Antti Rautiainen
Against EU or for the International Resistance?
(January 2000, a comment on anti-EU movements)
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Contents

tonomists understood that this slogan is not nationalist, althought it tells the true nature of the EU without a paraller attack against the nation state.

I would also like to give a well deserved beating to all those journalists who always report Finnish demos as "a handful of anti-Eu punks/bigots/old farts were against everything as usual, and no-one cared". And I neither like to organise demonstrations just "against EU", but against certain aspects of corporate globalization, from which EU is just one, seeing the EU in it's global context. Majority of the people in Finland understands that withdrawing from the EU would not change things a lot, and journalists are trying to do their best to get people know that radicals do not understand this. We must fight against their bullshitting, but not by abolishing all the anti-EU rhetorics.

But I would still like to define my opinion so that I am "against EU and against nation state", instead of saying "I am for socialist united states of Europe", as trots say. It is clear for trotskists as well that EU cannot be reformed, but the trotskist revolution which replaces old governement with a new is not a lot different from reformist attempts.

In anarchist viewpoint, it is very important to stay far from both pro-EU, "pseudo-internationalist" argumentation and from nationalist, "pseudo-anti-imperialist" argumentation. We know that EU practice is mockery of real internationalism, and national states are also made for the oppression of working class.

As long as there is more than these 2 choices, there will not be problems for anarchists. But when choices are reduced to 2, life is not easy anymore. I think this was the situation in Finland 1994, in the time of EU-referendum. There was only two choices, to boycott referendum and to vote NO to EU-membership.

Reasons to boycott referendum were clear — it was pseudo-direct democracy to justify the choices capitalists abroad and in Finland made 50 year ago. Althought NO won, nothing would have become better than already was.

But there was reasons to vote NO as well. Joining to EU was a big leap forward for Finnish ruling class, they get much better chances to get legislation they wanted for oppression of people and making more profit. In the polls before referendum, more than 60% of MP's were pro-EU, 90% of journalists were for membership, from bosses almost 100%. From people, never less than 40% were against. There was a conflict between big share of people and their bosses, althought bosses set the rules of the conflict so that their servants hadn't a lot of chances.

Do not give a shit about details?

Anarchist are not for legislative reforms, but for the revolution. One group of anarchist certainly just laughed cynically and continued "making of revolution" if their countries planned to make legislation to legalise killing of anarchists, but some anarchist maybe tried to make something to oppose these plans.

Difference between Brussels and Helsinki rule is certainly smaller than in this extreme example, but there clear differences

anyway. After EU-membership, both wiretapping and infiltration have been legalised. Police has made a new special riot unit, and bought plenty of equipment. 70% of the legislation comes from the Brussels, and 95% of people have no fucking idea what is going on there. Plenty of information used to be open has become secret. "Standardisation" has helped to clean some 5% of inhabitants out from the unemployment statistics. There is nowadays only 3 banks in Finland from which one is not Finnish anymore, group of 3 forest companies and Nokia rules the economy, only one company controls 50% from resale business of daily products.

Developments in economic centralisation would have happened also without EU-membership, althought maybe a bit slowlier. But in legislation, the NO-victory would have caused more headache to corporations. Due to EU, during the next 10 years Finland will propably make an anti-terrorist legislation which allows jailing people for 10 years due to their ideas, making Finland same kind of totalitarian state as Italy, England and Germany. A legislative reform not meaningless to anarchists.

The fact that politicians managed to put the conflict line between "no-EU" and "yes-EU" was of course a good deal for them. Very often seen argument for Yes-vote was that "we are a small country, we cannot influence globalization… inside EU, we have a bit bigger chances to be in the side of the winners, and a bit better chance to influence the corporate friendly legislation EU will be forcing on us anyway althought we stayed outside." Now, when people have voted yes, politicians may blame EU for all the shit, and say that EU has justification of people. Whole referendum was actually a sort of game for the Finnish bosses, as all the referendums and all the elections in parlamentary democracy tend to be — bosses take a tiny risk that result is something they did not liked, and in exchange they get a jackpot to blame people themselves about all the the shit during the next 4, or in EU-referendum case, next 100 years. Another view to NO-campaign is that it was just a hook,

nothing. And I agree indeed with autonomists, trots and (all?) anarchists that since withdrawal from the EU is as likely as a revolution, it is no reason to put any resources to withdrawing struggle, since resources allocated for proceeding of "unrealistic demands" could be used to proceed with the total revolution as well. But if some people try to create non-party affiliated movement for the withdrawing, we must be solidar to this movement — from which the ridiculous party attempt is just a fraction — as long as we are free to oppose nationalist argumentation or argumentation which sees withdrawal as some fundamental solution to any problems. Sadly, often these two fundamental demands already make cooperation impossible, as the example of the events around anti-summit demonstration organising in the Helsinki show.

Tampere countersummit 15.-16. october was initiative by the "modern" left, and it was able to create the message. Remains of anti-EU movement saw no trouble to subscribe the declaration, althought it did not included any withdawal-stuff. In Helsinki 12th december, remains of anti-EU movement were before radicals, and there was a conflict. It ended up so that "moderns" did not signed their declaration. I guess "left-nationalists" finally didn't appeared a lot in the demonstration, which was still open for everyone in the Euromarch-spirit, but without a common declaration. If remains of anti-EU movement or anyone other wants to have such alliances, they should not demand to have a common declaration. Way to get their own message through is to take own banners to their block, and to make own declaration. In fact they weren't interested about a large scale mobilisation of their own people right from the beginning, maybe because they cannot mobilise very much people in general. Actually, the most marginalised, the radical left, seems to have the best demonstration mobilizing capacity in Finnish civil society outside trade unions and farmers union.

Around Helsinki organising, there was also some discussion about traditional "No to EU, no to the power of money"-slogan between those who finally organised the demo, but finally au-

since people who claim "we must wait for the revolution to solve the problems" sound same like people who claim "we must wait for the harmageddon to solve the problems".

People in anti-EU movement of Finland have made a good job in changing a lot of the "nation state" rhetorics to "internationalist", "yes to the rest of the world" rhetorics. I think by complete abolition of this tradition we give right the monopoly to oppose EU. Any of our rhetorics may give side support to our enemies — ecological rhetorics may make ecofascists stronger, rhetorics for opening of the borders, opposing the fascists or destroying of corporate olighopols may make give side support to right-wing liberals. We cannot stop doing our job because of this. We must not be afraid that nationalists beat us if we admit that they are right in the claim that EU is a leap forward for corporate order. Althought Finland may have a pseudo-democracy, EU is even much less democratic. We must be honest, and admit that they are right in this one, but only in this one. I also think that if we try to avoid with any price the so untrendy anti-EU rhetorics, which gives media all tools to marginalisation, the coming anti-NATO membership struggle will suffer. And I invite whoever that claims anarchists should not oppose NATO-membership of their countries since it is nationalist or reformist to eat my internet service provider, since only 16% of Finns currently supports NATO-membership. In another hand, due to popular resistance Finnish NATO-membership is so unlikely scenario during the next 15 years that bosses will rather use backdoor of EU-integration to build military alliances.

Something in common

I either support shouting the traditional "Finland out from the EU"-slogan in demos. It is time to forget that old slogan, since everyone in the society outside old-liner leninists, right-wing bigots and anti-EU movement remains understands that withdrawing solves

which left ate — small change to small victory, big change to huge demoralization of anti-corporate movement.

How nationalist the Finnish "NO"-movement was?

But there was a movement back in the 1994, not the best possible movement for anarchists but a movement anyway. And it was a movement which clearly had interest difference with the establishment, althought it's victory maybe would be such a very small backlash for the establishment. And the movement was not hopelessly spoiled by nationalism. This because the most rightist parties, Swedish party and conservative party are much more pro-market than pro-nation, and center party which controls almost whole Finnish countryside is so authoritarian, that a small clique of their pro-market leaders managed to dominate against the opinion of 75% of the membership. Center party happened to be in the governement in 1994, of course in opposition they would have followed their membership opinion and Finnish EU-membership would have been less likely. Social democrats were in the opposition, but they were authoritarian enough to give a shit about their member's opinions anyway... Since the rightist nationalists were controlled by their leaders, the initiative to organise opposition was left to leftists.

Often these leftists are more or less nationalist. But still, campaign of 1994 chose no-nationalist line of argumentation, main slogan was "no to EU — yes to world", which signaled that EU is a plan of small clique of industrial countries to oppress and exploit the rest of the world. No-nationalist campaign against the EU-membership was possible, because so many the organisers were leftists, and because of the "winter-war mental heritage".

With "winter-war mental heritage" I mean two things, at first it means afraiding of Russia, which creates strong tendencies to

militarism and military alliances in Finland. For example, bigger share of people goes to army in Finland than in any other country expect Israel, Greece, Cyprus, Turkey and North-Corea, but unlike in these 5 countries in Finland people do it almost voluntarily since alternative service is possible and almost Ok. This part of the "winter-war mental heritage" is the main reason why YES won, together with boss propaganda through flagrantly pro-YES mass media of course.

But there is also another aspect of "winter-war mental heritage", distrust to military alliances, and idea that only thing to avoid Russian attack is to ally with Russia. This was a doctrine in the Finnish foreign policy between 1945 and 1990. Winter war gave a lesson not to wait from parlamentarian democracies of the West nothing else than nice words in case of Russian attack. Finland was also the only parlamentary democracy which made a voluntary alliance with Hitler (If you don't count silent allies Sweden and Switzerland), which is a big shame for Finnish social democrats .Althought war of 1941–1944 enjoys nowadays sort of support by the majority in Finland, it was not so before 1990.

"Winter-war mental heritage" is also the main reason why in Finland some 56% voted for the EU, and in Sweden only 52%. "Winter-war mental heritage" might be also the reason why Sweden is EU member now, since if the "NO" won in Finland, the same would have happened in Sweden for sure.

No lesson to learn from us to current applicants

I do not know how the line of argumentation of Finnish anarchist went in 1994, nor I know which share of them finally made a choice to boycott referendum, and which share voted no. If I had to bet, I would bet majority voted NO. I cannot do a final judgement which was the right one to choose, since it was really a catch 22 situa-

lots of social democrats who haven't become devils, which oppose the bad aspects of corporate globalisation. In Sweden there is also more critical liberals than in Finland. In Finland those less evil social democrats are fewer or none, social democrats get so used to lick Moscow in the seventies that it is quite easy to learn to lick anyone. Finnish social-democrats also adopted strategy to get commies into the governement to break their militancy 34 years ago, so the communist heritage of Finland in Left Union-party is much more moderate and pro-EU than the one of Sweden in Left Party, for example Finnish Left Union supported EMU, against the will of 80% of their voters (their members are right from their voters). Add the "winter-war mental heritage", and the Finland become the weak link, first domino which pushed Sweden to EU, and almost pushed Norway as well.

Youth of today

Finnish autonomists look to central Europe, where no-one supports withdrawing from the EU, and trotskists look to SWP of England. They see the remains of Finnish anti-EU movement as nationalist reactionaries. About anarchists, I cannot say anything general, since after de facto collapsing of Finnish anarchist federation during 1998 no groups claims to have right to "speak in behalf of anarchism in Finland". Saying that anarchists are in the same line with autonomists would not be wrong guess, and actually small Finnish autonomist movement lives in a sort of symbiosis with anarchist movement, althought there is a lot friction in this symbiosis from time to time!

But I do not agree with the analysis of trotskists and autonomists in Finland that anti-EU movement is reactionary from it's roots. Many people in the Finnish movement seem to afraid that anti-EU argumentation may just make nationalists stronger, but I think the shit by bosses must be resisted as a whole as well as bite by bite,

people created around 1999. These people are very influenced by traditions from outside the Nordic countries which are not in the line with those of Nordic tradition of EU-criticism, and they see the essence of Finnish anti-EU movement differently as I do.

In EU there exists a certain split or difference of arguments between Nordic/English movements and movements of other countries. Example about effects of the split were events around Wien countersummit of 1998 — participators made a declaration which involved demand about common European mininum income. Soon after the summit some, mainly Finnish and Danish EU-resistant Nordic individuals made a counter-declaration — they thought arguments for common mininum income are federalistic.

The reason for this is because of cultural backround. In Portugal, Italy, Spain and Greece the left has faced brutal oppression by their own governements in the near history, and they do not see Brussels anything worse. In Germany, it is also hard to see a much difference between the own goverment and Brussels governement, and actually German is the main actor behind many EU decisions. Many liberals maybe see EU as a method to avoid German agression against it's neighbours.

I do not know why left in England sometimes raises a flag to withdraw from the EU — maybe there is just a deep suspicion towards foreign rule. Or maybe my view is biased, and only fractions of Labour party, who find Labour governance "lesser evil", support withdrawing, and more radical left does not see any difference between London and Brussels rule. Also EU-resistance seems to be more popular among the tories than among the left, a different situation from Nordic countries.

But in the Nordic countries, the situation is clear — governments are (or were once) no doubt nicer than the one of Brussels. Withdrawing-argumentation is strongest in Denmark and Norway, and I've understand that among the people who started to resist the EU-membership in the seventies there were a lot of veterans of 40's resistance movement. Sweden was not occupied, but there is

tion — if you vote no, the establishment was able to show that you are in a minority, and justify their shit. If you supported boycott, you would have been unsolidar to a grassroot peoples movement, which was influenced, but not controlled by reactionary forces, and which had small chances to a small victory against bosses.

The current situation of applicant countries is propably different from Finnish one of 1994 — in few of them NO-side has as good chances as it had once in Finland, and NO-campaigns are propably far more nationalistic than in Finland due to different cultural enviroment.

It happens time to time, that large reformist people's movements emerge in the capitalist countries to oppose some certain aspect of capitalist system. Such movements are for example movement of Belgium against corruption a couple of years back, Sicilian movement against mafia and movement of New Yorkers against police brutality. These movements may include a lot of twisted reformist and "law and order"-shit, but I think anarchists should stay true to these movements, since their roots is still people's frustration to the capitalism and governement, as long as the movements are not completely rotten or in the complete control of some parties. Finnish NO-movement was such a movement, there was plenty of bad aspects, nationalism, nostalgy, wish to go back to good old times, but it STILL was a spontaneous grassroot people's movement. Of course, people who voted NO were mostly not critical liberals, but just suspicious nationalists... but they would have voted NO anyway, the NO-campaign maybe made some positive influence to the thought of some of them.

Of course, my claim "These people maybe were maybe nationalist to some extent, but not nationalist enough to be enemies" may sound very strange to anarchists from other cultural backrounds, but in Finland, people who are critical to police and army, like many of the former NO-organisers are, are already a 10% minority.

Finnish anti-EU movement from 1994 to today

But now it is almost 6 years from the referendum, and no going back. During the events during Finnish EU-presidency, it came clear that there is now a certain split in the Finnish movement, a split between those who live in the year 1994, and those who live in the year 2000. A difference between those who use rhetorics to withdraw Finland from the EU, and those who do not use this rhetorics.

The history of anti-EU -movement after 1994 is a very good and sad lesson. In 1996, the main people decided to go to EU election, althought without own party. This created huge problems, since they had to collect thousands of names for each individual in their list to get the right to participate. The election was a fiasco, they only get some 2% of the votes, mainly due to the "parlamentary mass expectation"-effect, if people expect you won't get votes, you won't get them. They hadn't any famous people in the list. The campaign to collect names managed to mobilise and activate hundreds of people, but maybe those resources would have been used to something more creative (if there was something those people found creative, sadly more people are always interested about election shit than about something else).

Idea in participating to elections was to create same kind of parlamentary anti-EU movement as in the Denmark, which gets lots of votes in the EU elections. But the difference between Finland and Denmark and Norway is that most of Finland was not occupied by an EU country since 1809, thus such a movement has much less chances in Finland.

After 1996, the anti-EU movement, "Alternative to EU"-organisation collected names against EMU and for referendum about EMU and Maastricht, it also deprived all the time. Opposing EU has become something what the people who are against

everything do. It is something with backforest rednecks, rightist bigots and leninists living in 70's do. It is certainly something what urban, educated, cool, young and international people do not do. When media wants to marginalize a demo, easy way is to claim it was organised by EU-opposers.

Since anti-EU movement saw it had not resources to collect as much names in 1999 as in 1996, they decided to found own party, which has ended up to a fiasco. The the idea was not invite oldliner-leninists, deep ecologists, and populist rightist movement ("Regular Finns"-party) to the same list with their new party, but they did not wanted to come with leninists... finally there was so few no-oldlinerleninist, no-trotskist no-rightwing populists (who all already have their parties) interested of own party that they couldn't collect cards, now they have a party which has maybe 20 members. They say it's "no-party" without a program for all the "grassroots people" to proceed their own ideas. Most of the people in their party is from former deep ecologist party (eco-fascist is not so bad label either) which was taken over by some media jokers in a real-life tragicomedy during 1998.

As things have went down fast, idiocratic ideas have come into the picture, as building the alliances with the right. But since no people from main rightist parties will sit in the same table with anti-EU's, they just end up to alliances with some minuscule bigot groups fighting against "EU as freemason conspiracy" (at least antisemitism was never a thing in Finland since there is so few jews around).

Cultural differences between the movements of EU-countries

In the same time, 2 movements have emerged in Finland which weren't around in the 1994 — "International socialist" Socialist league (founded 1996), and "Autonomist movement", which few