

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS:

A GLOBAL VISUAL HANDBOOK OF ANTI-AUTHORITARIAN COUNTERSTRATEGIES

Yellow rubber ducks floating over the heads of protesters in Bangkok.

Pink Gangs taking back streets and homes from patriarchal violence in India.

Blindfolded women dancing and chanting **“the rapist is you!”** in Chile.

“Sardines” flooding every Far-Right event in Italy.

Yellow umbrellas against tear gas in Hong Kong.

AU THO RIT AR IA NI SM

Submit
abstracts
until
July 31st
2021

Struggles against authoritarianism in its various forms – anti-feminism, racism, reactionary nationalism, anti-environmentalism, and others – often produce powerful symbols and iconic cultural artifacts which travel around the globe, inspiring other counterstrategies and moments of resistance.

WHY THE NEED FOR A HANDBOOK?

In addition to examples that have achieved global visibility, there are thousands of actions, interventions, mobilizations, and spaces which help to defy authoritarianism in their local or regional contexts but are unable to reach a global audience and therefore, are unable to inspire similar movements elsewhere.

A piece of street art or a broad public campaign, a poem or a space for poetic creation, a small media outlet, a political theatre collective or a satirical meme: effective counter-strategies subvert and oppose symbols and languages of new and old authoritarianisms and sometimes, provide glimpses of powerful counter-aesthetics. This is crucial, as authoritarian politics rarely work through rational argument but more often, appeal to their followers' gut feeling. Thus, beyond sharp and systematic analysis on the global turn towards authoritarianism, which we are currently witnessing, we need counter-strategies that defy the emotive politics of authoritarianism and effectively communicate emancipatory alternatives in another language, other imagery, and radically different sensual experiences. Fragments of these have been produced by different emancipatory social movements, political activists, and artists worldwide.

WHAT WE WANT TO DO

To gather these existing counterstrategies and inspire those yet to come, we aim to publish a visual handbook about resistance, disobedience, reversals of authoritarian regimes, political movements, and activists worldwide. The print publication will be accompanied by an online platform. During the entire process, contributors from around the world will have the opportunity to connect and collaborate with each other.

With this handbook, we aim not only to celebrate and to perpetuate these strategies against authoritarianism that are, by nature, often partial, temporary, fleeting, and marginal but also to learn from each other. Through collecting and linking different experiences, inviting critical reflection, and bringing to light untold stories of resistance, we seek to support a global exchange between emancipatory initiatives and explore questions such as: What are promising emotive and visual counterstrategies? How do you subvert authoritarian populist discourse, communication strategies or logic? What imagery fosters disobedience and resistance? What are the roles of aesthetics, sensual experience, and symbols in such counterstrategies and in the communication of alternatives to authoritarian rule? What might emancipatory counter-aesthetics look like?

In accordance with the visceral quality of authoritarianism, we place strong emphasis on aesthetic and sensual entry points to practices of resistance, on their symbolic meaning and their visual products, as well as the documentation and experience of resistance. We chose this not only to appeal to a broader public but because we are convinced that in addition to an exchange of ideas, we are also in need of an exchange of more sensual and visceral experiences of anti-authoritarian struggle. Aside from countering authoritarianism, these experiences are crucial to building, communicating, and realizing alternative visions and futures based on solidarity and freedom from domination.

WHAT CONTRIBUTIONS SHOULD LOOK LIKE

To participate, please send an abstract of no more than 250 words until July 31st to:
counterstrategies@posteo.de

Contributions can be in any of the following languages: English, German, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Standard Chinese, and German.

The finalized contributions should be handed in by the end of November, can include text of up to 1500 words and should include visualizations. These visualizations can be mappings and data visualizations and/or visualizations of an artistic kind, like photographs, flyers, and works of art. Most importantly, these visualizations should offer their own aesthetic access to the topic.

While the submissions do not have to be case studies, the contributions should be connected to an act of resistance, a moment of non-compliance, or a counterstrategy against contemporary authoritarianism that has already occurred. They could take the form of a story, a poem, the analysis of an artwork, a map, an image, a cartoon, or something else, as long as it can be published in print.

We explicitly welcome contributions from individuals or groups that are themselves involved in the struggle. They can be academic but also journalistic, activist, artistic or humorous in their respective approach.

Accepted contributions will be compensated with 250 Euro.

The publication is a collaboration of **Rosa-Luxemburg Stiftung**, the **International Research Group on Authoritarianism and Counter-Strategies (IRGAC)** and **kollektiv orangotango**.

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