

Compilation 3

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Archive of Suburban Dissent 1- Introduction

Gal Kirn, Niloufar Tajeri

September 23rd, 2017

Remembering Riots – An Archive of Suburban Dissent

“Thinking a Monument to Sub/Urban Riots” was a project that we started at the Academy Schloss Solitude in 2016 as a series of exhibitions, talks and workshops. We investigated the question of how to commemorate one of the seemingly least consensual political phenomenon in our societies, which has intensified in the last 50 years: the *(sub)urban riots*. On the one hand, in terms of political thought, even radical thought, it seems that the urban riot is always related to irrational violence and as a consequence, becomes a failure to concretize in a set of demands that would be “universalisable”. On the other hand, we asked if we want to rethink this “failure” in terms of another contested phenomenon: monument/commemoration.

What memorial form can urban dissent assume? How to make visible the symptomatic absence of any permanent/productive thinking and form of memory about urban riots? Not only that there are no clear and direct monuments or memorial practices of urban riots, but in fact they are present/represented indirectly by the ‘monuments’ of those who defeated the riots: for example, in the form of a new police station and weaponized architecture after the riots. But perhaps there is a need to also point to those forms most absent, which are actually the forms enacted by the rioters themselves, their self-organisations, even if only grasping the short-term suspension of borders between “us and them”, between the urban periphery and centre. What is then the most distinct modality of riots? What can the monument to riot be/do? One of the goals of this on-going project is now to contribute, edit and collect various materials, practices, pamphlets, even a call to a monument for *(sub)urban riots*.

For the new online platform of *Pages magazine* we intend to bring together an interpretative archive of urban dissent: an archive that documents the failure to remember the riot, that interprets the absence of a productive memory and analysis, and the antagonizing presence of substitutive 'monuments' by the state.

Archive of suburban dissent

Susan Buck-Morss has long practiced mobilization of past emancipatory and invisible resources for present use; while being active in retrieving past material she called for specific re-appropriation of the archive, which entails both de-nationalization and de-privatization of the archive, and we could add, its *de-colonization*: training eyes and ears for the development of an emancipatory mode of reception that can uncover fragments of urban dissent, which has an extremely precarious and fragmented appearance. Urban riots *violently* disrupt the urban fabric and life, however they can be seen also as intensification of the everyday situation in the urban segregated areas. The riotous eruption is almost always followed by an exceptionally violent confrontation between police/state and rioters, which strengthens the side of the state through moralisation/criminalisation of rioters. This results in a media spectacle, which neglects the core causes of riots and lacks analysis regarding the radical modality of riots attacking the sacred core of social order and consensus.

This archive is not interested in a comprehensive assembling of material of all History of riots, but to collect and select those riots that address the structural inequalities beyond the ethnical identifications, and thus contribute to making visible mechanisms and logistics of urban exclusion, political domination and (non)exploitation. The intensified crisis of global capitalism with crisis of political representation of different political forms –such as party, trade union, even movement– indicate an increasing occurrence of urban riots. With every new riot we encounter, there comes also a reminder of past and future riots. In their interiority

and modality riots know no private and national border, they rather dissolve the attachment to (private, but also state) property and the belonging to one ethnical/political/ideological signifier (great nation) by violent dissolution. In other words, riots seem to attack the sacred core and consensus of the liberal-capitalist state: private property, respect of order, and monopoly of physical violence. In this respect, riots and their memory, should become resistant but vital subjects-practices for Buck-Morss' call of a *denationalized-deprivatised-decolonised archive*.

The archive of sub-urban riots will embody, gather and retrieve, but most of all re-interpret objects, documents and activities of the past and present riots, rioters, and the emerging future riots. Thus, an item/entry of the archive can be a living archive, testimony of rioters and their families, a poem, a film, or sounds and noises that are related to the riots. Sharing a more ambitious call for social transformation, the archive of urban dissent does not pretend to make a change or stand in place of the voice of the oppressed. What it shall do is to archive the riot as a political phenomenon with certain political patterns and conditions, and counter the idea of "irrational, singular eruption", "criminal" instances, "unarticulated masses". Its purpose is an ongoing research that potentially triggers solidarities among the marginalised/subaltern in different places.

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Archive of Suburban Dissent 2 – Riots in Casablanca

Gal Kirn, Niloufar Tajeri

October 23rd, 2017

From colonialism to anti-communism

When people today speak of urban riots they immediately think of French banlieus, Tottenham riots, or maybe LA riots, which are all case studies of the Western metropolis – on which we primarily focused our research. But instead of theoretical and research focus on the suburban riots in the Western hemisphere we wanted to highlight an example that links to the urban riots in the North Africa in 1950s, the period which can be seen as an important step in the general anticolonial struggle of that and next decade. One of the earliest examples of the urban riot took place in Casablanca, Morocco, in early December of 1952, in Casablanca. Interestingly, this event, which was in the later historiography seen as a milestone for Moroccan independence struggle, has received very little political, artistic and theoretical attention, or appropriation. There is a mention of this event in the catalogue *Colonial Modern* (HKW), and some articles report on segments or general context. At that time, the event received an extremely negative coverage by the local, French and also world press. It was seen as a clear indication of antagonism and growing hate between French settlers and nationalist Moroccans, where the racial tensions will necessary spread out.

Despite referred in some historical textbooks as important event, there is very little written on the event, thus I decided that the contribution to the archive of dissent can take a rather “negative” approach, that is, to make a comment on the representation and narrative that was circulated widely at that time. There is a short newsreels, a report done by American Universal, which takes a very

peculiar line of interpretation (see newsreel bellow).

This newsreels, as many media reports at that time, does not tell you that the urban riots were triggered by a murder of Tunisian trade-union activist Ferhat Hashad in Tunis few days earlier, which implied the work of the secret organization of French settlers.

However, it was this murder that triggered series of peaceful demonstrations, which was joined by different sections of populations and political organisations. Demonstration transformed into riots on the 7 and 8 of December, and Casablanca was the site of most stormy reactions. Protest there brought together trade union organizations, communist party, and Istiklal independence party members, who first walked together on the police station, where they were joined by many unemployed youth “Yaouleds” (yall-kids-forgotten), who also lived in the bidonvilles. In front of the station open clashes with the police and armed forces of protectorate started, while some protesters made their ways through the police cordons.

In that moment the fire was opened a few hundred died in next minutes. While the newspapers report of 57 dead people, highlight goes to 7 on the side of police and Europeans, while others are not mentioned. In the aftermath of riot, arrests of youth and communists forces ensued, we can follow the shots and see the landscape of the bidonville, where the alleged communist plotters hid. The torture, and its effects, was openly displayed by camera, while further features of state of exception were implemented: a curfew, executions of rioters and suspects, and a ban on Communist Party and Istiklal national independence party. Furthermore, the King was sent into exile to Madagascar and the animosities within the Morrocan society strengthened. Riots had to be prevented, however it is clear –this anti-communist narrative points to it- that what was targeted was not really riots themselves, but more general solidarity and political coalitions among very diverse social groups and political organisations, even solidarity within a broader region of North Africa.

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Archive Of Suburban Dissent 3- Clichy Police Station

Gal Kirn, Niloufar Tajeri

January 15th, 2018

“The colonial world is a world cut in two. The dividing line, the frontiers are shown by barracks and police stations. [...] The zone where the natives live is not complementary to the zone inhabited by the settlers. The two zones are opposed.” (Frantz Fanon)

Frantz Fanon understood that colonial violence is inscribed in space.

He was describing colonial space, yet, reading his quote today, it is the image of the French post-colonial *banlieue* that comes to the fore.

Léopold Lambert has investigated the geography of Paris and its banlieues, concluding that we must talk of a “Fortress Paris” when it comes to the spatial relationship between the capital and its economically weakest suburban districts.

Since the riots in 2005 this urban divide has intensified with militarization of urban areas, intensified gentrification of areas close to train stations and the withdrawal of public as well as social institutions and services in the banlieues. The political response to the riots from the third-way left (Parti Socialiste) closely tied in with the perspectives and voices heard on the right, each of which called for the *further empowerment of the police*. After 2005, as Hacène Belmessous demonstrated, the police became a major partner in urban renewal and were directly involved in the control and surveillance of public and in some cases even semi-public space (lobbies, corridors, elevators). Other questions dealt with the placement and construction of roads, the reduction of public space and the methods used in the policing of different areas.

This is where urbanism as a specifically *military problem* became

apparent (again) while those living in such areas began to firmly construct (or reject) the corresponding identities imposed on them by the governing apparatus. This development is hardly surprising, in fact it is a historical *reversion* taking into consideration that these post-war modern estates (*villes nouvelles*) were planned and executed by the post-colonial French state. During the 1950s, the politics of planning in France was underscored by the coincidence of decolonization and an urbanization boom. The *villes nouvelles*, controlled by the state through the new administration of the *Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations*, were implemented by white collar professionals recruited from the former colonies in North Africa. Because of the turmoil in the Maghreb – riots in Casablanca had led to independence struggles – administrators, planners and architects, returned to France to key positions in the *Caisse des Dépôts*, developing and applying the planning approaches and design mechanisms that they had experimented with on colonial grounds. Hence, military logic and control – as both purpose and tool of urban planning – consciously and unconsciously migrated from the Maghreb into the design of the *villes nouvelles* from the start, at the same time that the migration of people from the former colonies to French cities took place.

The programmatic restructuring of space and its militarization happening since 2005 are merely a revised continuation of the colonial, binary planning logic of “us” and “them”, of controlling entities on the one hand and controlled bodies and spaces on the other, in the form of urban renewal and under the neoliberal doctrine. It reinforces, even intensifies the very dividing line, the post-colonial frontier that has escalated into riots in the past. It is installing a neo-colonial violence inscribed in space.

With political and social services increasingly removed from the banlieues since 2005, police stations are sometimes the only remaining public buildings, standing out more than before. In the case of Clichy-sous-Bois, where the riot broke out in 2005, mayors had been asking for a police station for 30 years. After the riot of

2005 it was decided that they would get one.

In the documentary film *La Sociologie est un sport de combat* (Pierre Carles, 2001), there is a scene at the very end in a cultural center in the banlieue Le Val Fourré, where Pierre Bourdieu holds a discussion with a young inhabitant, Said, who says:

“We ask for cultural centers and they give us a big police station, with these statues out in front, to claim that they too know culture. But if you take away the statues, you know what you’ll see? Nothing but a police station and the brutality it represents.”

The police station in Clichy is more sophisticated. It’s not a functional, honest building with a sculpture/statue in the front. Rather, it comes in the disguise of a sculpture itself. Removing the sculpture in order to see the brutality that the police station represents is not possible anymore.

The police station in Clichy looks like a cultural center, a sculpture an architectural monument. The architectural language is clearly borrowed from the cultural realm and a tendency in architecture towards more monumental forms and “sculptural” expressions in the 1990s and 2000s.

Most of the police stations reinforce a “brutal” or “weaponized” antagonism from within and from without, this one, and to a lesser degree few others, also reinforces a cultural antagonism from outside that distinguishes itself in terms of material, formal expression and style vis-à-vis the HLM buildings (*Habitation à Loyer Modéré*, French public housing) in the neighborhood. The police, as a public authority, doesn’t just seem to appreciate culture in the form of a statue in front of the building, it seems that they are “cultured” and therefore superior. Here also the financial aspect is important: the building cost twice as much as a regular police station, €11.360.000 (compared to the one built by XTU in Saint-Denis around the same time).

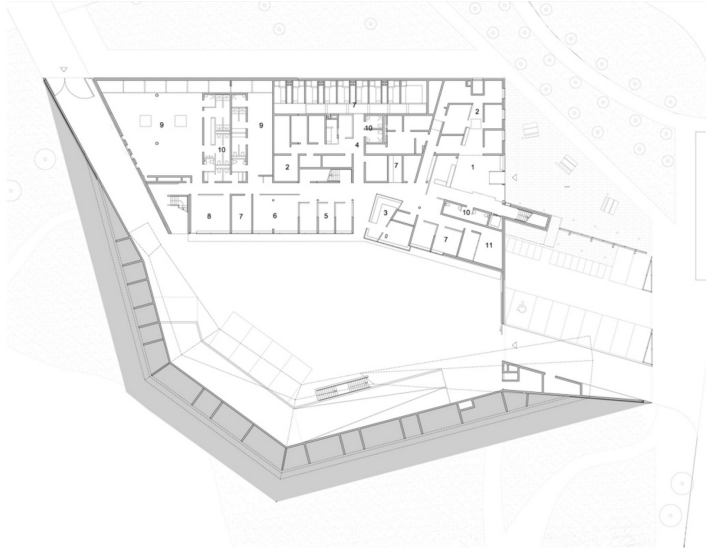
The building represents a kind of victory for the police after the 2005 riots. Here a single, official narrative of power brings us back to the urban logic of the banlieue and the history of colonial urbanism in the Maghreb. The binary this building seems to reproduce – police vs. rioters, and in spatial terms, police station vis-à-vis the HLM blocks – is more than a weaponized antagonism. It is also a cultural antagonism.

However, this represented binary “police vs. rioters” is false, since they are not equal rivals – there is an asymmetry of violence and control. The image of the binary is an ideological tool in itself, reproducing the status quo “us vs. them”, police vs. HLM/rioter. However, the HLM we see in this picture is, like the police station, a state building. The banlieue space, in the form of the HLM, is a space produced by the state. The state conceived its modern planning principles in the colonial context in the Maghreb. It implemented it in France, and controls, manages, renews and demolishes or privatizes it, raises its rent or manages its decline. It disconnects it from infrastructures or public services as much as it connects it to public services, in this particular case: to the police station.

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- 1 HALL
- 2 BUREAUX DES PLAINTES
- 3 CHEF DE POSTE
- 4 LOCAUX CELLULAIRES
- 5 CELULE MINEUR
- 6 SALLE DE REDACTION
- 7 BUREAUX
- 8 RESTAURATION
- 9 VESTIBULES
- 10 SANITAIRES
- 11 LOCAUX TECHNIQUES





Archive of Suburban Dissent 4- Barricades

Gal Kirn, Niloufar Tajeri, Joshua Clover

February 15th, 2018

Contributed by Joshua Clover to the Archive of Suburban Dissent

“Chateau Gaillard” was a barricade named after its architect, a shoemaker by trade, and rose two stories at the place de la Concorde. This fell, as would the “woman’s barricade” a couple kilometers to the north staffed by the Union des femmes. They would all fall, and barricadists unable to flee would be shot. The barricade is an example of the monument that must be rebuilt over and over, that must be designed to be practical in different practical situations of riots and revolts. What I wish to draw attention to here is a collective process that keeps material practice wedded to the monumental idea in a way that resists being detached and abstracted. This is my demand for monuments: they must resist the division of manual and intellectual labor in their creation and existence, even if that means the existence is premised on repeated construction and thus on impermanence and/or multi-locationality. Let us say that it is a *commune's overcoming of that division between architects and shoemakers*, between aesthetic memorialists and street fighters, that is the monument. Barricades — to be built as needed during struggles— are instances, affirmations, and clarifications of the monument. They are also barricades.

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Portrait of Napoléon Gaillard. Inventor of the French Shoe in Gutta-Percha. Musée du Compagnonnage, Saint-Julien de Tours, Fr.



Barricade, Paris Commune, 1871

Archive of Suburban Dissent 5 - Sea of Fire

Lidwien Van de Ven, Gal Kirn, Niloufar Tajeri

April 14th, 2018

This text is based on a conversation between Gal Kirn and Lidwien van de Ven on the topic of the *Sea of Fire*, or the Burning of Bandung.

Burning of the City as a Start of Anti-colonial Struggle

Sea of Fire, or what is called *Bandung Lautan Api*, emerged in the context of a still fresh occupation by imperial Japanese forces in World War II. Indonesian combatants who fought off the Japanese occupation received an ultimatum on March 24th, 1946 by British forces and Dutch Army Troops to disarm or leave the city. The Indonesian resistance found itself under the layering of different colonial oppressions, and as a response to this ultimatum around 200.000 inhabitants burned their homes. One cannot confirm the precise number, but most of the Southern part of Bandung was burned. The old houses are currently located in the Northern part of the city. A story goes that it was a young journalist Atje Bastaman who witnessed the burning of Bandung from Mount Leutik, a hill around Paeunpeuk, and saw how Bandung turned red. This made it into the headlines: "*Bandoeng Djadi Laoetan Api*", though due to lack of space was shortened to "*Bandoeng Laoetan Fire*".

The burning of the city followed a strategic decision by residents to not only flee the city, but to also prevent the Dutch Army Troops and the British Allies from taking full control in the citizen's place. The city was taken back for a short period, but had to be left behind again for forests and for undetermined time. The strategy of burning parts of the city is reminiscent of guerrilla fighting, which takes place

in urban surroundings, and can lead to riots and ultimately *burning*: be it historically through the symbolic burning connected to the food and stores that decided to raise the price of bread and other necessities; buildings that represent local symbols of power, such as job centers and police station; or police/colonial vehicles.

In the case of the *Sea of Fire* the political act of burning was radicalized, as it was connected to the space one holds dearest. This is not only how resistance takes place and people gain the time necessary to leave the city, but allows for the demonstration of political will: *the occupiers will not be able to really occupy our space, live in our houses, we would rather burn our homes than live in these homes under foreign occupation*. No matter how strategic the decision to burn Bandung was, some combatants stayed in the city and fought the occupation forces. One specific action, the suicide of Mohammad Toha, is worth recollecting. Toha was a member of the Indonesian militia and succeeded in smuggling several sticks of dynamite into the Dutch military Headquarters in Dayeuh Kolot. Once inside he was able to detonate the dynamite amongst warehouses of ammunition, killing himself and several Dutch and Japanese troops in the vicinity. The explosion created a small lake in Dayeuh Kolot, which triggered the metonymic vision of a lake and fire.

While retreating to the countryside, Ismail Marzuki was inspired by the *Sea of Fire* and added twist to his well-known poem, by altering last sentences of the song “Halo, Halo Bandung”. This became a popular song at the time. Meanwhile Bandung has since the postcolonial times, organizes yearly commemorations around monuments and locations in the city that relate to the events of 1946.

Hello, Hello Bandung

The capital of Parahyangan

For so long I'm in distance, I cannot see

Hopefully now we meet again
And after that, no more inquisitive feeling.
Hello, Hello Bandung, a city of full of memory.
For so long, I want to meet you.
Whilst my soul and desire in my body
We will meet again.
Hello, Hello Bandung, the capital of Periangan
Hello, Hello Bandung, a city full of memory
Now, she has become a Sea of Fire.
Lets reclaim her again, *Bung* (comrade).

Extended lyrics

One version of the song

1946 news: "How extremist I leave behind South-Bandung"

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The Sea of Fire, drawing



Indonesian armed resistance leaving the burned Bandung.



The monument to Sea of Fire