

WORKSHOP 1: STRUGGLES IN EUROPE



We started the workshop with a brief review of the struggles in the last period: the struggle against evictions seems, not surprisingly, to be the most urgent.

Participants expressed their concern about the phenomenon of “renoviction” (eviction organised through renovation). In the course of the discussion it became clear that there are two main modes of action against evictions: campaigns that aim to raise awareness (via mapping, reports and symbolic actions), and direct action via the organisation of anti- eviction fronts.

Other struggles include those against luxury real estate development projects. Others are to promote alternative ways of living. Some groups campaign against racist housing policies. There are also those fighting for lower rents, for more social housing, or against temporary tenancy agreements that undermine tenants’ rights. Airbnb also remains a huge problem in many cities, as does indebtedness. And while some are trying to prevent new “anti-squatting laws”, others are engaging in squatting, which has recently been successfully combined with the creation of housing spaces for so-called homeless people.

The Berlin referendum to expropriate large housing companies was mentioned, which led the discussion to more generic questions about how we raise awareness and mobilise (particularly in the context of the pandemic) and what approaches seem to be transferable to other contexts. Indeed, depending on the range of issues discussed, there is a wide variety of ways to fight, from lobbying political actors to direct action. Many comrades stated that the combination of different strategies and tactics is the most promising.

Another important tool that we will have to discuss more in the future is ‘storytelling’, i.e. how we politically shape the perception of socio-economic conditions and ultimately change the discourse.

