

The New School Occupation

*perspectives on the takeover of a building
or, why do student organizers bother to get out of bed in the morning?*



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**ANTI-DEMOCRATIC REFLECTIONS ON
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We are of course disappointed with the occupation's end: a shameful side-door exit in the middle of the night and an even more shameful declaration of "victory" on a measly slip of paper listing "demands met." To us, that which has been heralded as "victory" is in every way the death of the occupation – representative both of the loss of our space itself as well as our capitulation to the liberal forces that sought to destroy the occupation from the beginning.

Nevertheless, we had held our ground for 32 hours against police and security attacks and flagrantly broke laws while cops confusedly looked on; most importantly, we proved that occupations are possible in New York City, the fucking death metropolis center of capital's hate. This was a precedent that we hope will inspire others to escalate their actions in the occupations we hope to see in the near future.

It is toward these future occupations that we look as we put together this list of lessons and thoughts on the December 2008 New School occupation, in the certainty that what began at the New School is not over, despite the return of most participants to their private lives and despite the pathetic and misleading declarations of victory. Occupation is a means without an end - a practice that we can constantly renew and expand.

And, as always,
the event belongs to those who fight,
not to those who want to control it.

HATRED OF DEMOCRACY

Democracy is above all else the biggest and most successful lie of our time (and we're feeling the same way about consensus, too¹). The idea of democratically debating every day those who are against the occupation on the establishment, renewal, and expansion of the occupation is absurd - as if there is ever anything but antagonism between us. At every step, the occupation was brought into being in non-compliance with democratic order, an order that was forced on us precisely by those who opposed the occupation itself - because it was too disorganized, it was too illegal, it was too soon...

From the beginning, many of the figureheads and bureaucrats-in-training of the Radical Student Union [RSU] and Students for a Democratic Society [SDS] were against the occupation because it did not fit into their picture of the "long-term struggle." First, they did not support its immediate establishment and many disagreed with the tactic entirely. During meetings, they spoke endlessly of their self-righteous feelings about why the time was wrong or why it failed to fit into the long-term vision of the "student movement," causing the postponement of the occupation and sleepless nights for many. Next, after deciding to join us in the cafeteria once they realized things were happening with or without their consent, they were chomping at the bit to quietly end the occupation after the first night - upon the opening of the business day (of all the insults!). Thankfully, the wildly liberal logic underlying this notion was quickly revealed in all its hilarity and we continued on into the next morning.

1. When enforced as a strict practice in a very large group, consensus has a tendency to reduce decision-making outcomes to the lowest common denominator, as the most mediocre or least contentious decisions are usually the only ones everyone can agree upon. Often this watering down of actions or plans is the result of attempts to appease a small minority who would otherwise block the action entirely, meaning that their will eventually dominates the group decision anyway. In general, large-group consensus slowly erodes participants' will to act, grinding them down into exhaustion and apathy and often forestalling spontaneous or controversial action.

Later in the evening, many of these same “leaders” sought again and again to issue “official decrees” against the strategic move to control the building’s exit points, which allowed us to determine who entered the occupation, not security and the police. Finally, they orchestrated another “official” vote on the question of whether or not to forcibly open the fire exits allowing the crowds outside in to join us – the official line, they declared, was opposed. “Too risky, we’re just not ready” - it might upset the administration, their negotiators, the cops, even...

To detail this list is not to get petty – it is to be clear about exactly what happened during the occupation and how it was done. The fact is that every highpoint and expansion of the occupation took place despite these attempts at management. The occupation itself, as well as its intensification through aggressive fortification, its continuation past the first night, the forcing open of the fire exits and the joining of the crowds outside with us inside: one could trace a map of the occupation’s strongest and most joyful moments by simply imagining the opposite of the bureaucrats’ tyrannically democratic party line (every high point on this map would of course need to be immediately followed by the bureaucrats’ recuperation of the success in a letter, a declaration, a meeting or a pat on the back).

In any case, the bottom-line is that we do not have to wait for democratic consensus to act; in fact, the occupation happened because we did not wait.

DEMANDS

Demands are incredibly stupid: they say nothing about what we really want, of the transformation we really need. Making demands means two things: first, it means that we define ourselves in relation to the given order of things and in dialogue with those in positions of control. As if the university, administrative and police apparatuses are the hothouses in which human life flowers and grows, making demands means that we define within these contexts our choices, life projects and success. Second, it means viewing occupation as nothing but a means to an end, when, really, the thing to be avoided most is precisely any such end, any

return to the dismal ‘normality’ of capitalist life. As for us, we’ve realized that we discovered our fate there in occupying, where we experienced joy;² that the ends are contained in the means; that we have to attach ourselves to those practices that fill us with joy and a spirit of being ourselves.

So we understand occupation as a means without end, a form of action that perpetuates other forms of action without an end in sight. It is pure means, a gesture incapable of being reduced to a moment in or tactic of the ‘much-more-long-term-struggle.’ If we don’t rethink the relation between means and ends, then we have learned nothing.

EAT PIE IN THE SKY WHEN YOU DIE MOTHERFUCKER

“Build the PARTY! I mean, movement! Yes, towards the consolidation of power into the MOVEMENT! Anything for the MOVEMENT! Only the MOVEMENT can act! All praise the glorious MOVEMENT!”

During an occupation, aspiring politicians and self-appointed representatives of “the movement” will attempt to break our will by calling endless turgid meetings every 15 minutes which, as was exactly the case in the New School occupation, will consistently attempt to destroy every shred of momentum we build. Anytime things were exciting in the cafeteria, be sure that a meeting was called immediately to recuperate that energy into the party-like machine of the bureaucrats.

Those who have detached themselves from the notion of the “right moment” know that we are

2. That’s joy like Bonanno said it: the realization of ourselves in the negation of capitalist logic and labor. “Its attack is overcoming the commodity hallucination, machinery, vengeance, the leader; the party, quantity. Its struggle is breaking down the logic of profit, the architecture of the market, the programming of life, the last document in the last archive. Its violent explosion is overturning the order of dependent, the nomenclature of positive and negative, the code of the commodity illusion.” (“Armed Joy,” 1977)

always already ready, and that “long-term struggle” is a myth used to negate any desires for action that are not directed from core pathetically inept “leaders.” Their long-term struggle functions the same rhetorically as “real communism” did to the workers movement: an ever-receding future horizon, used only to justify exploitation in the present.

The truth is that figuring things out with your friends or in an assembly is a “meeting” that’s miles away from these bureaucratic movement meetings that rely on a model for “revolutionary organization” that mirrors directly the logic of capital. Fortunately, movements, as they know them, are dead; future struggles will grind their gravestones into rocks for the battles to come.

INTERIOR DECORATING

When we occupy a space, we must immediately make it ours. We should inhabit it and turn it to our own ends, because an occupied space is not that of work or protest, nor is it anything like the isolated spaces to which we’ve grown so accustomed; it is autonomous, collective and open for our own use. What makes this space different from all others, all the commodified, mediated, surveilled spaces of the city? - this is the primary question to ask when we take a space.

We put up banners, laid out sleeping bags and projected videos on the walls, staying up late through the nights talking to new and old friends. Remember the ridiculous fun we had supporting each other at the barricades and when we linked with the wild crowds from outside in that huge burst of energy? When we forcibly grabbed our comrades back from the arms of the cops? We have to immediately populate our spaces with all of this but so much more. At the New School we allowed the forces of management and meetings to dominate the space from the beginning – this was one of our biggest mistakes. Never again a Ministry on Culture, never another soul-crushing meeting to reinstate management just as we’ve shrugged it off: occupying should be an opportunity at last, however fleeting, to take a breath and figure out what it means to live together outside of capital’s logic.

MULTIPLICATION, EXPANSION

People had been standing outside supporting us all day long, but a support rally that had been called for late Thursday night drew a crowd of 200-300. This included a Greek solidarity street party that had begun in Tompkins Square Park, leaving a path of festive destruction in its wake, which pushed the situation to a critical mass. Unable to enter the building due to a complete police and security lockdown, and provoked by the arrival of new police trucks and reinforcements, people outside the New School angrily spilled into the streets, totally blocking 5th avenue and moving north against traffic, forcing cars to back up, and knocking down police barricades. Meanwhile, inside the occupation, as mentioned earlier, a small group of people rejected a fear-induced “consensus” decision to refrain from “contentious” activity and forced open a fire door to a raucous, jubilant crowd on the street to enter and join us inside. Running through the halls, dodging security guards and cops, breaking windows and hopping barricades, around 75 of our friends joined us inside and raised the stakes of the occupation once more. As this was happening, our comrades outside flung tomatoes at Bob Kerrey and chased the one-legged scumbag down the streets.

Those who opposed making this convergence possible called us “Custeristic.” Though we’d prefer another comparison, really, in the more abstract and intended sense, we’re flattered: the whole thing was pure adventurist joy. Creating multiple situations inside and out will effectively strengthen and expand an occupation, especially when they converge either on one point, as it happened at the New School, or when they multiply the fronts of battle (for example, if the occupations had expanded to include other buildings, or turned into strikes or blockades elsewhere).

“ADVENTURISM” GETS THE GOODS

The Bob Kerrey Issue was merely a pretense for us to take this action. For some the immediate generalization was to other New School issues, the broader reality of the neoliberalization of the university, and to capitalism most of all. We don’t know what this opened up for others involved in

the occupation, but for us the generalization was immediate, thorough and deliberate: Kerrey's highly public crisis of legitimacy gave us the opportunity finally to go on strike from all the myriad forms of production we live every day and to give ourselves over to occupation.

What we hope to have shown with our brief but successful occupation is that such action is possible in New York City – we just need to make it happen. Always look for controversy or conflict that can be pushed forward or spaces that can be opened up. Opportunities like this present themselves constantly: we need to watch for them and be prepared.

IN THE FUTURE

In the future, we are going to see the effects of the economic “crisis” intensify; we are already seeing cuts in education budgets, mass layoffs and city services slashed. We should intervene in these moments, but we must remember that we are not asking for a little less or a little bit nicer exploitation, and we are not interested in giving them suggestions on how to solve their crisis, because the truth is that we have been living the crisis all of our lives and what we want is, finally, to bring it to its fullest climax.

So when another student occupation takes place, we ought to remember some of the silliest demands we heard at the New School, some of the embarrassing posters like “Let Students Have a Say”, and think about how we position ourselves: are we giving the administration suggestions for ways to make us happier, more docile consumers again, or are we using these moments of intensified crisis to insist on our antagonism, to disrupt the whole arrangement altogether?

See you in the Spring!

*with love,
everyone's favorite autonomous faction in non-cooperation
january 2009*

A CASE STUDY OF OCCUPATION AS NON-EVENT

While there are many narratives currently in circulation which remain self-congratulatory and frantically attempt to persuade others that the turbulence surrounding the December 2008 New School University occupation “has only just begun,” those who rejoice in its victory largely do so at the expense of a reflection that might reveal the occupation’s more subtle articulations. Such accounts inadvertently obscure the notion that *to be victorious* is precisely *to end the occupation*; that is, within such logic, occupation emerges as a mere means for the satisfaction of particular student demands. And while the demands professed during the occupation always remained quite malleable, it is this logic, dominated by the hegemony of the commodity form, which accords to the occupation a deficiency of quality and aptitude.

Further, as will be argued below, to perceive occupation as an approach towards ends outside or even alien and hostile to itself, is to regard *occupation as property*, and it is such a process whereby the New School University occupation becomes transformed into *non-event*, as it is diffused and reduced away from the augmentation of potentialities. The New School occupation as *event however, recognized as an indefinite occurrence, or happening*, through its intensified interruption of *non-events*, or the banality of “student life,” continually expanded possibilities as a *becoming* which indistinctly sought the destruction of petrified capacity.

In order to adequately, or at least more interestingly, illustrate the points outlined above within the historical context of a social reproduction system of hierarchical power relations expressed, in this case, through the commodity form as *the university*, it is accommodating to first begin with an assessment of the occupation as constituted by two distinctive dialectical forces, each with their own set of agents, constituencies, programs, supporters, and above all, mercurial belief systems.

The first of such forces can be characterized as one of *generalization*, particularly as the dissolution of social identities distinctly *possessed* by students. Through such a process, whereby a particularized social distinction, with its own unique set of attributes, behaviors, and even adversaries, decomposes, the enemy eventually becomes not something which we stand opposed to, but rather a general milieu which we stand hostile within. This tendency had as its trajectory the expansion of initial discontentment out of the realm of the graduate faculty, expanding on to

the various grievances held university-wide, and finally shifting towards a rejection of the university specifically as an institution of capital, thus demonstrating a number of commonalities, by *temporality* rather than political affiliation, with the various other practical critiques currently underway, such as the revolt in Greece, Italy's "Anomalous Wave," and other attacks against capital and state throughout Europe.

Such developments can be characterized by the participation of other university students from NYU, CUNY, Rutgers, and most importantly *non-students* during the occupation. This progression can further be witnessed by the statements released from Paris to Mexico City, to Barcelona and onto Athens, just to name a few, all expressing solidarity with those that barricaded themselves within the New School building. Also to be noted as an indication for the generalizing propensity of the New School University occupation was the 50 person march from Tompkins Square Park to the barricaded building, destroying property and blockading streets along the way, while expressing cohesion with Greece by denouncing police as well as the *hostile force of economy* as it is manifested within the city of New York.

The second of such forces can be characterized as one of *fragmentation*. This tendency had as its trajectory the rationalization, management, and eventual domestication of the New School occupation, isolating and neutralizing it as the expression of a "student movement" with its own formulaic and dull methods of recruitment, including, but certainly not limited to, that of the pitiable martyr pamphleteer and other specialized tactics of the "student campaign." Through its process of regimentation, a cohesion emerges and separation is perfected through a unified isolation. As a force which tends to necessitate its own representation in order to effectively manage such potential moments of intensity, its concretization was personified as the NYPD, the on-campus private security forces, the university administration, the university student senate, as well as various distinctly leftist student organizations, in particular the Radical Student Union (RSU) and Students For a Democratic Society (SDS) affiliates.

As a recuperating force which normally seeks to circumscribe and pervert the unrest to a distinctly "student issue," these latter elements adhere to the rationality of fragmentation, in which the victory of occupation emerges specifically through its termination. These student organizations initiated

such efforts quite early, specifically by seeking an end to the occupation *before it even began*. This sentiment, as to what the capacities and trajectories of student unrest should or should not constitute, manifested itself through a series of conversations leading up to the occupation, particularly during the faculty's vote of no confidence in president Kerrey, and emerging most significantly at a meeting the night before the occupation would commence, on Tuesday December 17th.

During this meeting, all were subject to various contentions against occupation as improper and unseasonal, essentially frail without the necessary protocol demanded by student activism. Such reasoning, as the usual demonstration of collective absence, effectively diffused all enthusiasm and momentum; a leftist logic summarized on a dishrag of bureaucratization. Here it should be noted, as it will undoubtedly be proclaimed from the student organizations themselves, that such contentions during the meeting were not against occupation *per se*, but rather in support of a mutilated form of occupation which actively in pursuit of its own defeat. As a result of this debate, occupation was deferred until the following day, despite additional disagreements from the RSU and SDS affiliates that the potency of occupation resided in its abstraction, rather than in the seduction of its immediacy. Those who opposed the occupation at this moment stood *de facto* on the other side of the barricades, constituting a *fragmenting* force, and it is an objective embarrassment that cordiality and "democratic process" was maintained at this juncture. In the face of efforts and proposals set up to dismantle the occupation, the justifiable recourse is to abolish them by all means necessary.

It is within this context, strangled by the integrative forces of a "student movement," that occupation, as a means to an end rather than an advancement of a series of widening possibilities, becomes the *property* of its representatives. It is they who are the deserved experts in such matters, proficient in deciding the most practical and calculable ends for which occupation is employed. For occupation to exist *as property*, it must first and foremost be reduced to its quantitative value. Beginning from the initial meetings, in which occupation was opposed through disfigurement, the RSU brought the denial of the qualitative to an unprecedented sophistication, reducing participants to their statistics over their potentialities; the ultimate degradation of the gesture to its result or product. From here, the experimentation with social relations

during occupation becomes replaced by the dead weight of things, to the resolution of the commodity form.

Indeed, to regard occupation as *property* is to identify the profound core of the commodity as a form, rather than an empirical object. This form reflects a social relation in which the mediation between objects eclipses relations between living beings. Such is the case then that with the universalization of the commodity form into all realms of human activity, its partialized criticisms also become subject to its logic. Through its intensified and instrumental rationality, its standardized motions become hegemonic and find new playgrounds within *all* social life. Life experience as *general*, becomes subservient to the rationality and reified *will* of the commodity. It is such that occupation, as a mere tactic designed to terminate upon the satisfaction of student demands, which stand as *generally hostile towards the generalization of hostility*, reflects an era of competitive forms of meaninglessness.

Through the universal structuring principle that possesses the ability to penetrate society in all its aspects and remold it in its own image, there arises a rational systemization of all statutes regulating life. It is here that occupation becomes solely a statistically viable concept, belonging to only those who adopt the identity of student; exclusion through inclusion; an inner exile abrasive towards generalization, permitting only *very particular* possibilities as an essential *non-event*, that is, conscious and temporally comfortable with its own limitations.

It is at this point that it would be beneficial to focus on a series of moments during the New School occupation which suitably illustrate the collisions between the forces of generalization and fragmentation; most importantly as such forces cannot definitively be reduced to their agents.

The first of such instances emerged immediately when the RSU assumed the role of governing body once the cafeteria area was secured. In the leftist tradition of flattening impetus, the RSU began coordinating tedious meetings and appointing committees for tasks which until then had been either self-managed, such as organizing food and bathroom accessibility, or simply unnecessary, such as a committee for “culture,” which entailed the management of “stuff to do,” in order to *occupy* the time - no doubt the morbid residue of an ideology of leisure. One of course was fully entitled to

contribute to any of these decision-making processes, although it became abundantly transparent that to do so would amount to participation in collective delirium. Throughout the occupation, these meetings attempted to pacify all initiative by establishing a theatrical separation between the word and the act; an effort to isolate form from content. Here one encountered the fetishization of consensus, or of equitable decision making. This ideological tendency, dominant among those who have abandoned an adequate understanding of hierarchical power and confined such power to an ahistorical abstraction, encompassed a fragmenting force as it attempted, throughout the occupation, to dilute and adulterate, in the interest of a reified “democracy,” the impulses of occupation as an *event*, or the *happenings* of beings.

Indeed, as has been illustrated elsewhere, all of the pivotal, invigorating, and monumental moments of the New School occupation manifested themselves as autonomous actions *against* the will of the sovereignty. The myth of the general assembly decomposed under the resignation to wait for the exhausting endorsement of those inclined to define our capacities. Even the *initiation* of the occupation itself did so as an opposition towards democratic regulation and procedure, with the disapproval of power represented through the RSU. To place oneself at the mercy of the *ideology* of democracy, as well as compliment social inertia, is to regard collective will as simply the sum of solitary bourgeois individuals, rather than the result of complex proceedings of dialectically reciprocal influences. The principal question must not focus on the maximization of procedures by which the will of all the participants are calculated, but instead analyze the relation between the processes of debate and the aspirations of the action, an inquiry that cannot be detached from the nature of occupation itself.

It was that exact detachment, or *fragmentation*, of the nature and potentiality of the occupation that culminated in another moment which warrants mention. During the first night and centralized in the New School cafeteria, the occupation approached the recognition that the cafeteria workers would soon arrive in the early morning to begin their shift. This not only immediately reinvigorated the opportunity for more deliberation amongst the student organizations, but more importantly revealed the significance of occupation as a mere means, with desired ends incompatible with the miseries of non-students. The suggestion that the cafeteria workers should

be permitted inside to work during business hours literally suggests the diminishment of occupation to the ineffectual and “symbolic” confines of *hobby*, whereupon the disruption of normal university functions and mechanisms (i.e. the nature of occupation) becomes suspended in favor of sympathetic “public” relations. Indeed, as a foundational symptom of the student activist, subservience to media representation and of maintaining “credibility” by digesting the language of commodity as immediately communicable messages, remained dominant impediments throughout the occupation, most importantly as they hindered the occupation as an opportunity to experiment with traditional social roles and relations. Indeed, absent was the question of what ways could the experience of food be communized instead of maintained as an alienated form of labor, but rather preferred and reduced to the duality of *occupation (im)proper*. Instead, one bore witness to archaic and inept arguments such as: “Christmas is approaching and we dare not take food out of the mouths of ‘the workers!’” Unfortunately, it was subsequently learned that the union contract of the cafeteria workers stipulated a restriction for crossing “picket lines” so that the cafeteria remained closed. Such was the case then, that the precautionary measures of securing imported locks in order to prevent the opening of commodity flow in the cafeteria, had it been attempted by holiday Samaritans, never produced the conflict it desired.

The fragmentation of the New School occupation found conspicuous expression through the general reluctance of many to attempt advances against police and security. This detraction of possibility, whether deriving from a genuine fear of repression, or a shame of a desirously irregular appetite, was most clearly articulated during the final evening in which an aggregation of supporters outside of the building, both student and not, communicated a significant longing for participation. With the numbers inside the occupation slightly reduced compared to the afternoon hours, it seemed only natural to attempt a break in the police line in order to allow a portion of the 300 plus outside to enter the building. As usual, an assembly was convened despite the urgency of the matter, and it was chaotically and yet “officially” decided that such an attempt to open an unguarded fire door in order provide access presented too much of a hazard given the increasing number of police and the risk of jeopardizing the ongoing negotiations with the administration. Regardless of this resolution, the autonomous direct action of a few proceeded without the consent of the majority to the

ultimate success and triumph against the police and security forces, resulting in jubilation and exhilaration amongst reunited comrades, which has been documented, in all of its romanticism, elsewhere.

Further, it was in the aftermath of such ambitious and rousing endeavors as the one described above, which went against the preferences of those who sought the occupation's limitations as *non-events*, that those initially hesitant expressed immediate elation and gratefulness in the fact that the autonomous actions took place, but more importantly, that they were swept up in it. Asserted impotence and attempted fragmentation deteriorated against an innocent taste for direct action as many confronted police with successful de-arrests and other reconfigured power relations. Such a result from the production of *events*, inscribes significant implication into the practice of daring and audacity; into the joy which was located in the horrifying gestures that broke social consensus through autonomy, rather than exclusion and regimentation.

It was in moments described above, that what might have been previously characterized as impossible or "unrealistic," achieved *the possible*, while continually disclosing new territories of operation, new playgrounds for the occupation. For example, the demand that president Kerrey resign remained consistent throughout the occupation. However, if one were to gauge the probability of his resignation during the initial and preliminary moments of the occupation, in which the demand was regarded as principally and arguably "symbolic" or unattainable, compared to its final hours in which Kerry stared vacant and terrified at his enraged interlopers from beyond the barricades, the chances of his resignation acquired a renewed historical element which took on an entirely different significance, departing from the merely abstract, into a prospect within arms reach. Thus, what was possible throughout the occupation was constantly in fluctuation, and so the RSU's insistence that "we gained as much as we could", reveals a deficiency in the engagement of occupation, specifically as the reproduction of *non-events*.

This tendency to regard occupation as property can also be seen in the area of student demands. Operating within the framework of *occupation as property*, to demand is to celebrate exchange value. This way, the occupation becomes valued merely as a leverage within an instrumental

rationality whereupon once the demands are met, occupation is stripped of its potentiality. Indeed, to demand is to define an existence and a capacity through the mutilating terms of those in power; it means conceding an advantage to the enemy. Such was indeed the case with the final meager demands agreed upon by president Kerrey in the New School occupation: increased delusion into the mediating powers of a student senate integral in the fragmentation of generalized hostility, and of course the basic fodder for enhanced student activist resumes. For an occupation which is demonstrated as the *possession* of students, any attempt at its generalization will splinter and fragment upon the rocks of student activism, and its victory will always reside in its deeper integration into the university as commodity.

As the commodity form generalizes into every aspect of life, so too must our hostility against it generalize and transcend the *non-event* of a student occupation as that which is distinctively *owned* by a “student movement;” to multiply occupations, to dissolve their limitations as the production of *events*, valuing struggle less for its pretext than for the moments it allows us to live. It is the *process* of liberating space, the circulation of my potentialities, which sets me free over any “liberated space,” or practice that is subject to the deadening *non-eventualization* of the commodity form. Such is the case that it was never the demands themselves which were important during the 2008 New School occupation, but rather the ability of them to modify, expand, and potentially dissipate against the *ever-receding possibility*; which, through *process*, continues to bring closer that as yet unachieved goal for every insurrection: *to become irreversible*. And as long as the fragmenting forces within such *events* are not directly confronted, occupations will continue to end with whimpers, rather than segue and augment with bangs.

anonymous
january 2009

SEVEN POINTS ON OCCUPATION

1.

Occupation is the seizure and transformation of space. Whether as the takeover of a building, roadway or vacant lot, it manifests itself as an interruption, as the subversion of capitalist normality.

2.

An occupation is a physical materialization of our power unfettered by legality or mere process. It is a practical demonstration of our ability to take a space, hold it, and remake it in a way that we choose.

3.

An occupation is not just a means to an end, an “extreme” tactic, or a high rung on the ladder of democratic dissent. Nor is it simply an end in itself. It’s the communication of a will, the staging area for an extension of paralysis, and the manifestation of what we want in the here and now.

Nothing is produced and nothing is represented in occupation: in this sense, it is fundamentally incompatible with the logic of capital. Occupation compels us at the level of pure means, and it is only as such - stripped of functionality, as a gesture - that it has the ability to cause a rupture in the capitalist order of time.

4.

Rather than asserting that ‘another world is possible’ within the very same framework of the world that is given, an occupation exists as a conflictual fabric erupting in this order, within which new subjectivities emerge and create themselves in situations of conflict.

5.

As a rupture the occupation is revelatory, uncovering true lines of division and exposing commonalities. Solidarity is built, opening unforeseen possibilities for communication and common action. On the other hand, masks are pulled back, with bureaucrats and cops exposing their aspirations to merely put the current catastrophe under new management.

6.

Stasis signals the defeat of an occupation; it must spread, and it must deepen. It is dangerous to the reigning order in the connections that can be built between it and other forms of subversion: sabotage, autonomous self-organization, strikes, blockades, and the general illegal practices of life in the metropolis. Between all of these, there is always already communicability.

7.

The death of an occupation is prevented when it is pushed beyond itself, when its interruption of the capitalist order is followed by a relentless counter-movement that deepens the communicability of our power and solidarities through the expansion and connection of conflictual situations. Occupation resonates there, at the level of life lived as power.

jenny and wayne
january 2009

