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# An explosive force of freedom

ByOs der ikke findes (We who do not exist)

Three communiques from party organisers of a recent street party in the centre of Copenhagen's shopping district which became a riot. The party was held as part of an anti-gentrification festival Undoing the City which took place in Copenhagen 7-10 May 2009.

[http://www.openhagen.net/spip.php?page=statisk&id\\_article=109](http://www.openhagen.net/spip.php?page=statisk&id_article=109). Thanks to JJ and JKB for english translation An explosive force of freedom by Os der ikke findes (We who do not exist) May 15th 2009 Street Dancing Part 3 Communiqu  No. 1 The street party and the vandalism that happened over the weekend calls undoubtedly for commentary. But how? About what? And why? A friend tells us that we lack the erotic when we speak of politics. We are Negrian dust-eaters he says (from the Italian political philosopher Antonio Negri). Perhaps he is referring to street parties with vandalism when he asks us about sensuality. There is after all a reason for why it is at times described as an orgy of destruction. On the one hand an explosive force of freedom, where the street is reconstructed and shifted around. The experience of shop windows no longer being a barrier blocking the access to an object of desire. We do not want it. But rather to show that we can do something different with what is given. To show that the norm is in crisis. Stroegtet (the main shopping area in Copenhagen (ed.)) is in a crisis. That there are cracks in the surface. On the other hand and this is as important this vandalism is also an authoritarian expression that is undemocratic and excludes. It is often male dominated. Women and gays also smash windows. But not all can participate in the destruction. Many are excluded from vandalising, but destruction should be for everyone, not only white heterosexual Danish men! Freedom and authoritarianism is connected. The erotic is vandalism, but we have to be better at it! People are pissed off. About what? Is there a homogeneity in being pissed off? No. We don't think so. People are pissed off about being bored. People are pissed off about being forced to live in and resign to the heteronormative space. People are pissed off about having to spend all their money on rent. People are pissed off about not being represented. They are pissed off because everybody knows that politics is a show, where those who win are those who are the best actors. But no-one exclaims, as in the fairytale The Emperor's New Suit: but he is not wearing any clothes! People are pissed off about having to be ordered. People are pissed off about the order. There are no proposals for alternatives to the present order, but people are tired of it. The rage that is felt spins off in all directions. The French philosopher Michel Foucault is known to represent an anti-ethics par excellence, perhaps he can be of help. We find two places where Foucault nonetheless does take a normative stance and expresses an ethical judgement. In a text that was originally a lecture at an architectural school somewhere in Europe, with the title Heterotopia. The text ends with the following: In civilizations without boats, dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure, and the police take the place of pirates. (Foucault 1967, Of Other Spaces) So what does this mean? We are not entirely sure, but something along the lines that civilization is becoming more and more stagnant, suffocating, trimmed, categorised, surveilled, controlled, disciplined, formalised, normalised etc. And this is not a good thing. The pirates boat is, as opposed to the espionage of the police, on the water. Water is always moving, and the boat only remains in the harbour for a moment. The pirate lives on the water and thus does not live anywhere. Foucault's point is that pirates are better than the police. To travel is better than to spy. The pirate is a figure of freedom, while the police is one of control and regulation. And the former is better than the latter. The pirate flees from one harbour to the next, but would mostly like to remain on the water. The pirate has a lover in every harbour but takes no fianc . The pirate cannot be tied to the shore. Somewhere else Foucault writes the follow, in answering a question of what is critique: How not to be governed like that, by that, in the name of those principles, with such and such an objective in mind and by means of such procedures, not like that, not for that, not by them. (Foucault 2007:44). Politics or critique is here presented as a refusal to participate. A refusal to obey what is presented as necessary. To refuse the norm. To attempt an

escape. Not to live in an apartment, but rather in a tent. Not to be the king, but to rule from to back of a horse (Djengis Khan). Not to be a male, but to escape the gender. Movement away from identity is politics for Foucault. To smash the norm, to refuse to current disciplining. Perhaps this is what the street party is about. To have the egotistic experience of freedom, that the norm cannot permeate everything. That one can create cracks in the norm so that the reflection is no longer a 1:1 ratio. Carl Schmitt was Hitler's court jurist. He allegedly escaped the (Nuremberg) Nürnberg-process due to his juridical talents. He had one thing in common with Marx, whom he frequently read: the conflict, the political. The law, human rights and civic rights was for Schmitt an attempt to cover the political. Under the law lies the politics, he argued. Politics is raw and unmediated. It is about who your friends are and who you choose as enemies. Such a perspective on politics can very well be pertinent for understanding what happened the night before Saturday. On the one hand, people wanted to destroy without rebuilding, which for Foucault as such is freedom. On the other hand it is curious that Hitler's jurist chooses to describe politics as situated before the norm, the law, the economy, gender, sexuality etc. Politics is opposition. Politics is to refuse to obey. Dissensus is politics. Consensus is anti-politics. This is why parliamentarism is not politics but an illegal street party is! Thus one could arrive at the societal diagnosis that all the discourse about graffiti, one destroyed car, six smashed windows, a burnt sofa and a few bottles thrown at the police in fact is an expression of [the fact that] that the time of politics is over. The political no longer exists. Parliamentarism and security management is all that is left. This is not politics, but administration and risk management. We live in a post-political era, where conflict and disagreement is no longer possible. This is why people get so outraged when someone smashes the niceness and consensus. In actual fact politics is too violent. We have forgotten that politics and strategy is not the same thing. That representation is politically inhibiting and is not a solution to the problem of politics. Politics is what is left when the public show and the actors no longer can sustain themselves. Politics is when it becomes doubtful whether the police can sustain order. Politics is ugly and disordered! If politics is nice and orderly it is mere administration. Street Dancing Part 3 Communiqué No. 2 We do not exist. Only Denmark's desire to find us exists. But we do not exist at all. YO YO YO. We want to send out a big thank you to all those who took part in one of the best parties ever held in the cold heart of Copenhagen! We might have built your house, possibly cared for your child, maybe been your cashier, written the comment in your newspaper, we might have created what you have hung on your wall, or wiped the ass of your grandparents. But right now we do not exist for anybody. WHAT WHAT WHAT! We think you were great! Your disciplining dance, crawling and caps is our joy! The other day we found more who don't exist. And we held a party that doesn't exist. And we left some traces that existed for some. SAY SAY SAY! We will mess up that claustrophobic market for a moment, we spooned with you in the streets for two and a half hours, and it was some really good spooning! The leads cannot be traced to our neighbourhood, our workplace or who we vote for. Or who we don't vote for. The leads do not suggest who our parents are or what our upbringing was like. And neither to our level of income or our friends. FRESH FRESH FRESH! We like you all a lot. And we hope to see you around. The traces are rough. They are proof of that we have had sex up one street, down Stroegget, through the market. They run fifty meters down an infinite city that does not exist, but is owned by someone else. DEF DEF DEF! But for a short while was owned by us who do not exist. Street Dancing Part 3 Communiqué No. 3 Bo: I have now been sitting here following the media for the passed five days and to be honest I have no clue what is going on! Klara: No, I have really felt the same. It is as if Denmark's toes has been stepped on by a whole new gang of youth. It is kind of like we have kept a family in the cellar for over twenty-seven years and they just now found out that we have raped and had a lot of babies with them. Bo: Uhm! one thing that I have really noticed is how terrorism is now equated with graffiti and loud music and how people have talked about that we should be included in the anti-gang legislation. It is funny because it is as if in the combined hate towards gangs and terror, and by adding to that the hate towards a new group the hate of street parties - now can mix the perfect hate cocktail. We are now officially part of the axis of evil. Ha ha. Klara: Yes. And the politicians. They don't even fucking

care about this. It is as if we have started a new election campaign. It is so easy to start it, also from the side of the politicians. Is this your best offer for yet another six months of pseudo-politics and key-issues? That's just too weak. Bo: Yeah, if you want to promote yourself using smashed windows at least smash them yourselves! Klara: The whole discussion about for or against is to me absurd. The media is trying to find this or that story. But they know that they are always one step behind and never get anything. The media is running their own show, and this case is so far out that Lasse Jensen should take it up in the People and Media radio show on Friday. They're Bo: Yeah yeah! they just don't get it. They just can't get it. They have no interest in getting it. It is a better story when not understood but be outraged instead. When we then don't say anything then they find someone new to blame. We knew it before hand that the media is fucked and that is why this is not a media event for us. We got what we wanted, in fact more. Klara: Some good things have come out of it. The spokesperson of the police Flemming Steen Munch has been put under much pressure. He has been in the local council in the inner city for so many years without anyone having lifting an eyebrow, but now he is under mad pressure. Ha ha. Bo: Yes. And the event promoter Thomas Flequn is shaking in his pants, it is almost worth all the media shit that it is ruining his whole Wonderful Copenhagen project. We are the opposite of him. He is not underground, he is just a man with good sponsorship contacts. While he runs Distortion (an electronic music festival in Copenhagen (ed.)), we run the street parties. Klara: The media have blown this out of proportion. Get a fucking hold of yourselves. Bo: That's it! They all wanted to be there. That is what this is about really. Parliamentarism is so fucking boring, that when we make some politics they kind of all get really jealous. Ha ha.