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Artists have been deeply engaged in occupations in the U.S., Europe, Canada, and Australia, as well as manifestations in Japan, Hong Kong, and Moscow. These occupations famously have drawn inspiration from the uprisings across the Arab world, especially in Tunisia and Egypt, driven by the frustration of the young educated middle classes—fairly new ones, confronting societies controlled by hugely rich ruling elites but with little hope of a secure future for themselves, despite their university educations. But that is not the whole story, only the one about thwarted expectations. Another story is about denied expectations, and yet another about none at all. In other words, it is about the rising middle class, modernizing elites, and the aspiring-to-middle-class members of the working class, and those who know they had no chance. (As is so often the case, it seems that food was the original spark, in Algeria.) I am talking about the ongoing and recent tuition revolts in Quebec, Chile, and the U.K.; about the movements in Spain and Greece, and the huge housing encampments spurred by an art student in Israel; about the working-class statehouse occupation and push-back in Madison, Wisconsin; and the earlier rebellion of the banlieues in France, and the teachers in Oaxaca. Obvious differences aside, Occupy protesters are aware of sharing conditions in this long-term global financial sinkhole that are functionally quite similar. To put it simply, they share an awareness that the future, which should be theirs, is manifestly in the hands of others, who have grabbed it with both fists.

Occupy seems to be in a direct line from the alt-globalization movement, including the World Social forums, but to have little connection to the antiwar movement of the past decade, for most of which it was difficult to get young people into the streets. I'm relieved not to have to explain the need to get out there en masse to people who were inclined to cynically dismiss mass protest as manifestly ineffective (hey, kids, that's what our elders told us back in the '60s, that it's the tactic of the past—it's over!), since the huge demonstrations in early 2003 didn't stop the war. It's exhilarating to see the mobilizations; but it's not so great to see the American ones refusing to also follow an electoral strategy just as we did back in the day. We also believed that (socialist) revolution was just around the corner, and refused to vote. I've changed my mind about voting (less painful than a dental visit, and takes less time too!), but why should they change theirs?

There hasn't been much of a vocal presence of the organized left in Occupy; the alt-globalization movement found its theoretical basis during the period when the end of the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc had removed the underpinnings of most of the left, organized and unorganized, while political movements refounded themselves in anarchism(s) and ecologies. But earlier generations of protesters, from the '60s movements whose biggest component was organized, from the left, against war and racism, quickly fell in with Occupy, greeting it as more than simply critically

necessary—as the biggest thing to happen in ages. (Feminist messages, however, still need to be relearned, it seems.) Labor, much straitened, supported Occupy as well. (Teachers and academics too.) Important differences between then and now account for the lower levels of animosity and rejection. In the Cold War 1960s and '70s a leading sector of organized labor, the Teamsters and building trades, as the representative of (white, male) patriotic manhood of real America—in Nixon's term, the silent majority—had prominently clashed with the mobilizations of the streets, identified as dirty fucking hippies and communists—and not without reason. This time around that doesn't play so well.

The movements of the 1960s were largely rejectionist: antinationalist and anticapitalist, and often antiurban, and some were insurrectionary. It was easy to organize opposition to them on the basis of appeals to traditional values: the same ones that engendered the political backlash driving Republican strategy to this day. But American flags are not burned but fly at Occupy camps as they have been at Tea Party rallies. Ex-soldiers have joined up, in uniform and not, as they did during and after Vietnam even though this time there was no draft: so much for the doctrine of the professional army.

In the '60s, the nation was fairly prosperous; wages were rising and many people were entering the middle class, defined economically for some and in terms of social position for others. Indeed, that was the last time all this could be said to be true, as wages have stagnated or dropped since then, and the economy is flat or cratering. People all over, including those unmotivated to become involved, recognize the issue as their own, and so far at least passersby clap and honk when Occupy mobilizes. The narrative is of saving the nation from the banksters: we are the 99%, both nationally and globally.

The summer of 2011 was a summer of rumbling discontent in the U.S., and there was already a New York encampment against budget cuts—Bloombergville, after the mayor, modeling itself on the Walkerville tent city in Wisconsin—and the convening of a group calling itself the New York General Assembly (NYGA). By the time *Adbusters*, that fancy artist/hipster magazine out of Canada, put out a call to occupy Wall Street, artists had already been meeting with theorists and activists nearby. Anarchist and anthropologist David Graeber, famously, is implicated in these events (well known in the alt-globalization mobilizations, he wrote articles in *Adbusters* before its call to occupy Wall Street, the epicenter of the financial crisis, asking, “If in Egypt, why not here?”), but not only he. Before the occupation proper, artists (including me) participated in late August of 2011 in a seminar on debt and the commons; presenters were Silvia Federici, George Caffentzis, and Graeber, who had just published his giant history of debt. Debt and theft were on everybody's minds. The seminar was held at 16 Beaver, the artist-run discursive space in the Wall Street district. In attendance were David Harvey and some Spanish *indignados/encampados*, as well as the Greek anarchist artist Georgia Sagri, who quickly formed a tactical alliance with Graeber, and they joined up with the NYGA on September 17, 2011, helping to introduce anarchist forms and procedures.

The artistic imagination continues to dream of historical agency. Artists, like other participants, wish to lend themselves to social transformation and utopian dreaming, but not necessarily within institutionalized frames. Unruly for quite a few centuries now, artists are perpetually chafing against the dead hand of society, the mechanistic juggernaut of mass destruction that Surrealists saw in modern industrial society, with its hypercapitalist alienation and exploitation. We can see the Occupation activists as setting up a new public sphere, demanding the rein-statement of politics by refusing to simply present demands to representative governments and instead enacting democracy, challenging institutions of exploitation, and making theater out of procedure. Artists have a reputation for being difficult to organize, but there is always a sector ready to organize itself around a cause, an activity, an action—perhaps not anarchistic but anarcho-syndicalist? This is a good time for that. It is not simply as image makers and symbol wranglers that artists have chosen their means of participation but also as organizers, occupiers, strategizers, publicizers, spokespeople, working-group members, and librarians.

Artists are also always disposed to point to the deceptions and shortcomings of those whom they appear to serve—the 1%, in present terms—and perhaps like all unruly servants, especially the ones who feel they could do a much better job of running things, they have plans for changing the world. I plan to be there.