

FOR
A PAR-
TIES
PARTY

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The emergency is at the party

*To finally slow down
To stop depleting the planet
To stop exhausting ourselves
To find ourselves, meet each other and create links
To practice collective activity that most surely opposes war
To resist capital powers that would see us sad and frustrated.
To show the door to all those who would make us believe
that we should spend our lives earning it
To stick two fingers up to capitalism (and to do so happily).
To fight against ourselves, get out of our comfort zones
and to face our dreams.
To exult in public squares, to dance in the street
To do something concrete together that gives meaning to
our lives.
To join together, to create a dynamic collective that de-
pends only on us.
For all these reasons and more...*

Partygoers of all countries, let us unite!

THE URGENCY OFUTOPIAS IN GENERAL

FESTIVEUTOPIAS IN PARTICULAR

OR

"BECAUSE THE WORLD IS SPINNING OUT OF CONTROL"

-An emergency, really? Launched at full speed like a crazy train, our world is heading straight into the wall: climate change, the collapse of biodiversity, air, land and sea pollution, the depletion of natural resources, an explosion of inequalities, the rise of nationalist impulses and international tensions... it is the fall of our civilization that awaits us at every turn and the urgency would be to celebrate? !

-And yet... If the world goes into a spin, if it is destroyed day after day, it is in the name of growth, in the name of the jobs it creates, in the name of a certain notion of progress that would allow every human (or almost...) to own a smartphone and the latest pair of jeans, in the name of a system to which we are a part, a system that feeds on our loss of sight, our frustrations, our futile desires. If the multinationals have taken power everywhere, over everything, over us, if the sometimes-elected rulers of the people let it happen, it is also because we have tacitly consented – some more than others – to comfort prevailing over freedom, to work taking precedence over our lives, to competition prevailing over cooperation, that consumption becomes the illusory means of filling the void in our lives. If the world is spinning, it is because we are complicit in ruining our own lives to live them, guided by the mirage of social success at the expense of the es-

sential¹: us, others and everything that connects us. Paul Lafargue's reflections in *The Right to Be Lazy*, a work published in 1880 still ring true: "*the great problem of capitalist production is no longer to find producers and multiply their strengths but to discover consumers, to excite appetites and to create fake needs for them.*"². This world revolves too fast, around growth at all costs, for the benefit of a few and we are the ones who are paddling.

If the world is spinning, it is because capitalism continues its work: it divides us to rule us. The classic dichotomy of the bourgeois on one hand and the proletarians on the other, has been replaced by a real social millefeuille where one envies and distrusts his fellow man.. The resilience of this system over the centuries and according to social developments lies in its ability to arouse competition, jealousy and fear amongst us, sometimes to the point of hatred. Its strategy? Blurring the lines between the privileged and the exploited by pitting the latter against the former! It is from here that we can imagine the ideal antidote would be a way to bring us together...

If the world goes into a spin, it is because we have forgotten that reality depends on our ability to dream... to dream the world as much as our own lives. Since the fall

¹ On this obsession with social success and its antidote: the "refusal to reach", Corinne Morel-Darleux, *Rather Sink with Elegance Than Float Without Grace*, Libertalia, 2019.

² Paul Thefargue, *The Right to Be Lazy*, Henry Oriol editor, 1883.

of the USSR, to the monotonous air of a so-called "end of history",³ it is the same refrain that is repeated again and again: capitalism would be unsurpassable, unavoidable, irreplaceable. Discredited and downgraded to the rank of unrealistic projects, utopias would have gone bankrupt even though they were the engines of all social progress in human history: paid holidays, retirement, social security etc... Utopias would have gone bankrupt, and yet utopians are still standing, persisting in inspiring the best in a drifting world, loaded with ideals to infuse meaning, to re-humanize us, with a view to a common horizon to move forward together.

If the world is spinning, it is because we have lost sight of the means to resist individually and to share the dream collectively. Faced with social breakdown, skillfully maintained by the powers in place, there is no greater urgency than to meet again to stand together. More than ever, in the outlandish but vital hope of derailing the train we are embarked on, we need new utopias, provided that they are concrete and accessible, that is to say that each and every one of us can pull the levers.

The world is spinning. So be it! Ever more reason to get back to basics. So why not back to the party? A party gives us the opportunity to take a break, it allows the world to slow down by offering all its invitees the possibility of savoring the now. Of living the present moment. Be-

³ Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, Flammarion, 1992.

cause parties, are about defending our time to live, to meet, to love one another, to play, to dance, to toast, to be pleasantly unproductive, to be joyfully equal and dignified. Because it opposes productivity and competition. Because parties allow us to escape the fatality of every man for himself, because they bring us together and give us the chance to become aware of an unstoppable truth: our common interests are so much greater. Festivals and parties bring us together beyond our differences, our origins, our nationalities, our ages and our cultures! Parties put forward and centre what is most important to us: others, our encounters, friendships, love, having fun, dance, music, the drunkenness of life, in short life itself. Because the party is a goal to be achieved as well as the means to achieve it; we fight for ourselves and by ourselves. This is why the party is a real civilizational matter: it allows us to place the certainty that we are here to enjoy life at the heart of our political convictions.

**THE MEANING OF THE PARTY
AND THE "PARTY" OF CONSUMPTION
OR
"SHOULD VIP AREAS BE TORCHED"??**

Don't get confused! There are parties and there are parties... Never has the freedom to party been so threatened; never has there been such an urgency to exercise it as a means of resistance. But let us not get confused.! There are "parties" and "parties". Here again, polymorphic capitalism takes the festive clothes of entertainment and disguises the spirit of the party through its "consumer festivals". When it is not Christmas with its profusion of gifts intended to boost GDP hence enriching the rich by impoverishing all others, then it's Valentine's Day, Halloween or simply sale time in the shops. Parties are everywhere in *a society where money rules* but in such society parties are actually nowhere, diluted, vaporized on all levels of our social lives, in a gaseous state... They are sold to us; they are consumed, and it is their very meaning that is lost.

If it is impossible to define what a holiday is, at least it is possible to say what it is not. In the perfect extension of shopping centers that have become temples of the most holy consumption, in the spirit of social networks where every part of our private lives is monetized, following the same logic as schools and companies where competition rages, places thrive by usurping the idea of celebration. To

enter them, you have to pay and sometimes paying is not enough: you have to prove your credentials, be the subject of a selection so that the "gratin", the "cream of the cream" is not mixed with the common mortals. In perfect symbiosis with the dominant social model, nothing matters more than to appear, to distinguish oneself by one's rank to dominate all the others, who far from being revolted by it, find for some the motivation to crush their neighbors to make their way, in turn, to the top.⁴ They feed on the illusion that they are having fun, their degree of satisfaction being strictly proportionate to the amount of money they have spent and the number of "likes" received..

If it is impossible to define the party, at least we must dare to trace an outline by listing the criteria of our *ideal type of festivity*: spontaneity, gratuity and openness. Spontaneity, which always has its place, even in the best planned parties provided that we allow ourselves the freedom to improvise, to break out of the predictable, to better discover ourselves and each other. Free, because the only benefit of the party will be the freedom everyone feels through the shared experience. The antithesis of consumerist behaviour, the party is not only a place of gratuity but even more so a place of sharing, whether it be drinking, eating, dancing, singing or playing. And finally, openness, because

⁴ On this illusory identification mechanism of the powerful and the rich, see Mona Chollet, *Right-Wing Dreams. Undoing the Sarkozyist Imagination*, Zone, 2008.

all selection impoverishes and deprives us of the pleasures of otherness, of the discovery of the unknown, of the stranger. The holiday also has the power to abolish social or generational boundaries and place us all in our rank, that of equals. A party is either egalitarian or it is not a party. Equality is not a criterion of celebration; it is its very essence. Rich, poor, big, small, young or old, it is the setting where only the ability to have fun counts... It is this theatre, this collective creation where everyone has their role to play.

So, let's not get confused, there are parties and parties.. The philosopher Michel Foessel expresses it with well-chosen words: "It is possible to favour another form to the party, a more informal one, where there is no centre and one in which individuals participate rather than contemplate. This is the model of the festival defined by Rousseau in the "Letter a d'Alembert sur les spectacles", in which he opposes precisely the idea of the theatre where there is a room and a stage and where the spectators never become the actors of the play. This kind of party, which is a little more improvised, seeming to be more in line with democracy. For there is an intimate link between celebration and politics: the former is an experience of equality where roles are not fixed in advance and exuberance ceases to be perceived as a vice. The celebration is certainly looking for an opportunity to put the logic of social judgment on hold and submit to economic hierarchies. This explains, in my opinion, why the holidays that reproduce and reinforce

these hierarchies are just representations of boredom prevailing over happiness. »⁵.

If it is impossible to define the holiday, at least we can say that it is everywhere where we find the opportunity to be ourselves, to suspend time to rush into the parenthesis that it allows to open in our daily lives: *"The holidays (...) oppose in fact an intermittent explosion to a dull continuity, an exhilarating frenzy to the daily repetition of the same material concerns, the powerful breath of effervescence common to the calm works where everyone is busy on the sidelines, the concentration of society to its dispersion, the fever of its moments culminating in the quiet work of the sluggish phases of its existence".⁶* Every time we are inspired to let go of our fears, to be satisfied with little and make for the essential we are experiencing a party. A party is more willingly nestled in popular balls, free concerts in the public square or in parks, in public spaces that are open and free to all. A party can be by night or by day, in our improvised evenings, our joyful meals, our lively discussions, even our unexpected encounters on public transport, every time we let ourselves go to take a side-step away from the ordinary.

⁵ Michaël Foessel Entretien *Philosophy magazine*, 2020.

⁶ R. Caillois, *Man and the Sacred*, Edition augmented by three appendices on sex, play, war in their relationship with the sacred, Paris, Gallimard, "idées", 1950. pp. 125-126.

HAPPINESS FOR ALL AND DIGNITY THE RIGHT TO THE PARTY AND ALL OTHER RIGHTS THAT FLOW FROM IT

In the midst of a collective loss of a landmark, we need a compass. Obsessed with growth and purchasing power, the representatives of the people seem to have forgotten that our fundamental law concedes *the "happiness of all"* the ultimate goal to be pursued when claiming to govern. For those in doubt, it is written in full in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen of 1789. It is not a question of promising happiness to everyone, but rather of affirming that everyone must be able to access it, if they want to, so that the social conditions for this happiness are met! Here is an ideal that should make us want to fight: *the power to be happy*. However, the first condition for the happiness of all is respect for all our fundamental rights and only that of the right to property and the freedom to undertake, because it is clear that today some rights and freedoms are better protected than others. Too often our fundamental social rights proclaimed by the Preamble to the 1946 Constitution⁷ and particularly the paragraphs which provide that the Nation *"shall ensure to the individual and the family the conditions necessary for their development"* and that it *"guarantees to all [...] the protection of health, material safety, rest and leisure"*.. A

⁷ This text is an integral part of our block of constitutionality, just like the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen of 1789.

whole program! Gathered here are the right to have free time, to benefit from social security and still to have fun. If collective happiness were our compass, the party should be instituted as an ideal way to walk in the right direction, without tripping up.. Because the festival is demanding in rights and freedoms: it does not only require free time, public spaces and access to culture but above all a favorable social climate, a certain collective peace of mind, a healthy environment. Such a context is only possible when everyone has the essentials to live - better than a basic income! - the certainty of having a roof, the means for subsistence and the freedom to pursue a life choice: study, work, create, resume studies, do nothing... Before us, people fought for the consecration of these rights, but it is clear that we still have to fight for their realization. While the obsession with "purchasing power" transcends political divisions, the forces of the left would be better inspired to reconnect with the demand for the effectiveness of our rights. ... because all these rights fundamentally condition our dignity.

What does this have to do with parties? What is the right to live with dignity if not the right to live in happiness? It is indeed dignity that is at stake, since rich and poor are as equal in the face of celebration as they are in the face of death. Dignity because, the most disadvantaged are not the least dexterous and perhaps of a greater ability to have fun, precisely because they have more at heart to share and also so much less to lose. The working-class

ability to share what little they have at parties counters the "blasitude" and boredom of the ultra-rich. Those working classes have nothing to envy in the jet set.. What a terrible defeat for the supposedly "dominant" classes! This is perhaps the reason – be it conscious or not – as to why the party is the object of treacherous attack from the capitalist system: the last deadly battle before reducing us completely to the conditions of slaves. Every day more prisoners of work are increasingly crushed under restrictions, caught by the throat of credit and overdrafts, pressurized on all sides, exhausted by a life whose best part is reduced to a coating of sorrow. No wonder that some come to the point of losing even the will to party. How could it be otherwise when our working lives are not enough to protect us from social insecurity. Fatigue sometimes has a tendency to prevail and there is less and less cultural alternative to an evening in front of a series or film? It's hard to relax, to enjoy your free time when the pressure is constant and more and more unbearable as you descend the bars of the social ladder, not to mention the fate reserved for foreigners. The damage of incessant assaults on the most precarious, the hunt of the unemployed, the planning of repetition and the threat of losing hard-earned comforts, the capitalist system seeks to deprive us of our dignity: this power to be richer than the wealthiest by enjoying so much more of our lives. It is ultimately the people who are prevented from offering what is most precious to them and it is the whole of society that suffers from refusing to take advantage of it.

Our collective happiness thus fundamentally depends on respect for our rights: the right to social security, the right to rest, the right to culture, the right to health, the right to a healthy environment. And all these rights are interdependent: it is enough that one of them is attacked for the others to be diminished. That is why, in the name of dignity and all our other fundamental rights, we must claim not only the "freedom to celebrate" but also the consecration of the "right to celebrate". This would in no way make it a right more important than the others but rather a right that gives flavour to all the others. Because at the end of the day, it is when our most basic rights are respected, those on which our dignity depends, that our ability to party unfolds and with it all its potential, that is to say far from the outlets of the weekend where withdrawal into oneself is imposed in the face of the encounter, where the high takes precedence over drunkenness, where consumption crushes the essential. So maybe working will be less painful because it will be a choice. Then we can serenely devote more time to others, our loved ones, our commitments, our passions. Then we can party and enjoy the deep meaning of freedom: not our ability to go here or do that, but our power to be ourselves. Then finally, we will be able to fully experience our festive nature because the human is fundamentally a festive animal.

THE PARTY AS A CROSSROADS OF UTOPIAS FREE TIME, OPEN SPACES AND A GENERAL FESTIVE ATMOSPHERE

At the antithesis of a nihilistic project, the festive utopia carries a project of civilization that makes *the collective well-being* its main unit of measurement. Its goals are linked to our fulfillment. It does not care about the growth of GDP but is concerned about our basic needs. It questions the social organization to identify everything that promotes our meetings, sharing, conviviality and solidarity. It fights against everything that pits us against one another. It sets public policies in coherence with regard to a single purpose: how to organize society to allow us to fully enjoy our lives? This festive ideal is offered as a possible crossroads of utopias, that is to say as a unifying element, a point of convergence of our most legitimate demands: the utopia of free time, open spaces and that of the general festive atmosphere.

The utopia of free time. We want more time to live, not just to rest, recover and "replenish our labor power," not just to consume at all costs; we want time to enjoy. For Marx, "*it is beyond [the sphere of material production] that the blossoming of human power begins, which is its own end, the true reign of freedom. [...] The reduction of the working day is the fundamental condition for this libe-*

*ration.*⁸ Of course, we have to work less. Those who claim otherwise are idiots (unable to understand that infinite growth is impossible in a finite world) or cynics (who mock the consequences of unbridled productivism and the value of our lives)." Let us leave work only the strict place it deserves: a necessity to produce what is really useful to our lives.

Beyond that, the urgency is to free ourselves from market time. Because, while it is true that we have more free time today, it is no less false that this freed time is a prisoner of the social structures that confine us to our predefined roles as workers/consumers. This productivist strait jacket, weakens us collectively, by isolating us ever more from one another. It tends correspondingly to decrease until the times of commitment and social involvement disappear. This free time spent in associations or trade unions in the name of the causes that are close to our hearts, without forgetting neighbourly relations, is above all a lever of resistance without which our social rights regress inexorably, without which democracy remains in the state of promise. This "militant time" makes it possible at the same time to weave links between people and if the party is not always the operating model of these social structures, it is necessary to rejoice that it is favored precisely because of the connections that these collectives make it possible to create. The same goes for "creative moments" that offer

⁸. K. Marx, *Capital*, quoted by Manuel Rolland, "Reducing working time: the abandoned evidence", CQFD, December 29, 2021.

us opportunities to develop and share our talents: like writing workshops, jamming sessions and so on.

The question of time is finally that of the rhythm of our lives, today dictated by the obsession with performance: everything must go at full speed, everything is timed including and in particular time spent with loved ones. The urgency is not only to rebalance our rhythms but in general to stop 'chasing' our lives. It takes time to really live: if we deduct time spent studying and working, commuting and doing domestic tasks... what are we left with in terms of moments to be with loved ones, to rest, to do nothing, to commit...? All these temporalities are interconnected: time spent working absorbs time spent on the essential⁹, it eats into time spent on other pursuits and, at the end of the chain, it is the time of celebration, reserved for those still have the energy for it, which appears to be singularly threatened today.

The utopia of open spaces. For an urbanism of conviviality!
We want truly public spaces, offered up for our festive desires and fantasies. A society increases or decreases the possibilities of partying depending on the organization of its spaces. Today, alas, everything is made to promote the fluidity of travel, speed being the standard of any measurement. Performance and its diktat always and again: priority is given to major transport infrastructures, the car as the main mode of travel and as an essential stimulus for

⁹ On this subject, see the recent book by Céline Marty, *Work less to live better. Guide to an anti-productivist philosophy*, Dunod, 2022.

economic growth. On the other hand, public spaces have an increasing tendency to discourage breaks and prolonged stays with strategies of deterrence that shamefully illustrate an urban furniture hostile to the homeless, particularly in the metro. In the same spirit, bars are disappearing¹⁰, making way for fast food outlets all to the detriment of a conviviality being accessible to the working classes and youth. Let us not forget the gentrification that pushes "working" classes further and further, out into commuter towns while succeeding in the feat of anesthetizing the most festive neighborhoods of city centers.

It is therefore in the exact opposite direction that it is appropriate to engage: that of welcoming public spaces where benches, arenas, squares and pedestrian streets flourish so as to make conviviality possible again. As for forests, meadows, parks, collective gardens and other green areas, we must multiply them and ensure that they are open 24/7. Finally, the space dedicated to cars must be reduced to make room for all those who want to sit, pedal, play, dance and meet. A concrete utopia typical of Montrouil, the event *La voie est libre*¹¹ allowed the closure of a portion of motorway to let the inhabitants of the city utilize the space for their cultural initiatives. It only lasted for a day, but the street was open and the potential for the

¹⁰ According to INSEE, France had 500,000 bistros in 1900, 200,000 in 1960 and only 39,000 in 2016.

¹¹ Cathy Lamri and Clément Girard, « *La Voie est libre, une utopie citoyenne pour transformer l'espace public* », *Revue Transports urbaines*, 2019/2.

conquest of public space was revealed. Rousseau summed up this idea with this claim: "*Plant a stake crowned with flowers in the middle of a square, gather people there, and you will have a feast.*"¹²

The utopia of the general festive atmosphere. Everything is connected. Our time to live is evaporating, friendly public spaces are shrinking, and our world is getting gloomier.. The general atmosphere is an oversight of public action while it crudely but faithfully reflects the policies that are carried out. Individualism, competition at work or school (thank you *Parcours sup!*), everything pushes us to withdraw into ourselves where collective depression awaits us. Our societies are sick, and our mental health is dangerously threatened. Drug addiction increases at work, as does our addiction to anxiolytics and other antidepressants: 1 in 4 French people regularly consume anxiolytics, antidepressants or sleeping pills. Every year, 150 million boxes of these psychotropic drugs are sold at a prohibitive cost to social security (and during this time, the state continues to wage war on cannabis...). Society turned on its head! On one hand the economic and social system depresses us, on the other it sells us legal drugs to better support it. From there we can trace a link between the gloomy atmosphere and the excessive use of drugs, legal or not, that become outlets more than anything else ... Serotonin, dopamine and endorphine, are natural substances that our brains are able to produce themselves if the

¹² Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Letter to D'Alembert*.

context is suitable. We should be able to legally shoot ourselves with the general atmosphere and since the link between our physical and mental health is no longer demonstrated, it would certainly favour the balance of social security.

Artists are at the forefront of the battle against prevailing gloom. This is what the Covid-19 crisis has harshly revealed to us: it's not culture that has been deemed "non-essential" but the artists themselves, those who are on the front lines giving a little more meaning to our lives. In general, the community is always more committed to defending "culture", an abstract figure, rather than artists. Under the guise of democratizing culture, it finances above all the places that tend to be frequented by more affluent social classes: theatre and operagoers. For all others, only the "show" remains, the cheap inane "star-culture": what better invention than "the society of the spectacle",, perpetual entertainment and continuous ¹³digital stultification to keep people in bondage? Art must fall – literally - on us all! If the social context passes first and foremost through our daily lives, this is where artists have the best role to play, this is where our taxes should finance their surprise attacks. It is not culture, but artists who must be democratized! This is how to work for a more open, tolerant and happy society: by allowing us to meet artists on the ordinary paths of our daily lives, to have the opportu-

¹³ Impossible here not to quote the work of Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, éditions Buchet-Chastel, 1967.

nity to be amazed without even having expected to be. There is nothing better to awaken the senses and consciences than direct contact with artists: not the "big" inaccessible stars, no! those of everyday life: bar musicians, street clowns, subway actors and puppeteers in public squares. Long live street arts festivals and their federation¹⁴, carnivals, batucadas, brass bands, choirs, open-air milongas and all the artists who go where their audience is, who abolish the boundaries of the stage to make all the others actors in their own right, who inspire vocations by awakening the artists in us¹⁵. Here again, it is artists and artistic education that deserves to be defended. For art workers that education is constantly threatened. Visual artists and writers do not even have access to it. This is where there is urgency to act.

And on the subject of the general atmosphere... the police force, let's talk about it?! The obsession with security stems from the same anti-festive logic. From the episode of the yellow vests and the terror of flash-balls to that of the Covid epidemic, and its repression of festive movements, the state reveals its true nature when it attacks partygoers. State violence is absolutely intolerable when prefects, under the authority of the government, order the police to charge pacifist *teufeurs*. Steve Maia Caniço

¹⁴ <https://www.federationartsdelarue.org>

¹⁵ If it is not possible to pay them all the tribute they deserve, allow me to salute the Surnatural orchestra, HK and the Saltimbanques, Alma Dili, Télamuré, Zarhzä, La climatic fanfare, Wind of panic...

was dancing when he was rushed into the Loire, following a crowd movement caused by the intervention of the police on the evening of the music festival in June 2020. Most of the time duplicitous repression disperses through those taking advantage of public spaces, from fines for night-time disturbances to various and varied police intimidation, to the administrative closures of cultural spaces, events, meetings and celebrations that break the mold such as *La Comédia* in Montreuil. The fact that society is moving toward mobilizing its police forces to end the party says a lot about the frustrations that run through it and have started to become embedded in it to rotting point.. To date, no law has appeared that preserves the right to party, even once a year. That is what should be remedied. For all these reasons, the festival appears as the cross-roads of utopias, a compass that clearly indicates a direction: it is a change of society: anti-productivist, ecological, democratic and therefore festive.

THE PARTY AS AN AWARENESS RAISING TOOL

THE PARTY AS A LEVER FOR MOBILIZATION

OR

"THE PARTY AS A PERFECT MEANS OF RESISTANCE"

Because it brings us together in public places, because it offers us the chance to meet, exchange, have fun and understand our common interests, the party reveals itself as a means of mobilization and awareness of the people. A perfect means of resistance also since the strength of the festive utopia lies in the fact that it depends fundamentally on us, that it is accessible to us and therefore that it offers us the power to change reality.

In modern history, the "Fête de la Fédération" on July 14, 1790, inspired by spontaneous civic festivals, celebrates the storming of the Bastille, and will imbue society with the revolutionary ideal by demonstrating one essential thing: radical changes combine perfectly with festive moments. In this case, it is the celebration that unites the Nation around this ideal of equality. It becomes a form of expression of the general will: *"The excitement of the collective feast has the same structure as the general will of the Social Contract. The description of public happiness offers us the lyrical aspect of the general will: this is the aspect it takes on in Sunday clothes. »¹⁶*

¹⁶ Nicolas Righi, "Un objet pour tous : la fête", *Le Philosophoire*, 2002.

Since then, how many episodes corroborate this hypothesis that the holiday gathers around ideals and allows us to advance our common causes? The yellow vests movement of course, crystallized by friendly roundabout gatherings of individuals discovering their social proximity – their precariousness – and forging links to better defend themselves collectively¹⁷. It was by getting together and celebrating their common movement that these people discovered their dignity, that of citizens playing their role in democracy. The same can be seen in Madrid, when in May 2011, the 'Indignados' of the *Puerta del Sol* decided to fight against rental evictions: they did so by forming squads of joyful militants united by the sacred bonds of the revolutionary festival that had brought them together. In the spring of 2016, the *Nuit debout* movement stemmed from the same festive dynamic: breaking away from the daily grind by bringing people together to "remake the world" in the public square. There was also *The Children of Don Quixote*, *The Indignados*, *Black Thursday*, *The Precarious Generation*, *Save the Rich*, *Alternatiba* and more recently *Extinction Rebellion* and its militant village in the heart of Paris. All were social movements drawing on the source of celebration and conviviality to defend principles and condemn injustices. We can still mention the movements of 68, the mobilizations around Notre-Dame-Des-Landes, the ZAD, the Spring of peoples in the 70s, the Co-

¹⁷ Florence Aubenas, « La révolte des ronds-points », *Le Monde* du 15 décembre 2018.

Iour Revolutions in the 2000s and the Arab Spring in 2010. All are demonstrations that the party is the best path to a successful revolution, what some may have called "*the orgasms of history*."¹⁸ There's no naivety in these revolutionary movements and indeed some are also known for certain bloody episodes; but nonetheless what can be observed in all are effervescent societies and enthusiastic mobilizations spurred by "*a voracious enjoyment of regained freedom*"¹⁹.

Some mock the "care bear" revolutions as peaceful protests that don't bring change.. But non-violent movements have been known to overcome authoritarian powers. The Carnation Revolution in 1974 a good example of a protest whose demonstrators could not be curbed with state violence. No justification for forceful state control could be given, precisely because the power of the revolution came from non-violence and celebration. In any event, it is not important that these resistance movements have not always succeeded in overturning dominant systems. They were happy parentheses that offered individuals the opportunity to forge links and become aware of the importance of their common causes as well as the importance of defending those causes together. And if violence is necessary to fight against arbitrariness and

¹⁸ Yves Frémion François Volny , *Les Orgasmes de l'histoire* (L'Atelier du possible) 1980.

¹⁹ According to Antoine Bernard and Souhayr Belhassen of FIDH's formula, quoted by Maria Malagardis, *Libération*, March 25, 2011.

defend our dignity, then the celebration will have allowed us to forge links and build bridges towards the society of the future. Whether at the beginning of a revolutionary movement, during it or at the end to celebrate victory, the party is there to give meaning, to mobilize, to fuel desire. In the famous words of the Russian anarchist Emma Goldman: *"If I can't dance, I don't want to take part in your revolution."*

A lever for general mobilization! The party is not only a good way to resist, it is also and above all unifying. To those who believe that the festive form isn't credible from a political point of view, the strength of legitimacy is made possible by the party's ability to aggregate ever more diverse and varied populations. If we are convinced that we must fight and if we want to have a chance to win, then any withdrawal into ourselves would be deadly for our struggles. It is necessary to agree to lead unifying and therefore festive struggles to augment the energies of popular movements. And what could be better than these convivial moments to arouse the desire to act? Some will deride the lack of seriousness that characterizes festivities, but parties favour the sometimes impromptu and nevertheless profound discussions on the meaning of life, on what we are entitled to expect from it... in short, often on essential matters!! Parties make discussions of these most serious subjects possible without intruding on those who need to have fun above all. Whatever one thinks of what has become of the *Huma* festival, no one can deny that this event brought political consciousness to thousands of

onlookers, who came for concerts and left being struck with ideas.

If we start from isolated individuals, consumed with envy, prostrate in social isolation, how can we imagine that we could defend our collective interests. We will continue to get eaten, piece by piece, starting with the weakest and putting pressure on everyone else. It is precisely because of this social situation that capitalism imposes itself not as an ideology but as a default mode of social organization: every man for himself. Gilles Deleuze sums up this idea in these terms: *"Power requires sad bodies. Power needs sadness because it can dominate it. Joy, therefore, is resistance because it does not give up. Joy as a power of life, takes us to places where sadness would never take us."*

The party is the best means of resistance because not only does it allow us to fight against the sadness of capitalism but also because it inclines us to fight against ourselves. A struggle against our evil inclinations, it is the demon of individualism that catches up with us all, as well-intentioned as we were at the outset. Essentially, this fight is being waged against this force of inertia that prevents us from exercising the rights that are ours and from freedoms that remain locked in their theoretical space. What is it then that holds us back from going to artists rather than sinking into the arms of GAFAM? What keeps us from meeting our neighbors in common spaces for happy hour rather than staying at home? It is when we dare to break our routines, when we leave our comfort zone to meet stran-

gers that our collective interests advance. A festive society would allow more interaction and therefore connection, and therefore awareness of our common interests.

Today, all over the world, new forms of celebrations are being invented or reinvented, sometimes even crossbreeding, and all are seeds for the revolutionary movements of tomorrow. *Free zones*²⁰ organized in the streets give a new and augmented meaning to the flea market. Everyone brings what they want to offer to the free zone, it is a moment of sharing and conviviality putting all on an equal footing, the opposite of charity that separates out the givers and receivers. Deriving from an ancestral tradition, goguettes²¹ are taking place whenever people join together to sing well-known tunes, often adjusting the lyrics and mood of the songs, these are moments in which we listen to each other, engage in serious conversation and debate in a festive atmosphere. *Disco-soups* are also flourishing in Europe's public squares, bringing people together to cook and share their dishes (often made from recovered products) to support various music causes.. These

²⁰ *Bastamag*, " Zone de gratuité, ou comment les objets deviennent sans propriétaire fixe ", October 2, 2012.

²¹ Eugène Imbert,

La goguette et les goguettiers. Étude parisienne, Paris, imprimerie de P. Pierrot, 1873. For a more contemporary reference, see the documentary "Les goguettes, la tradition du bouffon du roi", directed by Marie-Laure Désideri and Christian Argentine.

parentheses – or *temporary autonomous zones*²² – demonstrate that another reality is possible here and now and that it depends only on us. And if it only lasts an afternoon or an evening, so be it!

It is not a question of giving meaning to the party but of restoring its essential attributes, because the party is political. It is the perfect way to fight on a popular scale. Here and there, let us come together, at the same or different times, to defend what is dear to us with those who are dear to us. Let us tap our feet at the same time to say that we are together and that we believe in the only absolutely indisputable thing: us.

²² Hakim Bey, *TAZ Temporary Autonomous Zone* », 1997, editions of L'éclat.

THE INTEREST
AND DOUBTS
OR
"SHOULD WE REALLY CREATE A PARTIES PARTY? »

The interest is simple: it is a question of reinventing militant forms to stir people's will and desire to remobilize. While people, in general, turn away from politics, the party appears as a relevant way to offer everyone the opportunity to get involved in what concerns them. It was because politics was left in meeting rooms, offices and other hemicycles that bureaucrats, managers and apparatchiks of all stripes took power. If we have to renew our way of doing politics, if we want to see different people as representatives, let us not be afraid to be creative. Why not take politics out in the open air, gather in public squares in a festive way to defend our ideas by implementing them? Why not break with the pattern of political parties running for our votes to implement their programs by starting by implementing ours without even being elected?

After all, the first form of political action is to act directly to change the world around us, in the manner of Cédric Herrou who welcomes migrants by giving full meaning to the ideal of fraternity²³. Direct citizen action lends credibility to the second possible form of political action, which consists in putting pressure on elected officials to make the right decisions by demonstrating, signing petitions,

²³ Cédric Herrou, *Change ton monde*, editions Les liens qui libent, 2022.

etc. So why not invest in a third form of political action, that of getting elected to make the decisions that seem right to us. Why not a party? Since we have common interests, why not ally with each other? Why not use the election gallery as an opportunity to celebrate?

Why not? Because any political enterprise is threatened by the risk of an organization that leads its members to lose sight of the pursued ideal.. This is the danger faced by any structure that seeks to conquer power and that, to this end, establishes formal or informal hierarchies: the leader, the elected officials, the militants and all the others²⁴. That is where the doubt comes from. In this respect, the political parties of the left would gain, today more than ever, to guard against such excesses and the remedies exist: to privilege direct action in order to concretize their ideals in real life. To proceed to the drawing of lots of candidates among all the militants to contain the will to conquer power and the appetite it can arouse, to provide that no one can be elected more than once so that no one sacrifices the collective project on the altar of his personal ambitions...

What about a parties party? The essence of the festive ideal lies in the conviction that true power lies in action, at the individual and micro-collective level, but above all in benevolence and selflessness. It follows that direct action

²⁴ Simone Weil Express *Note on the general abolition of political parties*, Climats, February 1950.

should always be absolutely predominant, that any centralized organization should be prohibited, that there could therefore be no status, no rules, no hierarchy, since we are all joyfully equal, free and independent. There would be no leader but as many scattered leaders. The total freedom of each other could lead to the creation of micro-structures at the scale of neighborhoods, better still at the street, or even building level. As long as it flourishes! As long as we manage ourselves everywhere.

The goal of a parties party should therefore be first and foremost to promote the horizontal development of the movement, to create independent but interconnected and solid islands by following a strategy of creating an archipelago of struggles to use the words of Corinne Morel-Darleux: ²⁵ "*What we need is not to form a continent, but an archipelago of resistance.*" The festival could be a beautiful strategy of visibility of all the scattered islets that today form this archipelago of resistance, their common denominator, capable of illuminating them with a *common festive movement*; like a garland would reveal its potential for alternative light. If we act on our scale, we will end up interconnecting with each other in a random and chaotic way – beautifully! Wherever we defend our rights, wherever we defend people, wherever we defend causes, organize parties at the same time to celebrate these ideals and the commitment we share to defend them, let us unite

²⁵ « 'Archipeliser nos résistances', *Terrestrial* (Review). <https://www.terrestres.org/2019/06/07/archipeliser-nos-resistances/>

our energies to shine the utopia that we all carry in our own way: a certain conception of the human and of civilization. It is not political power that must be conquered, but that of changing reality by bursting into everyday lives to change their course.

Let us summarize: there would be no leader, no rules, no statutes, we would only have our festive actions as a standard ... if there were to be a parties party, this is what it could look like!

**CONCRETE PROPOSITIONS
TO BE IMPLEMENTED AND DEFENDED
OR
"THE POTENTIAL PROGRAM OF THE PARTIES PARTY"**

Proposal n°1: Let's unite!

The revolution will be festive, or it won't be a revolution. Because this revolution has its roots in countries all over the world, *partygoers of all countries let us unite!* As much as possible, let's come together, meet, discuss our next holiday and the causes they can bring, form networks, synchronize to celebrate together wherever we are on the planet. Russians and Ukrainians. Indians and Pakistanis, Japanese, Chinese or American. Let's form an *International Party!* Let's conquer public spaces, streets and public squares. Let us seize every opportunity, let us unite, let us interconnect, let us merge our holidays and give them the meaning they deserve. Let's joyfully claim them together with dancing, singing and toasting!

Proposal n°2: For the doubling of public holidays

Because we work too much and because we will never have enough opportunities to gather, let's imagine new holidays to celebrate by doubling public holidays: starting with a June 21 music festival, without forgetting neighbors' day which will remain theoretical as long as the community does not give it a real chance to exist.

Proposal n°3 For a national holiday of free admission

Because we miss the opportunity to collectively celebrate what is most essential in our lives: love, friendship, sharing, fresh air and smiles... all those things that are priceless.

Proposal n°4 For a collaborative encyclopedia around the art of celebration

Because the party would benefit from being elevated to the rank of art, we must share our knowledge, know-how, tips and good recipes. A Party-wiki! This encyclopedia could bring together diverse and varied knowledge allowing us to renew our festive practices as much as possible.

Proposal n°5: For the 3.5-day week

Because it should in principle be guaranteed that we will not work more than half the days of the week.

Proposition n°6 For a right to early retirement

Because too many workers have died before reaching the right to retirement. Let's create the possibility of taking years of early retirement at the rate of one year for every 10 years of contribution.

Proposal n°7 For an unconditional basic income

Because we must remove every person from instability, a basic income must be guaranteed to guarantee the rights to dignified housing and quality food.

Proposal n°8 For a truly protective right for art workers

Because artists need time to create before they amaze us, the community must provide them with material tranquility during these creative phases. This right should also protect visual artists and authors.

Proposal n°9 For special leave for artistic creation

Because we have the dream of writing a novel, composing an album, painting etc... everyone should have the right to take a professional break to achieve it.

Proposal n°10 For a popular artistic education

Because our education system is too centered around the idea of making us future workers, we urgently need to bring music, writing and theatre education to the surface and make it accessible to all.

Proposition n°11 For the right to celebrate at home without the risk of being arrested or reported for nocturnal noise

Because today, the law is always on the side of the frustrated claiming the disturbance of party noise, rather than being given to those who should be protected to legitimately exercise the right to party.

Proposal n°12 For the right to a concert at least once a week

Because we must fight against cultural deserts and offer everyone the opportunity to sing and dance, in each village, in each neighborhood, at least once a week.

Proposal n°13 For the creation of public places to welcome free of charge all those who want to party together

Because there are not enough spaces to have fun, let's designate each village, each neighborhood a place of the festivities and let's invest in it!

Many thanks...

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