

## *Communiqué from an Absent Future* Further Discussion (Round One)

I recently posted Research & Destroy's *Communiqué from an Absent Future* on this blog. The manifesto, circulated during the recent University of California walkout, has been generating a lot of online discussion.

I thought it might be useful to try to continue that discussion in a more, uh, "organized" manner...one that would free it from the sort of tit-for-tat exchanges that happen in listserv debates and within the confines of blog/Facebook comment boxes (though, of course, I encourage comments to this post).

I talked to one of the *Communiqué's* authors, and to Brian Holmes (who wrote, I thought, a very interesting response to the manifesto), and to folks involved with the New School occupation. Together, we came up with three questions, based on reservations about and critiques of the *Communiqué* we'd seen circulated online.

So, here's how the discussion will happen:

Round One, below, will be three sets of responses to the questions we came up with: one a collective response from Research and Destroy, one a collective response from Dead Labor (the aforementioned New School occupiers), and an individual response from Brian Holmes (who is one of the organizers of the "Continental Drift Seminar").

Round Two, which will be posted in a week or two, will be everyone's responses to the first round of responses.

These are the three questions folks were asked to answer:

1) Whaddya mean the management class is being proletarianized!?! Isn't this somehow an insult/misrecognition regarding the REAL proletariat?

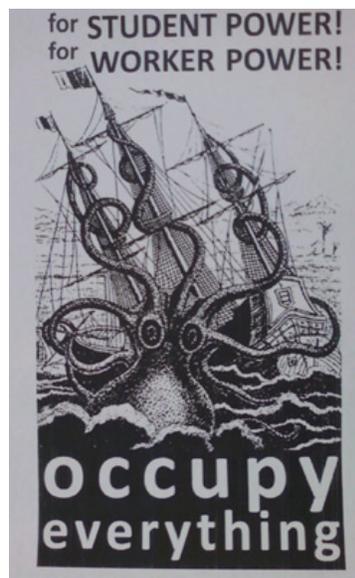
2) Does addressing the university student as the potential revolutionary subject get us closer to revolution? How? How not?

3) What would a non-reformist goal for a university be, if one exists?

Let the games begin!

Best,

charles



## RESEARCH & DESTROY RESPONSE

*1) Whaddya mean the management class is being proletarianized!?! Isn't this somehow an insult/misrecognition regarding the REAL proletariat?*

The R&D communiqué seems to have provoked skepticism with the brief passage, “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.” Against misreading, perhaps we should say that the crisis of the university is the crisis of the reproduction of the capital-labor relationship. Classes are a relation; when we talk about capital and labor we mean the poles of this relation in motion, not a series of rigid sociological categories with, say, the right amount or right kind of immiseration. The current crisis of profitability, for example, is not just a crisis of and for capitalists; it goes to every point in the social grid.

Whether or not one thinks of the places traditionally reserved for university graduates—the professional, the technician, the manager—as middle-class or some privileged fraction of the working-class, the university has no existence save by relationship to work and future work prospects. Even if one thinks narrowly of the true proletariat as unskilled manual laborers, such a group still remains the other of the university: the truth of class society from which university entrants seek immunity or escape. By serving as a real or imagined sorting system, the university (and like organs of class reproduction) assists in the perpetuation not only of the working-class but all classes.

This is precisely what has begun to decompose. Close to half of university graduates work in unskilled and service-sector occupations for which their degrees are entirely unnecessary. Those who do find employment in the technical, professional, and managerial occupation discover that decades of routinization and labor-market oversupply have nullified the advantage of these positions. Computer programming becomes data-entry, so-called “middle”-management positions nothing more than routinized clerical work. As manufacturing jobs departed with the high industrial era, it was precisely these other positions to which capital shifted its attention, attempting, rather desperately, to save on labor costs in a local-global competition—managing the managers so that they, in turn, might hector and superexploit the inferiors they were made to fear becoming. No doubt the university continues to reproduce a (shrinking) class of elites. The broad lines, however, are clear: a university degree is now as mythical a form of

security as the value of a home in 2006. This myth forms, in part, the object of our researches, of our destructions.

There's no need to overread "capital no longer needs us as workers." We understand that there is no capital without the extraction of surplus-value from workers: capitalism is nothing but this extraction in motion. But capital now casts about wildly in its attempts to find new pools of accumulation: it cannot valorize itself to the degree it would like, and many workers find themselves without the dubious but nonetheless necessary benefits of such exploitation. The annihilation visited on the manufacturing sectors has leapt to the fields of work that can't be compressed through labor-saving mechanization. There is nowhere for capital to turn but to the intensification of labor, the harrying of workers, managerial mechanics. Yes, capital will find use for some of us; many will find little or no employment. This is not to say that the college graduates inhabit the same place in the structure as the most immiserated workers—in both objective and subjective terms the composition of the working-class exhibits great variety. Solidarity means recognizing these differences in relation; it means a revolutionary program with the will to destroy them. . .

*2) Does addressing the university student as the potential revolutionary subject get us closer to revolution? How? How not?*

It remains opaque to us why one would *not* address the student as a potential revolutionary subject. The exploitation on which the current relations of production depend is immanent: it passes through walls and hours. If there is some idea, within or without the porous borders of the university, that life there is in some way exempt from the logic of capital, that the university is not indeed a forcing house for that logic, well, this is an illusion that should be directly confronted. That's likely the best reason to address the university student—as recognition of capital's true success in the recent epoch, which is to have successfully insinuated itself into every minute, every conversation and every dream.

The university with its ceremonial robes still holds on to something of the medieval—a distant whiff of the guild, with its masters, apprentices, stock boys. It is no doubt a challenge to persuade professors, graduate and undergraduate students to identify themselves as part of a larger class of labor. No doubt this is in part because each occupies a visibly different place in the matrix of the exploited, and some are more rewarded than others for their participation. This failure of class consciousness, this blindness to base material conditions, is a *description of*

*the problem* that exists at all strata—not a reason to look elsewhere for problems.

Do students have a peculiar or novel position in this problem of consciousness, of self-identification within the matrix of capital and its possible overcoming? Yes and no—an answer that goes for almost every group among the exploited. Let us imagine the student who indeed goes four years entirely free from wage labor: that nearly extinct case, the *pure student*, who exists largely in the idealizations of the idiot bourgeois, and in the resentment of some few representatives of the immiserated industrial proletariat of North America whom, having failed to realize themselves as a revolutionary class, now would bar the doors of their historic defeat.

The novel role of these “pure students” (as representatives of the problem at hand) is not that they are free from wage exploitation for four idyllic years. It is that they are the subject of an epochal historical bargain. No mass of surplus value will be extracted for these four years—on promise that the training received therein will allow correspondingly greater value extraction over the following fifty. They are, in short, a personification (complete with skateboard and laptop) of capital’s widespread wager on relative as against absolute surplus value. Allowing greater historical specificity, they are the burgeoning subclass conjured by late capital’s increasing dependence on technologies of management—including managerial bodies—to defer its own crisis.

So what is not novel, not peculiar? That, en route to refusal and insurrection, students are easily bought off. Less easily than unions, in some formal sense of negotiation (if there is one lesson to learn from 1968, it is this); more easily, in that it is easier to purchase a student with an abstraction like *democracy* or *peace*. Everyone has their price. Correspondingly, everyone is a potential subject of the logic of price, and of its undoing...

3) *What would a non-reformist goal for a university be, if one exists?*

This question is hard to answer, because we can’t extract universities from the world around them. We can’t take individual universities and re-make them along communist lines, as though they could function as oases in the desert. This is a bit like trying to “free” workers by re-making individual workplaces into workers’ cooperatives. While businesses that are co-managed on a democratic basis by workers, who also divide the profits, may have certain advantages for those who work there, they are in no meaningful way moving beyond capitalism—they must make a profit in order to survive, they must pay for rent and equipment,

and all the workers must make a wage that allows them to pay for all of the costs of survival. In a society in which the vast majority of people must spend most of their lives selling their labor for a wage, educational institutions will necessarily be places of social reproduction, places that train people to work. None of the possibilities for transforming the university within capitalism are able to overcome this problem.

The most commonly heard goal on the left for the university is the goal of accessibility—that is, making higher education free and available to all people. While we certainly agree that this kind of transformation would allow people from poor or disadvantaged backgrounds to compete more easily against wealthier people in the job market, it does not change the basic fact that people would still be forced to compete for the ability to work. In fact as more people get bachelors' degrees, what we find is not a decrease in wealth inequality but a decrease in the worth of the degree, to the point where now to compete for many jobs degree holders must go back to school for more training.

The other goal for the university sometimes discussed in radical circles is the goal of a space where “real” learning can take place, in a mode that is either explicitly radical or at least in opposition to the values of a society based on wage labor. Those who take this position usually cite the importance of the Arts and Humanities as disciplines that play a central role in fostering human creativity, teaching critical thinking, and transmitting knowledge about the world. They point out that these disciplines are under attack and sometimes call for the creation of an autonomous “people’s” university operated by teachers and students, where learning will trump profit as a guiding principle. Of course we agree about the value of creativity and critical thought. However, any university that operated along these lines would quickly become irrelevant to the vast majority of people who need an education that provides them with a better chance of finding work. It would be useful only to those who aim to translate the cultural capital acquired through training in the Arts and Humanities into jobs in the culture industry or to those who are independently wealthy.

The honest answer to the question about a non-reformist goal for a university is that our world is structured in such a way as to make radical change within one sphere impossible. Only by dismantling the whole can we hope to produce institutions that actually provide for people’s needs in a meaningful way. In other words, focusing on the university as a site of radical transformation is a mistake. The real value of university struggles is not their ability to transform the university, but their potential to draw attention to the interrelations between the

reproductive and productive spheres. As students begin to articulate themselves as workers and future workers, the mythology around the university starts to dissipate and the separation between students and workers begins to disappear.

A non-reformist approach to the university must expose what universities really are: institutions that reproduce the workforce, that is, that train and educate people to become workers, depending upon the particular needs of the economy at any given moment; and workplaces in their own right, employing teachers, staff, and service workers. We must also demonstrate that movements for university reform take the wrong position at a critical historical moment, a moment of capitalist crisis. Harkening back to a time of generous government spending on public needs is the wrong strategy when the public purse is shrinking rapidly. Instead of trying desperately to show how the government can meet our needs, we should use the opportunity to show how it *can't* meet our needs—to demonstrate capitalism's inherent instability and its inability to provide for people. The system is faltering, and instead of trying to get it working smoothly again we need to aid its demise.

Instead of thinking of the university as our goal, we should see it as the means to an end: a useful place that can help us in our struggle against capitalism by exposing many of the contradictions inherent in the system as a whole. The university is simply one of many sites where these contradictions become concentrated—like workplaces, schools, prisons, and neighborhoods. We analyze a part to shed light on the whole. The most important thing is to demonstrate the university's relationship to all of these other sites. Once these connections are made then university struggles blend more easily into other struggles in workplaces and communities. Strikes and expropriations (such as occupations) can be ways of demonstrating these connections. Taking over a university is really just taking over private property and collectivizing it—just like any property anywhere else in society. The point is to show that the university doesn't belong just to the students who attend classes there or the individual workers who are employed there, but to all of the working class.

As for the role of universities in a free society, I think most of us at R&D agree that they will not exist. Learning and teaching will take place in very different modes, based on people's varied needs and desires. But we think these modes will emerge through the process of communisation, as people begin to experiment with new social forms, and can't be prescribed now.

## BRIAN HOLMES RESPONSE

I want to take these questions in a different order, or all at once. To address students as revolutionaries is to address them as equals, right now not later. It's the best way of recognizing the long implosion of middle-class status that the financial crisis has suddenly thrust in our faces: "We are all going bankrupt," says the communiqué from the second Santa Cruz occupation. Addressing students as revolutionaries asks the question, it possible to depose the people who run things this way?

Bankruptcy is a powerful word. It drains the belief from an institution the way news of an accident drains the blood from your face. At last, some disbelief. With tuition practically doubling, job markets plunging, health care non-existent for huge amounts of people, and flexible contracts getting more coercive by the day, it's right to say that proletarianization is haunting the student population, and that's what comes off clearest in the *Communiqué from an Absent Future*. I especially like the cynical realism: it hits people where they are, it's perfect. But words like "proletarian" or "working class" will never catch the aspirations of people going to school, they have a lot more to lose than their chains. What they have to lose are the potentials, the life chances, offered by the social state. Face it, people want something from the state! The budget cuts break the promise, that's what hurts, that's what makes people angry. "Occupy everything" is a great response, not because it's the total appropriation of everyday life here and now—that's overblown and it's an illusion—but because occupation is a political "No!" that draws a line and proves that a fight is essential. What's needed is to stop the neoliberal machine from privatizing everything, which can only be done by a break, a frontal opposition that wrenches everyone out of their ruts and opens up new chances, puts the whole social deal back on the table. The bankruptcy of the system reveals its potential value, and at the same time, its actual ruin by the elites who are creating a society that no one else wants to live in.

The question is, how to make the break? The radical point of the *Communiqué* is to avoid useless negotiation that only delays the inevitable. And it's effective. But you better also avoid empty radicalism that only touches a small and easily neutralizable group. Here's the paradox: passion is essential, the rhetoric of insurrection is good for sparking it, the experience of revolt is fundamental and it changes your life—but the riot never lasts for more than a few days. And the

problems are immensely bigger than the rhetoric can encompass. No one should forget that the management plans that are being imposed, and the financial engineering behind them, are typical products of the university itself, which is the laboratory of neoliberalism and one of its most powerful institutions, it's hardly slated to disappear in some catastrophic collapse. To oppose those techniques and to depose the people behind them is going to require, not the abandonment of the institution, but its complete refashioning, which would have to be done by strong currents of internal and external subversion. The aim is rational and affective reshaping, changing the feel and the very logic of the place. It's not about reform, it's about transforming the institution that fabricates social beings, with their subjectivity and their knowledge and their technical skills. If we don't transform it, the current brand of dominant subjectivity is gonna stay in power and set up lots more police. But the question is how to get people to make the change, when in fact, so many interest groups are profiting from the situation as it is, while others are trying to hang on to their status quo, and still others are too scared or just too dazed to mobilize. Invocations of early twentieth-century struggles are not going to do the trick. Marx did not live through the 1930s and there is no analysis in *Capital* of the class structure produced by the social state, let alone the perverse twists that neoliberalism has given it. '68 already failed on outdated schemas and slogans. With the same starting points, this time will be no different. You have to begin with all the complexity of real life, and get the people living it to push it much further.

The specter of bankruptcy has shocked the ones who thought they could hang on to their current positions, the professors I mean. What they need to do—and to be forced to do—is publicly recognize that that they are losing their old liberal dream of the university, even while the students are slipping massively towards a precarious existence that has nothing to do with the subjects they came to study. I would say, the revolutionary strategy is getting a fraction of the profs to radicalize. That will send a lot more students over the line, don't you think? It will take a three-sector alliance—the precarious students and contract faculty, the service workers of the university, and the full professors threatened in both their pocketbook and their sense of mission—to stand up to all the other interest groups who, so far, have been the winners. The *Communiqué* pushes mainly towards the affects of fear and refusal of exclusion, it doesn't show how knowledge and cooperation become a weapon. I'd say, go for critique in action, occupy everything you can, but start opening up perspectives for a more complex resistance.

After the RNC protests in St Paul in '08 and similar paramilitary abuses at the recent G20 meeting in Pittsburgh, what's missing are ideas about how to develop

a radical struggle in a country that's set up such an extreme repressive apparatus. We need non-violent techniques for direct action, fresh arguments for the right to dissent by professors and political figures, a mobilization of legal support, and, at the same time as all that, a refusal of the procedural limits that make the repressive system into its own tautology, allowing only the kinds of debates that insure its own reproduction. Movements are strong when they have lots of openings. In France these days, small coteries of people whisper about what's happening in the countryside, in Tarnac, the coming insurrection. But the huge social movements of which those people form one interesting part require cooperation among many different levels of society. They are based in a continuous analysis of legislative, legal, and economic changes, along with a cultural production of counter-values and ways of reimagining the common, the public sphere, solidarity and social rights. In America we lack outbursts of revolt and sustained movements in order to overcome the enforced paralysis that has kept such ideas from getting anywhere near the mainstream over the last thirty years. For that we have to radicalize the universities, which is why I think this movement is so important.

Nothing is gonna happen in a day, or in one single social situation either. The rot in the system is deep and the neoliberal rationality is still convincing for large numbers of people. If we are lucky and some initial battles are won at UC, still there is going to be a need for longer-term strategies that can give intellectuals—read: revolutionaries—a role in society again. That also requires forming serious groups off campus, and outside the career fixation that sucks away most of the time and energy of people getting their degrees, publishing their papers, and looking at their navels in the complicated and submissive ways that people are trained for in the universities, and particularly in the humanities. It's amazing how effective that training is, to the point where nobody seems to have any materialist curiosity anymore. Few intellectuals today have much of a grasp of how society functions in its deadly complexity. Neither outdated Marxist categories nor even brilliant riffs on Situationist insurrectionalism are gonna give anyone that understanding, the knowledge of how to subvert the system. How does a revolutionary go about changing the wills of engineers, scientists, accountants, doctors, entertainers, politicians—or at least, of young people who aspire to become those things, but also see the dead-ends of society as it is?

Some answers to that question were already learned in the counter-globalization movements, and the existence of free-software networks is proof of the possibility to transform the technical basis of life in the overdeveloped societies. Now the reality of climate change is making larger numbers of people aspire to that kind of transformation. By studying how things work, by going

out to other groups in society and getting their perspectives, by finding out their economic and technical problems as well as their cultural and affective ones, we could build a capacity to bring new agendas into the university system and also out into the population at large. This process points a way out of the bubble, a way to live outside the incredible complacency that has been the inflexible rule in America in these past years and decades. Continental Drift and the other groups I am collaborating with are made to do that, it's an anti-zombification strategy, a way to prolong the autonomy of thought and emotion that's gained in struggles and street demonstrations. The point is to create social sites where that kind of autonomy can root and ramify and gain resistance over time, to form a real common sense in the face of decay and deepening problems. That's why I came back to America from Europe, because there seems to be some possibility to do that here, now that the major swindles of the last thirty years are finally bankrupt. So anyway, there's my two bits on the three questions, hope there was something useful.

## DEAD LABOR RESPONSE

1) *Whaddya mean the management class is being proletarianized!?! Isn't this somehow an insult/misrecognition regarding the REAL proletariat?*

To speak of a distinct class of managers, whose function may arguably be facilitating the integration of the proletariat in response to its periodic intensified contradictions, is to run the risk of reducing the dynamic processes of *proletarianization* and *mediation* into fixed, sociological categories. Undoubtedly, this obscures the historical development, qualitative diffusion and generalization of the compulsion to sell one's labor power.

What cannot be ignored however is the fact that the great bureaucracies of the 20th century have had their final gasps of air, both with the lucidity of their illusions, as well as their prominence in neutralizing and circumscribing class struggle. Their only recourse has been to recede into an image of themselves for the vultures of empirical analysis.

Thus, what is lost in such a point of departure is the understanding that the process of proletarianization is precisely that of mediation; the mediation between subject and object, individual and social, thought and practice, all of which become mangled and reconfigured through the intermediate of capital.

The superior question would be to inquire into the methods by which the proletariat itself produces generalized self-management as the object of capital. It is here that the proletariat emerges strictly as a form, the drive to sell labor power, with varying content, to the ultimate evasion of the metaphysician. Immediately, the notion of a more authentic or "real" proletariat dissolves upon an abstract equalization in which its only "real" expression derives from the contradiction between self-valorizing value and labor power. Archaic questions and inquiries into the "real" proletariat only divert analysis of proletarianization into a petrified and glorified object, finding refuge in its preservation that aims for an emancipation without self-abolition, ultimately deepening class society.

However, in order for the proletariat to combat its own existence as a class, and thus dissolve existing conditions *in general*, its only recourse is to proceed from its *particular* relation to both the productive and reproductive processes, and from the social categories to which these processes provide expression. This

entails calling into question all fractions of proletarian existence, from the circuits of both the production and reproduction of capital. The latter, defined with a particular relation to the production process whereby capital is not necessarily generated, but rather provided social lubrication and logical adherence for global production processes, still demonstrates the qualities of the productive proletariat merely in the exchange of their labor power with a capital engaged in the sphere of production. Thus, the notion of the proletariat is not limited to those who toil strictly within the productive process or exist as a uniform assemblage without its own specified mediums, features, or echelons. Instead, the proletariat resides precisely in the contradictions of productive labor that structure society *as a whole*.

This perspective further renders the proletariat as an *a priori* socioeconomic category stale and useful only to the extent that its specified categorical forms are utilized for its further integration with capital. If one were to pay recognition to the proletarianization of what may vulgarly be identified as a “management class,” it is only in the hope of elucidating the contradictions between labor and capital as diffuse and without regard to traditional class narratives, instead constituting various modes and dynamics of exploitation both within the productive and reproductive spheres. Anything less perpetuates the notion of class as an exterior constraint to the proletariat’s self-abolition.

2) *Does addressing the university student as the potential revolutionary subject get us closer to revolution? How? How not?*

No. The only revolutionary subject we acknowledge in the present is capital. Capital constantly revolutionizes our activities, our wants, our needs. The revolution within and against the revolution of capital will be done by its objects. The name given to that particular object of capital which produces value through its living labor has historically been called the *proletariat*. This object, because its activity is the most direct expression of capital, has the potential to negate it. Why? Because the proletariat is a *function* of capital, and hence, in interrupting itself, it interrupts the function of capital as well. This does not produce revolution or communism, only insurrection, the gap in which the possibility of nonalienated life can be asked meaningfully, truthfully. Insurrection, the horizon and limit of our potential antagonistic activity today, poses the material possibilities in which communism can be achieved. But from insurrection to communism, there is no common term. We do not impose our view of how that rupture between the two

will take place, we can only narrate the history of its attempted failures.

In the present moment, the question of the proletariat wanders aimlessly amongst the population. Neither here nor there, its nominal absence reveals its material omnipresence. Only that which can no longer be identified has been fully diffused. The great potential to valorize *all activities* is the common project of humanity today; it is our collective identity, our global home. From the standpoint of capital, there is no longer any difference between making a television show and watching a television show. They are both congealed modes of dead labor which offer up statistics to be interpreted for the further intensification of capital into life. In other words, objective proletarian functions have been extended to the population at large, and along with it, subjective proletarian conditions attach themselves. The former case means we are *always working*, and the latter means we are *always alienated*. From the proletariat to proletarianized life, this is the history of our present.

Granted such a situation, the university student is in no way outside the circuits of exploitation and alienation. But neither is the video artist, the drug dealer, the internet addict, the zine maker, the dumpster diver, the guerrilla gardener, the social critic, the radical publisher, the anti-capitalist organizer, the train hopper, the bank robber, the co-op manager. All these jobs of modern life are exactly that, jobs. A job is no longer what is done in return for a wage, it is rather what is done to acquire the means of existence, and this is exactly what capital seeks to incorporate into its accounting books.

The need of a constantly emerging revolutionary subject for its theories chases the Marxist ideologue over the entire surface of the globe: the French communards, the German industrial working class, the Russian soviets, the white American machinist, the black American urbanite, the nationalist revolutionary in the third world, the postcolonial subaltern, the unwaged female, *ad infinitum*.

Never has addressing any of these as *the* potential revolutionary subject gotten us any closer to revolution. In fact, by ignoring the totalizing nature of capitalism as a social system, attempts to concentrate on particular social actors have served only to fracture the coherency of revolutionary critique and impede its negative function.

The university student does not exist in isolation. What is higher education if not training for a life of wage labor? Gone are the days when attendance at university was an ascetic phase for the sons of the ruling class, an initiation into the upper echelons of capitalist society. Nowadays, students often work before and during their college years. After school they will be ejected into the “free market”

for labor power to toil their lives away, gifted with a hefty debt burden. Even the process of learning, such as it exists today, is steeped in neoliberal ideology and geared towards fostering docility and compliance.

To separate the university student from the worker is to separate the what-is-becoming from the what-will-be. This wholly ignores the ways in which capitalist social relations are reproduced. In this era, our enemy has subsumed the greater parts of our lives. The prevailing mode of production requires a social factory where all sectors of society are enlisted (often unpaid) in reproducing capitalist social relations. The university student is no exception.

When workers withdraw their labor, when students block their universities, when the unemployed loot their stores, when the youth burn their neighborhoods—and when this is done *all in relation to each other*—we call them the the proletariat. Nothing unites them but a collective disgust with their lives under capital, a disgust expressed not in political terms, but in practical refusal. The proletariat is the anti-political subject that knows itself by destroying itself. Destroying itself, it clears away all the shit of a society built on its labor and consumption.

This name, *proletariat*, must be divorced from its usual, narrow definition. How can we talk seriously of revolutionary potential without including unions of the unemployed in revolutionary Spain, militant communist women's groups during Italy's Hot Autumn, or the revolutionary students of May 1968? It is not up to us to address them. It is the entirety of the expropriated, inside and outside the workplace, that must address *itself*.

The university student is not the potential revolutionary subject. It is but a reflection of its own future and, like the whole of the proletariat, it is a subject that can only reach its potential through self-abolition. This is our goal, this is our struggle.

### *#3: What is a non-reformist goal for a University?*

There is no non-reformist goal for a university. Until capital ends, all our goals become means of furthering its value. This does not, however, make the process of achieving them less worthwhile.

An alternative to having reformist or non-reformist goals is to have revolution. But if 1) revolution is understood as a violent resolution of the historic contradictions in a given society, 2) the revolution of the global proletariat entails the final struggle of humans against themselves as alienated beings, then a struggle

which aims at overcoming reformism must seek to reveal the conditions in which the contradictions of history culminate such that *any* further goal is impossible outside of ending alienated life in its totality. In this explosive situation any reformist goal of *détente* is impossible. This situation sets up the ultimate “goal”, though we have surely been forced down this path more so than we would like to admit.

Furthermore, universities are not revolutionary subjects. Universities are ancient hierarchical institutions which are symptomatic of class society and have preserved themselves with great success for centuries. The university is so entrenched in the past and separated from the outside world that it is only in the past 60 years or so that it has taken on the aspects of a bourgeois revolution. Only recently have universities, at least in the most advanced sectors of capitalist society, been open to workers; the privatization process is a part of this revolution, the turn towards training and craft and the proletarianization of professors and students alike are mature products of this historic change. Any revolutionary path at this stage must lead outside of the university.

As we mentioned in our response to question #2, only the totality of the proletariat, the vast majority of humanity, has revolutionary potential, certainly not an alienated institution like a university. University students however can initiate the expansion of struggle and help proliferate the revolutionary condition.

The ultimate “goal,” if we must assume a normative stance, or better, the result which can lead from this particular decadent historical situation of the proletariat’s university students is best characterized as the will of living labor to abolish itself in the struggle for a liberated social totality.

Talk of reformist and non-reformist goals are uninteresting and blind to the fluidity of resistance. The question is not of this binary, but of the tactical and strategic moves which may bring us closer to the abolition of the university, the destruction of that which divides us, and the integration of all that remains.

Given our “goal,” it is simple to presume that the authorities, *ipso facto*, have zero legitimacy. What will be won in the final analysis must be taken. Taken with a combination of force and cunning.

Yes, our ultimate “goal” is presupposed in this conversation. For reasons of tactics and strategy, what may crudely be termed as reformist positions may be taken up—indeed, even with great enthusiasm—for reasons of delay and relationship-building. But instead of the old Leftist strategy of winning reforms so as to strengthen ourselves, we know that the most advanced struggles today are those in which we win without winning anything commensurable within the

system; we win but realize there really are no victors in this game. So long as the final “aim” is neither cast aside nor given secondary status, this method is acceptable.

What is interesting is how this can be done. A singularity of unflinching force is beyond our present means and conditions, so standing toe-to-toe with those against whom we are positioned is not the immediate solution. While passion and honesty would have us occupy everything right now without a single demand to authorities, the generalized situation of immanent crisis is not as urgent among all our fellow proletarians, so this cannot be our only move.

Delay: in both New School occupations, negotiations, issue-driven banners and liberalisms were embraced in order to feign cooperation and moderation while more endgoal-appropriate methods were explored. This delay led to the realization of the situation as unsustainable without the expansion of our occupation or the intensification of social conflict.

Coordination: resistance is nothing if not fluid. Those who begin the fight as liberals today may become, through struggle, comrades against the commodity tomorrow. There is no classroom like the field of social antagonism. Indeed, many at The New School were radicalized by the first occupation—the limitless possibilities breaching what was previously off-limits to the individual’s purview. Understanding the capacity for change within an individual in the context of an antagonistic moment, it may be wise to stand by the hoisting of the reformist banner in order to grow with potential comrades.

There will be no rest until the social sleep is broken. How we wake is the only relevant interrogation.