



The Last Night Train Travel - a report from a tour to visit activists in Europe on Ukraine and European crisis

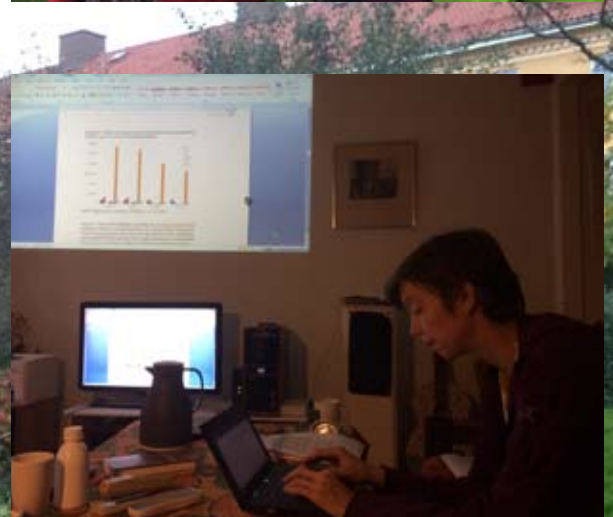
24.10 - 2.11 2014

Stuttgart
Klagenfurt
Gmünd
Graz
Wien
Budapest
Warszawa





Preparing for the tour with a visit to Stockholm: To the left visiting my father in Farsta. At the top action against TTIP on my way to a meeting about Ukraine. To the left and below fellow activists Lennart Kjörling and Ellie Cijvat in the Peasant and Indigenous Committee of Friends of the Earth Sweden.



Below myself in front of a remembrance of my professional career as a neon sign designer





It was the last chance to make an interrailtour by night train from Copenhagen. So I made a poster for the campaign to save the night train which Friends of the Earth Sweden launched and then I made a really nice night train tour. Here you see the train with wagons for Prague, Basel and Amsterdam.

As always it is nice on night trains! Here is a family playing together.

The train crew discussing on the platform, the Germans were fired together with the trains and below I am about to board the train for a good nights sleep.





First stop Welthaus Stuttgart

Arriving by train perfect in time for the inauguration of the new World house in Stuttgart was a pleasant start of the tour. Here there was music, TTIP protests, food of all sorts, games to play and for a Swede very surprisingly a fashion show with women in high heels.

On short notice there was a special seminar on Ukraine where I could speak to some 30 people. Many had opinions. The broad perspective I had bringing up how the Ukrainian conflict is an expression of many transnational social, ecological, economical and political developments was questioned by men focusing on geopolitics. Women had the tendency to agree on also a social understanding of the conflict.

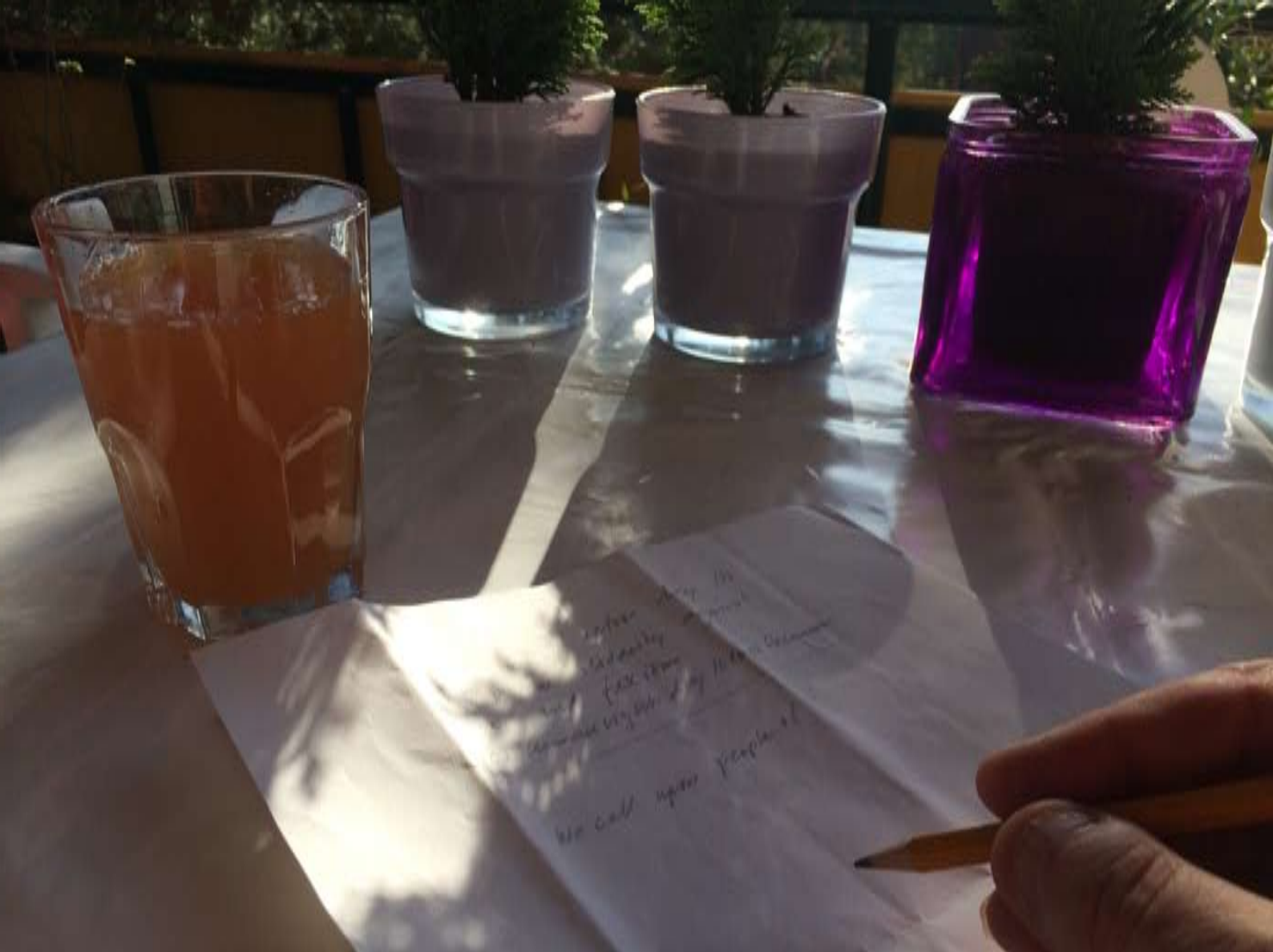
There was a good interest in taking action for peace in Ukraine on 10 December. There will be an action for Human rights to peace this day in Stuttgart which could be an occasion for sending messages against war.



Heike below spoke about the violent attack on students in Mexico and the necessity to organize solidarity.

Supporting solar cooker as part of international solidarity was shown at the "Welthaus" inauguration.





Summary of Interrail tour on Ukraine 24.10 - 2.11 2014.

During a week late October and beginning of November Tord Björk Active in Prague Spring 2 Network against Right wing extremism and populism made a tour by train to discuss the Ukrainian conflict and possibilities for common action. The tour included Three Capitals, Vienna, Budapest and Warszawa, two cities, Stuttgart and Graz and one small town Gmünd in Kärnten.

The most important outcome was the proposal by Peace initiatives in Stuttgart linked to the German Peace movement to make 10th of December an international action day on Human rights day for the Human Right for Peace and have one focus upon peace-building to solve the Ukrainian war. Main organizer behind the initiative is the Foundation for Culture of Peace based in Tübingen with several

international links. In the discussions was also MP from Die Linke, the left party in Germany.

The Germans also proposed another possible date for action, 8-9th of May to commemorate 70 years after the end of World war II in Europe. In Germany there will be a central action in Berlin on Saturday 9th of May and decentralized actions on Friday. This could be an important opportunity to promote peace initiatives and confront the present history writing that helps to establish enemy images, were Ukrainian conflict today plays a central role.

Generally the situation was similar in all places where I met different kind of people, there are less and less activists while at the same time activists at the local level also in big cities know

each others and cooperate on several issues in common as TTIP, migrants, environmental conflicts etc.

When discussing Ukraine there is a tendency that elderly men focus upon geopolitics as the most important or only aspect of importance while women and also younger people see as well social and ecological dimensions.

There is a general lack of information about the Ukrainian crisis also in a country like Poland neighbouring Ukraine. Thus political educational efforts are important.

There is a willingness to do some action together on 10th of December but we have to be realistic.

My proposals: See next page



Me and Henning on the top of a hill in Stuttgart made higher due to tons of stones from the city after being bombed by the Allies.

To the right two boys play on top of the stones. When asked they knew very well where the stones came from.



DIESER BERG
NACH DEM ZWEITEN WELTKRIEG
AUFGETÜRMT AUS DEN
TRÜMMERN DER STADT
STEHT
DEN OPFERN ZUM GEDÄCHTNIS
DEN LEBENDEN ZUR MAHNUNG



The host in her garden in Stuttgart were Heike and I was well taken cared of a sunny Sunday.



At the railway station the protest movement against the gigantic Stuttgart 21 project were staying day and night informing the citizens. The old terminus station is on the way to be replaced by an underground station. 100 000 have demonstrated and used civil disobedience being violently attacked by police, struggle goes on.

Proposals as conclusion:

Start the initiative for an action 10th of December in cooperation with Culture of Peace. PS2 can make a facebook event imrague Spring 2 network can start a facebook event and link up with the Germans when possible.

Start to discuss the possibilites concerning action 8-9 th of May

Make a political educational effort based on 3 parts:

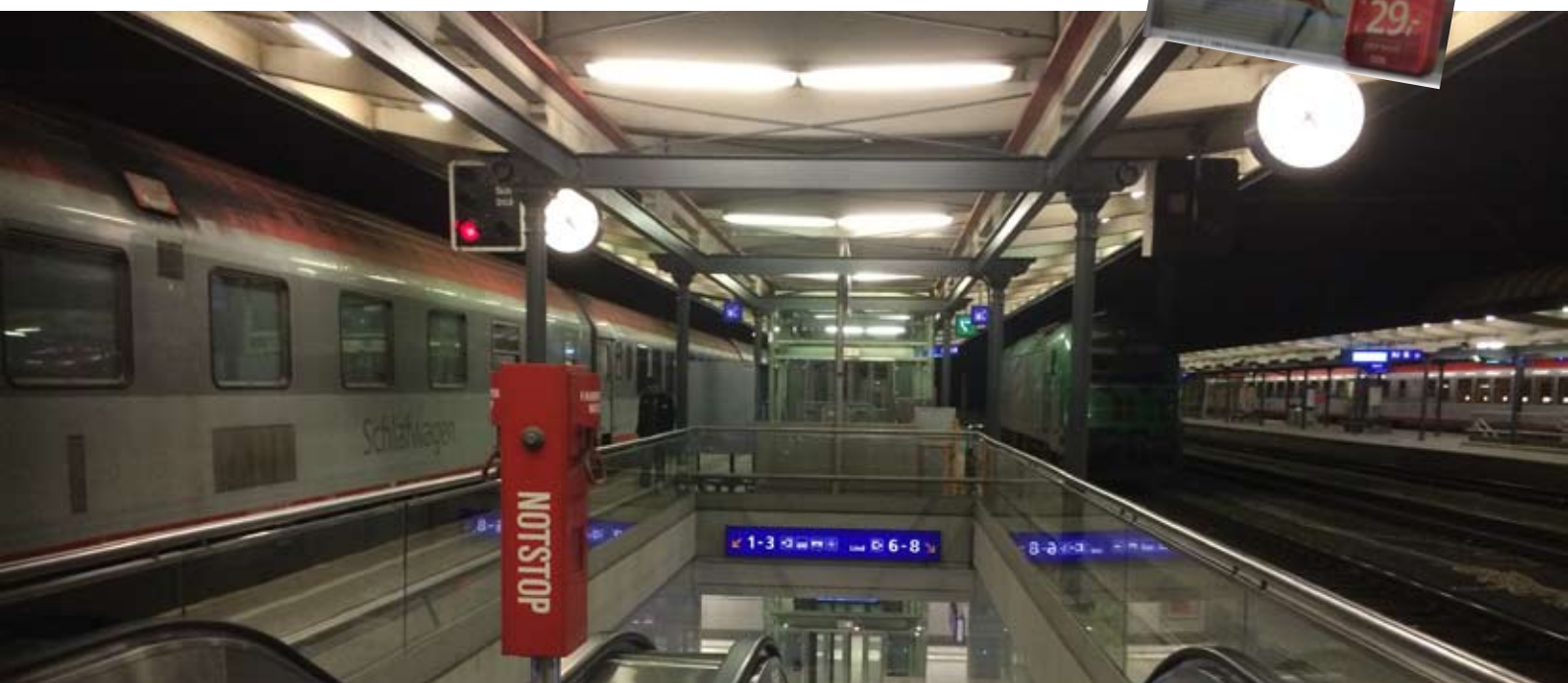
1. A reader with the most important articles structured and listed on our openfsm.net wiki Ukrainian conflict and solutions.
2. A mini exhibition with a picture and text about each dimension of the Ukrainian conflict and solutions, social, ecological, economical, ideological, political, military etc.
3. Continue gathering more articles on the openfsm.net wiki.

Tord Björk

One more night train took me as the poster says dreamlike in both literally and figuratively ways across the alps. The poster says it is both cheap and pleasant to travel this way, I do agree.



The host Henning Zierock in his house in Stuttgart. He had once asked Theodorakis if he could use a new melody by the composer with scores not yet printed. The composer sent the scores and when students in Tübingen were asked to join a peace choir hundreds joined. Out of this emerged the foundation for peace culture making solidarity activities in many countries. Songs bring people together!





Long time, 25 years, no seen. Me and Karin in Klagenfurt with the author Robert Musil, in the background.



Good local food, good cook, good meal. Thanks Karin.



The last farmer in town marching his geese soon to be eaten at the inn.



War memories also made their mark on Gmünd. Here Turkish cannon balls from an attack in 1470.

There was also time for a private visit during the trip to Klagenfurt and the small town Gmünd with 2000 inhabitants. The town invites artists to live in the guardhouse at the Gate. We went to a crowded vernissage and had a nice stroll through the town. What did the locals think about Ukraine? Well it seemed as if they had some understanding for Putin and did not trust media that much.



Good bath, good book - Shadows over Europe on the end of Roman empire, a current issue.





Next stop Graz

By bus the tour continued to Graz. Here Lisa waited and we had a nice discussion with activists at Traminer Weinstube with as good meals as the name says. In Graz actions had taken place with students and other organizations against TTIP. We discussed the possibilities for doing an action on Ukraine 10 December and had common opinion against the war. Also climate justice was of current interest.



Above in the middle, The valleys at Semmering from the train.

Below the walls in the weinstube with paintings of Vienna life - when would you have liked to live here?

In Vienna there was a small stop visiting one more of the wonderful Austrian weinstuben. Here Hermann Dworzak informed about the action against war in Ukraine that took place in Vienna and plans for 10 December while a trade unionists shared some words with us as well. Workers rights are under attack everywhere. Climate Justice was also discussed here.



1600



1750



1850



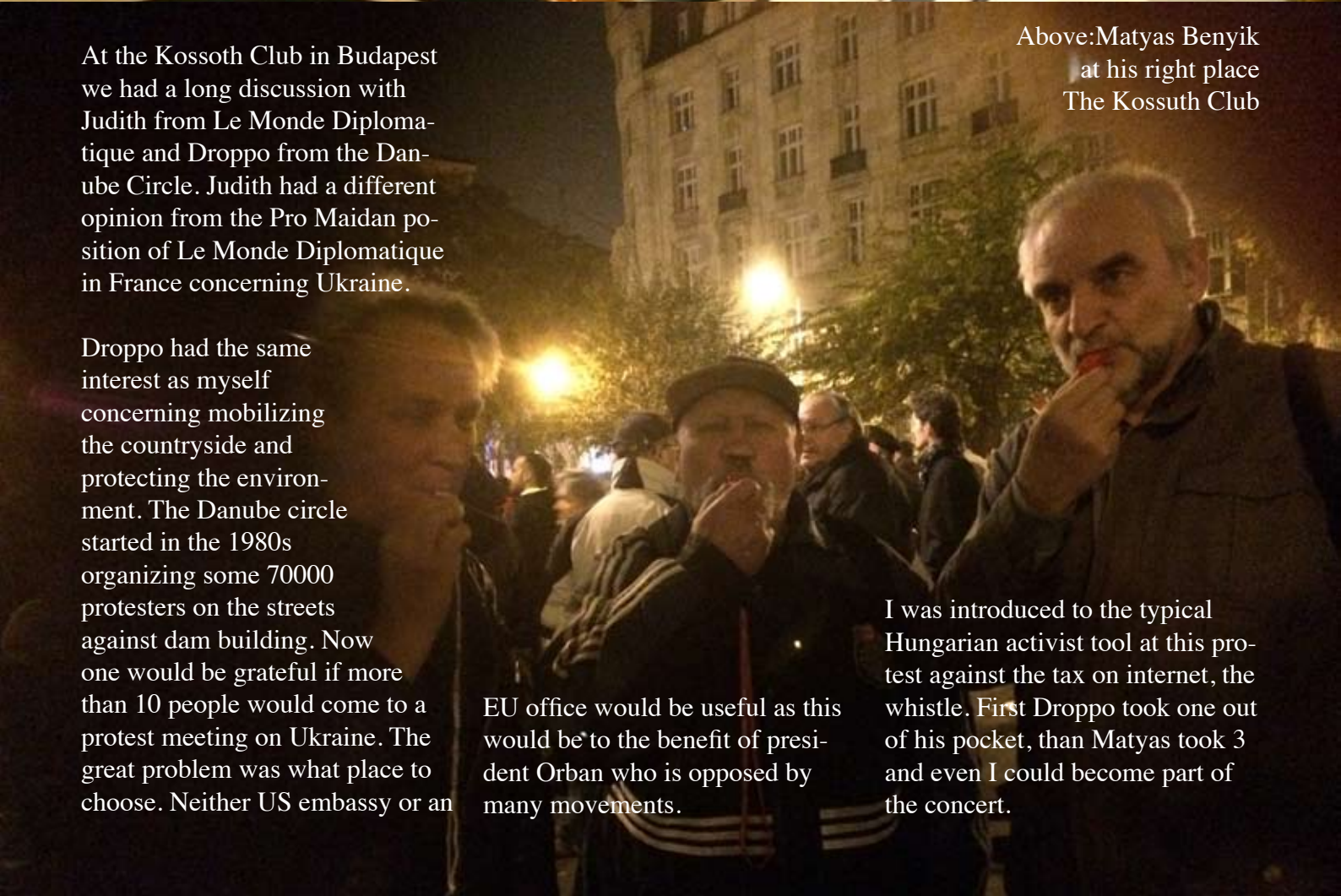
Above: Matyas Benyik
at his right place
The Kossuth Club

At the Kossuth Club in Budapest we had a long discussion with Judith from Le Monde Diplomatique and Droppo from the Danube Circle. Judith had a different opinion from the Pro Maidan position of Le Monde Diplomatique in France concerning Ukraine.

Droppo had the same interest as myself concerning mobilizing the countryside and protecting the environment. The Danube circle started in the 1980s organizing some 70000 protesters on the streets against dam building. Now one would be grateful if more than 10 people would come to a protest meeting on Ukraine. The great problem was what place to choose. Neither US embassy or an

EU office would be useful as this would be to the benefit of president Orban who is opposed by many movements.

I was introduced to the typical Hungarian activist tool at this protest against the tax on internet, the whistle. First Droppo took one out of his pocket, then Matyas took 3 and even I could become part of the concert.





The veteran activists have fun with all the young protesters



Next time I take a ride!

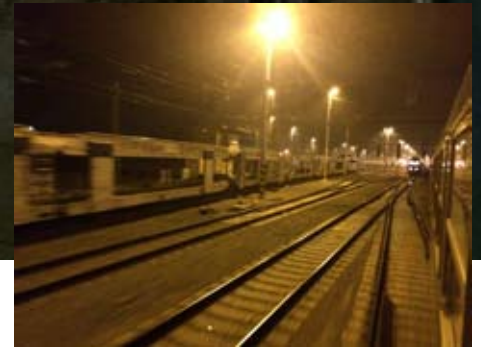


Occupy Budapest in action



Young activists normally making food for the homeless here preparing for Halloween





I was lucky. The night train needed to go back and forth at Keleti train station for an hour before leaving. This is one of Europe's most beautiful stations, and the night train to Warszawa one of the good night trains still working. Couchette 10 euro. In Bratislava and Breclav there was also interesting stops on the way...



Feminists in Poland

At a nice bar in Warszawa Ewa Charkiewicz was waiting for me. She told me about the work of an association of feminists that made reports about the situation for women. A bank from England specialized on giving small credit to women for a high interest now penetrated Eastern Europe including Ukraine. With their female work force they were able to convince many creating debt dependency. The only with stable job at this bank had good conditions at the main office and was thus rewarded a price for helping women. The feminist association opposed the more individualistic perspective of the established feminism focusing on access to work market. The exploitation of women and the poor is hard in Poland.



The squat against privatization

At Syrena squat in Warsaw there was a lot activity prearing for winter and making food for the many people living there. This squat in the city center has been central in the tenants movement and the struggle against privatization of housing. Gangsters use the unclear situation when people that rebuilt the houses after war are questioned and replaced by claimed ownership from before the war. Tenants who resist like Jolanta who started a tenant organization are killed. The squats defending the tenants are attacked by Nazis last national day and now again a new national day with ultra nationalist marches were in coming. But the squatters were calm, it is election year so this meant less risks for violence, it is after the election the serious situation comes. Regarding Ukraine I seemed to have more information than people in Warszawa living much closer. Thus the interest was strong when we discussed the situation in the neighbour country. They looked opportunistic at the situation for their own struggle against racism and for migrants. In media Ukrainians were popular at the moment but many fleeing to Poland were put into detention centres thus making it easier to question these centers.





Back again starting with the night train from Warszawa to Szczecin with couchette for 6 euro. Good morning with fresh bakery. From there a double rail car during 5 hours to Lübeck stopping at every small station on the line. The longest what we in Sweden used to call milktrain ride I ever made, a train n stopping everywhere to catch up the milk for the dairy.

In Lübeck the train was more than full, according to the Deutsche Bahn timetable a standard problem for this train. So why they close the night train making the pressure even bigger is a bit of a problem. The train ferry still runs but soon this will also be gone when a bridge will be built.

The train was also delayed so I missed the fun at the Copenhagen train station where people manifested to save the night train. But the ever present Ellie and Lena and Stig Broquist from Helsingborg waited for me and I felt welcomed back while to the train back to Malmö.

