

Massive social movements have spread around the continent. since the outbreak of the crisis. They have varied geographically as well as timely. They have been a reaction and a rejection of the current crisis policies. These new movements, while predominantly still national, reference each other and increasingly launch Europe-wide mobilizations (N14, For a European Spring, Alter Summit, Blockupy). One of the main features of the movements is the weak role of institutional actors (trade unions<sup>1</sup> and parties) and the strong link they create between economic demands and the question of a more radical or real democracy.

While the movements have gained strength and public support over time they haven't been able to achieve any considerable concessions by the ruling powers. On the contrary, movements facing a diminishing democracy as elected governments are replaced by technocrats and political decisions are increasingly moved to the European level. There they are transferred to institutions with least democratic control (i.e. the DG ECFIN or the ECB, either in the framework of the "Troika" or the establishment of the European Economic Governance).

Our first thesis therefore is that the state is developing in terms of an "authoritarian statism"<sup>2</sup>. This reduces the necessity to organize political consensus and thereby ensures the precarious unity of the "power block"<sup>3</sup> while the institutions of liberal democracy prevail. Therefore the new movements have to be conceptualized exactly in the context of the economic crisis and crisis management which affects the state. In this regard we are understand social movements as strategic-relational actors within a strategic-selective context.<sup>4</sup>

These movements are often described as something entirely new, in particular regarding their internal organizational forms. In this respect our paper focuses on the strategic stakes and perspectives of the movements and therefore also on their novelty.

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<sup>1</sup> The Alter Summit process marks an important exception in this regard as it tries to connect trade unions and older social movements with the demands of the new movements.

<sup>2</sup> cf. Nicos Poulantzas (2000): State, Power, Socialism, p. 203 et seq.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. 136-137

<sup>4</sup> vgl. Hay, Colin, Political Analysis. A critical Introduction, Palgrave Macmillan: Hampshire, 2002, insbesondere S. 126ff.

The movements address not only the national context but increasingly the European level as well as its effects on a national level. Hence the question arises to what extent a European social subject arises from below in opposition to current European crisis policies.<sup>5</sup>

Our analysis of the movements will follow the following lines:

- Conceptions of the crisis and societies in the movement(s)
- Conception of the state and its nature and in particular the understanding of the ongoing changes in the context of European integration
- The conception of strategies and tactics addressing the state and other social. The political actors and associated the movement(s) own perception on perspectives of change and success.
- Political and economic alternatives posed by the movement(s)

Our analysis will be based on a critical content analysis of documents coming from the movement(s) and its intellectuals. It aims to draw a critical analysis of the current movement(s), its internal contradictions and their prospects of change.

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<sup>5</sup> cf. Leigh Phillips 2013: A European 'demos' is being built by accident  
(<http://blogs.euobserver.com/phillips/2013/03/15/a-european-demos-is-being-built-by-accident/>)