

TO SQUAT...
IS TO
STRUGGLE
(PARIS 1984)



The texts found in this little zine were originally published in the zine *Molotov & Confetti* #1 (Paris, 1984).

Translated from French by Camille, Staz and Zanzara athée in November 2020.

All the *Molotov & Confetti* back catalogue can be found on the Archives Autonomies website:

<http://archivesautonomies.org/spip.php?article302>

According to the site, three editions of *Molotov & Confetti* were published in 1984-1985 in the wake of several attempts to open an “Autonomous Occupied Space” in Paris. The *Molotov & Confetti* team were also linked to Radio Mouvance, a pirate radio founded in 1983 that aimed to be “anti-racist, anti-fascist, anti-imperialist, anti-colonialist and anti-zionist”. Literally squatting the 106mhz frequency that was supposed to be reserved for the army and obstinately refusing to apply for a license from the High Authorities, the radio suffered from state repression, with no less than six seizures between 1983 and 1986 (five under a left-wing government and the final under the right on the 24th of April 1986).

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Anticopyright.

To squat... is to struggle

Hardship. Being young and stuck at your parents' because you don't have the money to rent a room. Being jobless and sleeping on the streets because rent is too high. Working cash in hand or in temporary jobs and sleeping on your friends' couch because landlords want to see your payslips. Being a migrant and having to commute to and from some far off suburb – or even further— – because the neighbourhood is being restructured. Hardship.

Hardship for the 50 000 Parisians without a home, hardship for 15 000 of them who only have the public squares and the metro platform. Hardship for 300 000 others who've been waiting for semi-mythical social housing for months. Without even counting the millions who are dying of hunger just to pay for a room or who, for lack of anything better, are rotting in the slums.

Hardship, and 300 000 empty homes just in Paris.

Some old, some new, some big, some small, some clean and some grotty. Everything you could dream of. Except that...

Except that They want tomorrow's city to be clean, ordered, disciplined and profitable. You go where They tell you to go. You turn up where They tell you to turn up. You pay when They tell you to pay. You sleep where They tell you to live. Everyone relegated to their own corner. . All dispersed, effectively isolated, well controlled. Inoffensive.

Migrant ghettos where you don't give a shit about the law and "French Culture", where you stick together to struggle and survive, where no cops dare to come without putting their own health at risk. They want to get rid of it all.

The tribes of youths who roam the city, without any worry for law and order, stealing, cheating, partying, riding rodeos, lazing around, blasting wild music with a hellish look, They want to get rid of it all. . The battalions of jobless scum turned desperados, with nothing to lose and ready for anything, They want to get rid of it all!

You give way to Their will, you live how They want you to live, you play Their society's game... or you

die. And yet, 300 000 homes are empty today in Paris.

300 000 empty homes, 300 000 houses to take back and occupy collectively, to squat, like thousands of other have already done, from *Nationale* to *Vilins*, from *Cascades* to *Rue de Flandres*, from *Crimée* to the *Champs-Élysées*.

Except that it doesn't always work. It works less and less even. The wild squats in the 20th arrondissement, the calmer squats in the 19th arrondissement, the rebel Autonomous Occupied Centres, the squats that collaborated with the State and the clandestine squats, they were all evicted.

But how is that surprising? If it's us that They want to get rid of, our gatherings that They want to ban, why would They ever tolerate our squats?

As long as it was only a question of money, as long as They were only trying to protect and make a profit out of Their real estate, we could brandish the law and catch the State and the landlords in Their own traps... by stretching out the procedures for another year, maybe even two years or more.

But now, it's another story. When They call us dealers and killers in the newspapers, They are aiming less

at the squatter inside us than at the youth, the unemployed, the immigrant or the prole.

When They invite themselves over every week to search and raid, it's not the squatter that They're aiming at, it's the delinquent, the guy on the run or the clandestine migrant.

When They leave you no respite, when They chase you every week from the home you occupy, it's not just the squat They want to destroy: because which job centre will you sign up at? Which legal address will appear on your resident's permit, on your job contract or on your social welfare documents?

Today, we can no longer simply occupy a building and forget about everything else. We can't pretend to have just resolved our housing problem and stop at that. Because the State doesn't forget what we are. Because its oppression doesn't end at the home.

A squat, today, can't survive on its own. It can't be held on its own. Because far from being a simple housing question, it's also necessarily a question of work, of unemployment, of residents' permits, of life in the neighbourhood, of food, of partying.

A squat, today, can only survive if it confronts

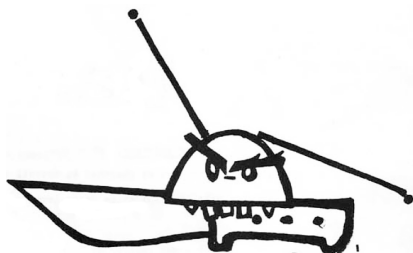
problems of work, money, control, collective life. It can only survive if others recognise themselves in it, the unemployed, the proles, the migrants, squatters or not, if they are there to support it and to defend it.

Today, if a squat is a ghetto amongst ghettos, it dies. To make it work, there is only one condition: to fight back.

Molotov

On the 15th May 1984, in Ménilmontant [in the Paris' 20th arrondissement], several dozen “angry squatters” attacked a police patrol with iron bars and molotov cocktails (and *confetti!*). Right after, a branch of the City of Paris' social housing department was stormed after evacuation of the people who worked there. The demand was the end of squat evictions and of police presence in the neighbourhood. And guess what? The press didn't talk about it.

- BECAUSE IT'S BETTER TO WRITE IT DOWN THAN TO BREAK ONESELF'S WOODEN LEG
- BECAUSE THERE'S NOTHING TO LOSE AND EVERYTHING TO GAIN
- BECAUSE BOOM BOOM RACATACATAC
- BECAUSE NO CONTROL
- BECAUSE BYE BYE WORK
- BECAUSE THE CAT HAS FINALLY HEALED
- BECAUSE WE'RE FED UP OF PAYING FOR EVERYTHING
- BECAUSE WE'RE GOING TO DESTROY THE PRISONS
- BECAUSE SOCIAL ANDROGYNY AND COMBATIVE ADVENTURE
- BECAUSE LIVE FREE OR DIE
- BECAUSE SUBVERSION ROCK AGAINST THE WALTZ OF THE BRANDS
- BECAUSE LIFE IS TO BE TAKEN BACK
- BECAUSE WE'RE ALL BRAWLERS
- BECAUSE IF WE HAD TO COUNT ON OTHERS...



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ROUGES