

# The bankrupt perspective of Blockupy

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The blockades, protests and rallies on March 18, during the opening of the new European Central Bank (ECB) headquarters in Frankfurt, Germany, were officially directed against austerity policies in Europe. In reality, they served a completely different purpose. They were intended to provide a cover for the Left Party and its European allies, above all Syriza in Greece and Podemos in Spain, as they become the most important instruments for the implementation of these policies.

The Frankfurt protests were framed by two important events.

One month ago, the Syriza government in Greece dropped its campaign promise to bring an end to austerity policies. It betrayed in every respect the impoverished population whose votes brought it to power. Syriza has promised the euro group to continue the austerity measures of the previous Greek government, work out further social cuts, rapidly meet financial obligations to all creditors and keep collaborating with the inspectors of the ECB, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the European Union (EU) “troika.”

One week after the protests, Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras paid his first official visit to German Chancellor Angela Merkel. They pledged to build a respectful partnership, and Tsipras reaffirmed that he will continue the austerity policies in close collaboration with the EU and the German government.

This capitulation has not escaped the notice of many who had hoped for a political change after Syriza’s victory in the elections. It has also affected Syriza’s European allies. Podemos received 15 percent of the vote in last Sunday’s election in Andalusia, falling far below expectations. In Germany, the Left Party is increasingly seen for what it really is—a bourgeois, pro-capitalist party which hardly differs from the Social Democratic Party (SPD), the Greens or the Christian

Democratic Union (CDU).

Under these circumstances, Syriza, Podemos and the Left Party desperately needed a new, leftist fig leaf. Blockupy was quite ready to provide it.

Behind their name—a combination of *block* ade and *occupy* — is concealed a broad network, extending from Attac to various trade union groups, the Left Party, numerous pseudo-left groups like the Revolutionary Socialist League (RSB) and Socialist Alternative (SAV), different forums and initiatives, and autonomous and anarchist groups such as the Interventionist Left and “All or Nothing”.

While these organizations have their political differences, they are united on one question: the rejection of an independent movement of the working class with the goal of overthrowing capitalism. Their perspective is limited to putting pressure on the ECB and other capitalist institutions so that, in addition to the banks and the super-rich, the more affluent layers of the middle class can also profit from their policies.

Some Blockupy members openly operate as advisors to bourgeois politics. For them, the protest against the ECB is only a springboard to a political career. They understand the term “occupy” literally—they do not want to abolish the ECB, but rather themselves occupy a comfortable chair in the new glass palace on the banks of the Main. Sven Giegold, who long served as the public face of Attac Germany, has secured just such a position. He represents the Greens on the European parliament’s committee on economic and monetary affairs, where he diligently monitors compliance with euro criteria.

This is also the reason why the enormous betrayal by Syriza has not affected these people. What excited them about Syriza was never its hollow campaign promises, but rather the prospect of gaining cabinet seats for themselves, as well as lucrative salaries.

Other members of Blockupy employ more severe

methods of protest—blockades and civil disobedience. But the radical character of their methods is in inverse proportion to their political objectives. They, too, seek only to exert pressure on the ECB, to bring its policies more in line with the interests of the affluent middle class. They formulate their hatred for the working class more openly than any other member of the movement.

In their call to blockade the ECB, the Interventionist Left (IL) laid blame on the majority of the population, saying they consider “all current social struggles” to be “chaos” and that they prefer the “already existing capitalist order.” The “All or Nothing” alliance insulted German workers in their call for a demonstration, calling them “hamsters in a wheel” who live at the expense of the South and only want to “get drunk after work, go jogging, subscribe to *Landlust*, and play World of Warcraft.”

Both groups emerged from the sometimes violent protests against the 2007 G-8 summit in Heiligendamm. They are close to libertarian and anarchist layers and are members of Blockupy.

The Left Party is purposefully using the Blockupy movement to mobilize support for its right-wing policies and its line on Syriza. The organization of the Frankfurt protest placed itself largely in their hands. The national party leadership resolved as early as January 24 to “financially support the Blockupy protest in the amount of €7,000.”

The rally was announced by Ulrich Wilken, the Left Party chairperson in Hessen, and deputy party leader Sahra Wagenknecht was, along with Giorgos Chondros of Syriza and Miguel Urban of Podemos, among the prominent speakers at the concluding rally.

Wagenknecht praised Syriza as a role model, saying “Greece has shown how one can simply sweep away a corrupt party system and bring a new force to power.” Chondros sought to encourage the Left Party functionaries and union bureaucrats in attendance, saying, “The example of Syriza shows that anything is possible in politics. We were once a very small party and now we are the party that constitutes the government.”

This glorification of Syriza is shared by all other members of Blockupy. The leading circles of the movement explained in a statement issued after the protest, “the courageous decision made by the people of Greece during the elections” is “an inspiration to

millions of people throughout Europe which shows that a society beyond the sorrows of capitalism is possible.”

The Interventionist Left announced before the protest that Syriza was “a third possibility, a left possibility, the possibility of a social alternative beyond the shameful austerity policies dictated by the EU.” It called Syriza and Podemos the “beginning of a European spring.”

Even conservative leaders of the Left Party have recognized the value of groups in the autonomous spectrum, even though their methods sometimes push against the boundaries of legality. Since she was elected the Left Party’s national chairperson in June 2012, Katja Kipping has striven for a closer collaboration with them. The party’s own Rosa Luxemburg Foundation regularly finances the events of the Interventionist Left and supports many of its members in the form of stipends. They return the favor by supporting the Left Party.

Real opposition to the austerity diktats of the ECB, the EU and the German government demands the building of a revolutionary party that unites the European and international working class on the foundation of a socialist program. That is only possible by waging a tireless political and theoretical struggle against Syriza, the Left Party and their supporters in the Blockupy movement.



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