

# Occupy the left or ignore it?



by **Christophe Aguiton and Nicolas Haeringer**

Translation by Judith Hitchman

Discussion paper translated by TNI as part of its [Alternative Regionalisms](#) work





## Occupy the left or ignore it?

Introduction.....	2
A brief overview of the origins of the Indignad@s and Occupy Wall Street.....	3
Distanced from the traditional left.....	5
Direct demands and actions.....	7
The micro-politics of the occupations .....	9
Radical alterglobalisation breaking with the past.....	10
And what of the left in all this? .....	13



# Occupy the left or ignore it?

Discussion paper translated by TNI as part of its Alternative Regionalisms work

by Christophe Aguiton and Nicolas Haeringer

Translation by Judith Hitchman

## Introduction

On November 22nd, the Occupy Wall Street activists (OWS) interrupted Barack Obama's speech in New Hampshire to ask him, using the famous amplified human microphone that has become famous since it was first used on 17th September in South Manhattan, where it was used, to do something about the banks that "are destroying our economy". They called on Obama to break his silence "and was sending a tacit message that police brutality is acceptable"<sup>1</sup>. Having first gained the attention of his own partisans who were trying to swamp the OWS activists' demands with their own slogans that support his policies, Obama concluded his speech by stating "families like yours, the young people who were here today - and that includes those who interrupted me by chanting - are the reason why I ran for office".

At the beginning of his presidential campaign, he thus explicitly reached out to the Occupy Wall Street activists, leading them to understand that their demands would be at the centre of his second mandate, should he be elected. But the OWS activists failed to respond to his invitation.

The Occupy and Indignad@s movements, and Uncut<sup>2</sup> have a very distant relationship with actors in the political sphere, be they Republicans or Democrats, left or right: although they may try to get them to take position, they are in no way prepared to risk any compromise, and refuse to participate in any kind of direct dialogue.

These movements are all producing an abundant quantity of intellectual material, written by the actors themselves, such as literature, films, flyers, posters. And the reflexivity, lucidity and maturity of

---

<sup>1</sup> Something that the occupiers are facing on a daily basis since their expulsion

<sup>2</sup> Movement of direct protest actions against budget cuts and tax exemptions in the UK <http://www.ukuncut.org.uk/>



this work is quite remarkable. Readers can only gain by consulting the sites that relay and promote these elements<sup>3</sup>.

If the reader then decides to continue, he or she will discover (after a short history of how these movements have developed) some elements reflecting on the issues facing the left as a whole (both social democracy and radical left, parties, associations and trade unions alike), detailed in the successive examination of the reasons for and consequences of their distancing from the traditional left; the importance of direct action and existing outlines; the micro-political impact of these experiments; and finally of an analysis of the historical break that these dynamics represent with the altermondialist actors.

This article is based on long conversations and meetings with the activists of Occupy Wall Street, Occupy London and the French, Spanish and Israeli Indignants and those playing a key role in the Senegalese “Y en a marre” movement. We have chosen to emphasise the commonalities between these movements, even though we are aware that there is a risk of falling into the trap of believing that there is a natural connection between all these movements (whereas they have yet to be built).

## **A brief overview of the origins of the Indignad@s and Occupy Wall Street**

The Indignad@s movement was born in Madrid on May 15th 2011, on the evening of a giant demonstration protesting against the austerity measures. It spread rapidly, first to the rest of Spain, then throughout the South of Europe, as far as Israel, resonating with the existing Senegalese « Y'en a marre », as well as finding an echo in the student movement in Chile. A few months later, it extended to and was renewed in the United States through the Zucotto Park occupation in New York, just a few steps away from the Wall Street stock exchange. The dynamic spread rapidly by itself, to the point where it seems more correct to talk about Occupy everywhere than just Occupy Wall Street<sup>4</sup>

The shock wave of the Arab Revolutions led to these movements that are inspired by the Tahir Square experimental methods in Cairo, and in Tunis, during the Casbah sit-ins, involving holding a symbolic site to express the depth of determination and desire to build a non-violent movement aimed at bringing down the existing regimes (and their policies). These different experiments feed into each

---

<sup>3</sup> Especially the site of the magazine [www.mouvements.info](http://www.mouvements.info)! It is also worth noting that a book, coordinated by the Contretemps magazine team will be published in early 2012; it will be a compilation of some of these texts.

<sup>4</sup> c.f. the list of occupations:  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_Occupy\\_movement\\_protest\\_locations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Occupy_movement_protest_locations); this list is not exhaustive



other – on 29th September last, an activist from Occupy Wall Street explained how satisfied they were to see how the movement had grown, had reached Spain via the Occupy Spain call...more than three months after the occupation of Puerta del Sol.

Although their independence from “traditional” social and political actors may give the impression that these movements are “spontaneous”, they do not spring from nothing: as Fadel Barro, one of the initiators of the Senegalese « Y’en a marre », movement explains, they are the result of a “long build-up of frustration<sup>5</sup>”. Their roots, particularly the organisational ones, are in altermondialism, zapatism, the antinuclear campaigns of the end of the 1970s in the United States, and the political practice developed at that time by the Quakers, as well as the experience of the anarchist and freedom movements. They are grounded in more recent experience. Occupy Wall Street was preceded at the beginning of the summer, by a camp in front of the New York Town Hall protesting against the cuts in public spending budgets, an experience considered by Isham Christie who was present in both Wall Street and the “Bloombergsville” camps, as “very useful”, and as having “taught us a lot about the techniques and know-how that we use in Occupy Wall Street”.

The social origin of these movements is undeniable. The economic crisis, the weight of public debt and austerity measures imposed on people are having a perceptible impact on people all over Europe and North America. They are particularly dramatic in countries such as Greece, Portugal or Spain, where the movements have been strongest.

These movements have a distinct generational mark to them: the Indignants are young students, young unemployed, young couples with no means etc. This aspect characterises a social change: to be young no longer means having been born 25, 30 or 35 years ago, but is linked to a set of characteristics (or rather lack of characteristics): you are young because you don’t have your own home, job, or any real hope of seeing this situation change in the short or medium term.

This exclusion (that has become the generalised mark of an age group) is linked to a second; to be homeless and confronted by a daily struggle, means most of their time is dedicated to being inventive. They have little commitment to traditional political or social organisations (which does not necessarily mean that they are indifferent to political issues), as they have very good reasons to be wary of them.

## **Distanced from the traditional left**

The actors in these movements, that have committed to a “new” cycle of very dense, intense struggles are shaking up the traditional political forces, starting with the left - who they oppose and either call upon or summon.

---

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.mouvements.info/Y-en-a-marre-une-lente.html>



The first target of the Spanish Indignad@s was Zapatero's socialist government. In Portugal, they mobilised against the consequences of the austerity measures introduced by the left-wing government (that was defeated in the elections that took place in early summer 2011), and in Greece against Papandreou, the ex-President of the Socialist International.

Everywhere in Europe, the socialist parties or social democrats are the first to announce that they see no alternative to reducing the weight of public debt by cutting down on social minima and public services. They are not presenting any real or symbolic alternative to the elements that caused the crisis in the first place: favouring the elite (which is inevitably linked to their corruption), the prime position accorded to companies (particularly banks and multinationals) etc. The only element that allows us to distinguish them from the right is their tax policy (that remains less unjust and more redistributive), and in electoral periods, their (largely rhetorical) opposition to the idea of constitutionalising a "golden budgetary rule"

That a vast protest movement against these policies should emerge is not something that should come as a surprise, even if its rapid success is amazing. The lack of any direct or indirect link between European Indignants and the left fringe groups that continue to hope (on-going or renewed) to govern is fairly comprehensible.

This distance is however not without consequences on the choices made by these movements, particularly in the form in which they chose to make their demands. Their refusal to play the institutional political game means that the balance of power that they are building is not aimed at strengthening demands that would ultimately be debated in bipartite negotiations. Their demands do not therefore need to take the form of a set of measures that could be implemented by others. This leaves greater scope for autonomy, the beginnings and ethics of "do it yourself" (whose political form brings together civil disobedience and building alternative life-style communities). For the "Y'en a marre" this means "getting actively involved here and now to make a better future", without waiting for the State to do things for them.

This shift towards demands that are directly linked to practice, explains to a great extent how the criticism of the lack of political content of these movements has been able to spread so successfully, to even impact some of the associative and trade union left by asking the following questions: "What is your programme?" "What are you proposing?"; in other words, "What are your expectations of the present government?"

The real question put by the Indignad@s and the Occupy dynamics to the left should not be reduced to demands and can not be met by a mere programme. Put in other terms, the unions, the associations and the parties of the left should not merely question the way in which they can relay the demands of these movements. Because what is going on within these movements is also something happening at another level, and is directly linked to the way in which we conduct politics, commit



ourselves and, ultimately, the way in which we build society.

The organisational choices made by these movements and the forms of organisation that they have adopted, represent, every bit as much as their demands, challenges for the left, be it traditional, government or radical.

The left-wing political parties that are opposed to austerity measures and policies led by the European Union and the IMF, associations like Attac, the trade unions (major unions such as Solidaires or the Confédération Paysanne), are as much concerned by this sudden change, as the socialist, socio-democratic or labour parties.

These movements are attached to their independence, and they refuse any kind of alliance that might lead them in the best-case scenario, to long negotiations with other organisations, and in the worst, to the pitfalls of becoming co-opted and instrumentalised. In Wall Street, the very organisation of the camp prevented it from being open to organisations, as Isham explained: “The camp is not necessarily very welcoming to organisations. Not very welcoming...let’s say that it is welcoming inasmuch as many organisations come and hand out their flyers or try to sell their magazines. But that doesn’t really sit well with the place, it seems a bit incongruous”.

Fadel Barro, for his part, explains that the “Y’en a marre” movement grew from the desire to “create a movement that was not necessarily politically aligned, that doesn’t answer to any given doctrine”.

These choices have sometimes been a turn-off for organisations that thought that they were the natural partners of these movements – including some who expressed their exasperation with what they perceive as a new form of dogmatism or purism.

When we take a closer look at this, these movements have, however translated their refusal to be institutionalised in different ways, depending on their political or social contexts. These fine differences lead us to deduce that their refusal is not a sign of dogmatic rigidity, but rather based on a very pragmatic attitude.

In Spain, the Indignad@s were not built on any opposition to political parties: they were equally aimed at trade unions.

In Greece the [Indignad@s](#) found themselves marching side-by-side with the trade unions in big demonstrations against the austerity measure, but in a very tough face-off: Constitution Square was occupied on one side by the “traditional” forces of the left, and on the other by the Indignants.

In the United States, the Occupy Wall Street actors immediately looked to the trade unions for support. The big union confederation AFL-CIO sent out a call to join the movement, and they have close ties to the Occupy dynamic and the grassroots coalitions.

These differences can be explained by the social and political situations that differ on at least two points.

The first is linked to the trade unions’ attitude to austerity measures. In Spain, following the one-day



general strike at the end of September 2010, the unions signed an agreement with the government on February 1st 2011. This caused a lasting rift between them and the Indignad@s movement.

In Greece, on the other hand, the unions have continued to call for strike actions and days of mobilisation against the austerity plans; they therefore found themselves in the street together, with shared slogans in spite of their differences (in terms of both political culture and social roots), which are factors that have prevented any deeper convergence.

The second factor that should be taken into consideration is the relative strength of the union movement and its weight in public space. The United States are very different in this respect from continental Europe. Trade Unionism is globally a marginal phenomenon in public space. This weakness means that the unions are obliged to build alliances and converge with groups where they are not in control, which is something that would be unthinkable on this side of the Atlantic. The AFL-CIO participated in the demonstrations that took place in Seattle in 1999.

## Direct demands and actions

Of course both social and political demands are at the heart of the movement. The aspiration for real democracy (which is inexorably linked to social justice) is also something that lies at the heart of the Indignad@s movement, (also called Democracia Real Ya! – Real Democracy Now!), and of the Occupy dynamic. Concrete demands are on issues such as access to housing, or the struggle against professional precariousness (particularly in the early stages of professional life).

These demands bring people together and federate everywhere. In the case of employment and housing for young people in Spain; against the power of finance and banks in the United States; against the violence and corruption in the massive movement launched in Mexico by the poet Javier Sicilia after the violent death of his son in March 2011 etc. And everywhere, since the success of Occupy Wall Street, the reference to the 1% of privileged people opposed to the other 99% of society. The fact that these themes speak loudly to people, and the violence of the social situation explain the impressive support of public opinion for these movements, from Spain to the United States. A second level of ideas lies behind those that bring people together: those participating in the occupations speak about an “overall rejection of the system” or the need to establish a de facto “real democracy” in the electoral systems of the different countries in question.

This idea is shared by all of these movements, including those that were built to include electoral time-tables, like “Y’en a marre”. Fadel assures us that the members of this Collective will not give in:





“We’re the ones who elected Abdoulaye Wade, which means we have the power to vote him out. We wanted to preserve this democratic option, to avoid setting the whole country alight, and to move forward to new adventures. We have elections in 2012. But if he tries to manipulate the election, he’ll find we are there, barring his path”.

No doubt this anti-system talk has not been perfectly linked to theory. Nor does it express a perfected programme. It is an extension of an idea close to the hearts of the Spanish and French Indignants: it is presented as apolitical. This apoliticism should not be understood as the result of a lack of political culture, but rather as being the fruit of a merciless analysis of the role played by the forces of the traditional left in starting the economic and financial crisis and the solutions that have been proposed.

We are, however, reticent in pursuing this kind of description of the demands that are formulated along fairly classical lines for at least two reasons: firstly, this is a recent dynamic, and is still a work in progress. The process of building it is therefore also a work in progress - as witnessed on December 10th 2011, by the invitation to all occupations to work on a Charter of Rights. To continue would imply accepting the idea of placing the movement in a programmed framework. To do so would be to contribute to supporting the illusion according to which demands are perceived as inevitably linked to the experimentation of the occupations themselves (because the first could be independently expressed). In other words: to continue would be the same as admitting that macro-political issues have no connection with micro-political practice – whereas the rejection of this dissociation is the result of the occupations. Isham explains that it is “a question of how to proceed: building alternatives, occupations, communities that we would like to see and to use as spaces for greater change...and ending up winners”<sup>6</sup>.

This prefiguration can translate into one of two approaches: either by direct actions (a prime example of this is the occupation itself) as well as by the internal organisation of the camps and the general assemblies. The activists do not plan to wait for the State to start implementing fairer policies any more than they put their energy into building a revolutionary-type of swing: they have made the choice of acting on behalf of the authorities or institutions, in an independent manner, even if it involves breaking the law, and prefer creating the beginnings of a different kind of society to waiting for the downfall of the current system. These choices can result in their being confronted by violent repression, and indeed all these movements have been confronted by this.

In New York the occupants have recently allied with Occupy Homes, a collective for the right to housing, and have started opening squats for those in need of housing, similar to the practice of the Spanish activists. A few weeks earlier, they launched a national campaign calling on people to change banks – to leave the commercial banks and join the mutual societies. In the last month 650,000 people

---

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.mouvements.info/Occupy-Wall-Street-une-question-de.html>



have responded to this call<sup>7</sup>.

## The micro-politics of the occupations

There is nothing new about these choices. As the anthropologist and independent anarchist activist, David Graeber continuously repeats, this is one of the founding principles of anarchism<sup>8</sup>. The occupants of Zucotti Park and of Puerta del Sol also take inspiration from the approach and the tools popularised by the Quakers, in the course of their fight against nuclear power stations in America in the 1970s, and in the very fine balance that they are trying to build between social change, personal change, and the beginnings of another world.

Their internal practice takes up as much of their energy as their “external” ones.

People always speak in their own name: the “we” that is so dear to the hearts of the social movements and trade unions is replaced by “I”. The importance attached to the individual does not mean that there is a sum total of egos and strong personalities. Quite the contrary: these movements are marked by the desire to create a collective and solidarity based on each individual’s autonomy. The prerequisite therefore involves accepting that every voice counts as such – it is an organisational choice that differs from that of unions and associations (internally and in all their coordination activities), where each representative speaks on behalf of many others.

The general assemblies, just like the groups, operate on a consensual basis, which means that there is no delegation possible; no-one can talk on behalf of the Indignants – and the groups all work on the same principles. The occupations are the pretext for a very high level of exploration of the principle of consensus (and a learning procedure of its ethos), as an alternative to agnostic democracy (where voting is the preferred if not the only procedure for decision-making).

The aspect of prefiguration of the occupations is sometimes based on simple feeling that can be expressed in terms of a degree of well-being (“I am happy to be here”). The members of Occupation often recount the strong feeling of the well-being that they experienced during their first General Assembly. Some of them, like Alejandro, an Indignant from Cadiz (in the South of Spain), tells how he felt something was “missing” when he wasn’t in the camp: “when you aren’t there, you feel like you’re losing something”.

But the prefiguration is more far-reaching than that, going as far as formulating elaborate demands

---

<sup>7</sup> c.f. the article by R. CECOTTI pour *Mediapart* :  
<http://www.mediapart.fr/journal/international/091211/occupy-wall-street-en-revolution-perpetuelle>

<sup>8</sup> c.f. for example Occupy Wall Street's anarchist roots  
<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2011/11/2011112872835904508.html>



for more democratic procedures based on direct democracy and an attempt to build consensus. All the occupations – because they are a lasting phenomenon – are asking the question of “How should we live together?”

The answers that the occupants come up with are far from naïve, and the questions they are dealing with are highly complex: How to “hold” an occupation when they are under constant police harassment? What to do when you are not allowed to use amplifiers to hold general assemblies? When you can’t get out of the rain? How to carry forward a political project of creating an open space for living that is respectful of everyone when the occupation attracts hobos suffering from mental illness or addictions? And how to collectively deal with the need to find a solution to all these issues?

## **Radical alterglobalisation breaking with the past**

Ten years or so ago, the alterglobalisation movement broke with the political culture of the social movements and the left that believed in social transformation in a similar way. Thus, in the social fora nobody was entitled to speak “on behalf of the fora”. Consensus was, (and remains) the procedure of decision-making for the governance of fora (the International Council), and in the assembly of social movements that decides on the priorities for mobilisation for the coming year.

This break with the centralised aspect of social and political organisations of the 20th century) where the representative bodies, Board, Committee, Secretariat express themselves on behalf of their members, was coherent with a different vision of society and the changes required: the internationalisation of struggles took shape through counter-summits and big international meetings held to confront the G8, the IMF or the WTO and “another world” needed to be built, using production cooperatives, local exchange as defended by the small-scale producers of the Via Campesina, or freeware as well as the nationalisation of the key means of production and exchange, all dear to the workers movement of the 20th century...

But this constituted only a partial break: nobody could speak on behalf of the fora, but the basic structures on which they were founded were the social movements and citizens or NGOs whose own structures could easily remain hierarchical and directive. Exploring practice that provided alternatives to agnostic representative democracy was limited to co-ordination spaces – and therefore by its very nature to a limited numbers of activists.

The Indignad@s movements, just like Occupy Wall Street are far more radical experiments in this new political culture and they mark a triple break.

The first of these is the style of action. The 20th century had seen the workers’ movement in countries like France use strikes, in particular general strikes, as a favoured means of action. The



mobilisations in December 1995 represent a turning point: the strike of the railway and tram workers was the spearhead of a the movement; but it was the success of the “Juppéthon” whose objective was to bring together over a million street demonstrators that led the government to give in.

This led to demonstrations becoming the preferred pattern of behaviour in social struggles like the mobilisations against the war in Iraq or the defence of democratic liberties. Together with the form of the fora, it became the favoured public manifestation of altermondialism.

Nevertheless demonstrations are limited in time (even if they are a frequent occurrence). Occupation goes further, inasmuch as it takes root, and shifts the phenomenon from the street to public life. Occupations share the individual voluntary commitment of participants with that of a demonstration (people rarely leave their offices or factories as a group to join in demonstrations). It is this lasting aspect that marks a shift. It fosters the radical dimension of the action that in no way imposes violence or rioting – which is one of the only ways in which a demonstration can have any impact if it is not massive in numbers. The extended time-frame emphasises the question of social experimentation and of “living together” – similar to the shift when a strike becomes an occupation of the workplace or becomes more widespread.

The second break is with the decision-making procedures. In the altermondialist movement, consensus was born of necessity – how can a social forum vote and how can you weight the votes of movements that are of different kinds and sizes? The logic used in the fora was purely of an instrumental nature.

The current movements are explicitly seeking to break with representative democracy. The shift away from consensus between movements and organisations to a consensus between individuals is not mechanical. What marks this consensus is that neither the compromise nor unanimity, but the fact that people have renounced their right to veto. For this to be genuine, every participant in an assembly needs to have a genuine right to veto.

If consensus is achieved between movements, the right to veto carries a triple weight: the size, the importance of the organisation or network exercising the right, through the symbol that they represent, and finally by their degree of commitment to the decision that is being made.

In the case of the Indignad@s, as in Occupy Wall Street, the participants may well be members of unions or movements or even of political parties, but they may only speak in their own name. Assemblies are built around the refusal to weight the right to veto. This means that there is an aggregate of subjectivities, where none are superior to the other. The veto is not a tool that can be used to negotiate an acceptable compromise: it shifts to what can almost be considered a moral ground: I, as an individual can block a decision being made by hundreds, or even thousands of participants if I consider that it is in contradiction with the founding principles of the group. In other words, I shall only block decisions if I have no alternative but to leave the group if the proposition were



to be accepted. As one Occupy Wall Street activist explained, “In theory if you block a decision more than twice in your life, it means that there is a problem, that you are not in the right group”. When a proposal is formulated, the assembly begins by checking that all participants have understood it properly. They then move on to a first level of disagreements, with everyone being invited to formulate friendly amendments (constructive modifications), that may or may not be accepted by the person who put forward the proposal. This enables the proposal to be reformulated. It is only then that the moderators ask whether any participants would like to exercise their veto.

The altermondialist practice breaks with representative democracy in their decision-making process: votes are replaced by an attempt to reach consensus. But decisions are still taken on the exchange of contradictory views; this is used in the attempt to reach a consensus. In the case of the occupations, consensus is not opposed to any single vote, but to the entire process that precedes it – that of agnostic democracy. What is at stake is not the issue of convincing the assembly that a particular point of view is better than another, (at the risk of undermining the other); it is to build a shared decision based on different points of view.

It is therefore no great surprise that the process publicly leads to very broad, federating demands and that it has some difficulty, at least in the initial stages, in defining strategies that could enable it to clearly respond to repression or attempts to co-opt the process.

The third break is one of the most promising: it is a cross between two traditions that spring from both the workers’ and the ecologists’ movements: those who favour structural change at political level and those who favour behavioural and life-style change. These movements link different relationships to social transformation, from direct confrontation to personal change: it is every bit as much a matter of changing the balance of power as of converting (to use a term that has religious connotations) or contaminating (in more anarchist terminology) those who have even a short experience of occupation. There are many testimonials on-line by individuals who are not particularly activists, and who have become intensely involved in occupations, after having experienced the feeling of extreme individual or collective of extreme well-being<sup>9</sup> (in the course of a general assembly for example).

The occupations of the Indignad@s and Occupy Wall Street are both tools for furthering their political demands and places of social experimentation. The occupation is supposed to prefigure another society. This blend meets a growing aspiration that is by no means limited to marginal groups or behaviour considered as “deviant”, to choose to change society by changing individual behaviour patterns, without foregoing political action.

---

<sup>9</sup> c.f. the example in this video link: <http://vimeo.com/30241489>



## **And what of the left in all this?**

The success of the altermondialist movement can be explained by its ability to link three aspects: a cycle of inter-connected struggles (linked essentially by transnational mobilisation); the renewal of the framework for interpreting and clear statement of injustice (to situate the injustice in the neo-liberal framework of globalisation); a set of organisational innovations (of which the world social forum is the most obvious example).

Although the Indignad@s and Occupy movements are still very young, they appear to have succeeded in combining these three dimensions at least in embryonic form: the struggles, although local are interlinked (by shared imagination); they are building frameworks of interpretation that are in phase with the current crisis of capitalism (this is encapsulated in the statement “we are the 99%”, whose symbolic strength reminds us of “another world is possible”); and they are simultaneously entering into an intense cycle of exploring radically direct forms of democracy.

It is therefore quite acceptable to consider what is currently being played out in New York, Madrid or La Défense as the precursor of a vast movement – which will bypass much of the left if they fail to move beyond programmed order as the only way of moving from micro-practice to the macro-political level.

An initial connection could occur between the actors of the first phase of altermondialisation and those of the current movements before next summer: the organisers of the Maghreb/Mashrek Social Forum, which is a preparatory stage of the 2013 WSF (that will be held in Tunisia) have recently decided to invite the Indignad@s and actors of the Occupy Everywhere dynamic to participate in a global assembly, that is now scheduled to take place in March 2013, also in Tunisia, at the same time as the WSF!

This text is the slightly updated English version of (S')occuper (de) la gauche, ou l'ignorer? written in late 2011. The discussions in the relationship between the Occupy movement and the political sphere have since moved forward, sometimes in a conflictual way, around the risk of co-option by the Democratic party, or other organisations, such as Move On that are more or less closely linked to it.

The authors are members of the editorial committee of Mouvements.