

# Conference: The crisis of nation-states – anarchist answers?

Time: Friday, 19.03.2021 to Sunday 21.03.2021

The conference is held online.

## Background

Nation-states are frequently taken for granted as indispensable prerequisites of social organization in larger groups. It seems unavoidable to separate the world into territories defined as national-states or those who aspire to be one (Nuristan, Catalonia, the Basque Country, with the mentionable exception of the Kurds, who currently seek solutions beyond the classical concept of the nation-state). The nation-state – even beyond controversial attempts of its legitimization – is regarded as the sole institution able to guarantee and ensure basic human rights, that seem unthinkable without an enforcing national-state.

Meanwhile, a crisis of the nation-states power to regulate is evident. The point-of-view that the nation-state is the guarantor of its citizens' maximum of personal rights is controversial nowadays. Empirically, this crisis is made apparent by an incredible number of inter- and intra-state armed conflicts, by the crisis of European, north- and Latin-American and Asian welfare states as well as continuous violations of international law since the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War. Whether the horrors of two world wars would have been possible without the concept of nation-states can be sincerely doubted.

From a theoretical perspective, a number of plausible arguments can be made against the nation-state – from a historical point-of-view it is disputable that the nation-state is aiding human progress (cf. Claus Offe, Jürgen Habermas or Wolfgang Streeck). Moreover, ethnological and anthropological observations point out, the existence of historical and contemporary social examples – even of large social groups - devoid of police or the state's monopoly on legitimate use of force (cf. Christian Sigrist or more recently Hermann Amborn). From the point-of-view of social-constructivism or a theory of power the existence of the nation-state is under critique, just as from materialistic or post-structuralist perspectives (cf. Joachim Hirsch, Bob Jessop or Alex Demirovic), who all insist that the nation-state is not the friendly bastion against the evils of capitalism, but much more an integral constituent of capitalism.

## Focus

All those reasons can be subsumed into Karls Kraus's saying, that the nation state is the very same disease, that it propagates to cure. Despite all this justified critique of the current state of the world dominated by national-states, one question is left open:

How else? What can be the alternatives?

(Frequently, asked jointly with statements such as: if you can't offer an alternative you shouldn't criticize) The critique of the nation-state that is frequently labeled as anarchism is being formulated since at least 150 years. The current convention aims to find out, which theoretical approaches of the anarchist spectrum can answer the question: how is a world society thinkable beyond the limitations of nations and what are the requirements for maintaining a better society? The convention addresses two central themes: the critique of nation-states and possible forms of alternative social organization (of small or large scales). Hence, at least for the time-being of the first conference we

need to leave untouched two important areas. Neither will we give an overview of currently existing and frequently extraordinary practical projects such as cohabitation projects, consumer cooperatives, communes or the organization of counter-culture nor will we analyze such projects. Furthermore, we will not cover the problems encountered by transforming the current suboptimal society into a better, more just and more human future. Without recognizing the importance of these questions, we intend to focus on the plausibility of common anarchist thinking from a theoretical point of view and intend to find a more substantial form of the nation-states critique.

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