After few hundred meters of march, a clash with a police line that was trying to prevent people from going through a main commercial street ended up with cops fleeing away and leaving behind a car that was immediately set on fire by demonstrators.

We heard some really distressing communications from colleagues asking to be taken out from there.

Declarations by a *BRIMO Mosso d'Esquadra* (Catalan riot police) published in the newspaper *La Vanguardia* (06.10.10)

By two in the afternoon, all over the center of the city groups of protesters from all ages and social backgrounds were engaged on fighting back cops, setting barricades on fire and attacking the main commercial shops that were still open thanks to police protection and threats to the workers. Waves of tourists running away in panic and the big numbers of the mobilisation contributed to overcome the response from authorities. Barcelona was in chaos; meanwhile, mainstream media reports were still talking on tv about a “general failure” of the strike and “total normality and order” in the streets.

From first hour in the evening, the Mossos d'Esquadra have started the eviction of the old headquarters from Banesto in the square of Catalunya of Barcelona, squatted the last weekend by a group of “antisistema” and according to police being used as a shelter for people that caused riots in the General Strike day.

Excerpt from *La Vanguardia* newspaper (30.09.10)

Around 15.30 h, the squatted bank was illegally evicted by riot police taking advantage from the fact that most protesters were dispersed working as picketers, resting for the coming demonstrations of the day or just going around to expropriate food and water from the few business that were still not supporting the strike. During the eviction, 19 people were arrested and subsequently beaten up by cops.

With six more demonstrations convened by different unions and social movements to take place during the evening, the riots went on simultaneously in big part of the city until almost midnight. The official balance after a whole day of struggle was of 43 arrested in Barcelona (out of 121 in all Spain) and hundreds of protestors injured all over the State, both by police or strikebreakers trying to get to their job places.

Media aims, the State pulls the trigger

The vandalic acts recorded in the Catalan capital have been provoked by "antisistema" elements outside the main demonstrations and the action of the informative pickets.

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[We are] Sick of this daddy's boys without any other job than creating shoddy riots, assaulting the streets, destroying everything they find and violating society! Sick of their stupid behavior, their revolutionary speech over the top, their thug looks and their bland bravery! Sick of Barcelona being transformed in a paradise for the "antisistema" that swarm around the planet, happy from finding such a friendly city!

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Mossos didn't shot a single rubber bullet [in Barcelona] during the 29-S

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[...] police officers have shot rubber bullets under the astonished gaze of dozens of tourists. The shots have been answered with the throwing of stones and glass bottles.

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However, all police services asked agree that those violent "antisistema" don't have an organised structure.

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During last day riots there was people giving orders and commands to the rest about where to go and what to do.

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Barcelona's City Hall proposes to close down the websites from those alternative collectives that "advocate violence".

Excerpts from press and tv mainstream media during the weeks after the General Strike

For almost one month after the 29-S, media kept on blaming those "antisistema" for being violent while no further comments were made about a labour reform and a whole system that represents an extreme attack over population's life and dignity. State's propaganda machine started a massive campaign of daily calls in favour of a wider repression and control both in the streets and internet while demanding jail sentence for the arrested strikers and trying to isolate them, showing its fear to the spread of insurrection and unrest in a socially explosive country like Spain.

Now we understand it, that veteran, with glasses and gray hair, that first look askance at the flaming stark and then added a cartboard to whip it up: he was an antisistema. Those adolescents that parked their bikes and help breaking the windows from the Diocesan museum (the one from the cheaters and abusers) were also antisistema. From the Pakistani beer street dealers we

already suspected, since nobody payed them attention, they took the chance to start fires as well. The ones holding the banner on the picket at 12 h: "Against Capital dictatorship, General Strike" also were. Also the ones stealing jeans, and the ones burning them, more of the same. The ones using the chairs from the pizzeria to build barricades as well. All antisistema.

[...] We know that if we would come out again with transforming Ritz in a popular kitchen and Aragon large estates in agricultural collectivities [like in 1936], State will answer us with guns. That's why we have in mind that in an insurrection we'll have to use something more than stones to defend ourselves. First of all we hate the daily violence from Capital, the one that kills with its wars and famines or the one that administrates death in its working and studing places.

[...] A huge hug to all those who, after the 29-S, walk the streets with a smile... shhht! when you'll pass next to a cop try to look serious, they are still looking for us.

Excerpts from the anonymous text *Antisistema smiles*, written few days after the riots

Legal situation of the arrested

From the 43 arrested in Barcelona, 7 of them got "freedom with charges" and 2 stayed in prison for some days (according to the judge, because there was "fleeing risk" since both were foreigners) while most of the rest it's still waiting to testify before the court.

For now three courtcases were made with the judge forced to drop the charges in two of them because of lack of evidences and the fantastic made-up statements made by police, and having to archive the last one (possibly due to irregularities in the detention files).

To ease the consequences of what will be a long, hard and very expensive process, a solidarity support group for the arrested was created with many benefit events being organised in the last months across Catalunya. As the social and economical situation will just get worse in the future, we can expect new waves of repression as the struggle goes on, with solidarity becoming our strongest and most essential tool to resist Capitalism and State authority.

We should not leave alone the people arrested that day, because the 29-S, we all took over the streets to defend a future beyond the crisis.

29-S support group

This booklet is intended to be just a short, partial and synthetized overview on the facts that happened before, during and after last 29th of September of 2010 in Spain, Catalunya and specially in the city of Barcelona as the author of this compilation saw and understood them.

Solidaritat amb les detingudes, per una vaga general, indefinida i salvatge.

for more info (in Catalan or Castilian):

<http://suport29.info>

<http://29-s.net>

<http://movimentdel25.org>

<http://assemblea.byethost2.com>

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Amsterdam, February 2011