

Solidarity from Slovenia with J20 Demonstrators

For a World without Representation

Anarchist Initiative Ljubljana

January 19, 2017

This is a translation of a solidarity statement from Slovenia, a nation that swept from obscurity into the spotlight as a result of Melania Trump's impending stint as First Lady. Not everyone in Slovenia is excited about this sort of publicity. "Make Slovenia Slovakia again," demanded one popular meme in Slovenia last fall, lampooning the ignorance of US citizens and rejecting media coverage as an exotic shopping district for mail-order brides.

Melania Trump's own immigration history is hardly a model of unblemished legal conduct: like countless other immigrants, she was not always able to adhere to all the regulations. Supporting a politician who swept to power on promises to break up families and deport immigrants, she represents the epitome of hypocrisy and betrayal. She is the perfect First Lady for all the former immigrants who voted for Trump in hopes of excluding others like themselves from competing for a piece of the American pie. Siding with those who have more power than you against those who have less is never a safe bet: as soon as your superiors have no more use for you, you can be sure they'll treat you the same way they treated those beneath you, and no one will have cause to stand up for you.

There are countless Slovenians who will never have the option to benefit from all the plunder that vultures like Donald Trump have hoarded in the US—just as countless migrants in Slovenia who have escaped from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and other places wrecked by US intervention are now at risk to be sent back to those warzones. Trump and his cronies aim to turn the entire world into a patchwork of gated communities arranged in concentric circles of privilege, in which the only people who are permitted to pass from one circle to the next are the ones who are willing to play a role keeping everyone else out.

We stand with everyone who desires a world without borders and oppression, against Donald Trump and the forces that produced him. Like our comrades in Slovenia, we have concluded that the only hope for humanity lies in solidarity and collective struggle against all forms of hierarchy and exclusion.

This Friday, the Presidential inauguration in the US will offer a brand new chance for local politicians in Slovenia to reaffirm their well-known servility. They already demonstrated it in

November when they warmly welcomed Donald Trump's victory—and not just because the Slovenian nation is now supposedly proud of its daughter Melania, and not only because they think her husband will be good for Slovenian business.

The US election results are echoing around the world, especially in regions affected by US foreign policy—whether that be regular fly-overs of their war planes, the presence of US troops, US and NATO military bases, frequent bombings, or recruiting for devastating wars in the Middle East.

Slovenia is no exception. We still remember how we took the streets chanting “Your wars, our dead” when we fought against US invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. We remember fighting against the militarization of our society supported by membership in NATO war coalitions. We were angry because they were building a NATO airbase in Slovenia—and we were furious when they enforced transatlantic free trade agreements on us. We suffered economic crisis and austerity measures, the consequences of global economic policies dictated to us by the US and their loyal assistants in European Commission. We have not forgotten military interventions NATO carried out under US command against civilians towards the end of the Balkan wars in the 1990s, when they bombed Belgrade and other Balkan cities.

If it seems that Trump himself has been critical of NATO, the truth is that his new plan is to maintain the supremacy of the United States while forcing the countries on the receiving end of imperialist exploitation and occupation to pay for it themselves.

Knowing what it means to be on the receiving end of US imperialism, we had little hope that American foreign policy would be any different under a new Clinton administration. The US would still be dropping bombs, creating war zones, and spreading fear and bigotry in the name of the War on Terror—just as under Trump, we will still see the neoliberal exploitation of the global periphery, including the European South. All this is just the desperate thrashing of a collapsing superpower scrambling to maintain the illusion of economic and political hegemony.

However, Trump's victory does represent a shift to the right, both symbolically and materially. It stands for the legitimization of the rhetoric of hatred in the streets and in public discourse. It is a signal to grassroots fascists all around the world that their politics are becoming more acceptable. It is also a signal to all the patriots in nice suits who are trying to persuade themselves that they are not fascists when they violently fight for their supposedly autochthonous culture and for conservative values like state control of women's reproduction and deference to the family, to the nation, and to democracy and capital. And even though Trump will simply continue the mass deportations that intensified under Barrack Obama, along with the torture camp of Guantanamo, invasions in the Middle East, and racist politics within the US, we understand the uneasiness that overwhelmed US and the world. Trump's election has left little room for doubt about what is taking place in the world. What used to happen in the shadows or was seen as an anomaly has now become official policy.

Trump's victory puts the US on the world map of authoritarian regimes in a global transformation. In some places, this takes the form of extremist parties openly preaching racism and bigotry. Elsewhere, this process takes place in the name of centrist policies of order and security—values that ultimately produce results that fulfill the fascist agenda. They break society in half, into those who are good and those who are bad—those who are privileged and those who are robbed of their basic dignity. Such is the case in Slovenia.

We were not surprised to discover the Slovenian premier minister Miro Cerar trolling Twitter, expressing happiness over Trump's victory. He must have been very happy indeed to get an

ally in Washington who will understand his desire to close down Slovenian borders for migrants, introduce a state of emergency, increase the authority of the police and army, build a wall of barbed wire on the southern border, and deport migrants in massive numbers. Not to mention they both know how to create a social climate in which a right-wing uprising is just around the corner. What Trump wants, Cerar has already succeeded in accomplishing.

There is a particular twist in Trump's victory: the origin of Melania Trump, who was born and raised in Slovenia. In US, but also elsewhere, her life story is used to portray a good, beautiful, white migrant—who respects the law, is an exemplary image of conservative values as a wife and a mother, and loves her new state. This image serves to cast a shadow over all the migrants who are living in the US illegally, who are not white, who are supposedly taking jobs from US citizens and therefore deserve deportation and hatred. In Slovenia, the Melania narrative stands for the affirmation of privilege, reinforcing conservative notions of gender in which obedient servitude to a husband is rewarded with a comfortable life.

Melania's story is the background on which Slovenia is building its national pride by claiming a female body (that belongs to a person who actively supports Trump's politics of bigotry) as a body that belongs to a nation. In Slovenia, Melania is now served in the form of fancy cake in restaurants; the Christmas tree on the central square in the capital of Slovenia was named after her. Melania has been forced on us as our first lady—though we anarchists refuse to have anything to do with any nation. American, Slovenian, or any other.

The Trumps are telling the world that we can still believe in the illusion that the gated communities of privilege will include us: that we can benefit from the boundaries set up around the white race, Western imperialism, and the neoliberal economy. This is the world in which a few own everything while most of us have nothing. The only way to maintain the illusion that these things benefit us is by imposing a politics of separation: expulsion, wars, and borders. Extreme repression and extreme hatred.

This is why we support the efforts of our comrades in the US and elsewhere who are organizing to fight all the forms of segregation and division in our societies, who are fighting against rising fascism, deportations, the massive development projects that are destroying nature, police killings of people of color, and all sorts of wars.

This is much more than a struggle against Trump. It is a struggle against the global politics of exploitation and a struggle against all politicians, some of whom will now try to persuade people in the US that the only way to stop Trump is to elect them instead. They hope to hide their true agenda: to maintain the world as we know it, a world that actually ceased to exist a long time ago. Trump's victory is neither a surprise nor an anomaly. It is just a garish reminder that representative democracy always entails the mechanisms of exclusion, violence, and hierarchy. This is the system in which we are all losing while the privileged ones are winning. If today the decision to protest in the US might be a bit easier because a bigot is ascending to the throne, we must never forget that this system deserves our resistance even when a politician with a kinder face comes to power.

When the system attacks us, we respond with fury. When they send the army to our streets, we respond with courage. When they take our voices away, we answer with actions. On January 20, the US is to play the starring role in a performance for the world in which they will try to convince us that reconciliation is possible, that the normalization of the politics of hatred and separation is desirable.

Many will not be convinced. Your courage is our inspiration. #DisruptJ20.

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