

26th of July 2004

DAILY

PUTISCH

LIGHT ON THE OPPONENTS

NEWSPAPER

IT'S A GENDER GLOBAL ACTION?

HEY GUYS, BE MALES BUT BE GOOD!!!!

Program of today

What about P.G.A

9-10	Breakfast	Big tent big school
9:30-10	Introduction and welcome	Big tent big school
10-11	Introduction to gender issues for children	Kindergarden big skl
10-11:30	Sexual violence accountability	Classroom 4 big skl
11-12:30	Genderlab drama workshop	Gym big school
11:30-13	Mens workshop	Kindergarden big skl
13-14	Theatre workshop	Memorial park
14-15	Lunch	Tent on football pitch
15-16-30	Workers collectives and women initiatives	Calssroom 3 big skl
15-16:30	Sex workers debate	Municipality building
16:30-17:30	Diesel to vegetable oil	Outside front big skl
16:30-18	nextGENDERation	Classroom 2 big skl
17:30-19	Essentialism debate	Classroom 3 big skl
18-20:30	Qweer Serbia video	Classroom 9 big skl
20	Implication of anti-muslim laws in France	Classroom 5 big skl

PGA process discussions started off with an introduction to what PGA is and it's recent history. To ensure that more people would be able to take part in the discussions, we broke into smaller groups. Here the introduction of participants took part and the agenda for the discussions was decided. As there wasn't much time, group 1 didn't go any deeper into any particular issue, but raised different questions and discussion point that might be important for the PGA process and network.

- What is the PGA? Local connections between movements and local activities. The globality is just a name. So maybe more correctly, we are "Local People's Action".
- What is the history of PGA in the last five years and what has been the history of different movements in the local areas of people participating in the PGA conference? More people talking about what they are coming from, not only what is PGA and how we network within it.
- What visibility does PGA have to different movements? What information is available about how PGA is structured and what is and is not PGA?
- How can we have better continuity and sharing of knowledge and visibility, in space and time?
- How can PGA be more of an inspiration source, also in between conferences and other activities? How to sustain the feeling of networking within PGA?
- What are info points!? Do they work? How could they work better? Could info points be facilitating local contacts? Ideas about point-to-point networks were presented.
- What does PGA do now? Are we moving away from global days of actions and if so, what comes next?
- Was there ever a decision on whether PGA should participate or not participate in Social Forums?
- How to build more connections between movements in Europe and Africa?

Anyone to be the next PGA Converter?

COORDINATION MEETING Sunday's Report

1 Visibility group

The cultural centre of Belgrade has planned to have 3 speeches on Thursday as well as projection of films, and then to have a party. The director of the cultural centre has many different things to deal with, like the fact that 3 different television channels will be there on Thursday. This last point, and the fact that one of the films they want to show is one of Michael Moore's, and the fact of having speeches are problematic. It's important that everybody talks about it today before the co-ordinating group reach an agreement tonight.

2 Lighting

A new working group has been created to deal with the problem of lighting the outside areas at night.

3 Translation

There have been some problems during the discussions, as in yesterday night's meeting after dinner. There are not enough people volunteering to translate. The system of pointer written on the pass indicating the different languages people speak doesn't work.

4 Medical team

The medical team is hard to find... They need some more mobile phones, which the co-ordinating meeting tries to finance.

5 EMMA group (security)

Even harder to find...

6 Kitchen

The co-ordination between the autonomous kitchen and RAD's kitchen is difficult. Is it a good idea if they serve meals at the same time? 400 meals are served whereas only 200 persons have registered themselves at the infopoint. On top of that, 150 workers are coming today at 1.30 p.m....

7 Bar

The bar is settled on the main camp, near the school whereas it should have been at the football camp, where there is nobody. No profits are expected but if there is some, it will be given to the collective. Couldn't the drinks be sold on donations? Is the children group annoyed by the bar's presence?

8 Media

The media group is organising a trip outside the camp to meet people, hand out leaflets and talk with them. Another media group is existing with one person only... Concerning the trip outside, no Serbian will be able to accompany the group as they will already have lots of things to do with the coming workers... not talking about the punk concert tonight. One precision: not only Serbians

are needed to deal with drunken people, there are lots of French here too...

9 Newspaper

It's really difficult to print a newspaper without ink. So the question is what must be printed in priority: the practical guide in Serbian for the coming workers (but only here for one day), the newspaper or a third and shorter text for the workers? The newspaper could also be only stick on the walls.

Animals Equality

Why is there no meat nor fish in the meals at the pga conference?

Talking about animal equality...

Among the persons who have been organising the pgac, many are vegetarian or vegan for the animals and many among them want equality between humans and animals. What does that mean?

What one usually answers to justify the fact that he/she doesn't take into ac-



count the fundamental interests of other animals (their interest not to suffer, not to be killed, etc.), what one usually says to justify their exploitation, corresponds approximately to these three categories:

- 1) animals are not members of our species (species way of thinking)
- 2) they are not intelligent, free or capable of thinking
- 3) they are constituents of nature and their function is to be eaten (« animals do eat each others, don't they ! »)

If we agree with an argument like « we can exploit animals because they don't belong to our biological group », then we can no longer reject racism, sexism, etc. Is this kind of thinking acceptable? Does it justify anything?

On the other hand, if we accept that intelligence, freedom or the ability to think become criteria to decide how to treat somebody, it would allow such things as feeding a child or an idiot in order to eat them afterwards. We all agree that nothing could justify such practices: it's not because a person is intelligent that we have to take her into consideration, it's because he/she can suffer of the consequences of our acts, because we can make her life enjoyable or horrible, whether she be an idiot or a genius!

Last but not least, we don't believe that anything like « nature » exists: we don't believe that the world is governed by any kind of mystical order, which would assign a specific role to each and every being, an order which we should respect or worship, which we should follow as an example... In the history of the Christian Western countries such a mystical order has always been used to legitimate all sorts of dominations: patriarchy, speciesism of course (speciesism is the discrimination based on the species like sexism-sex, racism-race) but also kingdoms, racism, slavery, colonisation, the oppression against children, etc.

Once you've started considering someone in a purely functional way in relation to a kind of general order, you're on the way to dominate this person (for example, this is the social perspective of totalitarian systems: the individuals are considered as merely mechanics of the general order, which is the only thing that matters).

As a consequence, we think that it is not justified to refuse to take into account what the animals are living, what they would like to do or what they try to avoid; it's not justified and it's illegitimate ... so we think this oppression is not defensible. In this way, any kind of animal exploitation is an injustice, as much as it would be if it were applied to humans.

As unfair. In the same way. In an equal way.

The first beings concerned by this question are all the animals we eat: on the one hand because the amount of victims is horribly huge (every single year, about one milliard vertebrates and thousands of milliards of fish are killed in every country). On the other hand, because this massacre - organised so that people can eat meat and fish - is an extremely common habit and occupies a huge place in our imaginary and a central place in our meals; this habit seems to create part of the basis for social relationships. When we kill the animals in order to eat them and treat them as insensitive objects, we show a strong despicable for them; this despicable, this contempt, seems to nourish and consolidate the relationships between humans, it seems to allow humans to see each others as equals, feeling much above non-humans, standing proudly on top of heaps of cadavers. We are not animals! We are not livestock!

We wish to establish new relationships with non-humans, relationships which are no longer based on domination but instead on the acknowledgement of what non-human animals need, what they desire, what they reject; new relationships which would eradicate contempt, indifference and inequalities.

That's why, in the same way as we fight against sexism so that men stop defining themselves as more valuable than women and stop exploiting them, we want humans to stop defining themselves as superior to the other animals; we want humans to reject any form of exploitation.

We don't ask people to feel pitiful for the animals, we simply ask for justice!

Sunday 25th Coordination meeting

1 Coordination meeting

It was agreed to hold the next meetings at 8.30 pm instead of 8 pm so that those who want to participate have enough time to have dinner beforehand.

2 Bar

Because of the security problems it might provoke because some people get violent when they've been drinking too much, it was decided that there won't be any more bar on the site. See point 6 about the security team.

3 Gender day - today

The issue was raised that there might be some security problems around the queer night performance taking place tonight, as it could attract homo/lesbophobic reactions. Give a hand to the emma team!

4 Medical team

The members of the medical team still need more volunteers. So please sign on the board in the information point to give a hand!

The members of the medical team now wear orange armbands so that they can be easily identified. They have formed 2 teams to make shifts 24 hours a day. They are now based in room 4 in the main school building, the last room on the right hand side when you enter the school. You can find the phone numbers to reach them on the door of room 4, at the entrance of the building, at the info point and the security team should also be able to reach them.

5 Conveners

See elsewhere in this newspaper

6 EMMA – Security team

EMMA still needs more volunteers!!! And they pointed out that it's really important there should be Serbo-Croatian speakers in each of their teams.

More particularly, some persons were worried about the fact that drunken people got near the tents where the children are sleeping, in the children area. So an effort has to be made to find a solution to avoid drunken people to wander all around the site.

In this effort to try to avoid any kind of trouble (with the neighborhood, with people who would like to sleep, with the children area, etc.) it was agreed that people are asked to stay quiet during the night between 3 am and 8 am, both on the school site (inside as well as outside the buildings) and on the football field. The main school building will be closed during the night too. The security team asks the persons in charge to make sure they lock their rooms at night when they don't use them anymore (kitchen, queer room, etc.).

A report will be made about how it went last night, to see if any improvement can be made and if people can come up with other suggestions to deal with security problems.

7 Visibility day – to make PGA visible

The cultural center of Belgrade has confirmed it will be possible to hold an event there on Thursday. As said, there will be speeches on privatisation, and from 9 to 11 pm a Michael Moore film (special wish of the people of the cultural center). The visibility group asked for autonomy about the decisions concerning the program as they're running short of time and have to make some advertisement through the radio, etc. During the rest of the afternoon, it will be an open space for everybody to get involved and create activities (theatre, etc.)> It was argued that it would be good if it wasn't only a few speakers but something more diverse and representative of the horizontal and participative spirit of the PGA.

If you want to take part in the program, you can attend the visibility group meetings at 1.30 pm, every day, under the blue tent where the meals are served.

8 DSM

The issue was raised that many people from the DSM (the local conveners for our conference here) don't participate to coordination meetings or to daily practical tasks but mainly to public image / media events which raise both a political problem but also a technical problem in terms of link with local context and technicalities.

It was answered that the few of them that are here are doing what they can and that it's as much a problem for them to be so few.

9 Resnik

Resnik, the site where the conference should have taken place in the first place (10 km away from here) and where some people were still organising activities, was closed by the police yesterday night when a big party was taking place. The people who were staying there moved here in Jajinci and are willing to organise some workshops. So keep an eye on the boards at the info point.

10 Registration

Too many people haven't registered yet: only 300 have whereas we are approximately 400. It's a problem because the organisation won't have enough money to pay for the food and other practical things. The other problem is that RAD and the autonomous kitchen prepare food according to the number of people who have registered and, at some point, there might not be enough food for everybody... Don't forget that you can still pay less than the official 5 euros a day if you can't afford it... and that you can also pay more if you can afford it in order to support the others.

While you're registering at the info point, don't forget to volunteer for the tasks like helping to prepare the meals, cleaning, facilitating, becoming a member of the security team or the medical team, etc.

PGA needs a new convener for a next conference to happen!

Remember that PGA process meetings (discussion about PGA structures and political strategies) take place every day from 15 to 16.30 pm and that the groups interested in becoming next year's conveners (which means welcoming next PGA conference) should attend these meetings to be able to discuss about it before Thursday's last meeting (conveners are collectives acting as contact, information, and coordination points; they co-organise global and regional conferences, like this year's conveners for our PGA conference here is DSM). An announcement should be made this morning at breakfast time. There will also be a workshop on convenorship organised Wednesday in order to exchange experiences between ex-conveners and collectives who might think about being the new ones.

Still some people are wondering whether it's a good idea to talk about next year's conveners whereas there are some problems about the general process of this year's conference that should be discussed beforehand.

Others argued that whatever were the present problems and the urgency to deal with them, it was still good to give a chance to the continuity of the network.

Important gender question

The gender question is a central issue for the conference, Mathieu explains. There are 13 workshops organised about this subject, and a specific Gender Day. It is interesting to understand how this began.

« This problem is often ignored in the movement, even though it is always there. Every day, in the most "innocent" of behaviour we can see this domination of women by men. Actually we are all conditioned by society, to repeat this behaviour sub-consciously. »

« For example, to take the popular activist meetings, it is so typical that the majority of men are more vocal. And worse! One can see that if a woman make a proposals, she is ignored the first time, but men are normally heard.

In our imagination, it is the men who have the decision making power, a role that is not given to women. Even where people should be aware of these issues, men are treating women according to their physical appearance rather than their arguments. In previous AMP conferences, there were attempted rapes.

The rules of our patriarchal culture are imposed from childhood. One can see at schools the books are full of the stereotypes and more generally, in society, there is a very strong model of patriarchal domination.

Because the men don't suffer from this domination it is easy for them to ignore the issue and not ask questions. Luckily feminism came and challenged the system and asked the questions. It is not possible for men to fully understand the situation women are in and how that makes women feel. However they can begin to try and understand by reading feminist literature.

In an ideal situation, we could abolish gender » says Mathieu.

Self-organising an autonomous kitchen

A big group of people that arrived on Monday to prepare the conference, had to find a solution to the question of food (if possible, according to the principle of self-organizing, even if it was just for the days before the conference. This is how the autonomous kitchen was created, even though it was "laborious", according to one of the participants. Also, some people were not happy that the Rad kitchen would prepare the meals during the conference. Rad is a self managed cooperative, and the workers take a wage. They often work with militant groups but people felt that we should also have a kitchen that is self organised. People felt it important that we should be able to provide for ourselves, that is why we came here. Some people were disappointed that the cooking was seen as secondary and many times there was nobody to help cook. However, eating is the most important thing! Luckily even if it is hard to coordinate the kitchen, things are starting to happen.

An idea was passed before the conference that the kitchen should continue and that a new stone fireplace should be made where we could prepare meals outside. And also that people would participate. The only difference between now and before is that we used to have donations, and now we use meal tickets for both kitchens. 5 Euros per day may seem a lot, but the price is negotiable. Anyway, we have our ideas, and we have to try and make use of what we have to fit.

For breakfast the principles of self organisation has been maintained. The meeting of the kitchen group is held every morning at that time, and everyone is welcome.

Sienna Rodgers, age 10, a caixa player with Rythms of Resistance (london) writes:

"Today at the 4pm samba workshop for kids there weren't many kids. In fact, there was only me and another boy called Medeo. It was good. People learnt the songs quickly.

Tomorrow though hopefully there will be a few roma kids and maybe some serbians.

About the PGA its a bit boring because there are no kids my age.

The only meeting I have attended so far is the morning samba meeting and I was the facilitator which is quite hard because you cant shut adults up most of the time."

Ash Brewen, age 8, feels that most of the adults are ageist. "the facilitators dont facilitate properly. If the kids do something wrong because they haven't been

Kids Space

taught how to do a meeting, the facilitators dont correct them but they do with adults. Say an adult deviates from the subject then the facilitators will correct them but with kids they ignore them. I had this experience myself with the first general meeting. I've lived in squat communities in london and france where there are mostly adults. Sometimes the adults say lets get some kids in but they give up after a week or two."

Kerstin Rodgers, a parent and an ROR drummer writes:

In fact despite the desire of the PGA conference to include children the reality is that very few children are here. What happens to people when they have children? Do they give up and stay at home watching telly?

Are all the young radicals in their teens, twenties and thirties that are here right now going to

stop travelling, being activists, taking risks when they have children?

Do you have to give up your life when you have kids or can you incorporate them? Surely bringing our children to these events is part of their education...

I just spoke to a young activist who confidently declared "well you make a choice: do you live your life for you or for your kids?" And at the ripe old age of 26 he declared that "Its because I want to live my life that I have decided to not have children".

(I didnt tell him that its unlikely to be him making that choice anyway, its generally the woman).

Positive reasons to bring kids: they show the locals that we are just like them in that we have families and responsibilities too.

Rumours

There's a noisy Batucada show tomorrow at 6:00 a.m.

The juggling workshop is a secret self-defense workshop.

Radical activists are here! Other peoples think they are dissidents. People are sleeping when dogs bark.

This newspaper is written by junkies!

For kids (not only), the meetings seem just like school.

Yesterday's newspaper was read by everyone!

The medical team's meeting is moving location to a psychiatric hospital.

Registration of the passport is just for us.

Somebody is pissing on tents at night!!!

Some others says that they saw a flock of sheep :o)

Our way of life

The role of the media is to allow communication of a society with itself. Control of this communication by the state and private interests is the best way to avoid any embarrassing debates. The mainstream media never questions this control which is why it is necessary to re-appropriate the media. This newspaper is an experiment in re-appropriation. It is important that everybody can participate in its redaction. To this aim, an open meeting is organized every morning, at 10:30 a.m. in the computer room to decide the content of the next day's paper. But it is possible to write an article at any moment: there is a "daily news" folder on the desktop of the computers. where one can save txts. At 18:00, layout begins with the available texts. If there is too many articles or they are too long, the choice is hard. It is better if this choice is not individual... And as for the long articles, we have the internet! So it is possible to work without a leader...

Do You Want To Say Something!?!?

Sorry

Yesterday, people are not understanding a part in the article about the meeting interruption. The problem is the first sentences: "Yesterday evening, people from (...) Reznick enter the space. An English guy took off his trousers (...). This really annoyed people who leave the room (...). The reason why people are so upset (...) is because they know the people interrupting the meeting. THESE people would have been preventing the smooth functioning of the organization over the last six month (...)"

So OK, when I read that, I can understand that "people from Reznick" is contain in this "THESE". And that is nor the truth.

Concerning the fonctionment of the newspaper, another precision seems necessary: as anybody is free to write an article in it, the newspaper is not representative of the PGA. What's more, nobody can speak in the name of PGA. One mustn't forget that an article cannot claim to be objective. This is the first criticism which can be made against the traditional medias, which claim to be neutral in order to aim at a larger audience, to sell better to their announcers. For example, let's consider a riot. 'There was a riot' seems to be the most neutral way to report this piece of information. Nevertheless, its impact won't be the same depending on the kind of media that will refer to it. What's more, this difference will be visible at the scene of action too, according to which side of the bar-

ricade the observer will be standing. That's the reason why it's important that alternative medias don't claim to be neutral, but on the contrary assume their positions. Not to be neutral doesn't mean that accurate information cannot be given. At this point, concerning the article written in yesterday's newspaper about the interruption of the co-ordination meeting on Friday night, one had to understand - or maybe it should have been written clearly - that the article was to be set back into its context, that is the co-ordination meeting itself, and that it was mainly the point of view of the persons who had participated to this meeting, even if saying so doesn't change the reality of what happened. It really seemed that this incident was the principal event of the day, and that's the reason why it appeared on the first page. Then, it must be added that the first page of a newspaper doesn't necessarily give its political position; first of all the front page presents what seems to be the most interesting. A newspaper usually gives its political position in the next pages, through its editorial, if it's willing to do so (or on the contrary avoids to take any position - just have a look at the editorials of big newspapers...). If you look at yesterday's PGA's newspaper, the article which could be called 'editorial' is the smallest article written under the big title of the inside pages. All right, those who wrote it were also the last ones to go to bed. It's also true that it would be much nicer if more persons had participated to its redaction. But, as anybody can come and write an article whenever he/she wants, it's not easy to be

many people on the same article. That's the reason why reunions are scheduled at 10.30 a.m. to see where we are going and then at 6 p.m. to see how far we've gone.

Personally, I'm a journalist, and I hoped I would be able to forget about my job when arriving here. But I felt like participating to this newspaper because it represents the challenge and opportunity to do something different. Now, I think that everything is ready so that the process can keep on working on its own. That would be great, I could have some real vacation and then have lots of ideas of revendications for the day I'll go back to work!

