

## *Anarchist CSD 2020: Emancipate, liberate, cooperate – against every war, against every domination and with no national flags!*

Stonewall was a spontaneous militant riot by people of colour, immigrants, sex workers and the oppressed. Let us never forget that!

### **Review and evaluation of the ACSD 2020 in Berlin**

The Orga-Group: We are a very small group and yet anything but homogeneous. We bring different perspectives, identities, experiences and points of view. We have come together for the ACSD 2020 and are in the process of forming a group and discussing common positions. We are taking one step at a time, even though we sometimes find it hard to accept that this is a slow process. Nevertheless, we are glad that we have ventured the ACSD 2020 and we would like to share our follow-up with you.

#### **1. Events and impressions**

The anarchist CSD took place on Saturday July 25<sup>th</sup> 2020 and started at 6 pm at Kottbusser Tor in Berlin-Kreuzberg. The weather was nice, and the sun was shining. Unlike the mainstream CSD with its internet show, we took our protest to the streets. Even if corona limitations made it more difficult, over 500 people followed the march at the start, more joined in later making it about 1000 people – all of them with anarchist face coverings. Corona means keeping distance – with our march we wanted to raise awareness for practices of social distancing, overcome them and show a strong sign of resistance against borders between people which have been established by the ruling class long ago and which are brutally maintained. We criticised the ruling class' way of dealing with the pandemic: Its focus on the hetero family as core part of the society and the deliberate disregard for queer needs and collective ways of life. In addition to this, we prepared two questions for our open mic sessions, which were to take place at two different spots during the march as to give others the chance to speak. The questions were: "How are we dealing with Corona?" and "How are we dealing with conflicts in the leftist queer scene?". The first question arises from the current situation and the second one from the many ongoing conflicts and the fact that they rarely come to productive solutions.

During the preparation for the ACSD 2020, we often got questions about last year's Radical Queer March and were asked how we were going to deal with "antideutschen", pro-Israel and pro-Palestine groups in case of troubles. We were determined not to let anyone sabotage our march and therefore we announced that we would stop the demonstration and clear things up. We would not accept any intervention by the cops during conflicts. If people were to show up with national flags, we would seek dialogue; the ACSD should not become a playground for national flag twerps. The rest we were ready to take on ourselves. Considering the short amount of time we had to organise the march, we had no

other choice. Unfortunately, we were not able to organise many things that we were planning and wishing for. We contacted various queer groups in advance, queers from the BIPOC scene (Black/Indigenous/People of Colour), Turkish and Arab queers, with the "Mad & Disability Pride" and we invited them to participate. But we lacked the time to build viable alliances. Above all, we would have liked to have seen a stronger involvement of queer groups with a BIPOC perspective, and we think it is a pity that we did not manage to build alliances for this ACSD. We met with some people from Bloque Latinoamericano and we discussed our respective positions (thanks to all of you for the consultation and exchange!). We know that there is still room for improvement. Nevertheless, we did not want to leave the ACSD untried.

We are also very grateful for the valuable input and cooperation with the Mad & Disability Pride Alliance and have to note here self-critically that we did not manage to make the march as barrier-free as we had wished in the short time available. Amongst other things, a rest car, a translation into German sign language and a better infrastructure for wheelchair users were planned. All this required time and financial means, which we unfortunately did not have for this march.

What we also lacked was a working radio link with several microphones, a few DJ\*s and less imperial music, more translations, a more thorough preparation of the awareness team in advance (all the more: thank you, people!)... We see all these as ways to make ACSD 2021 even better. In the course of the follow-up we are just starting to talk about how we want to shape the upcoming ACSD.

### **The start**

After communicating our request for a general anarchist face covering and a short prelude, the march moved towards Hermannplatz. Since we were a small team, several tasks had to be distributed to volunteers. Our banner "Liberate, Emancipate, Cooperate: Queer Anarchist CSD" was held by lots of amazing people and formed the head of the march. Further back there were lots of other flags and banners. We then communicated through our sound truck that party or national flags were not welcome in the march, since we are actively against any form of national state, statehood and war. The route was supposed to go through Kreuzberg and Neukölln, past places where the government forces immigrants and financially disadvantaged people out, displaces and stigmatises them and suppresses the last self-organised and autonomous spaces, such as the already evicted *Syndikat*.

### **From Hermannplatz to Sonnenallee**

Upon arrival of our loud protest against gentrification and the plans of fascist Karlstadt-billionaire Benko at Hermannplatz, we pointed out the role that Joschka Fischer, the former foreign (war) minister and member of the party *Die Grünen*, has in it. Fisher practices so-called green washing to make the project of the aforementioned FDP supporter look acceptable. Afterwards, two speeches were held: one against the double standard regarding cis feminine and cis masculine breasts and one by our collective referring to our general standpoint (published on

our website). When the *Rattenchor* started singing, our mood went through the ceiling. Dearest *Rattenchor*, it was amazing, and it gave the march a lot of energy!

More and more people joined the march as we walked through Sonnenallee. Sonnenallee is one of the places known for homophobic, transphobic, racist and fascist attacks on queer and immigrant people. That is why we found it important to show our presence against patriarchal structures, oppression, capitalistic exploitation, racism, fundamentalism, police/fascist attacks and bigotry. For this reason, we reached out to several groups from the neighbourhood beforehand to get to know their current struggles and contradictions and to show proper solidarity. The conditions of the neighbourhood are the conditions of all of us! It was nice that fellow comrades translated our speeches in Arabic and Turkish. Thank you!

The march walked further down Sonnenallee. Around 200 meters away from the bakery Damaskus, where we were going to hold our next speech, the demonstration stopped. At that moment we experienced two simultaneous attacks. There was a transphobic assault at the end of the march, which followed a confrontation regarding a sexist incident outside of the demonstration. Just as we had suggested to react in such instances, the bystanders stopped until the situation had cleared up. The head of the march walked further for a while, until the news of what had happened reached it. At the same time the moderation, truck drivers and other protesters were aggressively shouted at and harassed by a member of the march and a small group of her followers. That was highly inconvenient since at that time we were holding the speech at the bakery Damaskus, which had been target of a fascist attack some weeks before.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, in the short preparation time we were not able to include the bakery Damascus itself, although we were on site at short notice and had asked if they would like to make a speech themselves. We would have liked this to be more inclusive. Nevertheless, the speech was so important to us since we wanted to draw attention to the attacks on the bakery.

This chaotic situation with several conflicts during a speech was the most delicate and stressful time of the march for us and we spent a particular section further down in this evaluation to it.

### **Toward Erkstraße, Flughafenstraße and back to Hermannplatz and closure**

The demonstration moved further toward Erkstraße and Flughafenstraße. At the corner of Karl-Marx-Straße a climax with tuba, saxophone and trumpet awaited us: the queer brass band Transophonix played a few cool songs for us. That was amazing, thank you so much! At the corner with Hermannstraße we held another speech about the schamlosen investors' tactics to commercialise housing spaces. A person in the march spontaneously held a speech, saying he finds it important

---

<sup>1</sup> The speech was about the stigma faced by migrant residents through racist police interventions, raids and racist reports by media such as RBB. There is a connection between this stigma and the fascist attacks against Syrian and Turkish shops. The cooperation between fascists and police officers has also been pointed out.

that there is an anarchist-or-whatever CSD since lots of queer people are exposed to bullying at the workplace. We sent our greeting to *Syndikat*, a Berlin bar which had by then been evicted with 700 cops by the red-red-green senate.

We turned onto Hermannstraße and the demonstration walked back to Hermannplatz. People were in a very good mood. The CSD got back its political profile! We showed that we stand against the sell-out of our city and that we stand against oppression. With “Smalltownboy” by Bronski Beat on their lips, over 800 people flocked together down Hermannstraße. People were happy. We were present, we stood together, we showed resistance!

Unfortunately, some of the speeches could not be held because of the incidents that took place in Sonnenallee. Even the planned open mics had to be skipped and the important analysis of how we want to deal with conflicts within left-wing communities could not take place. In accordance with our slogan “against every war” we call out for overcoming escalative impulses and attitudes within our communities.

The *Rattenchor* and later FaulenzA got the mic... there the cops got nervous, it was already quarter past ten and the rap lyrics took a clear-cut position against cops. ☺ A fantastic atmosphere and an amazing end to a cool, pervert, sexual, warm, loving, radical and militant ACSD 2020.

## 2. Specific incidents

In the following text we are going to refer to the events that were directed against the character of the ACSD and which we experienced as attacks on us and other people. In this detailed evaluation we want a) to share with you what kind of attacks and assaults we experienced and b) to create the prerequisite to distribute the responsibility for the success of the future ACSD 2021 among many shoulders by achieving better transparency about certain conflicts. The accountability we wish for is one carried by political communities that feel inspired by the idea of an anarchist CSD or see themselves as part of it. We see ourselves as an emancipatory project, this means we want an open CSD where people who wish for a society without hierarchies can connect and share their perspective with other queer people. We believe that the ACSD could and should offer room for controversial topics. Yet we don't accept doctrinaire, abusive, tactical, identitarian, ideological and post-stalinist approaches against us, groups or people affiliated to us.

Before the march we allowed ourselves to determine what was important to us and constituted the particular character of the march: As anarchists we reject national states and their symbols as a positive point of reference. We stand against war logic and we clear our stuff on our own – that means putting the state authorities' desire to intervene in its place, stopping the march if necessary and clearing conflicts up together.

In the past the Israel-Palestine-conflict was forced onto several CSD groups, initially in 2004 through – in our eyes authoritarian – “antideutsche” activists. In 2019 after a provocation by “Antideutschen” a conflict escalated with BDS and pro-

Palestine groups at the Radical Queer March: the team of the Radical Queer March was totally surprised by this dynamic before and during the demonstration, the police intervened against the BDS block and ultimately the march was suspended. The march organizers were probably not decided enough to keep the police away from the demonstration or maybe tolerated the police intervention due to their own overstress. A few weeks before a part of our current group had organised the libertarian CSD and stated that national flags were not welcome. The participants respected this decision. The libertarian CSD was not in the focus of pro-Israel and Pro-Palestine groups though. The conflict between “Antideutschen” and pro-Palestine groups and between both and the respective CSD teams drags like the appendage of an unsolved contradiction throughout the whole left scene. According to our analysis the external parties’ interests getting into CSDs do not lie in queer emancipatory and solidary struggles but rather in division – every year anew.

As mentioned above, one day before the march we organised a meeting with some people belonging to pro-Palestine groups. Among others we got in touch with the group known as QuARC through several channels and with months in advanced. We invited them but no reply was received and so we couldn’t meet in advance. Our intention for the meeting was to show that we are open to the participation of antiracist groups and we wanted to talk about eventually working together. Specifically, we discussed with the people who attended the meeting about different positions and differences. Our decision not to allow national flags was interpreted as a way of silencing, the muting of marginalised groups and liberation struggles by beneficiaries of *white*<sup>2</sup> supremacy. People from these groups referred to movements that fight for their freedom using national symbols, such as flags, in a positive way. For us, from an anarchist perspective, especially due to the analysis of national liberation struggles and the formation of new patriarchal and economical power structures, they do not represent a positive reference. We agreed to meet once again after the ACSD to carry on with this discussion, for instance in regard to common or diverging opinions, and we invited them to hold a speech, for instance about Palestine. Unfortunately, the representative of QuARC did not show up in spite of her intention to.

At the march from the beginning there was a small group of pro-Palestine people, identifiable as members of the groups QuARC and BAP, with signs which did not depict the typical PLO/Palestinian flag but could be interpreted as a queered up version of it. This flag was similar to the newly created Philly-flag which depicts the usual rainbow and on the right side has a triangle with brown and black stripes (representing BIPoC queer people) and the transgender flag colours (light blue, pink and white). In particular, but especially because of the colours and their arrangement in the centre of the banner many people identified it as an intended reference to the Palestinian flag. Twice, people from our team sought dialogue with these people we will later refer to as “the escalating group”. Our people were

---

<sup>2</sup> We write “*white*” in cursive to point out its socially constructed nature. That means this word does not indicate a skin complexion but rather an ideological idea, a socially hidden structure, which is connected to privileges and their preservation. *White* is often intended as norm(ality) and remains invisible or unnoticed while everything else that differs from it gets labelled (and stands out because of it). In many anti-racist texts the adjective “Black” is written with a capital letter to make clear that it designates a political category, not a skin colour.

either shouted at or the person who seemed to lead the group seemingly gave orders not to speak with us. Our team quickly decided we did not want to waste time on it and decided to accept it for this demonstration. Through the “Lauti” (the sound van) and with our jingle we repeatedly announced that no party national flags or banners are desired on the demo. An expulsion of the group from the march didn’t take place at any time. Everything else is a lie.

Near the bakery Damaskus in Sonnenallee our moderators and several other members of the team got suddenly verbally attacked by people from the escalating group, particularly through constant shouting. By this, a proper handling of the simultaneous transphobic assault toward some Arabic queer participants in the back part of the demo was consequently massively obstructed. This was the most difficult time of the march, keeping it all together, particularly because the speech in front of the bakery still had to be held (it had been attacked by nazis a few weeks prior to this). At this point we had three ongoing conflicts. Firstly, the anti-trans attack at the end of the march. Secondly, the escalating group around the speech. And thirdly, we suddenly had to keep the cops at bay, who made an appearance because of the yelling of the escalating group’s leader.<sup>3</sup> The content of the shouting was the “wish” to get the microphone and the accusation of silencing.<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, she insulted the participants of the demonstration as racists, just like the moderation.<sup>5</sup> One of the people holding the rope around the sound truck was massively yelled at. The position these people are in does not allow them to flee the scene and escape harassment. Our truck was shortly hindered from moving forward through a blockade. Apart from the diverse insults they repeatedly misgendered the moderation, even after being corrected. Some people from the escalating group were constantly filming their leaders and other participants without anyone’s consent – this was explicitly perceived as an attack as well. Actually, for us there was no reason to hand out the microphone to a person who prohibits their followers to speak to us and refuses to discuss contradictions with us. Even if their leaders behaved irresponsibly toward the whole march, we told them that we would make the microphone available to them if they stop insulting people and adhered to the three-minute limit that we had set for every speech. Despite increasing time pressure, we decided to do so not least because they could publicly face up to the criticism from the demo participants\* whom we politically trusted and also because we wanted to protect people from further verbal attacks. We also decided to hold the speech about the fascist attack on the bakery Damaskus first, since we were not willing to let the demonstration be taken out of our hands: Besides other topics, we came to Sonnenallee to speak up about

---

3 The whole situation was very demanding, and we also put a lot of energy in it afterward to clarify what had actually happened. This text is also the result of inquiries which we made in order to describe the chronologically compressed events more precisely.

4 We had announced we were going to have two open mics (which we later decided had to be cancelled because of lack of time). But open mics are moderated mics about a common topic. A moderated mic actively deals for instance with racist, sexist or other remarks which massively contradict the character of the march. This idea of an open mic was obviously misunderstood here.

5 We said through the sound truck that on this street there had been several sexist, racist and fascist attacks and we repeated it again for people with a short memory as well.

racism within our society... As explained before, we had to enforce our speech against that group's escalation and ask them to step one meter away from the speaking person with their shouting. Disturbing a speech with three translations, as well as attacking orga people, could easily be understood as sabotage of the demo. When people from the escalating group got to speak, their speech was neither about anarchist contributions to Palestine and Israel, nor about any form of queer political statement regarding the demonstration. Because of this time-consuming escalation other speeches could not be held: speeches against racist police brutality in front of the police station in Neukölln, against the eviction of Liebig 34, and two open moderated (!) mics – this too may be seen as sabotage.

In retrospect, however, we think that it was not about sabotage per se, but that we served as a stage for a show, and that the target group was a different one: The point was to tell their filming comrades and their followers on Facebook (!) that they had now "fought" for the microphone and successfully fought against "silencing". The pattern of this orchestration is simple: "good freedom fighters against bad colonisers". This kind of binary logic does not fit into the situation at the march, does not take in consideration the diverse composition of the orga group and denies the particular character of the demonstration. Here, on the contrary, images of dominance are reproduced instead dissolved. In other words, we believe that in this way the prevailing racist narrative is more likely to be perpetuated in a war-logical way, since we do not come into exchange and controversy in this way. We understand very well that groups (have to) choose forms of separatist politics to prevent exposing themselves to white (male, cisgender, heterosexist, etc.) privileged people. Yet we suppose that all the hate we were attacked with is a logical consequence of a binary way of thinking which does not allow any nuances. That people who are affected by racism or otherwise marginalized have a hatred for *white* privileged people: granted. The attacks on the ACSD though were anti-emancipatory, based on an idea about the only correct positioning and a friend-foe thinking. They don't do justice either to us as a diverse group, nor to our decision to position ourselves against racism from different perspectives – and to constantly struggle for this positioning. In our opinion, the fact that we previously sought contact with the attacking group and that the exchange was refused, speaks volumes. We were just the screen on which they projected their enactment on the day of the ACSD.

To sum it up: We doubt collaborations with cadre-like organisations with an authoritarian self-image. If groups or people approach the march in a tactical way and try functionalise it, they are not part of it, but understand themselves as an attack on it. It is noticeable when these people do not appear with their own content and events to the outside world, but pounce on others. It is convenient to attack the events of others. Whoever sabotages the character, political orientation and consensus under which we gathered, whoever withdraws from confrontations and continues to attack us, is not part of our struggle and will not be so.

We want a march for all queer people, no matter the skin colour, passport, body ability, sexual preferences, (non-)faith or age. Who wish for an anarchist rising, a step toward a society without hierarchies, and are willing to struggle with all contradiction to get to it... it is actually pretty simple.

This statement is meant as the beginning of a broader discussion and with it we invite people to take part in it.

**We refuse to tolerate any form of attack against our structures in the future. Protect anarchist structures! Social revolution instead of war !**

**We thank all participants for encouragement and support for the anarchist orientation of the CSD.**

Your Anarchist CSD Berlin organizers group

Website: <https://acsd20.noblogs.org>