



RADICAL CAMPUS POWER

The Revolutionary University: Remembering “Communiqué from an Absent Future”

Recently, Antifa’s presence on campus—militantly battling fascistic speakers and influences—has given rise to key questions. How can we continue to radicalize the university? How can we turn it into an engine for revolutionary experimentation and coordination on a mass scale?

To answer these questions, one of the most important things we can do is to retrieve from the past the revolutionary ideas and practices that can help show us the radical possibilities housed within the present moment.

The university has long been the site of radical dreams and experiments. Well before Antifa’s front-and-center organizing against the fascism of the Trump regime and its lackeys, France’s universities erupted in May ’68; the German student group SDS (Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund) aimed to transform West German universities into “laboratories” for a revolutionary council democracy[1], and universities played a key role in the downfall of the apartheid regime in South Africa.

“Communiqué from an Absent Future” belongs to this radical tradition. Written by Research and Destroy in 2009, it offers a devastating critique of the neoliberalized university that is the hallmark of American higher education today. The university is being gutted; but if the university was *always* a factory to produce disciplined managers and workers, R&D notes that that role has only become more blatant

and more intolerable in the midst of a financial meltdown in which the compensatory promise of upward mobility is evaporating.

But the “Communiqué” also offers a powerful vision of the possibilities contained in the university system’s crisis. It argues not for that system’s reform—it is not part of a struggle to make the university “great again”—but its transformation.

““ 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. [...]

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

neighborhoods, and slums. All of our futures are linked, and so our movement will have to join with these others, bre[a]ching the walls of the university compounds and spilling into the streets. [...]

[W]e 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.

Under the right conditions, disillusioned students, exploited contingent as well as sympathetic tenured faculty, and campus workers can combine with radical results. These forces can, and must, connect with others' struggles as well if they are to become revolutionary.

[1] Münster, Arno, *Ernst Bloch: Eine Politische Biographie* (Hamburg, CEP Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 2012), 346.

Antifa on a Conservative Campus: Possibilities

Recently, we've seen powerful Antifa actions on college campuses like Berkeley and the University of Virginia striking back against emboldened white supremacists and fascists. We've also seen how crucial Antifa is on college campuses after neo-Nazis like Richard Spencer proclaimed they are targeting colleges as recruiting-grounds.

But what if you're on a conservative or even reactionary campus? This situation poses special challenges for Antifa. It may be difficult to find anything beyond a small group willing to mobilize against fascism and its roots in the white supremacy, misogyny, and imperialism central to capitalist society. And activists confront not only widespread apathy, but also the real possibility of backlash from both administrators and many other students and faculty. The threat to contingent faculty is especially great. The situation can seem hopeless.

Still, there is great value in cultivating a radical Antifa presence on conservative campuses. In this post, I point out that importance by drawing on my own experiences as part of a small Antifa group on a conservative campus. And I start to assemble a list of other, further radical possibilities beyond those we explored. I hope, then, this reflection could be helpful to people in similar situations.

1. Some background: Villanova and the Charles Murray Action

Villanova University is a notoriously conservative school. Many students in its overwhelmingly white and upper-class student body vocally support the Trump administration (with “Make America Great Again” signs and parties, and an endorsement of Trump in the college paper, e.g.). It was in this context that white supremacist physical violence erupted on campus. Two of my own students of color mentioned to me the fear they felt for their safety on campus.

Villanova has also been openly hostile to progressive activism. For instance, one contingent faculty-person in our group—Nova Resistance—was explicitly threatened with being fired for another, very benign and non-disruptive, organizing project on campus. In recent years, Villanova administrators rescinded a speaking invitation to a queer activist.

We formed Nova Resistance to disrupt an invited talk by the white supremacist, anti-worker, and misogynist pseudo-intellectual Charles Murray in March 2017. In the lead-up to the event, two of us had tried to create a large faculty and student action; they were either ignored or met with anemic, sanctimonious arguments for “free speech” or “boycotting.”

In the days prior, one of us hung very simple posters across campus to call for resistance. We distributed it by slipping it secretly inside the student newspaper and taping it across many campus buildings. Nova Resistance officially met for the first time only hours before the event began. Members made signs, and made a plan for the action. Some of us were very new to more disruptive, small-group tactics.

By the day of the talk, we were only a handful of activists, with at least one person coming from off-campus. The event was heavily guarded many hours before. A police helicopter circled overhead; campus swarmed with armed police carrying many thousands of dollars of military-style equipment; there were numerous conspicuous undercover

cops; and so on. The talk was to be held in a secure basement location on campus with very limited seating—obviously chosen because it is the building that houses campus security. Moreover, we discovered that, in addition to campus police, the university paid some \$15,000 to hire the police force from Radnor Township. Clearly, administrators were spooked by the ghost of Middlebury.

Four made it into the crowded event, while a few others remained outside to prepare for a protest and teach-in after our eventual ejection. As soon as Murray took the stage, two from Nova Resistance stormed the front of the event, blocking the projector screen with a banner. The plan was for the two to stage a silent action during the event while a banner and signs were held to under-cut the talk. Others were to create an increasing disruption of ridiculous noises, cheers, heckling, etc., all as a way of interrupting and hopefully halting the talk.

Almost immediately, the two of us who were standing at the front were accosted by belligerent audience members. One person in the reserved seats in the front row—neither security nor a talk organizer—grabbed the shirt of one of us and seemed nearly on the verge of punching him. The talk’s faculty organizer, as well as an unaffiliated, liberal professor, approached the two Nova Resistance members at the front, trying to convince them to cease the disruption. Another member of our direct action team went to the front of the room with the other two.

Fairly quickly amid these confrontations, one of the three activists at the front began more disruptively yelling about Murray’s fascistic ideology, the school’s implication in it, and so on (departing from the group’s plan of silence). However, the activists refused to engage directly with the attempts at heckling or negotiation and instead resolutely stated that they refused to have their university provide a podium for a reactionary eugenicist, racist, misogynist hack. After around 15-20 minutes of this, campus security threatened to arrest the activists if they did not allow themselves to be escorted out of the event. They chose the latter option in order to re-consolidate outside. One member filmed the encounters and eventually posted them on our social media outlets.

Outside we rapidly escalated. One of us brought a megaphone. Using this, we organized an impromptu, direct-action “teach-in” immediately outside of the windows of the Murray talk. The crowd that formed around us was perhaps 40-50 strong and fairly receptive—unusual for Villanova’s campus—though the crowd was largely passive. We screamed and chanted (“No Murray! No KKK! No fascist USA!” etc.) into the open windows of the event with the megaphone, creating additional disruptions, although the windows were rather quickly closed. The police then confronted us, telling us we had to cut the megaphone (on threat, apparently, of arrest). We continued without amplification for a while, and then left. Members of Nova Resistance were approached by local news outlets for interviews and quotes.

We were not ready for the next steps. We had no statement prepared and hadn’t set up any social media outlets to post videos or analysis or to garner more support and visibility. Later that day we whipped up a Facebook page and began posting media, and within a few days we submitted an article for the school newspaper and created a manifesto-style statement, posting them as well. But our lag left us without a voice at a time when our actions were being interpreted and either supported or condemned without our own voice helping to shape the narrative.

(It should also be noted that the school newspaper, *The Villanovan*, warped the statement they ran without consulting us, toning down and pacifying our language.)

Nova Resistance then began to meet regularly, renaming itself the Radical Education Department (RED). We reframed our task beyond Villanova as the creation of a radical left think-tank developing Antifa practices across college campuses. We used the visibility and experience from the event to inform a number of articles in left popular media.

2. Some provisional lessons

We clearly missed our main, and admittedly very difficult, objective: to shut down Murray on a conservative college campus. But the event had some important successes. We were able to develop a small but significant “dual power” beside and against the Murray talk in our teach-in. While not in itself an enormous number, the 40-50 students and faculty who assembled for the teach-in represent an important rejection of the dominant, conservative culture on campus. Moreover, our disruption generated an outsized degree of visibility: we were featured on campus, local, and national news outlets. Most significantly, in my view, the anti-Murray action was the springboard to the larger and more ambitious organizing of the Radical Education Department.

With our limits and successes in mind, our action afforded some important insights into organizing on campuses like Villanova’s.

The importance of the affinity group: On a conservative campus, it’s crucial to gather around you a few like-minded, trustworthy comrades. It’s not at all hard to do—working with friends is the obvious place to start, but if you’re politically isolated, emails in a trusted listserv will do. (No matter what, you want to be sure you’re with people you can trust and vouch for, and avoid any specifics until trust is established.)

The difficulty of shutting down events on a conservative campus: As our example shows, it can be extremely difficult for a group with only a few members to shut down a campus event that’s protected by a militarized police force. More militant tactics would have been required for Nova Resistance, though we avoided them. For instance: we might have achieved greater disruption using the kind of actions “Earth First!” and others have become famous for: chaining ourselves to entrances or to fixtures in the event space. But on a reactionary campus, largely unsupported activist students or contingent faculty can be highly vulnerable.

Addendum on clearing the room: While this didn't work for us, it's worth brainstorming ways to creatively, and perhaps ridiculously, clear a room. What a group decides on will depend on the architecture of the room itself; the resources available to a group for getting people up and out; the relative danger to group members for any particular tactic; and how comfortable members are in being exposed to that danger.

The value of *limited* disruptions: While it's likely tough to *completely* shut down an event, this isn't a reason to think radical activism is a hopeless cause on a conservative campus. Even limited disruptions can bring important victories:

Experience: Going through an action helps cement a group and prepare it for more. It also gives it the kind of working knowledge of Antifa activism in a particular place—its limits and possibilities—you simply can't get from the armchair. And members experience a momentary freedom from the suffocating atmosphere of college bureaucracies, wrenching open a space of new possibilities. Opening that space is especially important at a conservative school, where radical left dissent can seem impossible .

Ideological breaches: Along these lines: interrupting Murray and creating an alternative, disruptive teach-in afterwards created a temporary ideological breach in the dominant ideology of the school. For a moment, a very different style of speaking, thinking, and acting emerged on campus. A number of students told me after the Murray event that they felt shocked and empowered. It is likely that many of them had never even been to a protest, seen a megaphone, or imagined such actions as a possibility. In this way, it's at least possible that this kind of action can, even on a conservative campus, be a tool to shift some conversations and perspectives, and expand what is politically possible.

Disproportional visibility: As our experience shows, smaller groups on conservative campuses can find ways to maximize impact via visibility, and to do so with minimal effort. Targeting highly publicized,

controversial events (like the Murray talk) can attract disproportional media coverage, even if you are unable to shut down the event. This tactic grants your group a great deal of exposure to potential sympathizers and members.

Basis for further organizing: Despite real limits, our action became a platform on which to generate the Radical Education Project. It's crucial to keep a "long-game" in view when you're on a hostile campus. The results we can achieve among a reactionary student body and apathetic or hostile faculty will be limited. But it can plant seeds of further radical projects that aren't so limited.

The importance of media infrastructure: One of our most important weaknesses was the lack of ready social media outlets and statements in the wake of the event. Assuring a small, isolated group has its own voice is crucial to combat the narrative of "disruptive elements" that will inevitably arise. And it is essential for developing the next steps of radical organizing beyond the initial event.

The problem of liberal "allies": There's a temptation to think that liberals will stand up for you once you confront fascism, white supremacy, and so on. After all, they are the ones constantly excoriating Trump and longing for the lost paradise of a Hillary Clinton presidency. But some of the harshest reactions at Villanova to our action have been from liberals. Liberals just as much as reactionaries have something at stake in shutting down radical politics. In fact, the administrators who threatened to fire a RED member were "good" liberals. As Chris Hedges reveals, liberals are among the most obsessed with the fetish of abstract free speech by any means necessary.

3. Some unexplored possibilities for conservative campuses

But beyond our own narrow experience, there are plenty of other possibilities our group didn't experiment with before, during, and just after the Murray talk that could be useful for others in a similar position.

Here is a provisional list of tactical options for activists on conservative campuses. This list has been assembled using the insights of other activists, direct action manuals, and beyond (of course, we're not saying anyone should actually do any of these things).

a. **Coordinate with other on-campus Antifa groups:** Connecting with other like-minded activists from other schools can provide a support network for otherwise isolated and small Antifa efforts on conservative campuses, especially as you're planning events. It can help get bodies out and generate broader perspectives on actions and the steps that come after. RED is now one such group; the Campus Antifascist Network (CAN) is another.

b. **Coordinate with other potentially, or actually, radical groups on your campus:** Villanova is deeply reactionary, but it still has potentially radical student groups. The same is likely true on other conservative campuses. It's worthwhile to feel out how supportive such groups will be prior to an event, and it's especially important to pitch in, lending support and solidarity to those groups (going to their events, helping them run the events, etc.). This doesn't only help build a radical base. Fascism grows out of the deep roots of social and political domination already existing in capitalist society. Attacking fascism means teaming up with other groups against the diffuse roots of fascism in racism, misogyny, imperialism, and beyond.

c. **Recognize the many ways a small group can disrupt events on campus:** As I noted already, a very small group can disrupt an event on campus with minimal effort, and potentially minimum risk—while also generating outside visibility for yourselves. But there are many tools for doing this beyond what we tried. Here are some tools for doing so:

- *Stink bombs*
- *Fart guns*
- *Hidden wireless speakers* to blast music or obscene sound-effects (be prepared to never see your speakers again)
- *Putting dog shit where a reactionary group plans to gather*

d. **Make a fascist event well-publicized:** If there's a fascist event on campus that few people know or care about, a group can *make* it well-publicized—maximizing an action's impact despite coming from a small group. Admins, faculty, and students are likely to notice if a group papers campus to call for resistance at a event. Leaking to campus and local news outlets can help, too. All of this lays the groundwork for maximizing impact. See (h) below on “Redecorating your campus.”

e. **Publicly shame:** When administrators host fascists and their ilk, there should be consequences. The same goes for anyone else on campus who thinks it's a good idea to host fascist or white supremacist events of any kind. Even very small groups can create these consequences, and it's often possible to do so anonymously.

- “*Compulsory relocation*”: a few (masked) activists entering into an offender's place of business (elsewhere could work as well), taking the belongings there and moving them outside as loudly as possible—all while announcing the offender's sympathies with authoritarianism. This tactic was spearheaded by BZ in Germany in the 1980s. More info in Georgy Katsiaficas, *The Subversion of Politics*, p. 122.
- *Camping or chanting* outside an offender's residence, work, or classes
- *Using the internet* to expose offenders to wider campus discussion and critique

f. **Follow, and reveal, the money:** Discover who funds white supremacist, fascist, or other authoritarian speakers, how much police protection has or will cost the university or college, and so on. Publicizing this information can be embarrassing to a school and its administrators and mobilizing for potential Antifa sympathizers.

g. **Make the right work for the left** (courtesy of Yannik Thiem): Turn the right's own actions against them. For instance, in a small town in Germany (Wunsiedel), the group Rechts gegen Rechts mobilized

townspeople to donate to a radical cause for each meter marched by a gathering of neo-Nazis. Something similar could be organized without a great deal of infrastructure if there are events on campus by the emboldened right.

h. **Redecorate your campus:** Make your campus into a massive billboard for the radical left. Faculty, graduate students, and adjuncts often have unlimited printing funds to create hundreds or thousands of flyers or posters. Redecoration can be done anonymously, and can cultivate a sense of intrigue and interest in an Antifa group. It can also create more attention for an event a group is planning to disrupt.

- *Wheatpasting* is an easy, quick, and non-permanent means of hanging posters
- *Banner drops* can often generate a great degree of attention as well

i. **Throw disruptive guerilla parties:** Reminiscent of Reclaim the Streets, you can occupy official campus spaces—the president’s office, e.g.—with temporary guerilla festivals that call attention to an administrator’s reactionary politics. This can be framed as a people’s repossession of space due to an offender’s infractions. It is important that someone film the festival and then post the video on social media outlets.

j. **Create guerilla media:** Creating radical alternatives to often reactionary student newspapers can be a ready way to challenge and begin to redirect the dominant ideology of a reactionary campus, as well as to announce and publicize events.

- *For distribution*, a radical newspaper, zine, or flyer can be slipped inside the official student paper, which provides a very easy means of mass distribution

k. **Explore others’ direct action manuals for further tactics:** The list of possibilities here hardly scratches the surface. While brainstorming,

it's inspiring and fascinating to dig into what others have done, though of course it's crucial to think about one's own context as well as to see all such lists as provisional.

- Earth First! *Direct Action Manual*
- Crimethinc, *Recipes for Disaster: An Anarchist Cookbook*
- L.A. Kauffmann, *Direct Action: Protest and the Reinvention of American Radicalism* (2016)
- Georgy Katsiaficas, *The Subversion of Politics: European Autonomous Movements and the Decolonization of Everyday Life* (2006)

The Insurrectionary Campus: A Strategy Proposal

We know by now that fascists are targeting universities as recruiting sites and as places to make ideologies of racial, gender, and economic domination respectable. Both liberals and conservatives are rushing to ensure that universities give fascists protected, well-funded platforms. What is the task of Antifa on college campuses? How can we be effective in combating the “fascist creep”?

Antifa’s powerful disruptions of fascist speakers help point the way. But that essential tactic has limits. It is often defensive, which leaves the university waiting for its next fascist cooption. What if the university could be more than a site to be defended? Can the struggle for campuses be not just *reactive* but *transformative*—wrenching universities out of the hands of fascists and liberals to make them sites of revolutionary power? We’ve seen glimpses of this possibility in the insurrections at **the New School** in 2008, at **NYU** in 2009, and throughout the wave of campus occupations in California in 2009 and 2010 -themselves reminders of the earthquake of student and worker struggle in May 68.

As a member of the Radical Education Department, part of the on-campus Antifa struggle, I offer the following: a strategy proposal for the experimental, insurrectionary seizing of campuses away from fascists and liberals. This insurrectionary approach could not only help create campuses entirely hostile to resurgent fascism; they could also help put powerful tools in the hands of radical left movements as they coordinate, expand, and develop, especially during key moments of social upheaval.

To make this proposal, I first frame it in the context of current American antiauthoritarian organizing. Then I analyze the crises shaking the university system, which reveal powerful possibilities and resources for radical action in and against that system. Finally, I chart some potential tactics by which to seize the means of intellectual production.

1. The University Struggle in Context

The horizontal, directly democratic struggles that surged after 2007 achieved important gains like reviving large-scale radical politics and producing a new generation of militant, antiauthoritarian organizers. The collapse of Occupy in the US, 15-M in Spain, and beyond in 2011 and 2012, however, reveals an important limit within the radical left today.

The kind of prefigurative organizing that stood at the heart of Occupy and related uprisings has been a crucial way of coping with the collapse of the revolutionary social movements of the 1960s and 1970s. In the absence of those larger, more powerful, and more coordinated struggles, prefigurative politics played an experimental role. Occupy's emphasis on consensus, for example, made it possible to tentatively construct mass movements by not forcing any group to commit itself to a particular program, thus bringing together a wide range of groups and interests.

Despite its important role, larger prefigurative struggles are often unstable. Within Occupy's coalitions, revolution-minded anarchists were constantly hounded by pious liberals wringing their hands in terror over the possibility of a broken window. After the state swept Occupy clear of the squares they were squatting, it was no surprise that the coalitions often scattered.

Movements like Occupy, then, highlight a central question for the antiauthoritarian left. How are we to create revolutionary, mass, and

durable movements capable of eventually overthrowing capitalism and social domination?

In this context, the question of the university becomes: how can campus struggles add to the construction of those kinds of movements? In particular, how can we help lay the infrastructure for mass, federated action during the next wave of revolutionary struggle?

2. Crisis and Possibility in the University

The university is undergoing a series of fundamental crises within which we can spot possibilities for revolutionary struggle. What follows is only a brief sketch of those crises and possibilities.

A. Crisis of “Expert Knowledge”

Because it is the place where society’s experts and managers are trained, the university plays an important role in determining what counts as “real” knowledge—which is why the media often turn to professors to comment on current events. Strangely, the university is *rejecting* this role. Professors and administrators are not only refusing to judge the fascist ideology of racial and gender inferiority as right or wrong; they are also asserting that fascists have a right to free university endorsement, massive funds for protection and promotion, and highly publicized platforms to spread their ideologies.

But Antifa’s challenge to fascists on campus reveals an important opportunity. The struggle over university platforms suggests that *they could increasingly become the conscious target of seizure and control by radicals*. Those platforms are ready-made bullhorns by which to cultivate revolutionary theory and culture able to reach far greater numbers than many other outlets. One can imagine, for example, anarchists increasingly and actively (rather than reactively) seizing podiums at high-profile university events—hijacking and subverting media coverage with minimal effort.

B. Crisis of the Disillusioned Student

Traditionally, the university has been seen as a basic tool for social mobility—and so a justification for capital’s brutal inequalities. But the possibility of social climbing now looks increasingly ridiculous in light of ballooning of student debt and an economy geared towards “flexible,” part-time labor.

We have already seen some of the effects of this disillusionment: the underemployed recent graduate is often the engine driving movements like the Global Justice Movement, 15-M, and Occupy. The question was already asked by **Research and Destroy** in 2009: what is the point of college, other than disciplining us to manage a failing society?

The university, then, contains a highly disillusioned group—precisely what lures fascists on campus—and yet one that clearly can be radicalized for antiauthoritarian struggle. In this university crisis, the left could accelerate disillusionment and radicalization.

C. Crisis of the Disillusioned Worker

The vast majority of classes are now taught by contingent faculty—teachers without job security who often also lack benefits and receive poverty wages. Drives to unionize contingent faculty have begun, but a more radical possibility can be found here.

The precarious teacher is facing plummeting job prospects; the hope for tenure is now almost completely gone for most. But their precarity organically connects these teachers to the other disillusioned workers at the heart of so many recent uprisings, positioning it to bridge on-campus and off-campus struggles.

The college campus, then, is home to extremely volatile ingredients—disillusioned teachers students, alongside also exploited cooks, servers, and janitors. And those ingredients are combined in a place that *also* offers the potential for a platform through which to spread radical

political organizations and ideas. If these could be properly combined, they could make the campus a thoroughly radical, even *explosive*, center.

3. Further Possibilities

But a college campus also has particular kinds of resources that, even beyond its volatile elements, make it an important target for radical seizure.

Communication

If a central job for radicals is assembling mass, revolutionary struggles, then one key element will be access to technological hubs for coordination and federation. We saw the importance of these kinds of hubs in N30. The radical overtaking of Seattle in 1999 was coordinated via Independent Media Centers—websites that communicated tactics and ideas. But in Seattle, activists managed those sites through physical IMCs—rooms full of computers and other resources (food, water, shelter) that made coordination and communication much easier and faster and that strengthened the sense of community and solidarity. We saw the importance of these centers in Seattle from the fact that police targeted them to choke off the uprising.

College campuses offer massive, free access to computers and the Internet that could be communication hubs for radical struggles on and off campus. One valid ID and password could give an entire movement that access. More than this, some grad students and faculty are given unlimited free printing privileges—and again, only one person with that privilege could print an entire movement's flyers, posters, zines, and papers for distribution.

But colleges also have libraries—and within them, mountains of information on past movements' tactics, strategies, and ideas. College libraries are waiting to become part of a radical research center for ideas and histories that could feed directly into movements.

Spatial Infrastructure

At the same time, radicals need centralized, reliable *spaces* for meeting, relaxing, sharing ideas, planning actions, and so on. This often means renting or squatting spaces across an entire cityscape, and those spaces are often available only on a temporary or unpredictable basis.

A college campus has a glut of unoccupied spaces ready to be used: halls, dorm lounges, library rooms or floors, theaters, and so on. On urban campuses, those spaces are not only relatively concentrated within one (often fairly central) part of a city, but also can be available more predictably.

4. Seize the Means: A Tactical Sketch

So what does it mean to seize the university through insurrection—to take hold of these possibilities and resources?

First, seizing the university means building radical, antiauthoritarian campus “cultures.” On the one hand, this entails what RED calls “guerilla education”—radical forms of education outside, beyond, and against the classroom that spread militancy and push a campus’s “common sense” far left. On the other hand, this means creating, multiplying, and federating radical groups on campus that are intolerant to fascism and willing to act in solidarity with radical struggles on and off campus. **The Filler Collective, the Radical Education Department**, anti-racist organizing, **the Campus Antifascist Network**, and radical struggles in solidarity with Palestine are examples of this work. The aim is to become a kind of disease, infecting other groups with leftist ideas while recruiting their most radical members. This is to “solidify” the radical left, **as a pamphlet from the 2008 New School occupation puts it**, creating zones of radical antiauthoritarianism on campus that spread and connect.

But it is not enough to aim for a radical leftist culture. Those cultures can become simply alternative spaces that leave the college basically

untouched. What's needed, I suggest, is an emphasis on direct, radical action. **The Filler Collective**, discussing a Pitt occupation, writes:

“ I sure as hell wasn't radicalized after hitting up some student group's meeting. I'm here because I'm still chasing the high from that first punk show in a squat house basement, that first queer potluck, that first renegade warehouse party, that first unpermitted protest, that first smashed Starbucks window. [...]

Last November, a student-led march ended with a brief occupation of the Litchfield Towers dormitory lobby [...] That night ended with radical questions circulating beyond our countercultural bubble for the first time in recent memory: Do the Pitt Police really have the right to beat the students they're supposed to protect? Wait, don't we pay to use that building? Well shit, do the police even have the right to dictate how students use our campus in the first place?

Insurrectionary actions reveal undreamt-of revolutionary possibilities. Without them, potential radicals remain stuck in a world with no alternatives.

In this way, overt tactics should be rooted in central, covert, insurrectionary tactics that take Antifa as a model. What I have in mind here, however, is not defensive but offensive, essentially devoid of protest: *experimental seizures of resources and of symbolic spaces that show that the university can—and must—be in the autonomous control of radical leftist movements.*

Occupations are a key example. In 2008 **New School students** overtook the cafeteria and study center; in 2013, students seized the president’s office at **Cooper Union**; at the **National Autonomous University** in Mexico, a building has been occupied by radicals for 17 years; and in the recent past, “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.” Such occupations are often *reactions*—to tuition hikes, e.g.—but they could become powerful *offensive* weapons.

Occupations should not be the limit of our imagination. Reclaim the Streets was genius in its guerilla actions, temporarily but radically overtaking and transforming roads, highways, and intersections. The same tactic could apply in a president’s office or at a campus event—perhaps making them unpredictable places to issue revolutionary communiqués.

By creating *offensive*, radical campuses, we could create schools where no one would dream of inviting a fascist ideologue. More than this, campus insurrections are practice for the next revolutionary moments, when we’ll be ready to take hold of the university’s and society’s resources in order to put them at the service of broader struggles. In the words of Research and Destroy,

“ We seek to push the university struggle to its limits. [...] [W]e seek to channel the anger of the dispossessed students and workers into a declaration of war.

The insurrectionary campus: not just defending against fascism, but making the university a tool of social revolution.



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radicaleducationdepartment.com
radicaleducation@protonmail.com

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