



after
the fall

Communiqués
from Occupied California

AUTUMN 2009

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fall

2009

OCCUPIED california

CLASHES, MOBILIZATIONS,
DEMONSTRATIONS, &
OCCUPATIONS

East Bay

UC Berkeley
Berkeley City College



★ "Sacramento"

Davis

UC Davis



San Francisco

SF State
SF City College



Turlock

CSU Stanislaus



Santa Cruz

UC Santa Cruz



Fresno

CSU Fresno



locked down occupation



open occupation and/or sit-ins



march and/or rally



blockade



prison



PACIFIC
OCEAN

NEVADA
CALIFORNIA

N

W

E

S

Los Angeles

UCLA



Fullerton

CSU Fullerton



Irvine

UC Irvine



MAP OF CALIFORNIA

CAMPUS LOCATIONS,
PRISONS, TOPOGRAPHY,
& OTHER POINTS OF INTEREST

USA

MEXICO

After the Fall: COMMUNIQUEÉS FROM OCCUPIED CALIFORNIA

This publication has been put together by a group of friends located in the Bay Area who have been involved in some of the events chronicled within. Any lapses, exclusions or focus on this or that geographical area or campus should be attributed to the location of the editors, their affiliations and their political sensibilities.

Retrospection is always dangerous, especially in those rare moments when the future is still alive. This is not a valediction, nor is it an attempt to centralize under a singular political line actions that in fact interacted according to resonance, affiliation and friendship. The texts collected here were all anonymous, often authored collectively, and, with the exception of the introduction and conclusion, available through zines and the internet. This is a different sort of archive. We thought it worthwhile to collect in one place the wealth of writing that occurred this fall, and to provide some critical contextualization for those who were not fortunate enough to be there. This is not a celebration of the past, but an arsenal to be deployed in the immediate future.

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“An occupation is a vortex, not a protest.”
COMMUNIQUE FROM OCCUPIED KERR HALL, UCSC

We are the Crisis

A Report on the California Occupation Movement

I. Like A Winter With **A Thousand Decembers**

In Greece, they throw molotovs in the street. For every reason under the sun: in defense of their friends, to burn down the state, for old time's sake, for the hell of it, to mark the death of a kid the cops killed for no reason. *For no reason.* They light Christmas trees on fire. *December is the new May.* They smash windows, they turn up paving stones, they fight the cops because their future went missing, along with the economy, a few years ago. They occupy buildings to find one another, to be together in the same place, to have a base from which to carry out raids, to drink and fuck, to talk philosophy. The cops smash into packs of their friends on motorbikes. They hold down the heads of their friends on the pavement and kick them in the face.

In Ssangyong, one thousand laid-off workers occupy an auto factory. They line up in formation with metal pipes, white helmets, red bandanas. Three thousand riot cops can't get them out of their factory for seventy-seven days. They say they're ready to die if they have to, and in the meantime they live on balls of rice and boiled rain. Besieged by helicopters, toxic tear gas, 50,000 volt guns, they fortify positions on the roof, constructing catapults to fire the bolts with which they used to build cars.

In Santiago, insurrectionary students mark the 40th anniversary of Pinochet's coup by attacking police stations and

shutting down the Universidad Academia de Humanismo Cristiano for ten days. *No more deaths will be accepted, all will be avenged.* In France, a couple of “agitators” dump a bucket of shit over the President of Université Rennes 2, as he commemorates the riots of the 2006 anti-CPE struggle with a two-minute public service announcement for corporate education. The video goes up on the web. It drops into slow motion as they flee the mezzanine after the action, not even masked. It's easy, it's light, it's obvious. How else could one respond? What more is there to say? *We know your quality policy.* A cloud of thrown paper breaks like confetti in the space above the crowd below—a celebratory flourish. The video cuts to the outside of a building, scrawled with huge letters: *Vive la Commune.*

In Vienna, in Zagreb, in Freiburg—in hundreds of universities across central and eastern Europe—students gather in the auditoriums of occupied buildings, holding general assemblies, discussing modalities of self-determination. They didn't used to pay fees. Now they do. Before the vacuum of standardization called the Bologna Process, their education wasn't read off a pan-European fast food menu. Now it is. Fuck that, they say. They call themselves *The Academy of Refusal.* They draw lines in the sand. *We will stay in these spaces as long as we can, and we will talk amongst ourselves, learn what we can learn from*

one another, on our own, together. We will take back the time they have stolen from us, that they'll continue to steal, and we'll take it back all at once, here and now. In the time that we have thus spared, one of the things we will do is make videos in which we exhibit our wit, our beauty, our sovereign intelligence and our collective loveliness, and we'll send them to our comrades in California.

In California, the kids write *Occupy Everything* on the walls. *Demand Nothing*, they write. They turn over dumpsters and wedge them into the doorways of buildings with their friends locked inside. Outside, they throw massive Electro Communist dance parties. They crowd by the thousands around occupied buildings, and one of them rests her hand upon the police barriers. A cop tells her to move her hand. She says: “no.” He obliterates her finger with a baton. She has reconstructive surgery in the morning and returns to defend the occupation in the afternoon. *We Are the Crisis*, they say. They start blogs called *Anti-Capital Projects*; *We Want Everything*; *Like Lost Children*, the better to

distribute their communiqués and insurrectionary pamphlets. Ergo, really living communism must be our goal, they write. *We Have Decided Not to Die*, they whisper. Students in Okinawa send them letters of solidarity signed *Project Disagree*. Wheeler, Kerr, Mrak, Dutton, Campbell, Kresge, Humanities 2...the names of the buildings they take become codewords. They relay, resonate, communicate. Those who take them gather and consolidate their forces by taking more. They gauge the measure of their common power. They know, immediately, that if they do not throw down, that if they do not scatter their rage throughout the stolid corridors of their universities, that if they do not prove their powers of negation, if they do not affirm their powers of construction, they will have failed their generation, failed the collective, failed history.

But why wouldn't they throw down, and scatter, and prove, and negate, and affirm? After all, *what the fuck else is there to do?*

In California, the kids write
Occupy Everything on the walls.
Demand Nothing, they write.



Students gather outside occupied Wheeler Hall on November 20, the last day of the three day strike at UC Berkeley.

II. September, October, **November**

A particular political sequence is always at once discrete and continuous, at once a singularity and a relay. And the series of militant occupations that would sweep the state in November both emerged from and exploded the limits of a political conjuncture whose parameters were established in September.

On September 24, the first day of the fall quarter at most UC campuses, a faculty-organized walkout over the handling of the budget crisis during the summer erupted into the largest coordinated protest in the history of the University of California. At UC Berkeley, over five thousand people flooded Sproul Plaza. On the same day, two occupation attempts at UC Santa Cruz and UC Berkeley would result in markedly different outcomes. At UCSC, a group of over twenty students successfully locked down and occupied the Graduate Student Commons for a full week, throwing massive Electro Communist dance parties in the open space of Covell Commons below the balcony, issuing online communiqués that would circulate internationally, and putting the incipient California “student movement” on the map of radical circles around the world. The slogans on their banners resonated because the collective “we” in whose name they spoke recognized itself therein, saw itself captured, concretized, enacted, redistributed in their terse formulae, their unabashed desire for totality, their articulation of an urgency at once symptomatic and prescriptive: “We Want Everything”; “*We Are The Crisis.*”

At UC Berkeley, a more ambitious occupation attempt would fail on the same night that UCSC succeeded. Having arrived with equipment to lock down the doors, a group called for the Berkeley General Assembly—a mass gathering of

some 300 people on the evening after the walkout—to occupy Wheeler Hall. Despite drawing wide spontaneous support from the assembly when they read the occupation statement from Santa Cruz, any effort to bring their proposed action to a vote was interminably stalled, and a subsequent decision to force the issue by locking down the majority of doors in the building resulted in a tense and protracted conflict between those who viewed the occupation attempt as a “vanguardist” affront to procedural consensus and those who viewed it as an effort to seize an important opportunity for collective direct action. The standoff continued until police walked into the building and cut through the locks some ninety minutes later.

The split within the Wheeler audito-



rium that night, and the split within the broader UC movement as to how the occupation at Santa Cruz was regarded, would largely shape both the discourse and the practical possibilities of the mobilization over the next month and a half. While a second, brief occupation at UCSC on October 14 would establish the tactic as a constant threat on UC campuses, partisans of slow and steady movement building decried such actions as irresponsible adventurism. This was an antago-

nism that would persist throughout the fall—a familiar split between “Trotskyist” and “ultra-leftist” orientations within the movement, the former holding fast to the supposedly democratic framework of General Assemblies while the second insisted that actions themselves were the means through which the movement was both organized and pushed forward.

While a massive organizing conference on October 24 would call for a statewide “Day of Action” on March 4, a small group of UC Berkeley grad students—not content to wait until the spring semester to act—launched a website and signature page calling for an indefinite student, staff, faculty strike beginning on Nov. 18, when the UC Regents would meet in UCLA to vote on a proposed

32% student fee increase. It’s notable that although this call for mass action was most actively pushed forward by many of the same people who had attempted the occupation of Wheeler on Sept. 24, it was also supported by representatives of the same groups that had most vocally opposed it. But even if the antagonisms within the movement that had emerged through October and early November would not be entirely displaced by the events that unfolded during the week of

the strike, at least the tedium of ideological playfighting would be.

On Nov. 18 and 19, thousands of protesters from across the state clashed with riot cops outside the Regents meetings at UCLA, chasing the Regents back to their cars as they were escorted from the building. The protests were met with a repressive police response, including taser attacks and eighteen arrests over two days. On the evening of Nov. 18, an occupation attempt at Berkeley would be foiled for the second time, when a team of about forty attempted to lock down the Architects and Engineers building—home of Capital Projects, Real Estate Services, and the Office of Sustainability. Forced to abandon their attempt when administrators locked themselves in their offices, the group nonetheless succeeded in drawing strong support from a crowd that gathered outside the building, and the aftershocks of that spontaneous solidarity would make themselves felt two days later. Later that night at UCLA, a group of forty students occupied Campbell Hall, successfully locking down the doors with impressive barricades and holding the building for over twenty-four hours before abandoning the occupation on the morning of the 20th. On the afternoon of the 19th, UC Santa Cruz students, already holding down Kresge Townhall, escalated their occupation by storming the main administration building. They held Kerr Hall for three days, locking it down after their demands were rejected on the night of the 21st, and vacating the building without charges after it was raided by police the following morning. At UC Davis, about fifty students marched into Mrak Hall on the afternoon of the 19th, their numbers rising to 150 through the afternoon, with dozens of supporters outside the doors. Eight hours and sixty riot cops later, fifty-two arrests ensued when those inside refused police orders to disperse. After spending the night at Yolo County Jail, they drove back to campus and occupied another building the next day, taking Dutton Hall for eight hours with a group of over one hundred, forcing the administration to call in riot police again before walking away.

In a word: between Nov. 18–Nov. 22 a “movement” became an occupation movement. But even in the midst of this explosive sequence, with its clear affirmation of tactical solidarity across campuses, no one could have anticipated the rupture that occurred at Wheeler Hall on November 20th.



III. Vortex: **Wheeler**

At 6:38 am on Friday morning, a post went up on Facebook: “UC Berkeley is Occupied. Wheeler Hall has been taken by students after Thursday’s vote by the UC Regents to increase fees by over 32%. After two days of marches, protests and rallies, students have locked down the doors against campus police while supporters have surrounded the building.”

At 6:38 am, the last item of this report was an effort at self-fulfilling prophecy. In fact, only a few dozen supporters clustered around one side of the huge neo-classical building at the center of the Berkeley campus, watching the windows. But twelve hours later, when police finally broke through the occupiers’ barricades, citing forty people for misdemeanor trespassing and then releasing them without cuffs, they were greeted by a cheering, lamplit crowd of some two thousand people who had packed around police barriers all day.

In between, everything swirled in and around the still edifice of Wheeler. *An occupation is a vortex, not a protest.* Shortly after it had been locked down in the morning, police broke into the basement floor, beating and arresting three students on trumped-up felony charges. Occupiers then retreated to the second floor, barricading hallway doors with chairs, tables, truck tie-downs, U-locks, and ropes, and tirelessly defending the doors against the cops throughout the day. Outside, students pulled fire alarms, cancelling classes and vacating most of the buildings on campus. Support flowed to the occupation, drawn in part by the massive and disproportional police presence that gathered throughout the morning and swelled to hundreds of riot cops by the afternoon. Inside the building, police snarled threats at those on the other side—*get ready for your beat-*

down—and pounded against the doors in a frustrated effort to break through the interior blockade. Outside—holding their ground against police attacks as the cops set up metal barriers around the building—thousands of students effectively laid siege to the building. Or rather, they *laid siege* to the besiegers.

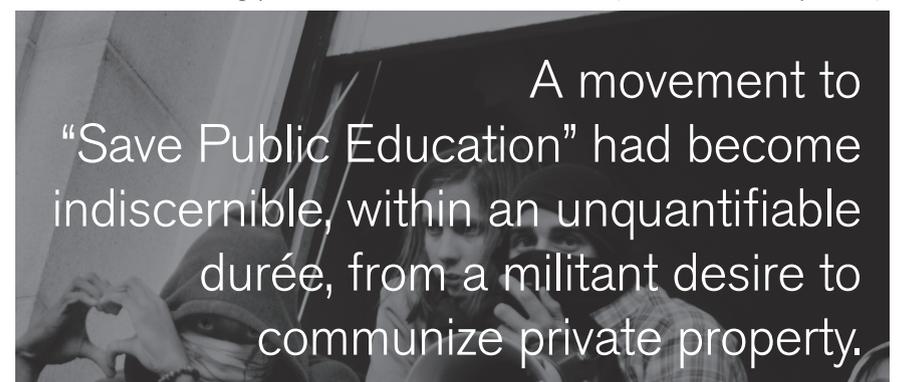
There were various powers of resistance. Across the pedestrian corridor on the west side of the building, students and workers formed a hard blockade, sometimes a dozen rows deep, preventing any passage throughout much of the afternoon. On the hour, many students attempted to organize rushes against police lines around the perimeter, timed by the tolling of the bell-tower and organized by runners between corners of the building. At around 4:00pm, a column of sixteen riot police lined up at the southeast corner of Wheeler, marching toward the backs of the students and workers amassed at the barriers. A gathering crowd, drawn by cell phone communications and twitter feeds, fanned out to surround the advancing column, blockading a path along the east side of the building and locking arms around the cops until they charged a weak point in the chain, beating one student on the ground with batons and shooting another in the stomach with a rubber bullet. When later in the afternoon it became clear that the police would eventually break down the barricades on the second floor, self-organizing groups took up tactical positions at all possible points of exit—even those reportedly accessible by underground tunnels—blockading the loading bays of an adjacent building with dumpsters and forming a human barricade across the doors of Doe Library to the north of Wheeler.

To turn the campus into a militarized warzone was the choice of the administration and the police; but it was also an implicit taunt, a challenge from which students and workers refused to back down, making it obvious that they would not allow the occupiers to be spirited away to jail in handcuffs without a potentially explosive confrontation. As Berkeley grad student George Ciccariello-Mahler’s particularly canny account of the day put it: “Let this be clear: if the students were arrested and carried out, *there was going to be a fight.* A riot? Perhaps (this much depended on the police). A fight? *Mos def.*”

This commitment of the crowd outside the occupation entailed a slight displacement that was audible in the chants of the crowd: from “Whose University?! Our University!” to “Who owns Wheeler?! We own Wheeler!” “Wheeler” is the proper name of this displacement, because the building that it designates became—in an unexpected instant stretched out through a morning, an afternoon, an evening—the site of a displacement of the opposition between a mass movement and the supposedly vanguardist tactic hitherto perceived as the fetish of a few ultra-left adventurers. A displacement, not a fusion. These poles persisted in pockets among the crowd, but their conflict was simply not what mat-

tered on that day. Whether or not all interested parties might choose to describe the event in these terms, what happened was that a “we” numbering two thousand, surrounding the perimeter of Wheeler Hall, declared collective ownership not just of the “University” (an abstraction), but of a particular building, a concrete instantiation of university *property*. And when this happened the priority of factionalist politics that had defined the movement for the previous two months was shattered by the immediacy of an objective situation. A movement to “Save Public Education” had become indiscernible, within an unquantifiable *durée*, from a militant desire to communize private property.

Several of the occupiers would later refer to the “medieval” character of the tactical maneuvers that day: having retreated to an inner chamber, after their outer defenses collapsed, they ceded most of the building to the police. But the police were themselves enclosed by the barricades they had established to keep the crowd outside at bay. The space was constituted by a *double barricade*—by the barricades of the occupiers and the barricades of the police. This was the convoluted topology of the occupation: the space inside was opened up by being locked down (a refusal to let anyone in);



the space outside was closed off by a state of siege (a refusal to let anyone out). There was an intimacy at a distance between these two spaces—the affective bond of a shared struggle—that communicated itself through the walls and through the windows, that crackled through the air around campus, that carried through a rainstorm in the early afternoon, that enabled the occupation to persist. *That it was possible* to hold the space inside, despite the immediate efforts of the cops to take it back: it was the concrete realization of this power that activated the energy and resistance of the crowd outside. That the material sup-

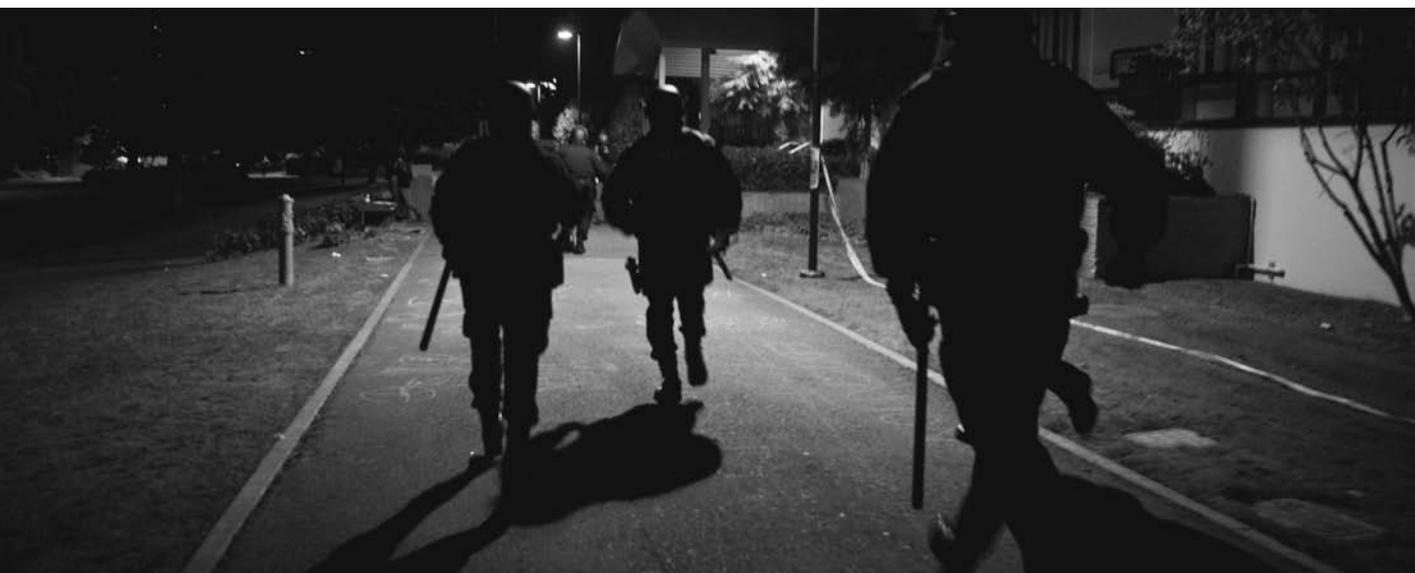
port of the crowd outside was unyielding, that it refused to be pacified or exhausted: it was this collective determination that empowered those inside to hold the doors throughout the afternoon. It became increasingly evident that the police—functioning in this case as the repressive apparatus of the administration—were effectively trapped between two zones over which they had no real control: the area outside their own barricades and the area inside the second floor doors defended by the occupiers.

This essentially powerless position—the reactive and isolated position of the

police, and by extension the administration—was never more evident than at the end of the night, after the occupiers had been cited and released, after they had addressed their supporters through a megaphone, after the crowd began to disperse of their own accord. The barriers cordoning off the plaza outside Wheeler were withdrawn and the majority of the police began to file away, until two weak rows remained, guarding the building at the top of the steps, under the lights cast across the neo-classical façade. A languid crowd began to assemble at the bottom of the steps, just standing there, aimlessly, calming star-

ing across the unimpeded space between them and the cops. A parent walked up with two children, perhaps four and six years old, casually pointing up toward the stationary soldiers of property. Everyone might have whispered the same thing at the same time: look how small they look, how sad and out of place and ridiculous.

The illusory power of the police throughout the day was in fact the power of the contradiction of which their presence was merely an index. It was the power of the people inside, the power of the people outside—the power of people, that is—to suspend the rule of property.



Police raid the Business Building occupation at SF State at 4am on December 10. The building had been occupied early the previous morning and renamed Oscar Grant Memorial hall. Police broke a downstairs window to gain access to the building.

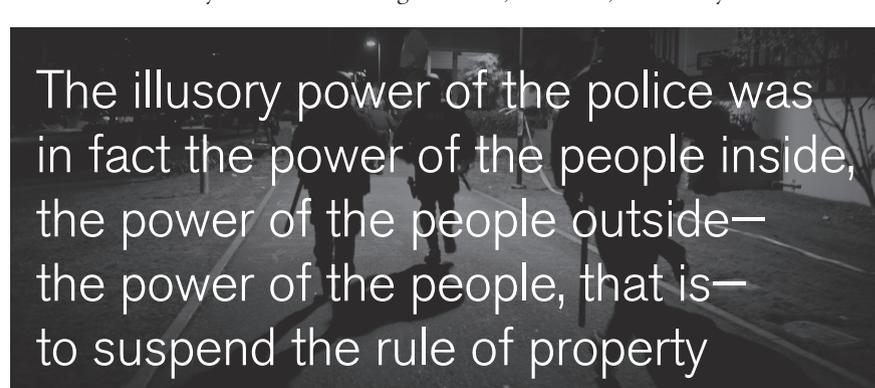
IV. Collateral Damage

Property is one of the knots that ties together multiple levels of the UC crisis, and that binds it with the larger crisis of the state and the global economy. Citing a twenty percent cut in state funding for the University, UC President Mark Yudof declared a state of “extreme fiscal emergency” in July 2009—a measure intended to legitimate and expedite a slash-and-burn approach of the administration to dealing with the budget shortfall. It has been the mantra of the UC administration over the past few years that the state is an “unreliable partner,” that the crisis of the California economy coupled with the refusal of the state government to prioritize support for public education necessitates a program of increasingly draconian cuts and austerity measures. And indeed, many within the university have accepted some version of this argument, urging students to direct blame for the crisis toward Sacramento and to acknowledge the economic “realities” of the moment: Proposition 13 has handicapped the capacity of the state to draw revenue from property taxes since 1978, and money for public services has dried up accordingly; the crisis of the university budget is part and parcel of a larger economic crisis effecting every sector in the state and taking its toll across the country. Why should the University of California claim any exceptional status?

It has become increasingly clear that such narratives don’t add up; both their

credibility and plausible justifications for their acceptance slip away rapidly as one looks into the structure of the UC budget. A recent report on administrative growth by the UCLA Faculty Association “estimated that UC would have \$800 million more each year if senior manage-

ment had grown at the same rate as the rest of the university since 1997, instead of four times faster.” In other words, while UCOP continues to point to economic necessities and legislative priorities as the root causes of the crisis, it is a plain fact that the excessive and inexplicable growth of the administrative class itself accounts for the same amount of money—this year alone—as the budget shortfall.



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Even more resonant, particularly for the occupation movement, has been the role of capital projects in the UC crisis. On August 6, the SF Chronicle reported that despite a supposed fiscal emergency

that had forced layoffs, furloughs, and increased class sizes, UC had agreed to lend the state \$200 million, money that would be paid back over three years at 3.2 percent interest and allocated to stalled capital projects. Money for construction projects, it seemed, was readily available where money for the educational mission of the university was not. In mid-October, Bob Meister, a UCSC Professor and President of the Council of UC Faculty Associations, published an exposé making clear the link between proposed fee increases and capital projects: since 2004, all student fees have been pledged by UC as collateral for bonds used to fund construction projects. UC retains an excellent bond rating, superior to the state of California’s, in part because that rating is guaranteed by rising student fees. Thus, reductions to state funding actually *help* the UC to improve its bond rating, because while state “edu-

cation funds” cannot be used as bond collateral, private student fees can—and cuts to state funding provide a pretext for increased fees. On the list of priorities driving the substitution of private for public funding, “construction,” as Meister put it, “comes ahead of instruction.”

In light of such revelations, to hold that “Sacramento” is the primary source of the UC’s woes amounts to either naiveté or willful obscurantism. Not only are current reductions in state funding a drop in the bucket of UC’s total endowment—and nothing compared to the growing revenue of the university’s profit-generating wings—it is also the case that UC administration has powerful motives to both collaborate with the continuing divestment of state funding and to divert its own resources from spending on instruction. For many, this state of affairs is both obvious and unsurprising, and perhaps no one has articulated its stakes more plainly than Berkeley graduate student Annie McClanahan in an address to the UC Regents prior to their November 19 decision to pass the proposed fee increases. “I’m here today to tell you,” said McClanahan, “that when students and their parents have to borrow at 8 or 10 or 14% interest so that the UC can maintain *its* credit rating and *its* ability to borrow at a .2% lower rate of interest, we the students are not only collateral, we are collateral damage.”



Supporters of the SF State occupation link arms to defend the building.

V. Communization

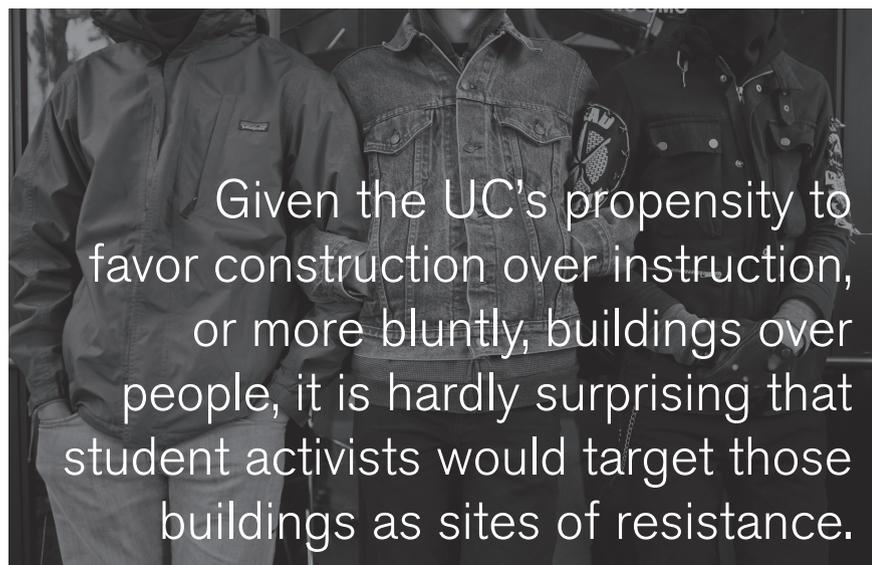
The collateralization of student fees thus puts into question the very future of the university and the class-relations it is called upon to maintain. As elsewhere in our post-industrial economy, the massive personal debt required to keep the university and its building projects churning along indicate the unsustainability of current class relations over the long-term. Something has to break. If the weakness of the American economy was, in the years leading up to the financial collapse of 2008, exacerbated by the securitization of household debt via all kinds of exotic instruments, the situation is little different with students. UC's bondholders bear nearly the same relationship to student borrowing as an investment bank bears to the homeowner underwater on her subprime mortgage. In both cases, the fiction of a "sound investment," of a present sacrifice which will pay off in the future, occludes what is essentially a form of plunder, occludes a present and future immiseration which will, eventually, undermine the foundations of our consumer-driven society.

Given the UC's propensity to favor construction over instruction, or more bluntly, buildings over people, it is hardly surprising that student activists would target those buildings as sites of resistance. The failed Berkeley occupation of the Nov. 18 – the first day of the strike – targeted the Capital Projects and Real-Estate services offices, departments responsible for the construction and administration of all campus buildings. The statements which the occupiers released via a blog entitled *Anti-Capital Projects* clarify the terms of the struggle, suggesting that what is broadly at stake are two different visions of the use of space, and by extension, two different regimes of property. Or rather, property and its negation.

These texts fall in line with the broadly anarchist or anti-state communist perspec-

tive of the earlier occupations, in which the horizon of occupation, its *project* so to speak, leads far beyond the university. To the extent that occupation offers, hypothetically, the opportunity to remove a building from the regime of property—in other words, to abolish its status as "capital" and to cancel one's subordination to owners and ownership—it forms a tactic little different than "seizure of the means of production," one with a venerable history and a wide extension beyond the university. In particular, one thinks of workplace occupations and expropriations and hous-

ing occupations. With unemployment reaching staggering proportions and with millions of bank-owned and foreclosed homes standing empty, occupation seems like a tactic that is itself a strategy—a form of militancy that is not a means to an end but an end in and of itself. But any such threat to property relations immediately invites conflict with the police. One also risks conflict with the larger mass of the student-worker movement and activist faculty, who are loath to extend the struggle beyond reform of the university. The radical stream within

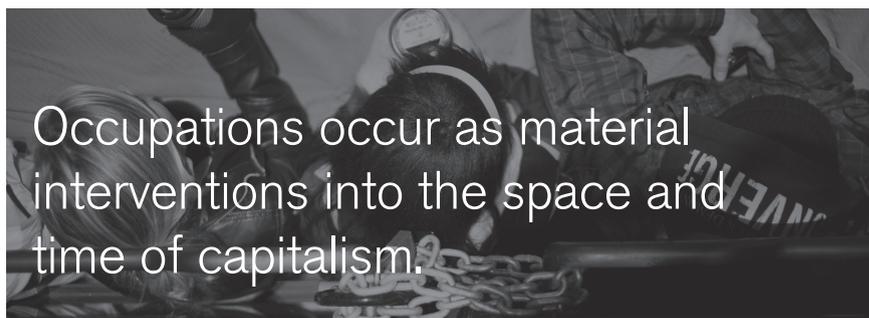


the student movement, on the other hand, sees the fight for increased access to the university as futile without situating that fight within a much broader critique of political economy. Even if achieved, present reforms of the UC will merely slow its eventual privatization, and the crisis of the university remains connected to a much larger crisis of employment and, in turn, a crisis of capitalism that permits of no viable solution. In other words, the jobs for which the university ostensibly prepares its students no longer exist, even as they are asked to pony up more and more money

to negotiate one's departure from the occupied building on the basis of concessions won. If any winnings are likely to be mooted, in the long-term, by overwhelming economic forces, then occupation is less potent as leverage for negotiation than as a practical attempt to remove oneself, to whatever degree possible, from existing regimes of *relation*: to others and to the use of space. The occupiers, in this sense, refuse to "take what they can get." They would rather "get what they can take." (This is how some fellow travelers in New York, participants in a series of inspiring occupations last year, have put it). An occupation is not a token illegalism to be bargained away in exchange for whatever modest demands the authorities are willing to grant, since this only legitimates the existing authorities in exchange for whatever modest demands those authorities are willing to grant. Demands are always either too small or too large; too "rational" or too incoherent. Occupations themselves, however, occur as material interventions into the space and time of capitalism. They are attempts to "live communism; spread anarchy," as the *Tiqqun* pamphlet *Call* (an influential text for the occupation movement) puts it. This slogan was written on all of the chalkboards during the Nov. 20th occupation of Wheeler.

The communiqué and some of the other texts associated with the autumn occupations link up with what is often referred to as the "communization current"—a species of ultraleftism and insurrectionary anarchism that refuses all talk of a transition to communism, insisting, instead, upon the immediate formation of "communes," of zones of activity removed from exchange, money, compulsory labor, and the impersonal domination of the commodity form. Communism, in this sense, is neither an endpoint nor a goal but a process. Not a noun but a verb. There is nothing to-

ward which one transitions, only the transition itself, only a long process of metabolizing existing goods and capitals and removing them from the regimes of property and value. Judged in relation to such a project, the occupations of the fall are modest achievements – experiments with a practice that might find a fuller implementation in the future. There is an exemplary character to the actions – they are attempts to generalize a tactic that is also a strategy, a means that is also an end. But can the tactics elaborated within the university escape its confines and become generalized in the kinds of places – apartment buildings, factories – where they would become part of an extensive process of communization? In a sense, the byline of the movement – *occupy everything, demand nothing* – is prospective;



Occupations occur as material interventions into the space and time of capitalism.

it imagines itself as occurring in an insurrectionary moment which has not yet materialized. This is its strength; its ability to make an actual, material intervention in the present that fast-forwards us to an insurrectionary future. Beyond such a conflagration, there is really no escaping one's reinscription within a series of reforms and demands, regardless of the stance one takes. Only by passing into

a moment of open insurrection can demands be truly and finally escaped.

The prospective dimension of the earlier positions is confirmed by the fact that both the Nov. 20th Berkeley occupation and the Santa Cruz Kerr Hall occupation, the successor occupations, did have a list of demands – demands which had a certain tactical logic in developing solidarity, and expanding the action, but that also suffered

from the problems of scale, coherence and “achievability” that plague the demand as form. Nonetheless, what happened in both those instances was a massive radicalization of the student body, a massive escalation, one that was hardly at all countered by its superscription inside this or that call for reform. At Kerr Hall, the fact that the occupiers asked the administration for this or that concession was superseded, in material practice, by the fact that they had, for the moment, displaced their partners in negotiation: while they negotiated, they were at the same time in the Chancellor's office, eating his food, and watching videos on his television. They did in fact *get what they could take*, and when the moment came, they didn't hesitate to convert the sacrosanct property—the copy machines and refrigerators—into barricades.

Outside supporters defend Oscar Grant Memorial Hall late into the night.



VI. We are the Crisis

Some writers have concluded that the sweep of the fall's events presents a dialectic between the “adventurist” action of small groups, and the back-footed, reactive discourse of those who want to build a “mass democratic” movement, the final synthesis of which can be found in the “mass actions” undertaken by hundreds in November. This seems false to us since, in retrospect, the smaller actions resolve into the many facets and eruptions of a singular “mass movement” dispersed in time and place. The smaller actions were what it took to build up to something larger. Again: it is not a question of choosing between these two sides, nor of synthesizing them, but rather of displacing the priority of this opposition. The real dialectic is between negation and experimentation: acts of resistance and refusal which also enable an exploration of new social relations, new uses of space and time.

These two poles can't be separated out, since the one passes into the other with surprising swiftness. Without confrontation, experimentation risks collapsing back into the existing social relations that form their backdrop – they risk becoming mere lifestyle or culture, recuperated as one more aestheticized museum exhibit of liberal tolerance toward student radicals. But to the

extent that any experiment really attempts to take control of space and time and social relations, it will necessarily entail an antagonistic relation to power. This was evident when, during the week before exams reserved for studying (Dec. 7-11), Berkeley students marched back into Wheeler and held an open, unlocked occupation of the unused parts of the building, negotiating an informal agreement with the police and administrators, plastering the walls with slogans, turning classrooms into organizing spaces, study spaces, sleeping spaces, distributing food and literature in the lobby, and holding meetings, dance parties and movie-screenings in the lecture hall. This attempt to put the building under student-led control turned out to be too much for the administration, and early in the morning of Dec. 11, the last day of the occupation, 66 people were arrested without warning as they slept. That same evening, in response, a group marched on the Chancellor's house carrying torches, destroying planters, windows, and lamps. What was originally conceived as a largely non-confrontational action quickly became highly confrontational. *There is nothing new without a negation of the old.* By the same measure, even if the people occupying Wheeler on Nov. 20th had little time to reinvent their

relations, inasmuch as they spent most of their time fighting the cops for control of the doors, what emerged was a structure of solidarity, of spontaneous, self-organized resistance that obliterated any distinction between those inside and those outside, and that passed, by way of political determination, through the police lines meant to enforce this barrier. *There is no negation of the old which does not provoke the emergence of something new.*

Project Disagree; Academy of Refusal; Research & Destroy; Anti-Capital Projects: the rhetoric of negation conforms to the topology of the blockade, the barricade. We Want Everything; Like Lost Children: and this negation opens onto a space of uncertain drift—a *dérive*—whereby a desire for totality gives way onto the navigation of the not-all. We are the Crisis. This is the only sense in which one might affirm a “movement.”

Nous Sommes le Pouvoir, the slogan of May '68, foregrounds the *capacity* of the “we,” the positive *power* of *solidarity*. *We Are The Crisis* would seem to cede some of this power, indexing the being of the we to catastrophe, and thereby to a degree of powerlessness: to conditions that are out of control, precisely beyond the measure our capacities. *We Are The Crisis* inscribes

the “we” as both symptom and prescription, without attempting to evade their entanglement. And this entanglement—our condition—poses a *problem* for power per se. *Nous Sommes le Pouvoir* speaks from and for collective capacities; *We Are the Crisis* writes the collective that resists, that experiments, into the crisis of capital: into objective conditions. But if we recall that, etymologically, “crisis” means *discrimination, decision*, then the slogan is stripped of any teleological determination of the “we” as simply an “expression” of the economy.” *To decide upon* the we, upon the collective, as both symptom and prescription, within and against the objective conditions of capital: this is the vector of decision along which the current occupation movement attempts to push those objective conditions toward a breaking point. ✪

communiqué
from an
**absent
future**

Introduction: **We live as a dead civilization.** We can no longer imagine the good life except as a series of spectacles preselected for our bemusement: a shimmering menu of illusions. Both the full-filled life and our own imaginations have been systematically replaced by a set of images more lavish and inhumane than anything we ourselves would conceive, and equally beyond reach. *No one believes in such outcomes anymore.*

7 Against
Pompeii



On the terminus of student life

by research & destroy

The truth of life after the university is mean and petty competition for resources with our friends and strangers: the hustle for a lower-management position that will last (with luck) for a couple years rifted with anxiety, fear, and increasing exploitation—until the firm crumbles and we mutter about “plan B.” *But this is an exact description of university life today; that mean and petty life has already arrived.*

Just to survive, we are compelled to adopt various attitudes toward this fissure between bankrupt promises and

just act as one who believes, just show up, take on more degrees and more debt, *work harder.*

Time, the actual material of our being, disappears: the hours of our daily life. The future is seized from us in advance, given over to the servicing of debt and to beggaring our neighbors. Maybe we will earn the rent on our boredom, more likely not. There will be no 77 virgins, not even a plasma monitor on which to watch the death throes of the United States as a global power. *Capitalism has fi-*

these things. They have counted on our human capacities to endure, and to prop up that world’s catastrophic failure for just a few more years. *But why not hasten its collapse?* The university has rotted itself from the inside: the “human capital” of staff, teachers, and students would now no more defend it than they would defend a city of the dead.

Romantic naïvete, iron cynicism, scorn, commitment: these need not be abandoned. The university forced us to learn them as tools; they will return as weapons. The university that makes us mute and dull instruments of its own reproduction must be destroyed so that we can produce our own lives. Romantic naïvete about possibilities; iron cynicism about methods; scorn for the university’s humiliating lies about its situation and its good intentions; commitment to absolute transformation — not of the university, but of our own lives. This is the beginning of imagination’s return. We must begin to move again, release ourselves from frozen history, from the igneous frieze of this buried life.

We must live our own time, our own possibilities. These are the only true justifications for the university’s existence, though it has never fulfilled them. On its side: bureaucracy, inertia, incompetence. On our side: everything else.

The university has rotted itself from the inside: the “human capital” of staff, teachers, and students would now no more defend it than they would defend a city of the dead.

the actuality on offer. Some take a naïve romantic stance toward education for its own sake, telling themselves they expect nothing further. Some proceed with iron cynicism and scorn, racing through the ludicrous charade toward the last wad of cash in the airless vault of the future. And some remain committed to the antique faith that their ascendingly hard labor will surely be rewarded some day if they

nally become a true religion, wherein the riches of heaven are everywhere promised and nowhere delivered. The only difference is that every manner of crassness and cruelty is actively encouraged in the unending meantime. We live as a dead civilization, the last residents of Pompeii.

Romantic naïvete, iron cynicism, scorn, commitment. The university and the life it reproduces have depended on

I. Like the society to which it has played the faithful servant, the university is bankrupt.

This bankruptcy is not only financial. It is the index of a more fundamental insolvency, one both political and economic, which has been a long time in the making. No one knows what the university is for anymore. We feel this intuitively. Gone is the old project of creating a cultured and educated citizenry; gone, too, the special advantage the degree-holder once held on the job market. These are now fantasies, spectral residues that cling to the poorly maintained halls.

Incongruous architecture, the ghosts of vanished ideals, the vista of a dead future: these are the remains of the university. Among these remains, most of us are little more than a collection of querulous habits and duties. We go through the motions of our tests and assignments with a kind of thoughtless and immutable obedience propped up by subvocalized resentments. Nothing is interesting, nothing can make itself felt. The world-historical with its pageant of catastrophe is no more real than the windows in which it appears.

For those whose adolescence was poisoned by the nationalist hysteria following September 11th, public speech is nothing but a series of lies and public space a place where things might explode (though they never do). Afflicted by the vague desire for

something to happen—without ever imagining we could make it happen ourselves—we were rescued by the bland homogeneity of the internet, finding refuge among friends we never see, whose entire existence is a series of exclamations and silly pictures, whose only discourse is the gossip of commodities. Safety, then, and comfort have been our watchwords. We slide through the flesh world without being touched or moved. We shepherd our emptiness from place to place.

But we can be grateful for our destitution: demystification is now a condition, not a project. University life finally *appears* as just what it has always been: a machine for producing compliant producers and consumers. Even leisure is a form of job training. The idiot crew of the frat houses drink themselves into a stupor with all the dedication of lawyers working late at the office. Kids who smoked weed and cut class in high-school now pop Adderall and get to work. We power the diploma factory on the treadmills in the gym. We run tirelessly in elliptical circles.

It makes little sense, then, to think of the university as an ivory tower in Arcadia, as either idyllic or idle. “Work hard, play hard” has been the over-eager

motto of a generation in training for... what?—drawing hearts in cappuccino foam or plugging names and numbers into databases. The gleaming techno-future of American capitalism was long ago packed up and sold to China for a few more years of borrowed junk. A university diploma is now worth no more than a share in General Motors.

We work and we borrow in order to work and to borrow. And the jobs we work toward are the jobs we already have. Close to three quarters of students work while in school, many full-time; for most, the level of employment we obtain while students is the same that awaits after graduation. Meanwhile, what we acquire isn’t education; it’s debt. We work to make money we have already spent, and our future labor has already been sold on the worst market around. Average student loan debt rose 20 percent in the first five years of the twenty-first century—80-100 percent for students of color. Student loan volume—a figure inversely proportional to state funding for education—rose by nearly 800 percent from 1977 to 2003. What our borrowed tuition buys is the privilege of making monthly payments for the rest of our lives. What we learn is the choreography

of credit: you can’t walk to class without being offered another piece of plastic charging 20 percent interest. Yesterday’s finance majors buy their summer homes with the bleak futures of today’s humanities majors.

This is the prospect for which we have been preparing since grade-school. Those of us who came here to have our privilege notarized surrendered our youth to a barrage of tutors, a battery of psychological tests, obligatory public service ops—the cynical compilation of half-truths toward a well-rounded application profile. No wonder we set about destroying ourselves the second we escape the cattle prod of parental admonition. On the other hand, those of us who came here to transcend the economic and social disadvantages of our families know that for every one of us who “makes it,” ten more take our place—that the logic here is zero-sum. And anyway, socioeconomic status remains the best predictor of student achievement. Those of us the demographics call “immigrants,” “minorities,” and “people of color” have been told to believe in the aristocracy of merit. But we know we are hated not despite our achievements, but precisely *because* of them. And we know that the circuits through which we might

free ourselves from the violence of our origins only reproduce the misery of the past in the present *for others*, elsewhere.

If the university teaches us primarily how to be in debt, how to waste our labor power, how to fall prey to petty anxieties, it thereby teaches us how to be consumers. Education is a commodity like everything else that we want without caring for. It is a thing, and it makes its purchasers into things. One's future position in the system, one's relation to others, is purchased first with money and then with the demonstration of obedience. First we pay, then we "work hard." And there is the split: one is both the commander and the commanded, consumer and consumed. It is the system itself which one obeys, the cold buildings that enforce subservience. Those who teach are treated with all the respect of an automated messaging system. Only the logic of customer satisfaction obtains here: was the course easy? Was the teacher hot? Could any stupid asshole get an A? What's the point of acquiring knowledge when it can be called up with a few keystrokes? Who needs memory when we have the internet? A training in thought? You can't be serious. A moral preparation? There are anti-depressants for that.

Meanwhile the graduate students, supposedly the most politically enlightened among us, are also the most obedient. The "vocation" for which they labor is nothing

Another world is not possible; it is necessary. The ought and the is are one. The collapse of the global economy is here and now.

other than a fantasy of falling off the grid, or out of the labor market. Every grad student is a would be Robinson Crusoe, dreaming of an island economy subtracted from the exigencies of the market. But this fantasy is itself sustained through an unremitting submission to the market. There is no longer the least felt contradiction in teaching a totalizing critique of capitalism by day and polishing one's job talk by night. That our pleasure is our labor only makes our symptoms more manageable. Aesthetics and politics collapse courtesy of the substitution of ideology for history: booze and beaux arts and another seminar on the question of being, the steady blur of typeface, each pixel paid for by somebody somewhere, some not-me, not-here, where all that appears is good and all goods appear attainable by credit.

Graduate school is simply the faded remnant of a feudal system adapted to the logic of capitalism—from the commanding heights of the star professors to the serried ranks of teaching assistants and adjuncts paid mostly in bad faith. A

kind of monasticism predominates here, with all the Gothic rituals of a Benedictine abbey, and all the strange theological claims for the nobility of this work, its essential altruism. The underlings are only too happy to play apprentice to the masters, unable to do the math indicating that nine-tenths of us will teach 4 courses every semester to pad the paychecks of the one-tenth who sustain the fiction that we can all be the one. Of course I will be the star, I will get the tenure-track job in a large city and move into a newly gentrified neighborhood.

We end up *interpreting* Marx's 11th thesis on Feuerbach: "The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it." At best, we learn the phoenix-like skill of coming to the very limits of critique and perishing there, only to begin again at the seemingly ineradicable root. We admire the first part of this performance: it lights our way. But we want the tools to break through that point of suicidal thought, its hinge in practice.

The same people who practice "critique" are also the most susceptible to cynicism. But if cynicism is simply the inverted form of enthusiasm, then beneath every frustrated leftist academic is a latent radical. The shoulder shrug, the dulled face, the squirm of embarrassment when discussing the fact that the US murdered a million Iraqis between 2003 and 2006, that every last dime squeezed from America's poorest citizens is fed to the banking industry, that the seas will rise, billions will die and there's *nothing* we can do about it—this discomfited posture comes from feeling oneself pulled between the *is* and the *ought* of current left thought. One feels that there is no alternative, and yet, on the other hand, that another world is possible.

We will not be so petulant. The synthesis of these positions is right in front of us: another world is not possible; it is necessary. The *ought* and the *is* are one. The collapse of the global economy is here and now.

II. The university has no history of its own; its history is the history of capital.

Its essential function is the reproduction of the relationship between capital and labor. Though not a proper corporation that can be bought and sold, that pays revenue to its investors, the public university nonetheless carries out this function as efficiently as possible by approximating ever more closely the corporate form of its bedfellows. What we are witnessing now is the endgame of this process, whereby the façade of the educational institution gives way altogether to corporate streamlining.

Even in the golden age of capitalism that followed after World War II and lasted until the late 1960s, the liberal university was already subordinated to capital. At the apex of public funding for higher education, in the 1950s, the university was already being redesigned to produce technocrats with the skill-sets necessary to defeat "communism" and sustain US hegemony. Its role during the Cold War was to legitimate liberal democracy and to reproduce an imaginary society of free and equal citizens—*precisely because no one was free and no one was equal*.

But if this ideological function of the public university was at least well-funded after the Second World War, that situation changed irreversibly in the 1960s, and no amount of social-democratic heel-

clicking will bring back the dead world of the post-war boom. Between 1965 and 1980 profit rates began to fall, first in the US, then in the rest of the industrializing world. Capitalism, it turned out, could not sustain the good life it made possible. For capital, abundance appears as overproduction, freedom from work as unemployment. Beginning in the 1970s, capitalism entered into a terminal downturn in which permanent work was casualized and working-class wages stagnated, while those at the top were temporarily rewarded for their obscure financial necromancy, which has itself proved unsustainable.

For public education, the long downturn meant the decline of tax revenues due to both declining rates of economic growth and the prioritization of tax-breaks for beleaguered corporations. The raiding of the public purse struck California and the rest of the nation in the 1970s. It has continued to strike with each downward

declension of the business cycle. Though it is not directly beholden to the market, the university and its corollaries are subject to the same cost-cutting logic as other industries: declining tax revenues have made inevitable the casualization of work. Retiring professors make way not for tenure-track jobs but for precariously employed teaching assistants, adjuncts, and lecturers who do the same work for much less pay. Tuition increases compensate for cuts while the jobs students pay to be trained for evaporate.

In the midst of the current crisis, which will be long and protracted, many on the left want to return to the golden age of public education. They naïvely imagine that the crisis of the present is an opportunity to demand the return of the past. But social programs that depended upon high profit rates and vigorous economic growth are gone. We cannot be tempted to make futile grabs at the irretrievable

while ignoring the obvious fact that there can be no autonomous "public university" in a capitalist society. The university is subject to the real crisis of capitalism, and capital does not require liberal education programs. The function of the university has always been to reproduce the working class by training future workers according to the changing needs of capital. The crisis of the university today is the crisis of the reproduction of the working class, the crisis of a period in which capital no longer needs us as workers.

We cannot free the university from the exigencies of the market by calling for the return of the public education system. We live out the terminus of the very market logic upon which that system was founded. *The only autonomy we can hope to attain exists beyond capitalism*.

What this means for our struggle is that we can't go backward. The old student struggles are the relics of a vanished

The crisis of the university today is the crisis of the reproduction of the working class, the crisis of a period in which capital no longer needs us as workers.

world. In the 1960s, as the post-war boom was just beginning to unravel, radicals within the confines of the university understood that another world was possible. Fed up with technocratic management, wanting to break the chains of a conformist society, and rejecting alienated work as unnecessary in an age of abundance, students tried to align themselves with radical sections of the working class. But their mode of radicalization, too tenuously connected to the economic logic of capital-

ism, prevented that alignment from taking hold. Because their resistance to the Vietnam war focalized critique upon capitalism as a colonial war-machine, but insufficiently upon its exploitation of domestic labor, students were easily split off from a working class facing different problems. In the twilight era of the post-war boom, the university was not subsumed by capital to the degree that it is now, and students were not as intensively proletarianized by debt and a devastated labor market.

That is why our struggle is fundamentally different. The poverty of student life has become terminal: there is no promised exit. If the economic crisis of the 1970s emerged to break the back of the political crisis of the 1960s, the fact that today the economic crisis precedes the coming political uprising means we may finally supersede the cooptation and neutralization of those past struggles. There will be no return to normal.

III. We seek to push the university struggle to its limits.

Though we denounce the privatization of the university and its authoritarian system of governance, we do not seek structural reforms. We demand not a free university but a free society. A free university in the midst of a capitalist society is like a reading room in a prison; it serves only as a distraction from the misery of daily life. Instead we seek to channel the anger of the dispossessed students and workers into a declaration of war.

We must begin by preventing the university from functioning. We must interrupt the normal flow of bodies and things and bring work and class to a halt. We will blockade, occupy, and take what's ours. Rather than viewing such disruptions as obstacles to dialogue and mutual understanding, we see them as *what we have to say, as how we are to be understood*. This is the only meaningful position to take when crises lay bare the opposing interests at the foundation of society. Calls for unity are fundamentally empty. There is no common ground between those who uphold the status quo and those who seek to destroy it.

The university struggle is one among many, one sector where a new cycle of refusal and insurrection has begun—in

hope of success. Taken together, however, they suggest the possibility of widespread refusal and resistance. Our task is to make plain the common conditions that, like a hidden water table, feed each struggle.

We have seen this kind of upsurge in the recent past, a rebellion that starts in the classrooms and radiates outward to encompass the whole of society. Just two years ago the anti-CPE movement in France, combating a new law that enabled employers to fire young workers without cause, brought huge numbers into the streets. High school and university students, teachers, parents, rank and file union members, and unemployed youth from the banlieues found themselves together on the same side of the barricades. (This solidarity was often fragile, however. The riots of immigrant youth in the suburbs and university students in the city centers never merged, and at times tensions flared between the two groups.) French students saw through the illusion of the university as a place of refuge and enlightenment and acknowledged that they were merely being trained to work. They took to the streets as workers, protesting their precarious futures. Their position tore down the partitions between the schools and the

that shut down high schools and universities — announced the extent of the new generation's disillusionment and rage. Despite all of this, however, the movement quickly disintegrated when the CPE law was eventually dropped. While the most radical segment of the movement sought to expand the rebellion into a general revolt against capitalism, they could not secure significant support and the demonstrations, occupations, and blockades dwindled and soon died. Ultimately the movement was unable to transcend the limitations of reformism.

The Greek uprising of December 2008 broke through many of these limitations and marked the beginning of a new cycle of class struggle. Initiated by students in response to the murder of an Athens youth by police, the uprising consisted of weeks of rioting, looting, and occupations of universities, union offices, and television stations. Entire financial and shopping districts burned, and what the movement lacked in numbers it made up in its geographical breadth, spreading from city to city to encompass the whole of Greece. As in France it was an uprising of youth, for whom the economic crisis represented a total negation of the future. Students, pre-

these institutions could offer. Here content aligned with form; whereas the optimistic slogans that appeared everywhere in French demonstrations jarred with the images of burning cars and broken glass, in Greece the rioting was the obvious means to begin to enact the destruction of an entire political and economic system.

Ultimately the dynamics that created the uprising also established its limit. It was made possible by the existence of a sizeable radical infrastructure in urban areas, in particular the Exarchia neighborhood in Athens. The squats, bars, cafes, and social centers, frequented by students and immigrant youth, created the milieu out of which the uprising emerged. However, this milieu was alien to most middle-aged wage workers, who did not see the struggle as their own. Though many expressed solidarity with the rioting youth, they perceived it as a movement of entrants — that is, of that portion of the proletariat that sought entrance to the labor market but was not formally employed in full-time jobs. The uprising, strong in the schools and the immigrant suburbs, did not spread to the workplaces.

Our task in the current struggle will be to make clear the contradiction between form and content and to create the conditions for the transcendence of reformist demands and the implementation of a truly communist content. As the unions and student and faculty groups push their various "issues," we must increase the tension until it is clear that we want something else entirely. We must constantly expose the incoherence of demands for democratization and transparency. What good is it to have the right to see how intolerable things are, or to elect those who will screw us over? We must leave behind the culture of student activism, with its moralistic mantras of non-violence and its fixation on single-issue causes. The only success with which we can be content is the abolition of the capitalist mode of production and the certain immiseration and death which it promises for the 21st century. All of our actions must push us towards communization; that is, the reorganization of society according to a logic

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workplaces, neighborhoods, and slums. All of our futures are linked, and so our movement will have to join with these others, breaching the walls of the university compounds and spilling into the streets. In recent weeks Bay Area public school teachers, BART employees, and unemployed have threatened demonstrations and strikes. Each of these movements responds to a different facet of capitalism's reinvigorated attack on the working class in a moment of crisis. Viewed separately, each appears small, near-sighted, without

workplaces and immediately elicited the support of many wage workers and unemployed people in a mass gesture of proletarian refusal.

As the movement developed it manifested a growing tension between revolution and reform. Its form was more radical than its content. While the rhetoric of the student leaders focused merely on a return to the status quo, the actions of the youth — the riots, the cars overturned and set on fire, the blockades of roads and railways, and the waves of occupations

carious workers, and immigrants were the protagonists, and they were able to achieve a level of unity that far surpassed the fragile solidarities of the anti-CPE movement.

Just as significantly, they made almost no demands. While of course some demonstrators sought to reform the police system or to critique specific government policies, in general they asked for nothing at all from the government, the university, the workplaces, or the police. Not because they considered this a better strategy, but because they wanted nothing that any of

of free giving and receiving, and the immediate abolition of the wage, the value-form, compulsory labor, and exchange.

Occupation will be a critical tactic in our struggle, but we must resist the tendency to use it in a reformist way. The different strategic uses of occupation became clear this past January when students occupied a building at the New School in New York. A group of friends, mostly graduate students, decided to take over the Student Center and claim it as a liberated space for students and the public. Soon others joined in, but many of them preferred to use the action as leverage to win reforms, in particular to oust the school's president. These differences came to a head as the occupation unfolded. While the student reformers were focused on leaving the building with a tangible concession from the administration, others shunned demands entirely. They saw the point of occupation as the creation of a momentary opening in capitalist time and space, a rearrangement that sketched the contours of a new society. We side with this anti-reformist position. While we know these free zones will be partial and transitory, the tensions they expose between the real and the possible can push the struggle in a more radical direction.

We intend to employ this tactic until it becomes generalized. In 2001 the

We must act on our own behalf directly, without mediation. We must break with any groups that seek to limit the struggle by telling us to go back to work or class, to negotiate, to reconcile.

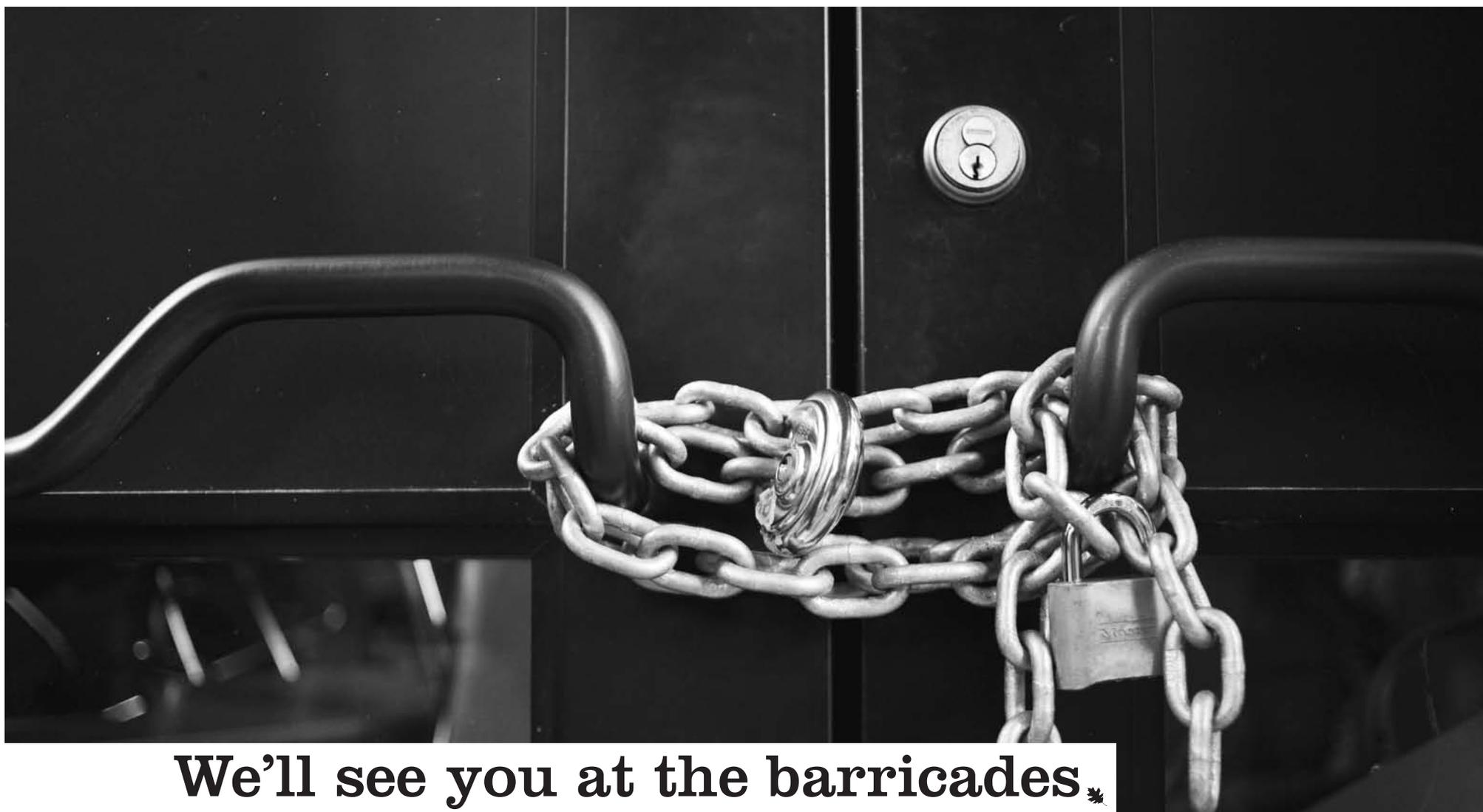
first Argentine piqueteros suggested the form the people's struggle there should take: road blockades which brought to a halt the circulation of goods from place to place. Within months this tactic spread across the country without any formal coordination between groups. In the same way repetition can establish occupation as an instinctive and immediate method of revolt taken up both inside and outside the university. We have seen a new wave of takeovers in the U.S. over the last year, both at universities and workplaces: New School and NYU, as well as the workers at Republic Windows Factory in Chicago, who fought the closure of their factory by taking it over. Now it is our turn.

To accomplish our goals we cannot rely on those groups which position themselves as our representatives. We are willing to work with unions and student associations when we find it useful, but we

do not recognize their authority. We must act on our own behalf directly, without mediation. We must break with any groups that seek to limit the struggle by telling us to go back to work or class, to negotiate, to reconcile. This was also the case in France. The original calls for protest were made by the national high school and university student associations and by some of the trade unions. Eventually, as the representative groups urged calm, others forged ahead. And in Greece the unions revealed their counter-revolutionary character by canceling strikes and calling for restraint.

As an alternative to being herded by representatives, we call on students and workers to organize themselves across trade lines. We urge undergraduates, teaching assistants, lecturers, faculty, service workers, and staff to begin meeting together to discuss their situation. The more we begin talking to one another and

finding our common interests, the more difficult it becomes for the administration to pit us against each other in a hopeless competition for dwindling resources. The recent struggles at NYU and the New School suffered from the absence of these deep bonds, and if there is a lesson to be learned from them it is that we must build dense networks of solidarity based upon the recognition of a shared enemy. These networks not only make us resistant to recuperation and neutralization, but also allow us to establish new kinds of collective bonds. These bonds are the real basis of our struggle.



We'll see you at the barricades. ✪

Occupy California

**We are occupying this building
at the University of California, Santa Cruz,
because the current situation has become untenable.**

Across the state, people are losing their jobs and getting evicted, while social services are slashed. California's leaders from state officials to university presidents have demonstrated how they will deal with this crisis: everything and everyone is subordinated to the budget. They insulate themselves from the consequences of their own fiscal mismanagement, while those who can least afford it are left shouldering the burden. Every solution on offer only accelerates the decay of the State of Cali-

fornia. It remains for the people to seize what is theirs.

The current attack on public education – under the guise of a fiscal emergency – is merely the culmination of a long-term trend. California's regressive tax structure has undermined the 1960 Master Plan for free education. In this climate, the quality of K-12 education and the performance of its students have declined by every metric. Due to cuts to classes in Community Colleges, over 50,000 California youth have been turned away from the doors of higher education. California State University will reduce its enrollment by 40,000 students system wide for 2010-2011. We stand in solidarity with students across the state because the same things are happening to us. At the University of California, the administration will raise student fees to an unprecedented \$10,300, a 32 percent increase in one year. Graduate students and lecturers return from summer vacation to find that their jobs have been cut; faculty and staff are forced to take furloughs. Entire departments are being gutted. Classes for undergraduates and graduates are harder to get into while students pay more. The university is being run like a corporation.

Let's be frank: the promise of a financially secure life at the end of a university education is fast becoming an illusion. The jobs we are working toward will be no better than the jobs we already have to pay our way through school. Close to three-quarters of students work, many full-time. Even with these jobs, student loan volume rose 800 percent from 1977 to 2003. There is a direct connection between these deteriorating conditions and those impacting workers and families throughout California. Two million peo-

ple are now unemployed across the state. 1.5 million more are underemployed out of a workforce of twenty million. As formerly secure, middle-class workers lose their homes to foreclosure, Depression-era shantytowns are cropping up across the state. The crisis is severe and widespread, yet the proposed solutions – the governor and state assembly organizing a bake sale to close the budget gap – are completely absurd.

We must face the fact that the time for pointless negotiations is over. Appeals to the UC administration and Sacramento are futile; instead, we appeal to each other, to the people with whom we are struggling, and not to those whom we struggle against. A single day of action at the university is not enough because we cannot afford to return to business as usual. We seek to form a unified movement with the people of California. Time and again, factional demands are turned against us by our leaders and used to divide social workers against teachers, nurses against students, librarians against park rangers, in a competition for resources they tell us are increasingly scarce. This crisis is general, and the revolt must be generalized. Escalation is absolutely necessary. We have no other option.

Occupation is a tactic for escalating struggles, a tactic recently used at the Chicago Windows and Doors factory and at the New School in New York City. It can happen throughout California too. As undergraduates, graduate students, faculty, and staff, we call on everyone at the UC to support this occupation by continuing the walkouts and strikes into tomorrow, the next day, and for the indefinite future. We call on the people of California to occupy and escalate. ✱

Electro Communist dance party
and banners outside the first
Santa Cruz occupation
of the fall.





Riot police guard the UC regents meeting in LA on November 17.

the beatings will continue

Should you make a move from protest to resistance, you will be brutalized, arrested, destroyed.

That is the message sent by the police attack upon two students outside the second UCSC occupation on October 15. Carrying a picnic table toward a building with the best intentions—to *wedge a stick into the maw of capital*—they were pepper-sprayed without warning. One of them, cuffed, arrested, and thrown in a cruiser, now faces suspension.

What could be less surprising? *There is no difference* between the treatment of these students by the cops and the treatment of all students by the administration. Our lives are permanently under attack, and the beatings will continue until we convert the crisis that we are into the gen-

eralized revolt we must become.

Why have students begun to barricade the doors of buildings that we claim as our own? To carve out material spaces of resistance and emancipation. That to do so requires us to make explicit the state of siege under which we live, to exteriorize the locks and chains by which it compels assent, teaches us that these emancipated spaces can only exist *outside the law, inside the barricades*. The students inside the building evaded arrest; the students outside the building were attacked and detained. *The spaces in which we are free are those that we take and hold by force*. That is the hard lesson we all have to learn.

Since some of us are learning it more quickly than others, let there be no end of generosity toward comrades who are punished for their courage rather than for their complacency. Our support for those willing to act will be material, immediate, and unyielding. Networks of mutual aid will be essential.

Though we have no interest in theatrical protests intended to court police crackdowns, we know that as the movement becomes more militant the brutality of the police and the punitive character of the administration will not cease to make itself evident. In the confrontation between property and people, the po-

lice are agents of property, poorly paid to protect the rights of things. As long as they refuse to act in solidarity with other exploited workers, they can only protect the sanctity of walls, dumpsters, and picnic tables while attacking anyone who might challenge the logic of their own exploitation. We must sustain our militancy in the face of their attacks and support those who are targeted.

This arrest is the first aimed at student resistance on UC campuses this year. We know there will be more. How could it be otherwise, so long as the absolute antagonism between oppression and resistance continues to clarify itself?

For the soldiers of property: nothing but contempt.

Demand nothing. Occupy everything.

Research & Destroy



The Necrosocial

Civic Life, Social Death, and the UC

Being president of the University of California is like being manager of a cemetery: there are many people under you, but no one is listening.

UC President Mark Yudof

Capital is dead labor which, vampire-like, lives only by sucking living labor.

Karl Marx

Politics is death that lives a human life.

Achille Mbembe

Yes, very much a cemetery. Only here there are no dirges, no prayers, only the repeated testing of our threshold for anxiety, humiliation, and debt. The classroom just like the workplace just like the university just like the state just like the economy manages our social death, translating what we once knew from high school, from work, from our family life into academic parlance, into acceptable forms of social conflict.

Who knew that behind so much civic life (electoral campaigns, student body representatives, bureaucratic administrators, public relations officials, Peace and Conflict Studies, *ad nauseam*) was so much social death? What postures we maintain to claim representation, what limits we assume, what desires we dismiss?

And in this moment of crisis they ask us to twist ourselves in a way that they can hear. Petitions to Sacramento, phone calls to Congressmen—even the chancellor patronizingly congratulates our September 24th student strike, shaping the meaning and the force of the movement as a movement against the policies of Sacramento. He expands his institutional authority to encompass the movement. When students begin to hold libraries over night, beginning to take our first baby step as an autonomous movement he reins us in by serendipitously announcing library money. He manages movement, he kills movement by funneling it into the electoral process. He manages our social

death. He looks forward to these battles on his terrain, to eulogize a proposition, to win this or that—he and his look forward to exhausting us.

He and his look forward to a reproduction of the logic of representative governance, the release valve of the university plunges us into an abyss where ideas are wisps of ether—that is, meaning is ripped from action. Let's talk about the fight endlessly, but always only in their managed form: to perpetually deliberate, the endless fleshing-out-of—when we push the boundaries of this form they are quick to reconfigure themselves to contain us: the chancellor's congratulations, the reopening of the libraries, the managed general assembly—there is no fight against the administration here, only its own extension.

Each day passes in this way, the administration on the look out to shape student discourse—it happens without pause, we don't notice nor do we care to. It becomes banal, thoughtless. So much so that we see we are accumulating days: one semester, two, how close to being this or that, how far? This accumulation is our shared history. This accumulation—every once in a while interrupted, violated by a riot, a wild protest, unforgettable fucking, the overwhelming joy of love, life shattering heartbreak—is a muted, but desirous life. A dead but restless and desirous life.

The university steals and homogenizes our time yes, our bank accounts also, but

it also steals and homogenizes meaning. As much as capital is invested in building a killing apparatus abroad, an incarceration apparatus in California, it is equally invested here in an apparatus for managing social death. Social death is, of course, simply the power source, the generator, of *civic life* with its talk of reform, responsibility, unity. A 'life,' then, which serves

and reality can be separated; which everywhere reproduces the empty reactionary behavior of students based on the values of life (identity), liberty (electoral politics), and happiness (private property). Everywhere the same whimsical ideas of the future. *Everywhere democracy*. Everywhere discourse to shape our desires and distress in a way acceptable to the electoral state,

As much as capital is invested in building a killing apparatus abroad, an incarceration apparatus in California, it is equally invested here in an apparatus for managing social death.

merely as the public relations mechanism for death: its garrulous slogans of freedom and democracy designed to obscure the shit and decay in which our feet are planted. Yes, the university is a graveyard, but it is also a factory: a factory of meaning which produces civic life and at the same time produces social death. A factory which produces the illusion that meaning

discourse designed to make our very moments here together into a set of legible and fruitless demands.

Totally managed death. A machine for administering death, for the proliferation of technologies of death. As elsewhere, things rule. Dead objects rule. In this sense, it matters little what face one puts on the university—whether Yudof or

some other lackey. These are merely the personifications of the rule of the dead, the pools of investments, the buildings, the flows of materials into and out of the physical space of the university—each one the product of some exploitation—which seek to absorb more of our work, more tuition, more energy. The university is a machine which wants to grow, to accumulate, to expand, to absorb more and more of the living into its peculiar and perverse machinery: high-tech research centers, new stadiums and office complexes. And at this critical juncture the only way it can continue to grow is by more intense exploitation, higher tuition, austerity measures for the departments that fail to pass the test of ‘relevancy.’

But the ‘irrelevant’ departments also have their place. With their ‘pure’ motives of knowledge for its own sake, they perpetuate the blind inertia of meaning ostensibly detached from its social context. As the university cultivates its cozy relationship with capital, war and power, these discourses and research programs play their own role, co-opting and containing radical potential. And so we attend lecture after lecture about how ‘discourse’ produces ‘subjects,’ ignoring the most obvious fact that we ourselves are produced by this discourse about discourse which leaves us believing that it is only words which matter, words about words which matter. The university gladly permits the precautionary lectures on biopower; on the production of race and gender; on the reification and the fetishization of commodities. A taste of the poison serves well to inoculate us against any confrontational radicalism. And all the while power weaves the invisible nets which contain and neutralize all thought and action, that bind revolution inside books, lecture halls.

There is no need to speak truth to power when power already speaks the truth. The university is a graveyard—*así es*. The graveyard of liberal good intentions, of meritocracy, opportunity, equality, democracy. Here the tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. We graft our flesh, our labor, our debt to the skeletons of this or that social cliché. In seminars and lectures and essays, we pay tribute to the university’s ghosts, the ghosts of all those it has excluded—the immiserated, the incarcerated, the just-plain-fucked. They are summoned forth and banished

by a few well-meaning phrases and research programs, given their book titles, their citations. This is our gothic—we are so morbidly aware, we are so practiced at stomaching horror that the horror is thoughtless.

In this graveyard our actions will never touch, will never become the conduits of a movement, if we remain permanently barricaded within prescribed identity categories—our force will be dependent on the limited spaces of recognition built between us. Here we are at odds with one another socially, each of us: students,

private wet dream for the future; everywhere, in everyone this same dream of domination. After all, we are intelligent, studious, young. *We worked hard to be here, we deserve this.*

We are convinced, owned, broken. We know their values better than they do: *life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness*. This triumvirate of sacred values are ours of course, and in this moment of practiced theater—the fight between the university and its own students—we have used their words on their stages: Save public education!

When those values are violated by the

their new terms as well as *what was always dead* in the university, to see just how dead we are willing to play, how non-existent, how compliant, how desirous.

Every institution has of course our best interest in mind, so much so that we’re willing to pay, to enter debt contracts, to strike a submissive pose in the classroom, in the lab, in the seminar, in the dorm, and eventually or simultaneously in the workplace to pay back those debts. Each bulging institutional value longing to become more than its sentiment through us, each of our empty gestures of feigned-anxiety

Social death is our banal acceptance of an institution’s meaning for our own lack of meaning. It’s the positions we thoughtlessly enact. It’s the particular nature of being owned.

faculty, staff, homebums, activists, police, chancellors, administrators, bureaucrats, investors, politicians, faculty/ staff/ homebums/ activists/ police/ chancellors/ administrators/ bureaucrats/ investors/ politicians-to-be. That is, we are students, or students of color, or queer students of color, or faculty, or Philosophy Faculty, or Gender and Women Studies faculty, or we are custodians, or we are shift leaders—each with our own office, place, time, and given meaning. We form teams, clubs, fraternities, majors, departments, schools, unions, ideologies, identities, and subcultures—and thankfully each group gets its own designated burial plot. Who doesn’t participate in this graveyard?

In the university we prostrate ourselves before a value of separation, which in reality translates to a value of domination. We spend money and energy trying to convince ourselves we’re brighter than everyone else. Somehow, we think, we possess some trait that means we deserve more than everyone else. We have measured ourselves and we have measured others. It should never feel terrible ordering others around, right? It should never feel terrible to diagnose people as an expert, manage them as a bureaucrat, test them as a professor, extract value from their capital as a businessman. It should feel good, gratifying, completing. It is our

very institutions which are created to protect them, the veneer fades, the tired set collapses: and we call it injustice, we get *indignant*. We demand justice *from them, for them* to adhere to their values. What many have learned again and again is that these institutions don’t care for those values, not at all, not for all. *And we are only beginning to understand that those values are not even our own.*

The values create popular images and ideals (healthcare, democracy, equality, happiness, individuality, pulling yourself up by your bootstraps, public education) while they mean in practice the selling of commodified identities, the state’s monopoly on violence, the expansion of markets and capital accumulation, the rule of property, the rule of exclusions based on race, gender, class, and domination and humiliation in general. They sell the practice through the image. We’re taught we’ll live the images once we accept the practice.

In this crisis the Chancellors and Presidents, the Regents and the British Petroleum, the politicians and the managers, they all intend to be true to their values and capitalize on the university economically and socially—which is to say, nothing has changed, it is only an escalation, a provocation. Their most recent attempt to reorganize wealth and capital is called a crisis so that we are more willing to accept

to appear under pressure, or of cool-ambivalence to appear accustomed to horror, every moment of student life, is the management of our consent to social death.

Social death is our banal acceptance of an institution’s meaning for our own lack of meaning. It’s the positions we thoughtlessly enact. It’s the particular nature of being owned.

Social rupture is the initial divorce between the owners and the owned.

A social movement is a function of war. War contains the ability to create a new frame, to build a new tension for the agents at play, new dynamics in the battles both for the meaning and the material. When we move without a return to their tired meaning, to their tired configurations of the material, we are engaging in war.

It is November 2009. For an end to the values of social death we need ruptures and self-propelled, unmanaged movements of wild bodies. We need, we desire occupations. We are an antagonistic dead.

Talk to your friends, take over rooms, take over as many of these dead buildings. We will find one another. 🌿

Life and death are not properly scientific concepts but rather political concepts, which as such acquire a political meaning precisely only through a decision.

Giorgio Agamben



Carter-Huggins Hall

Occupation Statement



On 19 November at approximately 12:30AM students occupied Campbell Hall at UCLA. The time has come for us to make a statement and issue our demands. In response to this injunction we say: we will ask nothing. We will demand nothing. We will take, we will occupy. We have to learn not to tip toe through a space which ought by right to belong to everyone.

We are under no illusions. The UC Regents will vote the budget cuts and raise student fees. The profoundly undemocratic nature of their decision making process, and their indifference to the plight of those who struggle to afford an education or keep their jobs, can come as no surprise.

We know the crisis is systemic - and that it reaches beyond the Regents, beyond the criminal budget cuts in Sacramento, beyond the economic crisis, to the very foundations of our society. But we also know that the enormity of the problem is just as often an excuse for doing nothing.

We choose to fight back, to resist, where we find ourselves, the place where we live and work, our university.

We therefore ask that those who share in our struggle lend us not only their sympathy but their active support. For those

students who work two or three jobs while going to school, to those parents for whom the violation of the UC charter means the prospect of affordable education remains out of reach, to laid off teachers, lecturers, to students turned away, to workers who've seen the value of their diplomas evaporate in an economy that 'grows' without pro-

We are determined that the struggle should spread. That is the condition in which the realization of our demands becomes possible.

ducing jobs - to all these people and more besides, we say that our struggle is your struggle, that an alternative is possible if you have the courage to seize it.

We are determined that the struggle should spread. That is the condition in which the realization of our demands becomes possible.

To our peaceful demonstration, to our occupation of our own university, we know the University will respond with the full force of the police at its command. We hear the helicopters circle above us. We intend to learn and to teach through our occupation, humbly but with determination. We are not afraid. We are not going anywhere. ✱

Post-Occupation Statement

written in response to student-leader recuperation at Campbell Hall

A certain small group of students is doing what it can to slander the occupation that occurred at Campbell Hall. Cinthia Flores, a junior politician careerist bent on control, has helped to spread rumors that the occupation was carried out by mostly "older white males." This rumor is absolutely without truth - the occupation was in fact planned and carried out by more minority students than whites -- but is that important anyway?

The building was liberated and barricaded to keep the police and administration out while opening the space for student and youth autonomy. The building remained porous and was in fact, for the first time ever, under complete autonomous student discretion. Prior to the final meeting which destroyed the occupation, a rush of students had come in to the building creating an incredible energy of activity, excitement and anticipation. Friends were made, the building re-dec-

orated, and the bathrooms were declared gender-neutral: while there was a general feeling of defeat on the outside from the day's protest, inside Carter-Huggins Hall there was a revolution.

A meeting was called to discuss the occupation and was held in the building's stairwell. It was derailed by student leader saboteurs who were threatened by the autonomy granted to students by the liberated space. It was and remains a concern that the building chosen for occupation provides services to minority students (whom the saboteurs condescendingly view as societal handicaps). Well, this concern is actually quite ridiculous - the space was opened to all students and youth regardless of their status as UCLA customers, and for 24-hours too, without the old hourly limitations of the building under university control. It is important to check race, class and privilege, we don't deny this, but this is not what went on - the meeting devolved

into mere race-baiting in an attempt by the saboteurs to take power of the occupied building. And they succeeded.

The student government leader, Cinthia, left the meeting 1/2 way through after using all of her time inside to change the positive horizontality of the building in to a hostile-bureaucracy. On her way out of the building Cinthia desecrated the legacy of Bunchy Carter and John Huggins by tearing down for the second time the banner declaring the hall Carter-Huggins Hall. After she tore down the banner, it was brought to our attention that she and her cronies had earlier sabotaged an attempt at direct action by a separate autonomous student group. The group had planned for months to storm the regents meeting at Covell Commons. Cinthia and her gang of movement-police linked arms in *defense* of the regents meeting, taking a load off the police, and thwarted the student group from rushing in to Covell.

These so-called student leaders swear they know the correct and objective form of protest. There is no respect for a multiplicity of tactics. By the time of the meeting, power had already been taken away from the university without asking permission from administrators or student leaders (are these even different categories?) and was redistributed horizontally. Unfortunately this freedom brings about the possibility of usurpation by those used to power, used to hanging above everyone from their ivory tower. These people thrive on the status quo, its their realm, and they always want to drag back those who escape.

There are Cinthias everywhere who make up and direct the movement-police to be encountered at any site of struggle. Occupation takes power and immediately destroys its concentrated form. Beware of bureaucrats, occupy everything! ✱

NOVEMBER 18, 19 UCLA
clashes outside of Regents Meetings



From November 17-19, the UC Regents met at UCLA to vote on a proposed 32% student fee increase. Thousands gathered on campus from across the state to protest the fee-hike and to confront the Regents. The brutality of the police response was matched by the militancy of the protesters. Students were tasered and cudgeled; eighteen were arrested. As the occupation of Carter-Huggins hall continued throughout the day on north campus, the crowd outside the Regents meeting surrounded the building, overturned police barricades, chased the heavily-guarded Regents back to their cars, and blocked streets around campus. The rage and resistance manifest at UCLA set the tone for a week of direct action across the state.



The occupation attempt of the A & E building is aborted when Edward Denton, Vice Chancellor of Facilities Services, hides in his office and locks the door. After entering the building, police detain the occupiers for an hour before citing and releasing them.

no capital projects but the end of capital

The University of California is occupied. It is occupied as is the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna, and the Technical Institute of Graz; as were the New School, Faculty of Humanities in Zagreb and the Athens Polytechnic. These are not the first; they will not be the last. Neither is this a student movement; echoing the factory occupations of Argentina and Chicago, immigrant workers occupy forty buildings in Paris, including the Centre Pompidou. There is still life inside capital's museum.

We send our first greetings to each of these groups, in solidarity. We stand with

zation as an act. This antagonism cannot be negotiated out of existence. We make no demands but the most basic one: that our collective life shall admit no owner.

Whoever has watched the disease of privatization, precaritization, and financialization spread through the University of California will not fail to recognize it as the plague of neoliberalism insinuating itself into every corner of the globe, every minute of our lives. In the most recent revelation, we have discovered the obscene student fee increases are being used not for education but as collateral for credit

versity community (save them, of course) must join the nation and the world in its immiseration, must be battered equally by a nightmare economy built on real human lives. We say to them: if you summon forth such solidarity, do not be surprised when its power escapes you.

The arriving freshman is treated as a mortgage, and the fees are climbing. She is a future revenue stream, and the bills are growing. She is security for a debt she never chose, and the cost is staggering. Her works and days are already promised away to raise up buildings that may

The arriving freshman is treated as a mortgage, and the fees are climbing.
She is a future revenue stream, and the bills are growing.
She is security for a debt she never chose, and the cost is staggering.

everybody who finds themselves in a building today because they have chosen to be, because they have liberated it from its supposed owners — whether for the hint of freedom's true taste, or out of desperate social and political necessity.

This declaration and this action begin with contempt for those who would use their powers to cordon off education, cordon off our shared world, those who would build "opportunity" on the backs of others who must inevitably be exploited. This is why it begins here in this building with its Capital Projects, its Real Estate Services, its obscenely named Office of Sustainability — it begins in the corridors of accumulation, the core of the logic that privileges buildings over people. But it also begins with love for those who would refuse such enclosures, who are committed to the deed rather than the petition, who are committed to *deprivati-*

operations and building projects. This is the Regents' will. If bonds aren't repaid, the fees — that is, our days and years of work, extending into an empty future — must be used for repayment.

There is a grotesque irony to this. Student fees are being securitized and repackaged exactly like the toxic assets that triggered the latest economic collapse. Four years ago it was subprime mortgages; now it is "subprime education," as Ananya Roy says. The very strategies and schemes that bankrupted millions of lives, and that showed the bankruptcy of the economic sphere — it is to these that the university has turned for its salvation, *even after such strategies failed spectacularly*. The Regents reveal themselves not simply to be dishonest, venal, and indifferent; they are too stupid to learn the most basic lessons of recent history. Or perhaps this is their idea of solidarity: that all members of the uni-

contribute nothing to her education, and that she may not be allowed to use — buildings in which others will work for less than a living wage, at peril of no wage at all. This is the truth of the lives of students, the lives of workers (often one and the same). This is the truth of the relation between them and the buildings of the university, in the eyes of the Regents and the Office of the President.

No building will be safe from occupation while this is the case. No capital project but the project to end capital. We call for further occupations, to pry our buildings and our lives from its grip. We call for a different university, and a different society in which this university is embedded. We call for a different relation between lives and buildings. We do so freely. *We are the power.* ✨

anti-capital projects

Action Timeline

2009

UC-WIDE ONE DAY STRIKE

System-wide walkout and strike carried out by faculty, students, and staff is the largest coordinated protest in UC history

Students and faculty at UC Berkeley walkout of classes and many workers go on strike to hold a 5,000 person rally on Sproul Plaza

Demonstrations take place in UCLA

The Graduate Student Commons at UC Santa Cruz is occupied for a week

Thousands attend rallies at campuses across the UC system

UC Regents grant UC President Yudof "emergency powers" and approve furlough plan and executive pay increases for two dozen senior administrators

Car burns near UC President Yudof's home in the Oakland hills

New School in Exile occupies campus building

UC Regents approve 9 percent fee hike

CSU Trustees approve 10 percent fee hike

CSU Trustees approve 20 percent fee hike

UC Interim Provost Lawrence Pitts letter specifies that furloughs cannot be taken on instructional days

• April 10

• May 7

• May 13

• July 16

• July 20

• August 20

• August 21

• **September 24**

UC-WIDE THREE DAY STRIKE BEGINS

At UC Santa Cruz the entrances to campus are shutdown by demonstrators and 500 Students occupy the Kresge Town Hall

At UC Berkeley 2000 people demonstrate and march

At UCLA 14 students are arrested scuffling with the police and some blockade and disrupt Regents Meeting

At San Francisco State University hundreds of students march and hold a sit-in in the administration building

500 Students walk out at City College of San Francisco

Attempted occupation of the Architects & Engineers (Capital Projects) Building at UC Berkeley

A study-in at the UC Berkeley anthropology library keeps the library open through Saturday, when it was supposed to be closed due to budget cuts. Students announce another study-in for the next week

Students at UC Santa Cruz occupy the Humanities 2 Buildings for a period of several hours. They leave before sunrise. Pepper-spray is used against students, two are arrested

An organizing conference at UC Berkeley with over 500 participants chooses March 4th as a Statewide Strike and Day of Action for public education

40 students at CSU Fullerton hold open occupation in Pollak Library

UC Berkeley administration announces that they have found necessary funding to keep libraries open on Saturdays

CSU Fresno has a demonstration with 600 people and holds a sit-in in the library

Students at UC Santa Cruz hold a study-in at the Science & Engineering Library keeping the library open through Saturday

UC Regents begin to meet at UCLA to discuss fee increases, cuts and layoffs

• September 29

• October 9

• October 14

• October 18

• October 21

• October 24

• November 13

• November 17

• **November 18**

• **November 19**

• **November 20**

• November 21

• November 23

• November 24

• December 5

• December 6

• December 7

• December 9

• December 11

• December 17

UC Regents approve 32 percent fee hike

Students at UCLA occupy Campbell Hall & rename it Carter-Huggins Hall, after two Black Panthers murdered in the building in 1969, 2 are arrested

Students at UC Santa Cruz occupy a second building, Kerr Hall, the main administrative building. This occupation lasts for 4 days.

Students at UC Davis occupy Mrak Hall, the main administration building, 52 are arrested

75 march in New York City in solidarity with occupied California disrupting traffic on 5th avenue

Open occupation held at Dutton hall at UC Davis

About 100 students enter and occupy the library at CSU Fresno overnight

Wheeler Hall at UC Berkeley is occupied early in the morning. Numerous clashes between students and police. 41 students are arrested, cited and released. Another 3 students arrested earlier that day

Students at CSU Fresno hold another library sit-in that lasts until the next morning

Students at UC Irvine surround Aldrich Hall, 1 student arrested

Open occupation of Mrak Hall at UC Davis forces administrative concessions to three demands

Students in Vienna, Austria march on US embassy to protest police brutality on California campuses

100 students stage a sit-in in the lobby of the UC Office of the President in downtown Oakland

In response to the public announcement of library occupation at UC Irvine, administrators decide to open the library

Protesters carrying banner reading "Hella Occupy" rally in front of CSU Stanislaus President Hamid Shirvani's house

Live Week begins at UC Berkeley. Wheeler Hall is renamed Freeler Hall, doors remain open

30-40 students at San Francisco State University occupy the Business Building, and rename it Oscar Grant Memorial Hall after a 22 year old black man who was shot and killed by Bay Area Rapid Transit police almost a year ago. Police enter the following day at 4am, arresting 23 occupiers and 10 outside protesters, some who were blocking police vehicles from taking occupiers away.

Police enter Freeler Hall at 4:30am, and arrest 66 sleeping occupiers without giving a dispersal warning. That evening, a hip-hop show is held off-campus and 70-80 people carrying torches march to the Chancellor's mansion, where some property is destroyed. 8 people are arrested randomly for felony charges.

UC Berkeley holds secret student conduct hearing of one student, a Berkeley undergrad, arrested at Chancellor's house. 60 students, faculty, workers, and family members gather outside to protest.

links

- A CRISIS OF PRIORITIES
http://ucpay.globl.org/crisis_of_priorities.php/
- ANTI-CAPITAL PROJECTS
<http://anticapitalprojects.wordpress.com/>
- A UNIVERSITY WITHOUT STUDENTS
<http://aucwithoutstudents.wordpress.com/>
- THE IMAGINARY COMMITTEE
<http://theimaginarycommittee.wordpress.com/>
- INDYBAY ON EDUCATION
<http://indybay.org/education/>
- LA VENTANA COLLECTIVE
<http://ventanacollective.blogspot.com/>
- LIKE LOST CHILDREN
<http://likelostchildren.blogspot.com/>
- LIVE WEEK
<http://liveweek.net/>
- NEW SCHOOL REOCCUPIED
<http://reoccupied.wordpress.com/>
- OCCUPY CALIFORNIA
<http://occupyca.wordpress.com/>
- OCCUPY SFSU
<http://occupysfsu.wordpress.com/>
- OCCUPY UCI
<http://occupyuci.wordpress.com/>
- OUR UNIVERSITY
<http://ouruniversity.wordpress.com/>
- REBEL RADIO
<http://ucrebelradio.wordpress.com/>
- RECLAMATIONS
<http://reclamationsjournal.org/>
- RECLAIM UC
<http://reclaimuc.blogspot.com/>
- RESEARCH AND DESTROY
<http://researchanddestroy.wordpress.com/>
- THEY PLEDGED YOUR TUITION (Bob Meister)
http://www.cucfa.org/news/tuition_bonds.php
- UC SOLIDARITY
<http://www.ucsolidarity.org/>
- UC STRIKE
<http://www.ucstrike.com/>
- UNCIVIL PROCEDURE
<http://uncivpro.com/>
- UNIVERSITY PROBE
<http://universityprobe.org/>
- WE ARE THE CRISIS
<http://wearethecrisis.blogspot.com/>
- WE WANT EVERYTHING
<http://wewanteverything.wordpress.com/>

further reading

- Behind the Privatization of the UC, a Riot Squad of Police Occupy Everything!*
by George Ciccariello-Maher
COUNTERPUNCH
- Berkeley Law Student Statement of Public Education, Struggle, and Silencing Dissent.*
UNCIVPRO.COM
- Berkeley Student Advocate's Office Report on Wheeler Hall*
STUDENTACTIVISM.NET
- Chancellor Birgeneau Must Be Held Accountable for Violence Against Students*
by Yaman Salahi
YAMANSALAH.COM
- Communiqués from the Valley: New pamphlet on Student Struggle in the Central Valley*
MODESTOANARCHO.ORG
- How America's Universities Became Hedge Funds*
by Bob Samuels
HUFFINGTON POST
- Letter from an Anonymous Friend*
ANTICAPITALPROJECTS.WORDPRESS.COM
- Overview of Education Protests 2009*
EMANCIPATING-EDUCATION-FOR-ALL.ORG
- Solidarity Statements*
OCCUPYCA.WORDPRESS.COM/PRESS-SOLIDARITY
- The Emptiness of Liberal Morality:
Or Why Non-Violence Discourse is So Destructive*
UNCIVPRO.COM
- Torchlit Evening with Birgeneau*
by some undisciplined pupils
INDYBAY.ORG
- Wheeler Hall Info Packet*
ZINELIBRARY.INFO
- Where Does UC Tuition Go*
by Bob Meister
RECLAMATIONS



Anti-Capital Projects Questions & Answers

NOVEMBER 18 UC BERKELEY

Why Occupation?

Why occupation? Why barricades? Why would an emancipatory movement, one which seeks to unchain people from debt and compulsory labor, chain the doors of a building? Why would a group of people who deplore a university increasingly barricaded against would-be entrants itself erect barricades? This is the paradox: the space of UC Berkeley, open at multiple points, traversed by flows of students and teachers and workers, is open in appearance only. At root, as a social form, it is closed: closed to the majority of young people in this country by merit of the logic of class and race and citizenship; closed to the underpaid workers who enter only to clean the floors or serve meals in the dining commons; closed, as politics, to

those who question its exclusions or answer with more than idle protest.

To occupy a building, to lock it down against the police, is therefore to subtract ourselves, as much as possible, from the protocols and rules and property relations which govern us, which determine who goes where, and when, and how. To close it down means to open it up – to annul its administration by a cruel and indifferent set of powers, in order that those of us inside (and those who join us) can determine, freely and of our own volition, how and for whom it is to be used. *The university is already occupied—occupied by capital and the state and its autocratic regime of “emergency powers.”* Of course, taking over a building is simply the first step, since our real target is not this or that edifice but a system of social relations. If possible, once this space has been fully emancipated, once

we successfully defend ourselves against the police and administrators who themselves defend, mercilessly, the inegalitarian protocols of the university, the rule of the budget and its calculated exclusions, then we can open the doors to all who wish to join us, we can come and go freely and let others take our place in determining how the space is used. But we stand no chance of doing so under police watch, having sat down in the building with the doors open, ready to get dragged out five or six hours or a day later. Once our numbers are sufficient to hold a space indefinitely, then we can dispense with locks.

Our goal is straightforward: to broadcast from this space the simple truth that, *yes, it is possible* to take what was never yours, *yes, it is possible* for workers to take over their workplaces in the face of mass layoffs; for communities where two-thirds

of the houses stand empty, foreclosed by banks swollen with government largesse, to take over those houses and give them to all who need a place to live. It is not just possible; as the current arrangement of things becomes evermore incapable of providing for us, it is necessary. We are guided by a simple maxim: *omnia sunt communia*, everything belongs to everybody, as a famous heretic once said. This is the only property of things which we respect.

If possible, we will use this space as a staging ground for the generalization of this principle, here and elsewhere, a staging ground for the occupation of another building, and another, and another, for the continuation of the strike and its extension beyond the university. Then we can decide not *what we want* but *what we will do*. If we fail this time, if we fall short, so be it. The call will remain.

Why Now?

It is true that the upcoming vote at the Regents meeting – an almost certain ratification of the 32% fee increase proposed by Mark Yudof and the UC Office of the President – is merely the latest in a long litany of insults and injuries. But it is also the moment where the truth of the UC is undeniable, where its ostensible difference from the violence of the larger society vanishes. The hijacking of student fee money for construction bonds tells, in capsule form, the larger story of our enchainment to debt: credit card and mortgage debt, student loans we will spend our lifetime paying off.

We want students to see this increase for what it is: a form of exploitation, a pay cut from future wages at a time when widespread unemployment already puts

those wages in jeopardy. Let's be honest: aside from all its decorations, university study is a form of job training. We pay now in order to attain a better wage in the future. It is *an investment*. But the crisis of the university and the crisis of employment means that, for many, the amount they pay for a degree will far exceed the benefits accrued. We could, at the very least, conclude that it is a *bad investment*.

But stepping back for a minute, what would it mean to restore the public university to its former glory as an engine of class mobility, as a sound investment in the future? It would mean the restoration of a system which, while ensuring that some individuals, here and there, ascend the rungs, also ensures that the rungs themselves remain immovable. The best we can hope for is that *different people will get fucked next time*. There is no es-

cape from this fact. The university can't be made accessible to all without the absolute devaluation of a university degree. To save the university means to save poverty, pure and simple. *It means to save a system in which some people study and some people clean the floors.* . . . The same goes for the entirety of the education system – there is no way to reduce the inequality in K-12 education without a total transformation of society. The schools are designed to produce this inequality. If they were equally funded and equally administered and we still lived in a class society, then the education received there would be meaningless as a claim on future livelihood. *There has to be an underclass*. This is the truth of education. And it is the one thing we are supposed to never learn in school, the one thing which, despite all the gestures of solidarity, divides

the campus student movement from the most exploited university workers.

This is why we must seize these spaces – spaces that were never ours – and put them to new uses. If there is any value to the university it is its centrality as a point of transmission, an instrument of contagion, in which struggle is broadcast, amplified, and communicated to the society at large. If we achieve this or that reform along the way – save wages and salaries, lower fees – this will make us happy. We understand how meaningful such achievements are for the people who work and study here. But we also understand how meaningless they are for the society at large. Sometimes saving the university is a stop on the way to destroying it. There is no insoluble contradiction, then, between us and the larger movement. We are one face of it.



More messages left at UC Berkeley on November 18, 19, & 20.

Why No Demands?

First, because anything we might win now would be too insignificant. Countless times past student struggles have worked months and years – striking and occupying buildings and mobilizing thousands upon thousands of people – only to win back half of what they had already lost, a half that was again taken away one or two years later. But in any case, we are as yet far too small to win anything on a scale remotely close to the mildest of demands – a reduction or freeze of student fees, an end to the layoffs and furloughs. Even these demands would mean only a return to the status quo of last year or the year before – inadequate by any but the most cowardly measure. If we set our horizons higher – free education, a maximum salary differential of, for instance, 3 or 5, a university managed by faculty and students and workers – then we must realize, immediately, that nothing short of full-scale insurrection could ever achieve this. And if we were strong enough to bring the existing order tumbling down around us, why would we stop short and settle for the foregoing list?

The process of negotiation – the settlement of demands – is a dangerous one for a movement. It often signals its death. We have no illusions about this. We understand that, if we were to become powerful enough, and if we remained steadfast in our refusal of all negotiation or settlement, someone, some group, would step

in and begin negotiating for us. There is no avoiding that. Once we become a threat, then the bargaining will begin. If the first or second set of demands seems a worthy terminus, then we have a piece of advice. Become a threat first. You just might win something. But you'll never become a threat by determining to fight over the crumbs.

The whole theory of demands as it currently exists seems to rest upon a fundamental misconception. The demand is never really addressed to the existing powers. They can't hear us – everyone knows that. And, in any case, they've never responded to petitions or requests, only force. The real addressee of the demand is on our side, not theirs. A demand defines those who utter it; it sets the limits of the struggle, determining who is and who is not in solidarity with a given fight. And such demands are, invariably, bound to exclude some party or group. We recognize, of course, that they can be useful in this respect – useful as a means to constitute and unify body in struggle, but this body can only be partial, fragmentary, divided from further support. Some groups attempt to get around this problem by making their demands an eclectic laundry-list, but such solutions always end in absurdity. This is why we make no demands. Because we want to be in solidarity with all who are oppressed and exploited. We will not say who they are in advance. They will define themselves by rising up and standing with us.

Why This Building?

Well, it's perfect, isn't it? As the UC levies students with ever-steeper fees and drives workers further into poverty in order to continue with its inglorious expansion – football stadiums, high-tech research centers, new administrative buildings, \$1.35 billion in new construction during a supposed crisis – we can see no better target than one of the nerve centers of this strategy of accumulation, one of the routing points of this logic which privileges buildings over people. *Capital Projects indeed.* Even if the university is not, in a strict sense, profit-seeking like a capitalist corporation, the leveraged transformation of ever-greater levels of personal debt into new buildings, the congealation of our living activity into dead matter designed to react back upon us, to become the newest labyrinth of our unfreedom, is nothing less than a little blazon of the *project of capital* itself: capital which is nothing if it is not growth, expansion, multiplication, investment, and which continues along this path without the slightest regard for human needs. This is no less true of the UC, which will grow and build at any cost. Any growth is good growth, as

the front page of the Wall Street Journal tells us. Gross Domestic Product knows no qualities. A pile of guns is the same, to it, as a pile of anti-malarial drugs. It is a system which *must grow or die*, which requires more and more resources and energy, more and more workers, regardless of what this work is doing. This is why no patchwork of reforms and technology and consumer morality could ever address the growing ecological crisis – a crisis, at base, of a system which knows no limits. And so we take our stand here, at the Office of Sustainability, Real Estate Services, Capital Projects. We will not create more of what people do not need. Not today. Here, in this building which coordinates the acquisition of property and the optimization of real estate assets, we refuse to be subordinate to the logic of accumulation. And we call upon all of those in solidarity with us to take over other spaces on campus, in their communities, to take over their workplaces, to refuse the rule of things, the rule of dead matter. It is easy enough. Countless buildings lie ready for the taking. We can, all together, chant *Whose university? Our university!* And we can really mean it. 🌿



NOVEMBER 20 UC BERKELEY
occupation of Wheeler Hall

a call to the future

FROM IN AND AROUND OCCUPIED WHEELER

On Friday, Nov. 20th, a brilliant revelation appeared on UC Berkeley campus. Students and workers on this campus held true to their aging chants and actually stood up and fought back. Mocking the days preceding where apathy seemed to reign on campus, when we forced ourselves to mutter **“Whose University? Our University,”** while shuffling along and doing our duty as concerned citizens, for once, in and around occupied Wheeler we really meant it.

The fight inside Wheeler Hall by the occupiers in order to win their four demands translated into an incredible show of solidarity outside the building. We linked arms with once strangers, surrounded all exits and went as far as to build barricades two buildings away, to prevent the imprisonment of our friends via underground passageways. For 12 hours we shone light on a new horizon in this struggle. The occupiers inside were fighting for us and we were outside fighting for them and for the first time in decades thousands on our campus stood together taking direct action, not passively listening to speakers at a rally and not marching in circles.

The spontaneous organization outside of Wheeler has been criticized for being exactly that, but here we would like to commend it. We saw lines be redistributed to maintain three-deep levels, people dispatching themselves to watch-out for police movements and to bring food and water to those at the barricades. The words “solidarity” and “democracy” have been thrown around and emptied out for far too long. At the Wheeler Occupation we put action back into solidarity and we voted with our raised fists not with raised

hands. Ultimately, while we did not win any of the four demands from inside of the occupation, the demand from the multitudes outside was victorious as our friends emerged from the building without cuffs to join us.

Of course the police responded, but we need to make one thing clear: at the Wheeler Occupation we were not victims. Yes we had our fingers smashed and yes we did survive the police batons and rubber bullets but more importantly we stood our ground and did not back down. We provided a glimpse of what is possible when we are united in action and not divided by sectarianism of ideology or rank.

Speaking of sectarianism, at the Wheeler Occupation there were a considerable number of the Cal faculty and others on the higher levels of the university food chain who stood shoulder to shoulder with us and they must be commended for their courage. On the other hand some of the more prominent figures continued to enforce their authority and attempted to talk the occupiers inside into surrendering and those outside into sitting down or leaving. To these faculty, officials in the student government and student organiz-

ers we ask that you shed these positions of power and join us horizontally the next time we take action.

Some have criticized our actions on the grounds of depriving students of their sacred class time. Let’s not pretend that education is about robotically copying equations from the blackboard or regurgitating facts on the midterm or final. While this atomized education might have been disrupted for one day, a collective learning experience, far more educational in all respects, was provided to all at Berkeley. This is something to cherish and further, not to shun. In struggling together we learn deeper than in any classroom curriculum.

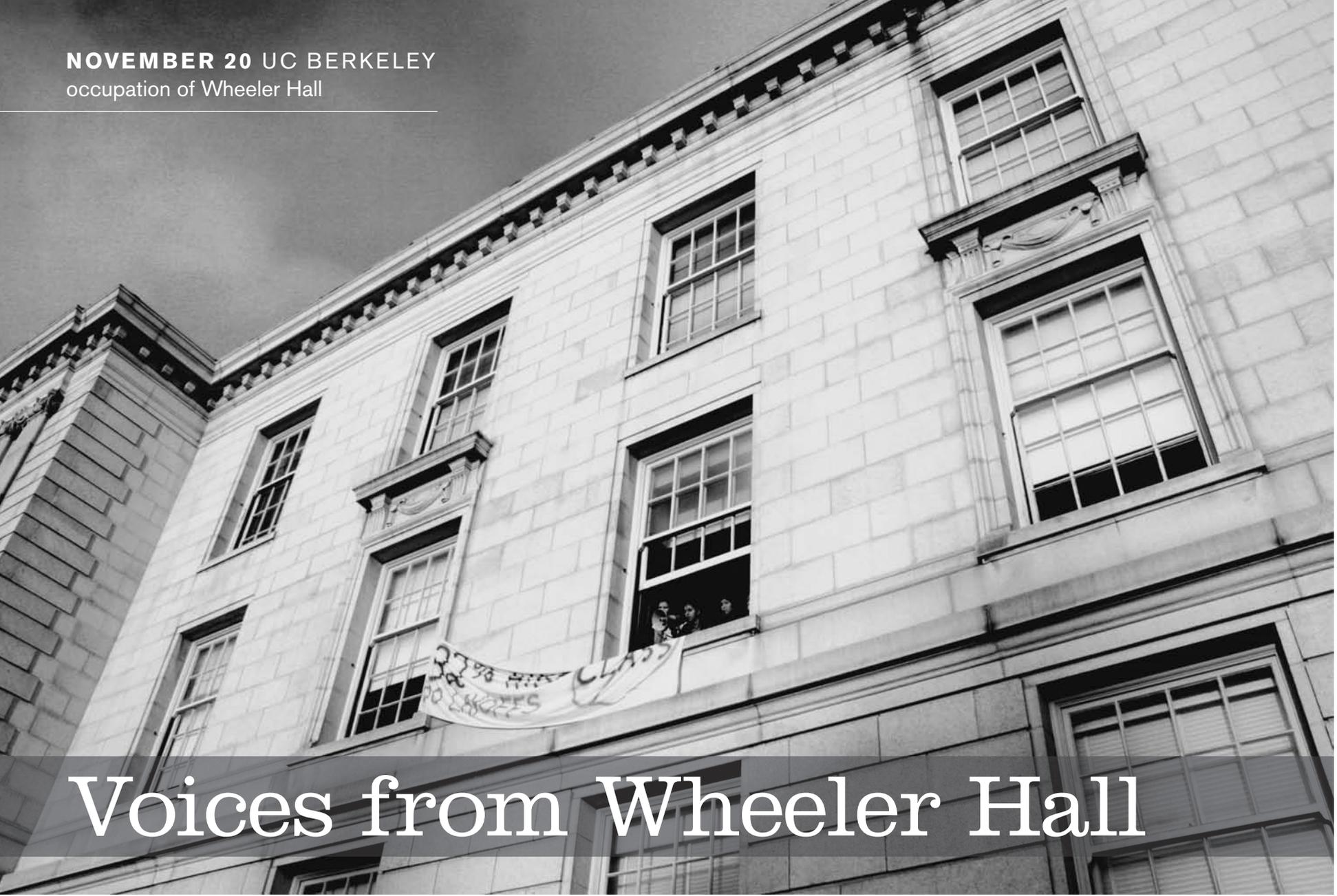
November 20th was a learning experience in how effective we can be if we stand together. We are not looking for a return to the status quo before this latest financial crisis. The privatization of the university did not start over the summer, it has been implemented for decades and this latest crisis is seen as an opportunity for its furtherance. Although the defunding of public education must be challenged, appeals to Sacramento for more cash will not reverse the activities of the current and past corrupt administrations.

Nor will it abolish the prison industrial complex, which stands in stark contrast to public education in terms of funding. There is a deep systemic problem that goes farther than UC Berkeley. Austerity measures of the kind being implemented on this campus are also implemented by the state and federal government and thus the struggle must be expanded beyond the university. But from our immediate position, as long as we don’t subvert the current power structure in the UC system, more state funding will mean more privatization, higher wage differentials and the increased financialization of our futures.

We are calling for more bold direct actions that continue to escalate the struggle and reclaim the university not for what it once was but for what it might actually become. Start organizing with each other, disrupt the zombie routine on campus, it’s time to rise from the dead.

Thank you to everyone who fought on November 20th. See you on the barricades next time. ✨

This call comes from a diverse group of numerous UC students and faculty who have been involved in planning direct actions and occupations on the UC Berkeley campus.



Voices from Wheeler Hall

The following are excerpts from the zine that emerged from the occupation of Wheeler Hall at the University of California, Berkeley on November 20, 2009. The occupiers did not issue a communique; their opinions were so heterogeneous, and their action so spontaneous, that they opted for individual statements later compiled in a zine format. As the explanatory opening paragraph states, “What can be said is we want change. Nothing is over.”

When we were handcuffed and waiting to be processed after the occupation, the plastic ties bit into my wrists, causing my hands to lose feeling and tiny capillaries to break along the unforgiving lines of contact between skin and restraint. But I did not ask for them to be loosened. At that moment, I consciously took control of the pain against the police’s arbitrary authority that made it acceptable for them to take control of us. I derived no pleasure from the bruises, only anger and resolve. Only one of the people oppressing me could stop the pain, so I wouldn’t let them; I would have fought to keep that pain constant until I was free.

Mario Savio said “...you’ve got to put your bodies upon the gears and upon the wheels, upon the levers, upon all the apparatus, and you’ve got to make it stop.”

I disagree; we must dismantle the machine, from top down, so that it never starts again. If we want freedom, if we want control over our own lives, we will dismantle this structure that facilitates the privatization of the wealth that should be the common inheritance of all. We will take buildings, streets, and all that is necessary until we are free and rid of this bureaucratic, authoritarian, and unjust structure. No student group should from now on pay for access to campus resources or request permission for anything. This is our campus, and we will use what we need and take what we need. We will occupy, we will appropriate, and in turn, we will liberate.

I have no doubt that the reason our occupation was a success was because of the fierceness of students, faculty, workers, staff and community members outside the building—under falling rain and rubber bullets—committed to protecting not just the wellbeing of those inside Wheeler but to defending the very idea that our university, that our education, belongs to us. There is nothing “public” about an education that the people have to pay for—not with our wallets, not with our silence.

We are surrounded with decay and know that there is no growth. The People (who have undeniable power) can be described as an axe. With solidarity, the axe finds itself in the hand of an invincible movement. Ease in the axe’s movement depends on the surrounding environment – the time, the available force, and motivation – we have this. You have this. Even more importantly, the tree knows it’s dead and this is the cause of fear for those in power. They are afraid of the ecstatic, spontaneous energy of every single person present at the time and this fear persists. The tree is coming down and it knows it.

“November is, for many reasons, the month for the axe. It is warm enough to grind an axe without freezing. But cold enough to fell a tree in comfort.”

- Aldo Leopold

In the apparent normalcy of an everyday school day, we will remember that this normalcy is always maintained through the threat of violence, that if we do not contest this violence we are complicit in it. We can understand also that this violence is heir to a legacy of colonial violence, that colonial violence was and is largely a product of the need of capitalism for raw materials and labor. When we come together in an outcry against the contemporary moment in the asymmetrical flows of capital we are inevitably met with the violence of the state which exists largely to facilitate these flows.

We will widen existing crevasses, proliferate reclamations of space and ruptures with the ordered asymmetrical flow of capital that is protected through state violence. This is only the beginning.

Reflections on **KERR HALL**

by student participants

In the aftermath of the November occupation of Kerr Hall at UCSC there has been a storm of writing and discussion as both supporters and critics have rushed to represent the unprecedented events and imbue them with political meaning. The administration said what everyone knew it would say – that the participants went beyond the bounds of civil protest, that they deprived the university community of its rights, et cetera. We are neither surprised by nor interested in their rhetoric. More important to us have been the conversations developing within the movement itself, some of which we fear threaten to distort the real content of the occupation and drain it of its radical potential. As participants in the Kerr Hall events we want to set the record straight about a few misconceptions and also challenge a particular kind of political logic that has surfaced from some quarters.



First of all, we have witnessed over the last several weeks an effort on the part of some to cast the student occupiers as frightened victims of administrative terror. We have heard more than a few descriptions of events that — whether out of ignorance or political utility, we cannot be sure — describe students erecting barricades fearfully and desperately as riot police arrived. Not only is this factually inaccurate, it misrepresents the basic dynamic inside the occupation. *It was a collective, preemptive decision by the occupiers to barricade the doors, not a fearful reaction to the imminent threat of police violence.*

When negotiations with the university broke down, we had a number of discussions about how to respond, and ended up deciding to defend the occupation physically. We had taken over the administrative headquarters of the university; we knew the administration could not let us stay. When we made the decision to remain, we accepted the inevitability of police force being used to evacuate us — because when people occupy property that does not belong to them, and when they refuse to leave, they will eventually be forcibly removed by the state. Students put up barricades not in a last-minute panic as news spread that riot police were approaching, but because we made an assessment of the balance of forces and decided it was strategic to put up a fight. Though we recognized there was a good chance we would

get arrested, we decided it was essential to demonstrate our unwillingness to give up control of administrative headquarters after the administration failed to grant any of our demands. We also calculated that we had enough support outside that our escalation tactic could potentially pay off.

The point is that there was nothing out of the ordinary or irrational about the way the administration or the police acted on that day. Administrators acted like administrators, and police acted like police. Anyone who was surprised or appalled by their actions seems to us naive in their understanding of the dynamics of power and resistance. The truth is that there was no “peaceful resolution” to the occupation, *because the occupiers refused to allow it.* It was not the administration’s fault that the police were called. The outcome was forced by the students themselves.

The conflicting interpretations of the occupation that have surfaced in the last week raise deeper questions about the way we understand and represent the emerging student-worker movement. Why do so many of the occupation’s defenders choose to frame the action using the discourse of non-violence, martyrdom, and moral purity? Why do they present the students as victims? From our experience anger and aggression characterized the mood of students more than fear and pacifism. This type of rhetoric is seductive in the short term because it has the power

There was no “peaceful resolution” to the occupation, because the occupiers refused to allow it. It was not the administration’s fault that the police were called. The outcome was forced by the students themselves.

to keep more moderate supporters from feeling alienated by the movement. However in the long run it is a major obstacle to be overcome, because movements for radical change are not actually won by moral suasion. In a recent piece by George Ciccariello-Maher about the occupation of Wheeler Hall at Berkeley, he interviews a student, Ali Tonak, who participated in the day’s events. Tonak criticized the misguided attempts of some faculty members to quell the crowd’s rage when police forced their way into the building, commenting that “They have a warped understanding of how power works. They think that calming people outside was keeping the people inside safe, when it was really the opposite: the only thing that was

keeping the folks inside safe was people being rowdy outside.”

Ciccariello-Maher develops the analysis further, commenting that “the final police and administration response — that of opting to let the occupiers walk out of Wheeler of their own accord — tells us just how powerful our collective presence was on that day. There can be no doubt that every single occupier would have been arrested, likely beaten and abused to some degree, and hit with the trumped-up felony charges, had the crowd not been assembled outside. And this was not merely because the crowd was bearing witness to injustice or expressing its verbal non-consent. It was not moderation and negotiation that created and sustained this piv-

otal moment and generated its outcome: it was the unmistakable show of force that the students gathered represented, a force that was not merely symbolic.”

Indeed, not symbolic but *material*. According to one participant in the Wheeler occupation, the police were threatening the occupiers with ‘felonies and beat-downs’ if they did not open the doors voluntarily. Of course, they did not open the doors voluntarily, and the principal factor precluding such asymmetrical violence was precisely the fact that the police were physically surrounded. The crowd did not disperse when met with a police charge, despite the injuries suffered. Rather, many people stood their ground and fought back, leaving the police with the only option of forcibly removing a thousand people if they were to arrest the occupiers. Faced with a potential situation they could not handle, the police had no choice but to simply cite and release the occupants of Wheeler.

In Santa Cruz, a similar crowd dynamic would likely have been necessary if it were not for the injury of faculty member Mark Anderson. It was not due to the peaceful chants of the small crowd that the occupiers of Kerr Hall were released with no charge. If it wasn’t for the immediate accidental injury of the faculty member, which made the police look brazen and overly-forceful at a key early moment, then the occupiers could have faced serious charges and injuries. Defeating such consequences would have been possible only by forcibly securing a defended perimeter around Kerr Hall.

The dynamics outside of Kerr Hall were most of all a result of the administration’s decision to send riot police at 6am Sunday morning, after threatening occupiers with police intervention for the duration of the night. Their calculation that sleepless occupiers and exhausted, dwindling supporters would present the least effective resistance and exit most passively was the sole reason for the timing of their action and it should be noted that such a diffusive end to the occupation would not have been possible at any other time.

In order to understand what happened that morning we must also consider the role played by some of the faculty members present, in particular the attempt made by some professors to negotiate a resolution to the occupation. Professor Bettina Aptheker, for instance, communicated directly with both EVC Klinger and students inside Kerr Hall in an effort to

persuade students to leave before the police were called. She described her efforts to the *Santa Cruz Sentinel*: “I told Klinger, ‘If you give me another five minutes I think I could get the door open.’ And he said, ‘I don’t have five minutes.’” *The Sentinel* and others have characterized Aptheker as negotiating on students’ behalf, but we would like to point out the logical absurdity of that statement. Let’s think about it for a second: Aptheker was negotiating on behalf of students to convince students to leave before the police arrived? If she was really acting on behalf of the students inside, why was she desperately trying to buy more time so that she could convince us to leave? And why was she unable to do so? Because we had made a collective decision to leave on our own terms, when we were ready. Aptheker was never given permission by us to negotiate with Klinger. If we were to give her any kind of authority to do this, we would have asked her to help win demands, not to convince him to let us leave—when the whole point of setting up barricades after negotiations broke down was to demonstrate that we weren’t going anywhere!

Clearly Aptheker was not acting on behalf of students but as a representative of certain faculty members who thought



dents inside via cell phone and encourage them to leave.

When police arrived some of these faculty members took up a policing role themselves. Students who reacted to the riot police in anger, who wanted to demonstrate collective power and antagonism toward the authorities, were instructed to remain “peaceful.” Students who used swear words against the police were reprimanded and those who broke the police tape that cops had strung around the

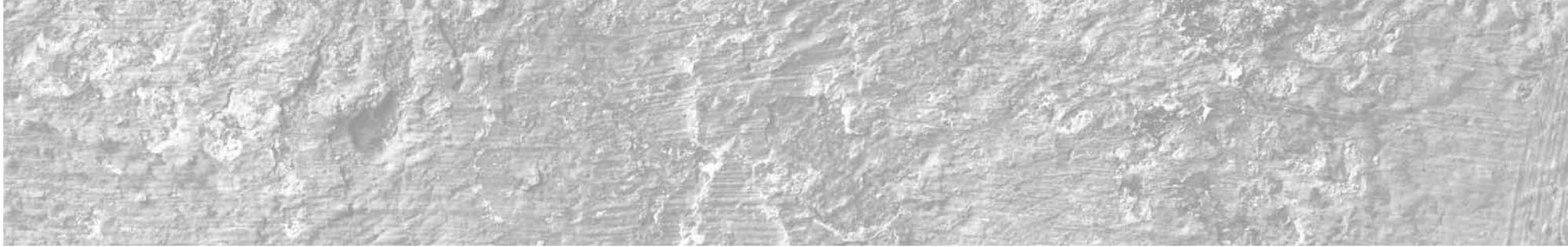
barricaded elevators and doors at Kerr Hall

we must make it clear to all faculty members who attempt to assert their authority over our actions that they should follow our lead, rather than the other way around

the occupation had reached its limit and that it was time for students to leave. These faculty members asserted their own political goals outside Kerr Hall by demanding a clean-up outside and inside the building, regardless of student aims. With “Faculty Observer” signs duct taped to their shirts and strung around their necks they immediately attempted to take control of the situation. One faculty member, without discussing her reasoning with students and supporters gathered outside, enforced a no-smoking zone near the building by telling students that they would “lose the faculty” if they did not obey. Some faculty took it upon themselves to contact stu-

building to keep the crowd away were told to back away and observe the line.

While we do not doubt that these faculty members acted out of a desire to protect the students inside, we question the sense of authority and paternalism that guided their behavior. They clearly felt they had either a right or a responsibility to manage the situation as they saw fit. Faculty acted as though those of us inside were not aware of the possible consequences of our actions or were too naive to think them through. In reality we had already spent hours discussing every aspect of police and university repercussions and made our decision together, as in-



formed adults. Real solidarity would have meant supporting our collective decision and joining the crowd outside as participants rather than “observers.” Instead their mode of interaction undermined student autonomy and collective power.

It is clear that the unprecedented events of the last several weeks — occupations, blockades, strikes, sit-ins, and demonstrations across the University of California system — were generated almost entirely by student and student-worker initiative. Therefore we must make it clear to all faculty members who attempt to assert their authority over our actions that *they* should follow *our* lead, rather than the other way around. As we experiment with new political forms we will make our own decisions about tactics and strategy and cannot accept their recommendations as sacred. We welcome their genuine participation and support but we will not allow the teacher-student relationship that we experience in the classroom to characterize our interactions in this movement.

This also means we must say goodbye to the sanitized and pacified version of the sixties that has been surfacing at recent actions and events. The spectre of the sixties — its political symbols, modes of discourse, and cultural forms — is part of the mechanism by which the older generation seeks to maintain its authority over the movement emerging now. More than a few times we heard faculty members telling students, “Don’t link arms when the police arrive because it will antagonize them. Trust us, we did this in the sixties.” Every time these words were used in the context of persuading students to follow pacifist principles. And some students themselves embraced the climate of political nostalgia, choosing songs and chants from the era and flashing the peace sign. Our point here is not to trash the movements of the past but to caution against condemning ourselves to repeat the gestures of a bygone era, against letting the political weight of a particular set of symbols and messages be used to discourage us from generating our own ways of thinking and acting. The world has changed and a new generation will develop its own political forms. While history offers up many lessons that we may find useful, ultimately the present must be made anew.

Finally we must address the issue of property damage, which has proven so controversial in the wake of the occupation. As the administration and local news outlets broadcast inflated figures relating to

clean-up costs, many have rushed to defend the occupiers by denying the fact that damage occurred or by characterizing it as unavoidable and minimal. In one sense these statements are generally accurate. Based on our experience it is correct to say that the majority of students inside the occupation had no desire to deliberately cause damage to the administration building.

However, while we appreciate these expressions of support and recognize their tactical utility in the midst of a smear campaign, we again fear that they overlook an important aspect of the political content of occupation. For we witnessed something else as well, something that seems not incidental but central to the experience of occupation itself: we watched the sheer glee with which students took over the headquarters of the university administration and made it our space. We ate food, listened to loud music, smoked cigarettes, wrote messages on every available surface, spread our belongings everywhere and used the Chancellor’s conference room as a screening center to watch the news coverage of the day’s events as well as footage from similar movements all over the world. We took back university property in a way that was much more than symbolic and in the course of so doing we experienced directly the realization that the institutional spaces from which power emanates — which we are taught all our lives to treat with deference and respect — were merely ordinary physical places, filled with mundane objects. And the shared experience of messing up that space, of treating the property inside as valueless, created instant bonds between participants. It was also a moment of genuine — if temporary — expropriation, as we claimed the property of the authorities for our own collective use.

We wonder why the issue of mess and property damage has proven so controversial in the way the occupation has been portrayed. Obviously we live in a society obsessed with the sanctity of property rights; however, the extent to which the issue has raised objections even among leftists suggests that it again taps into conflicting ideas about the nature of the movement itself. The pacifist camp seems to find the very notion that the occupiers deliberately made a mess or damaged property distasteful if not scandalous. It seems that they believe that every action on the part of students has to be represented as a defensive act, *forced by the administration*. For them the stu-

The purpose of a movement is not just to enact a series of symbolic spectacles but to transform its participants, their relationship to one another and to the structures of authority that govern their lives.

dents are obligated to constantly embody the moral high ground, and their tactics have to cause the least amount of damage, disruption, or controversy possible under the circumstances. Their response to critics is always the apologetic “We were left with no other choice. The administration forced us to take this drastic action.” With this reactive approach to political action there can be no effective way to go on the offensive, to analyze the existing scenario and traverse the political terrain as we see it, based on our own terms and initiative. We prefer to take responsibility for our own actions and plans instead of perpetually playing the victim.

Based on the criteria of the pacifists, deliberately careless treatment of private property seems like a liability, because in an immediate sense it was not necessary for the political success of the action. However, it sent an important message to administrators, namely that we had come to the point where we no longer felt intimidated by their authority. We have observed that some of the recent actions at various campuses have been controlled relatively easily by administrators. A number of sit-ins

were successfully de-escalated when an administrator was sent in to “talk with the students” about the budget and students, through force of habit, responded with deference. In situations where students refused to enter into a paternalistic dialogue with university representatives their efforts to disrupt university functions have been much more successful. More importantly, we initiated real, materialized disregard for administrative property that rippled through the minds of fellow students. Let’s not forget that the purpose of a movement is not just to enact a series of symbolic spectacles but to transform its participants, their relationship to one another and to the structures of authority that govern their lives. We submit that a lack of care for administrative property demonstrates not immaturity or irrationality but a very real sense of collective power and agency that is critically necessary if we are to sustain the courage necessary to continue to attack existing institutions. ✨



Back to Mrak an assessment

One might have imagined that “negotiations” and “continued constructive dialogue” were merely a means of deferring, defusing, displacing the university struggle. They are certainly that. But it was clear last night in Mrak Hall that these are also a direct extension of police intimidation, of the immediately repressive apparatus of the administration.

This was the case, first, because our negotiations focused primarily upon the role of the police in last week’s occupation, thus turning our attention away from our collective bond in the present, and away from the future of the university, toward a retroactive struggle against an injustice done to our friends and comrades. That struggle is, of course, a crucial aspect of our solidarity, and it is no small thing that it was at least partially won last night. But as one impassioned student pointed out as the negotiations were concluding, she didn’t get fucking arrested in order for her fucking charges to be dropped. Presumably, she got arrested due to the immediate urgency of a total demand: an end to the destruction of our lives and our universities by the neoliberal agenda of state legislators and opportunistic administrators.

But the directly repressive role of dialogue was perhaps most evident in the fact that negotiations could not proceed without the presence of the police. It was during our first encounter with Vice Chancellor Janet Gong that the cops arrived on campus, called in before the negotiations began and establishing their positions under their cover. These were not riot cops, the Chief of Police informed us, but “police with tactical equipment.” While we were talking, these police with tactical equipment began closing down the doors of Mrak Hall, as they had on Thursday 19. We should note the simple structural fact that students were able to guard those doors because they stopped talking to the administration. They rushed away from an endlessly circular conversation and into tactical positions; they had to remove themselves from the essentially performative scenario of dialogue in order to carry out the concrete task of defending their preferred configuration of the building against the police. Successfully defending those doors against closure last night was perhaps a greater victory than any eventual concession to our demands.

Unable to close the doors, the cops then closed off access to the washrooms. And this, too, occurred in a breach of good faith with the spirit of “negotiations”—one which only served to confirm their true function. Having expressed their emotional distress at the police presence—after having seen their friend violently arrested last week and videos of police brutality on the Berkeley campus—students demanded that the cops be sent off campus. Agreeing to “consider” this possibility for three to five minutes, administrators and the chief of police left the building—only to send in two columns of armed and helmeted officers while they were gone, striding through the crowd in order to check doors and to establish positions in a side hallway and at the top of the steps. Thereafter, all access to the washrooms was prohibited: an obvious tactic to both disperse occupiers from the building and to pressure negotiations toward a favorable outcome for the administration. The Vice Chancellor, the Chief of Police, and an armed police guard then returned to the building no sooner than thirty minutes later to resume the “conversation.”

It should be a clear and unyielding principle of any future occupations at UC Davis that there can be no discussion with the administration whatsoever while tactical police forces are on the campus. As long as the administration has already called the cops to arrest us whenever necessary, negotiations are a total sham, and must be treated as such. There can be no “discussion” with administrators once they have already called in repres-

sive forces to coerce and intimidate their interlocutors. What happened at UCLA, UCD, UCB, and UCSC between Nov. 18 – Nov. 22 will not soon be forgotten: police deployments by the administration effectively militarized our campuses; students and faculty were arrested en masse; a UCSC professor fell from a second story patio and was carried from the scene on a stretcher; students at UCLA were tasered; a student at UC Davis was repeatedly slammed against the hood of a car; students at UC Berkeley were beaten and maimed by punitive riot cops. The nightstick, the taser, the riot shield became an extension of the bureaucratic violence of the administration. All this because students occupied buildings in order to refuse the privatization of their universities, as do students in Europe for weeks, without any police response whatsoever. The sequence of events that unfolded last week—and the UC administration’s accountability for the brutality that ensued—is a fact that has consequences. We will certainly continue to resist and to struggle collectively; but we should not enter in dialogue with administrators who have proven themselves to have no respect whatsoever for our collective well-being, until they prove otherwise by refusing to deploy police forces that have demonstrated their malice and incompetence.

But there is also a different story to tell about Mrak on Nov. 24, which was, after all, a victory of sorts. There are different modalities of victory. And if there was a victory yesterday afternoon and last night, it was not just that certain demands were

As long as the administration has already called the cops to arrest us whenever necessary, negotiations are a total sham, and must be treated as such.

met by administrators. It was a victory of the intellect sharpened by praxis. The day was a sequence of remarkably precise articulations from a multiplicity of perspectives and positions. When we spoke amongst ourselves, we showed that in the context of collective struggle we can cut through issues that all-too often confuse and divide the movement. We did so with no facilitator, no stack. When we spoke to the administration and the police, we felt the clear superiority of our goals, our motives, and our collective intelligence over their own. We understood, immediately, the legitimacy and integrity of our action. We felt the power of our being-correct.

There are no “students” “faculty” “staff” any longer, among those who manifest themselves at Mrak. There is collective determination breeding active reason, measuring the strength of its consequences. 🍂

52 were arrested at UC Davis after a group of over 100 students and staff occupied the main administration building, Mrak Hall, on Nov. 19. After spending the night in Yolo County jail, students drove back to campus and occupied Dutton Hall the next day. Mrak would be occupied again the next week, on Nov. 24.





NOVEMBER 23

following the occupation of Wheeler Hall

The furniture in our classrooms — the furniture with which the occupiers of Wheeler barricaded the doors to protect themselves against the police — was made by prisoners in San Quentin. This is the truth of the university: it is guaranteed by state violence just as the UC's bonds are guaranteed by our fees.

The ASUC/UCPD "Police Forum" was crashed earlier tonight. As soon as the first cop began to speak everyone in the room stood up and he was interrupted with the following statement. Then everyone walked out.

Behind every fee increase, a line of riot cops . . . The privatization of the UC system and the impoverishment of student life, the UC administration's conscious choice to shift its burden of debt onto the backs of its students — these can be maintained only by way of police batons, tasers, barricades and pepper spray. These are two faces of the same thing. As students and workers we are hit first by fees and layoffs, and then by police batons. Privatization closes off the supposedly public spaces of this public university, erecting a wall that grows higher and higher with each passing year. Privatization is the metal barricades that the riot police set up around Wheeler Hall. Privatization and the police are the twinned forces of exclusion.

This violence is not new; it is only that, for many of us, it has remained invisible at UC Berkeley. The scandal is the reappearance on campus of what the Oakland and Berkeley police and the Alameda County Sheriffs do every day to poor people — without video cameras present, without stories in the New York Times or letters from concerned faculty. But the university has never been autonomous from the violence of society; we will not forget this fact. The furniture in our classrooms — *the furniture with which the occupiers of Wheeler barricaded the doors to protect themselves against the police* — was made by prisoners in San Quentin. This is the truth of the university: it is guaranteed by state violence just as the UC's bonds are guaranteed by our fees.

No investigation, no review process, no dialogue can change this structural truth.

To put it directly: the police are the antithesis of dialogue. There can be no dialogue under threat of violence, with the police standing in the background grinning, rhythmically slapping their clubs on their palms, telling us to "Get ready for the beatdown." They provide the assurance that speech isn't free even when officially promised, as our 14 friends and

colleagues who were arrested during the public comment session of the regents' meeting in UCLA will attest to. There can be no dialogue while the police are on campus; they are the threat. We refuse to smother our outrage, cover our wounds, put on a smile, and exchange pleasantries in quiet voices with those who beat us. The invitation to dialogue is pathological — they beat us one day, and invite us to share our feelings about it the next.

So we will not give them the satisfaction of participating in this charade. We reject the naive suggestion that "mutual understanding" is possible — you will never understand us, but we understand you. We understand that you were "just following orders," that these fee hikes are "necessary measures," that we all have to "tighten our belts," that the "rule of law" must be enforced. We understand where all of this puts you: on the other side of the barricades, defending the interests of privatization and capital. We will talk with you once you put down your badges and your weapons and join us on this side. Until then, there can be nothing between us except enmity. ✱

there can be nothing between us except enmity

statement delivered
at UCPD police forum

Police and demonstrators
exchange blows outside of
Wheeler hall, November 20.



The Bricks We Throw at Police Today Will Build the Liberation Schools of Tomorrow

If you're scared today you'll be scared tomorrow as well and always and so you've got to make a start now right away we must show that in this school we aren't slaves we have to do it so we can do what they're doing in all other schools to show that we're the ones to decide because the school is ours.

The Unseen
Nanni Balestrini

Days later, voices in unison still ring in our ears. "Whose university?" At night in bed, we mumble the reply to ourselves in our dreams. "Our university!" And in the midst of building occupations and the festive and fierce skirmishes with the police, concepts like belonging and ownership take the opportunity to assume a wholly new character. Only the village idiot or, the modern equivalent, a bureaucrat in the university administration would think we were screaming about something as suffocating as property rights when last week we announced, "The School is Ours!" When the day erupted, when the escape plan from the drudgery of college life was hatched, it was clear to everyone that the university not only belonged to the students who were forcefully reasserting their claim but also to the faculty, to every professor and TA who wishes they could enliven the mandatory curriculum in their repetitive 101 class, to the service workers who can't wait for their shift to end, and to every other wage-earner on campus ensuring the daily functioning of the school.

Last week, the actualization of our communal will gave us a new clarity. The usual divisiveness of proprietorship was forcefully challenged; cascades of hidden meaning rush onto rigid notions of possession, and our eyes look past surface appearances. So now when asked, "Who

does the university belong to?" we can't fail to recognize that the college itself was built by labor from generations past, the notebook paper is produced by workers in South America, the campus computers are the output of work in Chinese factories, the food in the student cafe is touched by innumerable hands before it reaches the plates, and all the furniture at UC Berkeley is produced by the incarcerated at San Quentin. Thus the university, its normal operation and existence, ought to be attributed to far more than it regularly is. To claim that the school is ours requires our definition of ownership to not only shatter the repressive myth that the college belongs to the State of California and the Regents but to also extend belonging past national and state borders and throughout time.

It's clear, the entire university, for that matter, every university, belongs to everyone, employed and unemployed, all students and all workers, to everyone of the global class that produces and reproduces the world as we now know it. The school is ours because it's everyone's and the destruction of the property relation, with all its damaging and limiting consequences, is implicit in the affirmation of this truth. It's our university...

...But, as of now, in its present configuration, who would want something so disgusting as a school?

1. THE POVERTY OF STUDENT LIFE IS THE POVERTY OF CAPITALIST SOCIETY

It's now larger than any conspiratorial plot by Thomas Huxley. In fact, he could have never envisioned the extent to which contemporary class society would transform education as such into another separated activity, detached from the totality of life and devoid of any practical worth or good, while, simultaneously, being in perfect accord with the needs of capitalist production.

Learning is now sapped of all its content, education is but another part of the assembly line in the social factory, and the university itself serves an important function within the reproduction of disjointed life in this divided society. While the colle-

giate apparatus infests countless minds with the logic and technical knowledge of capital, the illusion is being sold that somehow academic labor is divorced from the world of work. Our apologies, but a term paper is not the production of autonomous and creative knowledge, it is work and therefore exploitation. It is human activity animated for the sake of capital not for humanity itself. The conditioning and preparation of students for a life crushed by regimented value creation is the essential purpose of the college: to teach the young how to give and take orders. Nothing about the university is neutral; its role in society is clear. The lines are being drawn.

2.

THE REPRESENTATION OF THE STUDENT BODY HAS BECOME AN ENEMY OF THE STUDENT BODY

You will always be offered dialogue as if that were its own end; it will die in bureaucracy's stale air, as if trapped in a soundless room. In insurrectionary times, action is the speech that can be heard.

Slogan written on a Digital Wall

Far before last week's events, we've located them in the enemy's camp. Student activist-leaders shamed, begged, pleaded, and finally began to shriek and scream at us when we ignored their megaphone-amplified orders. In their last ditch effort to see their commands followed, they physically assisted the police in blocking us from occupying buildings and protected the outnumbered cops from our punches and shoves. It's obvious they've chosen their side some time ago. These are the idiots who were telling people who tried to break down the door of California Hall on November 18th that they should not do so because "there was no consensus." These are the same fools who sabotaged the attempted storming of the Regents meeting at UCLA and the occupation of Covell Hall, ruining months of self-directed planning, after declaring the crowd had become too "agitated." The Cynthia's, who later that day went on to disrupt the occupation of Carter-Huggins Hall. These are the same politicians, who grabbed the megaphone as students marched in to the President's office in Downtown Oakland, prepared to raise utter hell and instead directed them into a dialogue with middle-level administrators, later issuing an order that the crowd must leave "peacefully." Disgusting, yet typical. The only consensus they want is rallied around the social peace and the preservation of the existent institutions and the only alteration they want of the power structure is their ascent to the top of it. By actively collaborating with the administration and police, by orchestrating arrests, by frittering away the

momentum of the angry, they validate the insults we flung at them and they revealed themselves for the "student cops," "class traitors" and "snitches" they are.

For them it's a knee-jerk reaction: challenge their power and they fall back on identity politics. If they don't get their way they cry privilege. When the actions

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escalate, when we begin to feel our power, the self-appointed are waiting to remind us that there may be the undocumented present – the activist super-ego. Somehow in their tiny paternalistic brains they believe they know what's best for immigrants implying that the undocumented are too stupid to understand the consequences of their actions and god granted the student leaders the wisdom to guide these lost souls. In their foolish heads, immigrants remain passive sheep, black people never confront the police and just enjoy the beatings they get, and the working class always takes orders from the boss.

In pseudo-progressive tongue they speak a state-like discourse of diversity; the groans of the student-activist zombie is the grammar of the dead revolutions of the past. Their vision of race politics ignores the triumphs and wallows in the failures of the 60's movements. The stagnant ghosts of yesterday's deadlocked struggle; they are the hated consequences of the civil rights era that produced a rainbow of tyranny with a Black president mutilating Afghanistan, Asian cops brutalizing students on campus, and Latino prison guards chaining prisoners. In this same way, the opportunists act out their complicity with the structures of order. When students defy preset racial categories and unify in order to take action on their own behalf, the student cops attempt to reinforce the present day's violent separations and re-establish governance. They fail to recognize that divisions among proletarians are questioned only within the struggle itself and the festering scissions between the

exploited can only be sutured with hands steadied by combat with the exploiters. Like a scalpel used to reopen stitched wounds, the student activists' brand of multi-culturalism is undoubtedly a tool of state repression.

During the scuffle with the police in front of California Hall on the inaugural day of the strike, one of the student cops asked, "What's going to happen when we get into the building?" For us, given the social context of the strike, the answer is obvious, for them, even the question is problematic because of the risk it poses to their position of dominance. In the moment of rupture, their role as managers becomes void. Self-directed action crowds out the programmatic. They forever need to stand on the edge of the reality that something could pop off, because it is in that possibility that they can control the situation and ensure that things do, in fact, move in their way towards nowhere. When things get hot, the self-elected of the student movement are waiting with their trusty fire extinguishers ready in hand because they know that when people act on their own and valorize their self-interest, their authority crumbles and everyone can see how bankrupt their strategy of social containment actually is. The student activist stutter-steps on the path of nothingness. But we hope to turn the mob against them. To seize their megaphones and declare: "Death to Bureaucracy!" Some may ask, "Why have these hooligans come to our campus?" "They've come to ruin everything!" the student leaders will say.

And for once, we agree.

3.

WE ARE NOT STUDENTS, WE ARE DYNAMITE!

A movement results from combinations that even its own participants cannot control. And that its enemies cannot calculate. It evolves in ways that cannot be predicted, and even those who foresee it are taken by surprise.

Paco Ignacio Taibo

Many will ask then, why have we thrown ourselves into the 'student movement?' We are not students, at least not now and never in the UC system. It is not feasible for us to attend the UC in the first place, either because of the cost or the lack of desire to live the rest of our lives ridden with overwhelming debt.

We have not come to the university to make demands of the Board of Regents or the university administration. Nor do

we wish to participate in some form of 'democracy' where the 'student movement' decides (or is told to do so by student leaders) how to negotiate with the power structure. For us, Sacramento and its budget referendums are as useless as the empty words spewing from the mouths of the union leaders and activists on campus. Nothing about the "democratizing" the school system or forcing it to become better managed or more "transparent" even

mildly entices us. No, we didn't join the student movement to obtain any of these paltry demands.

Last week, we began to attack the university not just because we are proletarians scorned by and excluded from the UC, or that we hope by resisting we may reduce costs and thus join the UC system and elevate our class positions. Our choice to collaborate in the assault on California's school was driven solely by our own self-

ish class interest: to take its shit and use it for ourselves. Occupied buildings become spaces from which to further strike the exploiters of this world and, at the same time, disrupt and suppress the ability of the college to function.

Like any other institution structured by class society, the university is one of our targets. We made our presence in the student movement to break down the divisions between students angry over fee

hikes, workers striking against lay offs, and faculty at odds with the administration over cuts and furloughs. These are not separate struggles over different issues, but sections of a class that have a clear and unified enemy. We have come for the same reason we intervene in any tension: to push for the total destruction of capitalist exploitation and for the re-composition

of the proletariat towards communism.

And so, ask yourself how could one even go about reforming something as debilitating as a university? Demanding its democratization would only mean a re-configuration of horror. To ask for transparency is nothing but a request for a front row seat to watch an atrocity exhibition. Even the seemingly reasonable appeal for

reducing the cost of tuition will leave the noose of debt wrapped snugly around our necks. There's nothing the university can give anyone, but last week's accomplishments show that there is everything for us to take. If anything, our actions, as a means in themselves, were more important than any of the crumbs the UC system or the Regents Board might wipe off

the table for us. During these days, we felt the need for obliterating renewal give rise to intense enthusiasm. We felt the spirit irradiate throughout campus and press everyone "to push the university struggle [not only] to its limits," but to its ultimate conclusion: against the university itself.

4. ...AND SO IT MUST SPREAD

It is surely not difficult to see that our time is a time of birth and transition to a new period. The spirit has broken with what was hitherto the world of its existence and imagination and is about to submerge all this in the past; it is at work giving itself a new form.

The Phenomenology of Spirit

The stench that the university emits has become unbearable and students everywhere are reacting against the institution that has perpetually rotted away their being via an arsenal of disciplinary techniques. At campuses across California the corrosion of life is brought to a quick halt when the college's daily mechanism of power is given the Luddite treatment, and suddenly, studying becomes quite meaningless. Shamefully, the administration, terrified they are losing control and supervision of the pupils they spent so much time training, turn riot police on anyone ripping off their chains. At UC Santa Cruz, UCLA, UC Berkeley, UC Davis, SF State and CSU Fresno the unlimited occupations display the universal need for free and liberated space. The recalcitrance is spreading. In Austria, students left their occupied territory at the Fine Arts Academy to march on the US embassy in solidarity with the police repression on California campuses. On the same continent, the occupations in Greece have now extended outside the universities into the high schools and even the middle schools. Everywhere, the youth are recognizing the school as a rapid dungeon stunting their growth and, at the same time, they are refusing submission to the crushing of their bodily order. All over, a new generation is seeking the passion for the real, for what is immediately practicable, here and now.

The assaults on police officers, the confrontations with the administration, the refusal of lectures, and the squatted buildings point the objective struggle in the direction of the complete and total negation of the university. That is, brick by brick smashing the academic monolith into pieces and abolishing the college as a specialized institution restricted to a specific segment of society. This will require

Complete self-abolition necessitates that the logic of revolt spill out of the universities and flood the entire social terrain.

the instillation of technique known as learning to be wholly subverted and re-composing education as a generalized and practical activity of the entire population; an undermining through which the student shall auto-destruct.

Going halfway always spells defeat, and so, the spreading of movement is our only assurance against this stagnation. Complete self-abolition necessitates that the logic of revolt spill out of the universities and flood the entire social terrain. But the weapons of normalcy are concealed everywhere and especially within the most

mundane characteristics of daily life. The allegiance to the bourgeois family structure and interruptions by holiday vacations and school breaks threaten to douse the fuse before its ignition and hinder our momentum.

Let us not lose sight of the tasks before us:

We must forcefully eject the police from the campus. Find their holes and burn them out. Block their movements near occupied spaces. Build barricades; protect that which has been re-taken. We need only to look to Chile or Greece to see the immense advantage movements possess once they seize territory and declare it free of police. Blockade the entrances and gates of the campus as the students have already begun to experiment with at UC Santa Cruz.

We must also denounce and destroy the student Left (the recuperative, the parasitic, the "representative") that seeks to de-escalate the movement and integrate it back into politics. Our venom is not only directed at those who assisted the police in blocking angry students from entering California Hall at UC Berkeley or obstructed the crowds during the Regents meeting at UCLA but also of those who sought to negotiate with the police "on behalf" of the occupiers of Wheeler Hall. It is telling that the police will negotiate with them, because to the cops, they are reasonable. We are not, however, because we seek the immediate annihilation of both the pigs and the activists.

Renew the strikes and extend their reach. Occupy the student stores and loot them. Sell off the computers in the lab to raise funds. Set up social spaces for students and non-students alike to come in and use freely. Appropriate the copy machines and make news of the revolt. Take-

over the cafeterias and bars and begin preparing the communal feast. Burn the debt records and the construction plans. Chisel away the statues and vandalize the pictures of the old order. In short, create not an 'alternative' that can easily make its fit within the existent, but rather a commune in which power is built to destroy capitalist society. When faced with a university building, the choices are limited; either convert it to ashes or begin the immediate materialization of the international soviet.

To all waged and unwaged workers – students or not, unemployed, precarious or criminal we call on you to join this struggle. The universities can become not only our playgrounds but also the foundations from which we can build a partisan war machine fit for the battle to retrieve our stolen lives.

And to the majority of the students, from those paying their way to those swimming in debt, all used as collateral by the Regents, who bravely occupied buildings across California and fought the police against the barricades – we say this clearly: we are with you! We stood by you as you faced down the police in the storming rain and defended the occupiers. Your actions are an inspiration to us all and we hope to meet you again on the front lines. In you we see the spirit of insurgent students everywhere.

As our Austrian friends recently told us, "Take out your hairspray and your lighter"! Tear down the education factory. Attack the Left and everything that it "represents." Attack the new bosses before they become the old ones. Life serves the risk taker — and we're rolling the fucking dice! 🍀

FOR ANARCHY AND COMMUNISM!

Three Non-Matriculating Proletarians

we are still here

To those disaffected and affected by the budget cuts.

To those laid-off faculty who have been sent off this campus because Robert Corrigan values his six-figure income more than your pedagogy.

To those workers, always the unseen heroes who are the first to take the sacrifices.

To those janitors, who were denied from doing their jobs because of us. We do this for you.

40 years ago on this campus, San Francisco State College gave in to the demands of the 5-month Ethnic Studies strike, which gained valuable educational and economic opportunities for all Black and Third-World people. Self-determination for people of color was the word of the day, and although concessions were made, the struggle for self-determination of the working-class has not ended, but is going through a new phase of global class struggle intensified by the polarization of capital and labor.

Also 40 years ago, Indians of All Nations took a famous federal property known as Alcatraz Island, or The Rock, and again occupied the land that Lakota Indians had taken years prior unsuccessfully. The organizers, American Indians from tribes all across the continent, included young Richard Oakes, a Mohawk SF State student. The occupation lasted 19 months, whereby the IAN demanded a new American Indian Center on the unused surplus property, created a Bureau of Caucasian Affairs to deal with the white man, and purchased the island with feathers and beads worth more than the money paid to the native inhabitants of Manhattan Island by colonialists.

We Are Still Here

The legacy of the militant student and working-class movements of the 1960's lit the revolutionary consciousness of the globe, from the Latin-American workers' struggles to the anti-colonial uprisings in Africa, and back home to the Black Panther Party in Oakland and the Third World Liberation Front. These movements challenged not only the dominant capitalist

statement from the occupation of the Business School Building RENAMED OSCAR GRANT HALL

hegemony through class struggle, they spread new ideas of how to struggle.

Universities worldwide, like those in Austria, in Greece, Germany and our comrades across the bay at UC Berkeley have recently used the tactic of occupation as a means to challenge bourgeois property relations, where not production but knowledge and ideas are socially produced but privately appropriated for the ruling class, which categorizes and divides the working-class into hierarchal constructions that reproduce our high-level managers at the UC's, our technical workers at the CSU's, and the lower layers of the proletariat left to the crumbs of a community college education meaningless in this capitalist crisis; great training for the workplace, where the administration becomes the corporate board, the professor becomes the boss, and the tailist union bureaucrats become...well, I guess some things stay the same. The student is the worker, adding use-value to her education for future exploitation and extraction of surplus-value.

Although occupation, or reclaiming space, is not a historically new idea, it is a new form of struggle for many of those disillusioned with the promises of lobbying, those too tired of petitioning "our" elected leaders, those who have lost all faith in politics as they know it. As direct actions like these redefine socially-acceptable modes of protest, occupations themselves redefine the power-relations at the site of struggle. We are occupying because we understand that the budget cuts, which are manifestations of capital in its search for untouched investment and the prospect of profits, are enforced through our consent, through our submission, when we focus the gaze of rebellion at the self-imposed sites of bourgeois political debate and conflict like the Capitol Building in Sacramento, or even its local subsidiary office labelled Administration Building at every elementary school,



Supporters of the occupation of Oscar Grant Hall reinforce barricaded doors with their bodies. Occupiers lower a bucket to receive food and supplies from crowds below.

at every junior high, every high school, every college and university.

Our power as working-class people does not reside in the uneven and rigged political game where winners are chosen by their capacity to pacify those who wish to change the system, by their capacity to coerce the oppressed into rolling the dice one more time for the sake of chance: the opportunity that this time, maybe this time, change can come peacefully for the benefit of those subject to endless waves of unemployment, for the benefit of those faced with the racism of the workplace, for the benefit of those attacked by sexism and homophobia on the streets. The reclaiming of space that is occurring as we write this statement is a challenge to the assumption that politics and the power of political control is only suited for white-male representatives in black suits. The real power exists here, at the site of exploitation, be it the school or the workplace. We plant the seeds of these institutions as workers, students, staff, and faculty, constantly maintaining and watering them, looking after them as a gardener looks af-

ter hir garden, but we are not allowed to enjoy the fruits of that labor. This is the contradiction exposed.

By redefining and reclaiming these spaces, we expose the true violent nature of our society. After escalated police violence on the UC campuses in Los Angeles and Berkeley, student occupiers rightly proclaimed that "behind every fee increase, a line of riot police." In this structure, the Business Building of San Francisco State University, usually occupied by financial advisors for war-profiteering companies, there is no business as usual. Outside, the invisible hand of the market is holding a gun, revealing itself to us with a badge emblazoned "UPD". The act of occupation is violent because it is a threat; we are not those who wield weapons, we are not those who possess the means to subordinate people to not just physical violence, but the psychological violence that disempowers us to believe that we do not have the power to resist and fight back.

Then again, We Are Still Here 🌿



NO CONCLUSIONS WHEN ANOTHER WORLD IS UNPOPULAR

I.

We will not be free when we are educated, we will be educated when we are free.

PISACANE, 1857

Society has reached the stage of potential mass unemployment; and mass employment is increasingly a manipulated product of the state and state-like powers that channelize surplus humankind into public works, including armies and official or semiofficial political organizations, in order to keep it at once alive and under control.

LEO LÖWENTHAL, UC BERKELEY PROFESSOR, 1949.

Before the Fall we felt it briefly, in each hour and a half interval: the ten minute grace period between classes, waiting for a lecture to begin, assigning ourselves one uncomfortable chair amongst 130 other uncomfortable chairs, and so began the telling of human History—grand, anecdotal, scientific, relevant or apropos of nothing. And just as we felt this loss, it disappeared. So we laughed, we fell asleep, we posed calculated questions, we watched a bald man every three days in a nice shirt pacing back and forth in an auditorium, the lights went dim, the lights came up, we collected ourselves, ate po-

tato chips and a sandwich. We are kept alive, vaccinated, some even plump, yes, but we feel our surplus status. Excess. Excessive. This excessiveness animates our underlying dissatisfaction. That we do not matter: our private morals, decisions, attitudes, preferences, manners—that we are kept so absorbed, busy forever arranging these abstractions into purchases, identities, further abstractions on the future, sacrosanct opinions on the past. We are governed by the abstraction of the future and a grand or alternative History, sure, but we are also governed by these abstractions of the present.

That is the crisis, a lost faith in an inhabitable future, that the work ahead is as limited as the work in place now: the absent future, the dead future, the unemployment, the anxiety. For an economy that so often drains meaning from the immediate present for an imaginary future, a loss of faith is crisis. A surplus population of students, writers, photographers, freelancers, philosophers, social theorists without a doubt—but also increasingly of engineers, scientists, lawyers, businessmen, politicians. The economy that animates the university is an engine that produces irrelevance. That the economy itself provokes such a crisis of

faith is testament to its own inner operating procedures, and perhaps to its own grinding contradictions.

And yet in the Fall something broke. Students and staff made a different claim on the university. We were not convinced that a dead future could be renegotiated through a “New New Deal.” We were not easily chaperoned to the endless deferral of “Sacramento,” we did not hide from the rain, we did not quietly suffer the eclipse of the university by the county jail system. Our faith in a future abstraction was not renewed; it was replaced by faith in one other in the present.

II.

The movement should exist for the sake of the people, not the people for the sake of the movement.

AIMÉ CÉSAIRE, 1956.

Secure at first food and clothing, and the kingdom of God will come to you of itself.

GEORG W.F. HEGEL, 1807.

To put forth empty slogans to “Save the University” in a moment of student occupations is as misguided as calling to “Save the Prison” in a prison riot—redemption in this case would be to restore the status quo: the exclusions and incarceration, the slamming gates of the university and the warehoused social death of the prisoner.

They function as opposite poles on a spectrum of class reproduction. The university—an arm of the economy and state—in all of its exclusions and exclusivity, its funding schemes and governance, is bound to and dependent upon the prison. Certainly this was momentarily evident when we snuck a glance behind the theater of scripted rallies and petitions and discovered the batons and tasers of riot cops, county jail and county court, and a multimillion dollar administrative public affairs media campaign aimed at criminalizing students. In this way there is no “outside” to the university: there are no

“outside agitators” as the public relations office declares. For us the only outside agitators are the administration, its police, capital and the state.

During the Fall, students occupied in order to cast the administration, its police, capital and the state as the outside—to reconfigure the sides—the “insides” and “outsides”—of a struggle. We knew fundamentally there was no ‘outside’ to the university—the university is yoked to San Quentin, computer factories in China, deforestation in Indonesia, mineral mining in the Congo, nuclear energy in Russia, green capitalism in Sweden, coffee houses on Telegraph, intellectual property rights in India, coked up hipster parties in Echo Park, and weed farms in Mendocino. Perhaps this is the university’s appeal as well. It is a world. Everywhere, connected to everything.

So we thought it was a matter of subtraction: to take ourselves and these build-

ings with us to transmit a message that “We will get what we can take,” that “Everything belongs to everyone.” Among some, the reaction was predictable. “Only children can take everything.” “We must all make sacrifices.” “Our leaders are doing their best and making difficult choices on our behalf.” *Another world is unpopular.* And yet we found, despite mistakes and despite successes, that another world was recharting the global map: solidarity messages and actions from Pakistan, Japan, Ireland, Germany, Austria, South Africa, Chicago, New Orleans, New York City.

And now we move outwards, towards the ways in which the university is maintained: compulsory labor, the rented homes of university students and workers, the police violence in these neighborhoods. We gravitate towards the Miwok tribe in Stockton, CA who in January this year occupied their headquarters after being served eviction papers. We gravitate

towards the January 21st attempted occupation of a Hibernia Bank in downtown San Francisco in a struggle against homelessness, the occupation of Mexico City’s National University in the late 90s, the 2009 summer-long Ssangyong auto plant workers’ occupation in South Korea. We gravitate towards the young people who last year set fire to downtown Oakland to show they were still alive, to reveal a spark of their own relevance in the shadow of the police execution of Oscar Grant Jr. and so many others. We recognize ourselves in them. For all of our apparent differences, how we have been classified and filed under the logic of capital, race, gender, citizenship, *ad nauseam*, we know these categories do not guarantee a politics—we know our differences and commonalities are more complex than what is allowed in this world. Our faith is sheltered there, housed in mutual recognition, in building-seizures and confrontations.



Wheeler Hall, November 20.

III.

The present, due to its staggering complexities, is almost as conjectural as the past.

GEORGE JACKSON, 1971.

Over the past semester an important set of critiques were leveled at actions we gesture toward throughout this paper and any group engaged in direct action. The editors of this paper hail from different social movements and moments and frequently disagree. We cannot write a collective statement with positive prescription. What we do know is that *all liberatory social movements benefit from the destabilization of the university* as an institution, as both a dream factory of class mobility and an engine of profound inequality.

A social movement is a counter-force within an arena of power. At its best a

counter-force destabilizes that arena and creates social and political openings, in the moment and in its wake. The longer a crowd exists the more dangerous it becomes. It's there, in those openings, that we find fertile ground for broad and interpersonal solidarity, trust, dreams of the future, collective desire for anything. *That* is where we build our positive prescription, our visions. Meaningful, useful dreams are only dreamt in struggle, in the spaces opened and left behind by the fight.

The Fall was that kind of moment—a reemergence of new and old formations shaped around new and old realities and ideas. The creation of tactical and stra-

tegic openings. The real, if momentary, blockage of institutional policy and systematic violence. The necessary polarization; the flowering of new solidarities and the nourishing of the old; the possibility of generalized direct action, social ruptures; students and all the rest living in a more meaningful present instead of an institutionally-imposed, indebted future. Those currently in power want nothing more than the reproduction of stability and unquestioned legitimacy, the guarantee of an unchallenged control that lasts forever, the disparities each of us have tried to fight as though they were separate and separable catastrophes.

And so after the Fall we are left with some openings: March 4th is one among many. We've built, seemingly by vulgar and beautiful chance, a party. The occupation. The mob. A mobile force. A machine. This is to say many of us are you, and likely many of you are us. We are all bound together merely by inhabiting the same arena; many of "us" are people of color, queers, counter-settlers, 1st generation college students, service industry workers—traumatized, beat down, brilliant, and tender.

But we are also adventurists. ✱

The question is: why the fuck should I fight?

To some, the question itself is indicative of a problem; the problem of "I" and not "we". Regardless, it is an omnipresent question, or a reflection of an ideology, a mindset, that silences the voice, stays the hand, lowers the gaze, and railroads lives on a single track to nothingness.

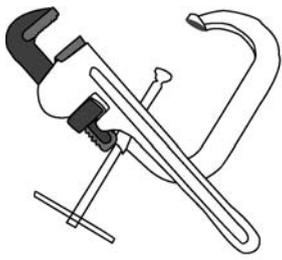
We fight for possibilities; of love, of friendship, of being able to follow our own interests without someone else fucking it up. We fight because we find all this in the struggle; the struggle itself is a liberation. It is the freeing of the voice to passionate outbursts of anger, the freeing of the mind from the chains of dogma, and the freeing of the hand to take, make, and destroy all that one desires. This is why you should fight, because in it you will find an open channel that flows to a sea of potential.

Why should we fight? It is inherent to all struggles that an opposing force exists. We fight with others against this force because through our struggle against a common enemy, we are able to pursue our innermost stirrings; the relations that send shots of joy down our spines and fire into our eyes. The communal protects and nurtures the inclinations of the individual. We do not intend to organize for some bullshit progressive reforms out on the horizon. We do not intend to sit around long tables and discuss "the political" or "issues of representation" with solemn faces and hushed tones.

Utopia is not the goal; the goal is achieved in the joy of making war on those who would impose their deadness onto us, the joy of constantly reopening

the crusty scabs of dogma that numb our minds and bind us with their handcuffs, the joy of making things bleed to feel alive and imbibe color to all barren relations. *Steady state is death; it is the ontological disposition of machines.* The erratic, turbulent fluctuation of our innermost desires; the chaos of unbridled love and unchecked anger—this is what we find in occupations and fights with police. Soon, we will find it in the warmth of a burning police station, in the smoldering ruins of a financial district, and in the steam, and sweat, and bodyheat of thousands of fellow comrades as we take this shit over. A society that is constantly rubbed raw, constantly on edge, constantly exhilarated; this is what we create in every moment of the fight. ✱

DISCLAIMER: THIS GUIDE IS INTENDED FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY. OCCUPY AT YOUR OWN RISK.



OCCUPATION

a do-it-yourself guide

PREFACE: WHY OCCUPY?

We in the US have been too timid for too long. We are afraid of the cops. We are afraid of losing our jobs or getting expelled from school. No one wants to take risks; no one wants anyone else to take risks. Protests are boring, poorly attended and ineffective. Peaceful marches or rallies reduce us to passive observers of what is supposed to be our own activity. We are told to express our anger and frustration by shouting or chanting, but otherwise, we are asked to exercise restraint.

At the UCSC walkout on Sept 24, protestors chanted and carried signs, but they crossed the street only when the 'walk' sign was lit. They would march across the street, push the button to cross at the next intersection and wait patiently for the light to change. The striking union, UPTE, had a picket line but did not actively prevent people from crossing that line. They knew that *most unions at the UC have contracts which explicitly force their members to cross the picket lines of other unions*. In Berkeley, at the general assembly held on the same day, protestors were asked: "what do you want to do next?" But they were never asked the obvious question—"what do you want to do right now?"

Why not decide on an immediate course of action and do it? Organizers complain they are losing members with each successive meeting; they seem to believe that meeting is an end in itself!

This wall of passivity can only be dismantled through action. But equally, we have to avoid the temptation of becoming "activists". On Sept 17, activists interrupted a meeting of the UC Board of Regents. They shouted at Mark Yudof, refused to quiet down and were arrested by cops. These sacrificial actions are disruptive—but only momentarily. They depend on the media to publicize their grievances, but, to gain this attention, activists must provoke the administration into an embarrassing confrontation. Administrators are not so stupid. They know how to neutralize these actions: they simply avoid confrontation. After the protestors were dragged from the room, Yudof said, "the students ought to be angry about the fee increases. I'm angry about it, too."

These are the problems we face: not only the cuts—not only the crisis which caused the cuts—but the ineffectiveness of our means of fighting them. We need to build a movement, but we find that we cannot. People will only join a movement

if it has the potential to change something, but a movement will only change something if people join it. So everyone does what is in their own best interests: they ignore the protestors and get on with their lives. Better to try to find a new job than waste time failing to get your old one back. The problem is not a lack of consciousness. People evaluate their situation and act accordingly.

It is the activists who fail to understand.

Everything is set up in advance to ensure that nothing actually changes. We are given a menu of options for managing the crisis and another for fighting the cuts. We do the hard work of organizing. We attend interminable meetings and plan largely symbolic actions. These things change nothing. The problem is simple: no decision making body has the power to give us what we want—and especially during a crisis, when the very existence of capitalism is at stake. The deans and chancellors making the cuts are subordinate to the UC president. The UC president is subordinate to the Board of Regents. The Board of Regents gets its money from the legislature. And the hands of the legislature are tied by the the California constitution, which requires a two-thirds majority to raise taxes.

We must reject all options on offer and demonstrate that without negotiations *it is still possible to act*. This is why we do not make demands. All demands assume the existence of a power capable of conceding them. We know this power does not exist. Why go through the motions of negotiation when we know we will not win anything but paltry concessions? Better to reveal the nature of the situation: there is no power to which we can appeal except that which we have found in one another.

That is also why we reject the logic of representation. No representative, no matter how charismatic, can achieve anything of consequence, except to deprive us of our own agency. Having representatives reduces us, once again, to passive onlookers upon our own activity. We have to take matters into our own hands. A huge demonstration is not a means to better bargaining; it is nothing if it is not an end in itself. A huge demonstration becomes an end in itself only when people at the demonstration start to act on their own; when they reject the leaders

who, acting on their own interests, tell people to be "reasonable" to wait for the right moment.

We do not want to wait any longer. We cannot afford to wait any longer.

This pamphlet is a guide to immediate action. It explains how to occupy buildings, with particular attention to universities. That is not because we believe students at the university have a special role to play, or because occupations are the only tactic with which we agree. It is simply because we *are* at the university, we *have* occupied a building here and we begin with what we know.

Occupations are a common tactic used at universities and other workplaces around the world. In 1999, students occupied the National Autonomous University of Mexico, the largest university in Latin America, to ensure that university education would remain free. In 2006, students occupied universities throughout France to repeal the CPE amendment, which would have made it easier for bosses to fire young workers. In 2008, workers occupied the Republic Windows and Doors factory in Chicago, winning concessions from Bank of America. In 2009, workers occupied the Ssangyong car factory in South Korea, holding it for two months and fighting a pitched battle against the police. These are only a few examples of what came before we occupied the Graduate Student Commons at UCSC in September.

We have been criticized for having acted as clandestine "adventurists", for ignoring the democratic process. We have seen the results of that process far too many times. It is never the case that, after people see the failures of letter-writing campaigns or teach-ins, they decide to try something else. They are disheartened that their hard work has come to nothing, and they return to their normal lives. When the next crisis occurs, new people get involved and democratically decide to make the same mistakes.

We have lived through too many cycles of failure and seek to try something else.

We wager that when people see what we are doing, they too will get involved. So far, that has proven true. Once enough people are involved, we will no longer have to act in a clandestine fashion. We will openly decide what to do next. Will we march immediately to the administra-

tive building and occupy it indefinitely, without demands? Maybe we march from building to building with bullhorns, calling students and workers out into the street? Perhaps we will march to the base of campus and set up barricades, blocking entrances to the university.

In any case, we know that our movement will only grow in and through action. We do not have to wait: *we can act now and act later*. If in the past, it has taken longer to organize these sorts of actions, that is either because people started too big, or because they were up against stronger foes than the bumbling administration of a California public university. In fact, the reason it took so long to organize this action was simply that many were afraid. We respect these fears even if we encourage everyone to push their boundaries. Others will join the movement, not when their consciousness is raised to the appropriate level, but when they decide that participation is worth the associated risks. Some people feel they have nothing to lose and get involved immediately. Others have so much to lose that they will only get involved at the last possible moment. We trust one another to know what to do.

Those we meet – who are neither hostile to change as such nor self-described "leaders" offended by action taken without their permission – have not criticized us for acting too soon but for occupying such an insignificant building. To these we reply: you are not alone in your desire for escalation. Find us. When we have more numbers, we will take more and more buildings until the campus is ours.

Of course, the goal is not to shut down campus as an end in itself. Once we demonstrate our collective power to dissolve the university, we will decide together what to do next. By then, others will have taken action at other workplaces, and we will be able to decide with them. We know only this: that when we get the chance to strike, we will take it without hesitation. We will take whatever measures are necessary both to destroy this world as quickly as possible and to create, here and now, the world we want:

A WORLD WITHOUT WAGES,
WITHOUT BOSSES, WITHOUT
BORDERS, WITHOUT STATES

GENERAL THEORY OF OCCUPATIONS

Plan ahead.

- Whether we occupy as a small group of clandestine adventurers or at the head of a large and unruly crowd, it is good idea to plan ahead.
- Scope out the building. What sorts of doors will we have to lock down? What sorts of furniture are available for building barricades?
- Check as well for any useful materials outside or around the building. Are there escape routes? Are there rocks to throw at cops?

Draw a large crowd to the occupation.

- A large crowd, especially of 'ordinary, everyday people', is our first line of defense against a police attack.
- If there is a confrontation with the police, a large crowd will probably form anyway to gawk at the spectacle.
- But our best chance of holding the space is to get that crowd as close to the building as possible before the police arrive.
- That way, if the police build barricades, the crowd will be between us and the cops, rather than outside police lines.
- If that crowd is full of 'ordinary, everyday people', the cops will be less likely to use extreme force to remove us from the building.
- Draw a crowd by calling a meeting of some kind: to discuss the crisis or just to dance; or announce the occupation at some other group's meeting.
- Either (1) announce to the assembled crowd that an occupation is occurring and rush them over to the building as quickly as possible.
- Or (2) give a rousing speech, convince the crowd that we all have to occupy a building immediately and then do it.

Get control over a door.

- When we scope out a building, we want to get a sense of how we can open up the space to other people once the occupation is under way.
- Choose a door, an accessible window, or some other method of getting people into and out of the space.
- When outside barricades are built, make sure people know not to barricade this one entrance too heavily.
- For this entrance, set up a lock that can be opened and closed easily, so when the time is right, we can let more people into the space.

Open the space to other people.

- People often want to debate who they should let in to the space, but it is best to let in everyone (reserving the right to turn away sketchy people).
- The risks of diluting the group or letting sketchy people in are minimal compared to what we gain by making the occupation open to everyone.
- Opening the occupation reduces the risks taken by the original occupiers. It's

also the point of occupying—to build a movement through action.

If there is a continual police presence, having a crowd inside police barricades allows people to move in and out of the building via the crowd.

Transform the space.

When we occupy spaces, we never use them as they were 'intended' to be used: libraries are not for studying.

We take over spaces to transform their uses: we organize to occupy more spaces and build a social movement, but we also have fun.

Throw a sick as fuck dance party!

Do not make occupations into arrest actions.

Occupations are tactics within a broader struggle. There is no reason to get arrested just to prove a point. When all else fails, run away!

RECONNAISSANCE

Choosing a building:

- Fewest doors that need to be secured.
- Heavy furniture for making barricades.
- Central location with a lot of foot traffic.
- Contact with the outside world (balcony, windows).

Who owns the building?

- Exploit ambiguities in ownership.

Some occupations are more disruptive than others.

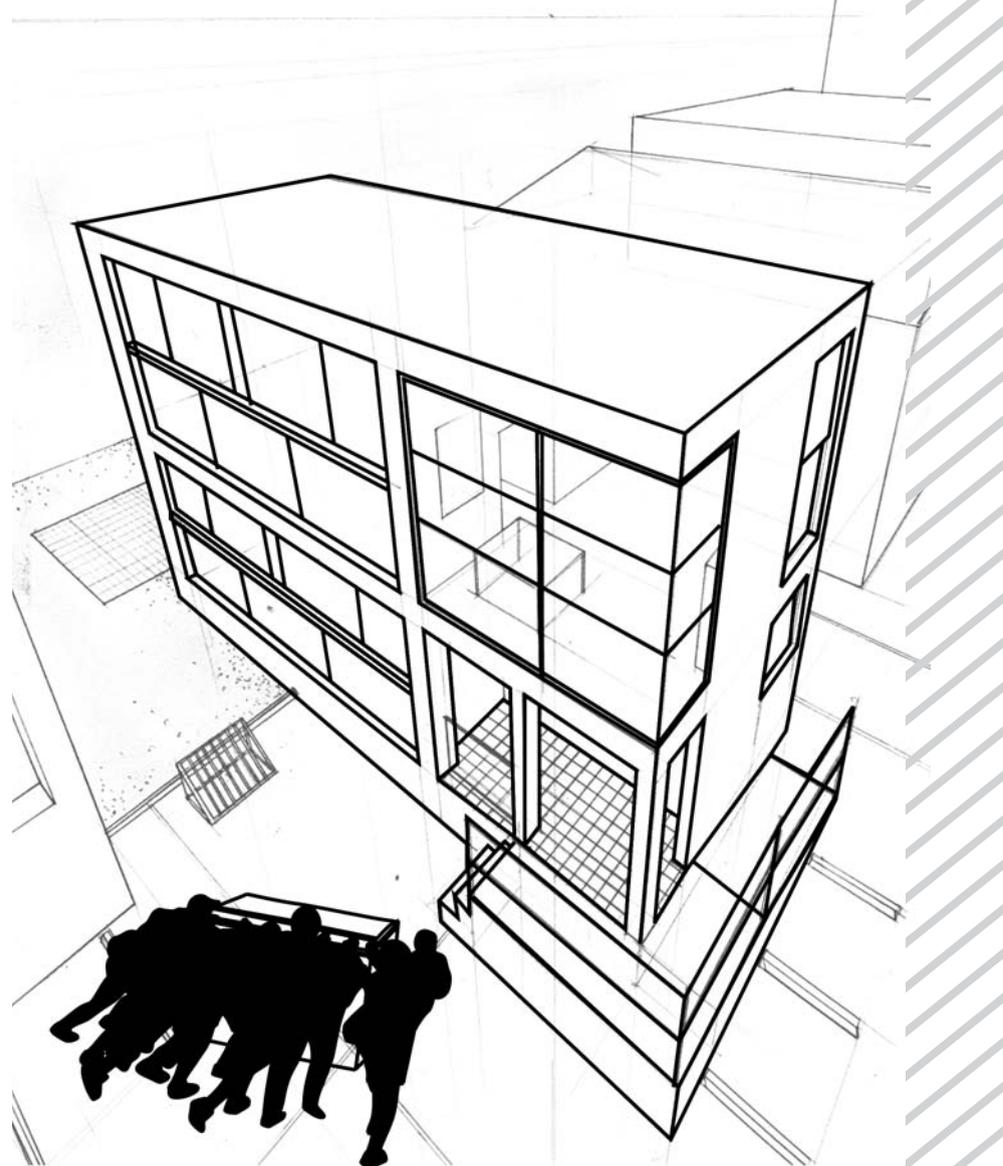
- At a university, occupying an administrative building would be more disruptive than occupying a student space.
- But for the same reason, administrative buildings are harder to hold. They're better left until we have a large social movement.
- Do not be afraid to take space from our purported representatives: unions, student government, etc.

When doing reconnaissance, be discreet but thorough:

- How many doors are there that have to be secured?
- Look for hidden doors and fire escapes.
- What do the doors look like, and how are they opened (handles)?
- We can secure doors using structural supports (poles, pipes). Are there any available?
- What furniture is available for building barricades?
- Can we secure a door in such a way that we can open it, either to let people in or to make an escape?
- If possible, take pictures or at least, take notes. It is always harder to remember the details than you think!

We may be in there for a while:

- Is there a bathroom, access to running water?



- Is there any way to get supplies in and out without opening a door?

Often it is possible to secure a floor or even a room, leaving the rest of the building intact.

SECURING DOORS

Doors open either towards the inside or the outside.

- Doors opening into the occupied space are the easiest to secure because we can barricade them closed.
- Unfortunately, doors in newer buildings tend to open out, so we have to secure the door independently of the barricade.

Different doors have different types of handles and are thus secured in different ways. Here are some examples.

• Door with handles:

Tie one end of a cable lock around the door handle. Tie the other end to a structure support, or even to another door handle. If no structural supports are available, use a piece of furniture or a large block of wood—anything larger than the door frame.

• Doors with bars:

If there is a space between the bar and the door, tie one end of a cable lock around the bar and the other end to a support.

If there is no space, secure a C-clamp to the bar. Loop the cable lock through the space created by the clamp.

• Swinging push doors:

Almost impossible to secure without damaging the doors. Unless they open into the occupied space, avoid them.

BE CREATIVE!

Make sure the doors are secured as tightly as possible:

- If the door opens even an inch, then the lock can be cut.

- Use carabiners to tie locks to one another.
- Carabiners also make it easy to open doors without disassembling the locking mechanism.

BUILDING BARRICADES

Whenever possible, build barricades both inside and outside the doors.

For the inside:

- Use as much heavy furniture as possible.
- Distribute the furniture evenly among the doors.
- Nothing too complicated or precarious.
- Do not excessively barricade the door we want to control.
- Do not stack up furniture that can be easily pushed aside, once doors are breached.
- We need to be able to apply pressure to keep the barricade in place (ie by pushing on it).

For the outside:

- Have a large crowd surround the building and especially against the doors.
- If police building barricades, we want the crowd inside the barricades.
- A separate, outside team should roll in and build outside barricades and then disperse.
- Use dumpsters, trees, wood pallets, chain-link fences, garbage cans filled with rocks.
- Make sure the outside team knows which door we want to control, so they do not barricade it too heavily.

OUTSIDE SUPPORT: LEGAL TEAM

Before the event takes place, contact a lawyer:

- Some lawyers are willing to provide free legal support. Most lawyers will want to meet with the occupiers before the action takes place.
- If at a university, find a lawyer who has some experience with university courts.

Have people fill out a legal release form and provide medical information beforehand, in case of arrest.

Have a legal support team:

- Have someone outside to note or record any abuse by police officers.
- Have someone at a landline to contact for jail support. Occupiers should write this number on their body.

We should have our IDs and change for the phone, but little else as it will be taken in the event of arrest

Know your rights:

- Do NOT say anything to police except your name, that you do not consent to any searches and that you will not speak until your lawyer is present.
- Resisting arrest raises the stakes. If a police officer stops you, ask if you are being detained. If you are not being detained, walk away.
- In California, concealing your identity while committing a crime raises the charge to a felony. If the mask has something written on it, it may be protected by the 1st amendment.

OUTSIDE SUPPORT: MEDICAL TEAM

Have assigned medics both inside and outside:

- Medics should know about the needs of specific individuals involved in the action beforehand (medications, allergies).

- They should have a medical aid kit. Bring with you:
Water, latex gloves, duct tape, band-aids, gauze and tape, hydrogen peroxide, neosporin, aspirin, benadryl, emergenC.

Wear or bring with you:

- Comfortable clothing, running shoes, long-sleeves, eye protection, clothes to change into.

Do NOT wear:

- Contact lenses, oil-based make-up, things which can be easily grabbed. Do not use tampons if you may end up in jail.

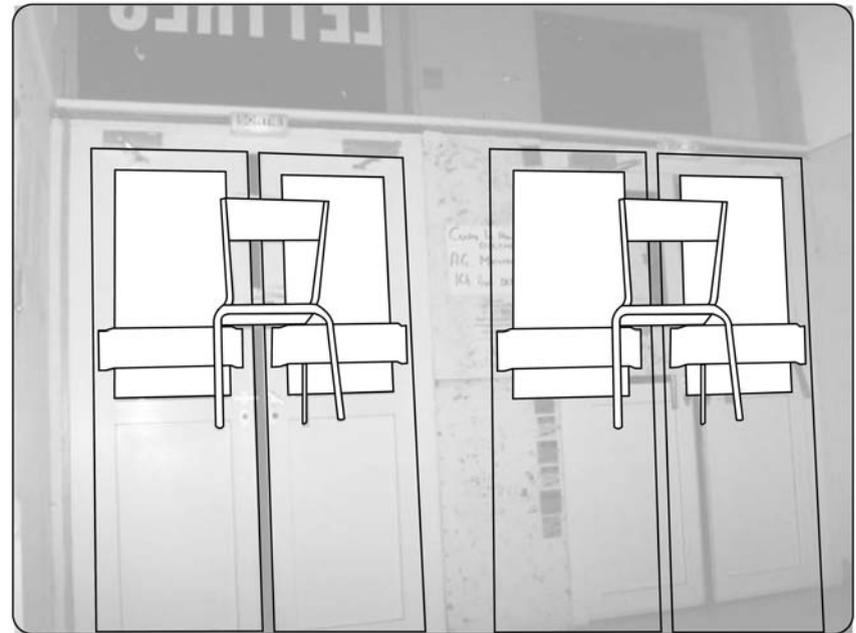
For pepper-spray: clean out eyes with a mixture of milk of magnesia and water.

For tear-gas: cover mouth with a cloth soaked in vinegar or water; use eye-protection.

OUTSIDE SUPPORT: MEDIA TEAM

This is not a symbolic action, but it is still important to have a media team. Have one or more people designated as media contacts, on the outside of the occupation:

- Remember to emphasize the media people as delegates, not representatives of those involved.
- Send articles to different news outlets; alternative media such as Indybay allows for self-publication of events.



Set up an email address and website associated with the occupation: make this information easily available.

- Do not use the email addresses of anyone involved in the action.

No particular individuals inside the occupation should become too visible, lest they be branded as leaders.

No one on the inside should give televised interviews, or any more information about themselves than is necessary.

Press Releases:

- Have an initial statement prepared before the occupation is announced.
- Pour out your feelings, but make sure you provide a reasoned explanation for what you are doing.
- Do not have an official line. Do not prevent people from expressing themselves in their own way.
- Have people on hand to make and distribute flyers keeping people informed about what you are doing.
- It is hard to do in the middle of it all, but write as much as possible about what you are doing. Keep a diary of daily twists and turns for posterity.

OTHER THINGS TO ORGANIZE:

Collect phone numbers to set up an emergency mass text-message in case of a police raid.

- Bringing supplies into the occupation:
- It is possible that you will be removed in the first few hours. Do not overpack.
- Bring some food, a lot of water, and medical supplies, but not much else.
- Pack extra locks and cables in case you need them.
- Bring a safe computer, in case police confiscate your supplies.

If you are successful, people can bring you extra supplies:

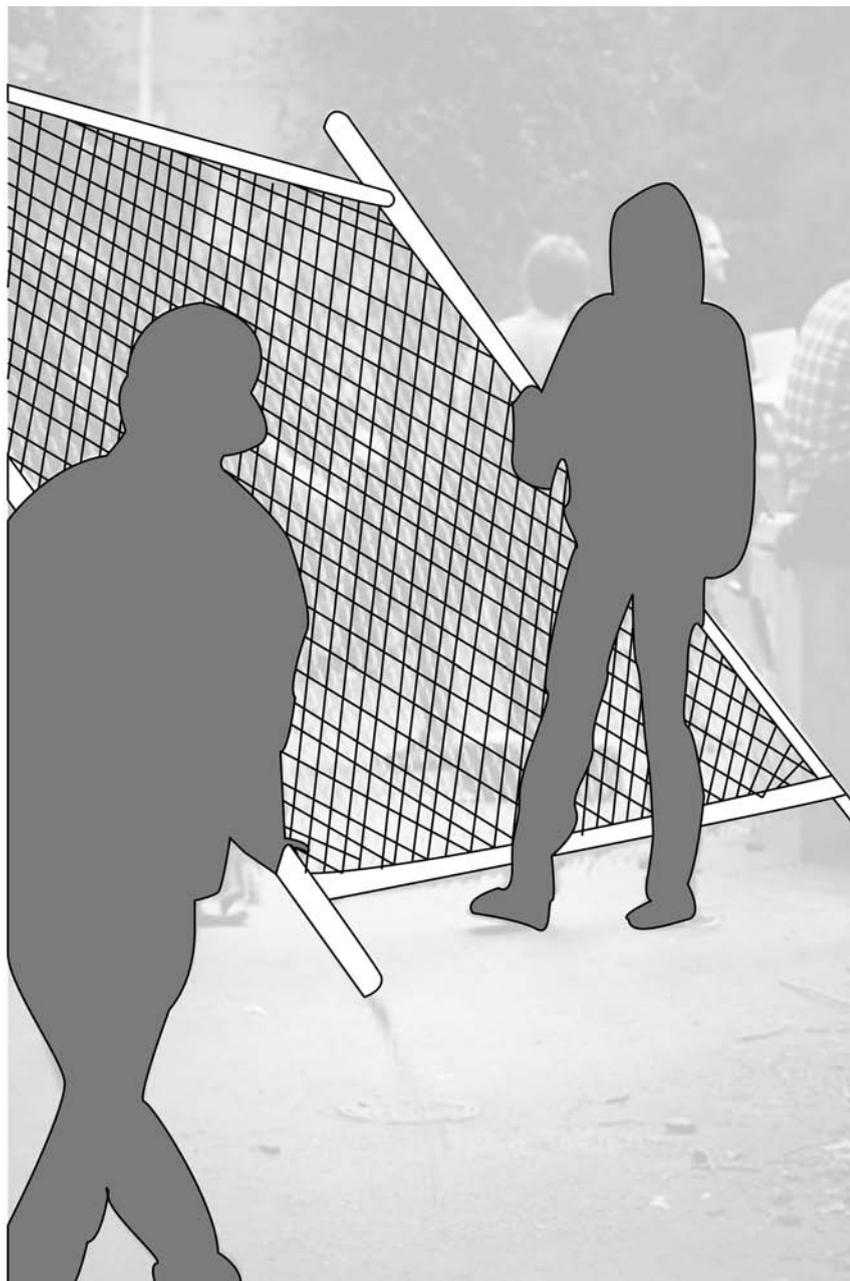
- Food, cigarettes, blankets, etc.

Share everything. Inside the occupation, there is no private property.

Break down barriers between people.

If possible, take pictures of building before you leave, for legal reasons.

No one on the inside should give televised interviews, or any more information about themselves than is necessary.







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