The Occupation Cookbook

or the Model of the Occupation of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb

The Occupation Cookbook is a "manual" that describes the organization of the student occupation of the **Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences** that took place in the spring of 2009 and lasted for 35 days. It was written for two reasons: to record what happened, and to present the particular organization of this action in such a way that it may be of use to other activists and members of various collectives if they decide to undertake a similar action.

What does it mean to "occupy" a school? A school occupation is not, as the corporate media like to portray it, a hostile takeover. A school occupation is an action by those who are already its inhabitants – students, faculty, and staff – and those for whom the school exists. (Which is to say for a public institution, the public itself.) The actions termed "occupations" of a public institution, then, are really re-occupations, a renovation and reopening to the public of a space long captured and stolen by the private interests of wealth and privilege. The goal of this renovation and reopening is to inhabit school spaces as fully as possible, to make them truly habitable – to make the school a place fit for living.

— **Marc Bousquet,** from the **Introduction**

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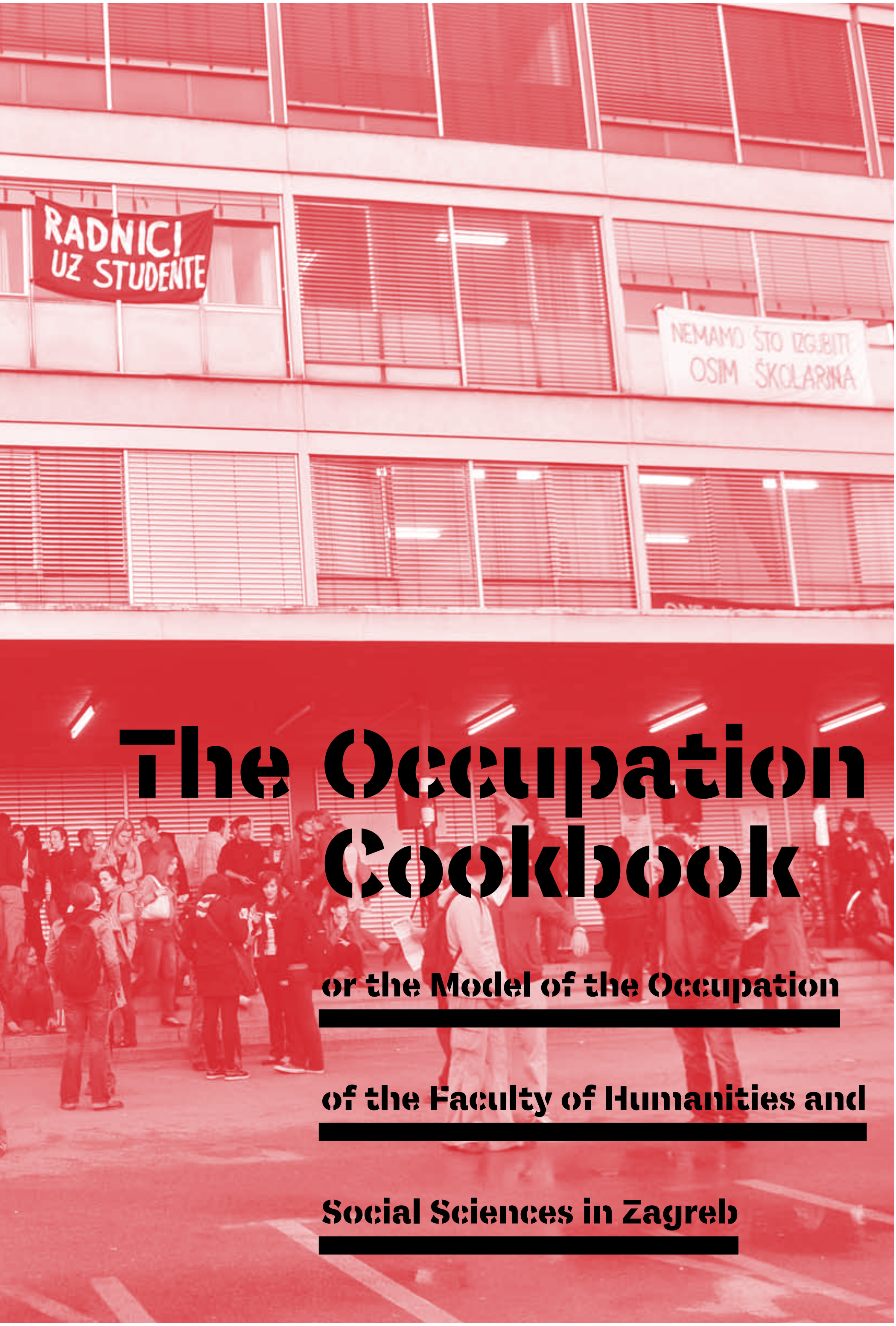
The Occupation Cookbook


ZNANJE
NIJE
ROBA
BUDIMO REALNI, TRAŽIMO MOGUĆE! '09.
SOYONS RÉALISTES, DEMANDONS L'IMPOSSIBLE! '68.



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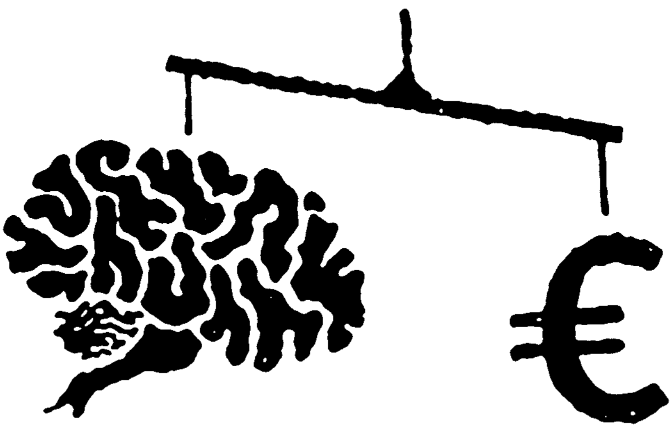
INTRODUCTION

Marc Bousquet

SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY



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Off With Our Heads!

A funny thing is happening in the United States. Across the country, headless schools are opening. One opens this fall in Detroit: the teachers' terms of employment are still governed by their union's contract with Detroit Public Schools, but they will administer themselves on a democratic, cooperative basis. In just the past couple of years, schools run by teacher cooperatives have opened in Madison, Denver, Chicago, Boston, and New York. Milwaukee has 13 teacher-run schools.

These aren't universities. They are elementary schools, kindergartens, high schools of the arts and humanities, high schools for budding scientists and programmers, high schools for social justice. Sometimes four or five co-operatively run and publicly funded schools share the same building and grounds. None of them operate in wealthy neighborhoods. Nearly all of them serve students who are struggling because English isn't their first language, or because their homes and neighborhoods are scarred by poverty, neglect, substance abuse and crime. They are generally successful by any measure, even the fatuous assessments of standardized testing. They are broadly popular with students, teachers, and parents.

Over the next few years, dozens – perhaps hundreds – of similar schools will open in Los Angeles: teachers will have control over curriculum, work rules and every facet of academic policy. In every school, councils of students, teachers, and parents provide active, intellectual leadership. Every school has a student, community and teacher centered system of governance imagined from the ground up by faculty and citizen co-proposers. They will all have at least one principal administrator, so they have not amputated the head, only shrunken it. Nonetheless it is clear that community leaders, students and teachers will hire, evaluate and severely circumscribe the authority of their (usually) solitary administrator in a self-conscious, explicitly distributed system of leadership.

The remarkable Los Angeles situation is a startling victory for grassroots democracy in education. Less surprising is the fact that you haven't heard about it. This victory has been ignored and misrepresented by the US corporate media, many of who also operate as for-profit education vendors. Leading national figures in both political parties, including the current Democratic administration, actively support the sectarian and profit-driven private management of public schooling.

One way to understand what's happening in L.A. is as a crisis in teacher unionism, a subset of the near-collapse of unionism in the country after decades of hostile law created by politicians slavishly pursuing corporate interests. The immediate trigger for bold action by United Teachers of Los Angeles (UTLA) was the determination by Los Angeles United School District (LAUSD) that as many as 300 "poorly performing" schools would be opened to bid by charter or for-profit management over the next few years, with a first round of community "advisory votes" on bids scheduled for February 2010.

The district was already the site of more privately managed public schools than any other in the country; three hundred more would essentially have broken the union.

Desperate for a new strategy and inspired by the usually union-supported headless schools springing up elsewhere, this time the behemoth UTLA declined to square off against giant LAUSD in the traditional all-or-nothing pitched battle. Instead UTLA chose to throw its resources behind a series of grassroots actions, negotiating the right for teachers to submit their own bids. It sent money and personnel in active, energetic support of groups of teachers, parents and students, helping them to generate highly individual school visions.

Within weeks: in neighborhoods across the city, teachers and parents met to hammer out proposals – at least one for every school put out for bid, 36 in the first round. The results of the February 2010 "advisory votes" conducted by the League of Women Voters were stunning. In every school up for bid, the grassroots and teacher-led proposal won decisively, averaging 87% over all alternatives, including rich politician and media backed national education-management chains already established in the city such as like Magnolia, Aspire, and Green Dot.

"Advisory" or not, the parents' vote was so overwhelming that it produced tangible political fear of electoral backlash, leaving the schools supervisor and district board little choice but to award the majority of the bids to proposals featuring workplace and community democracy. Of the 36 schools up for grabs, four were awarded to the Los Angeles mayor's nonprofit management corporation, three to private charters and management corporations; 29 went to teacher-parent proposals.

If the grassroots win the same percentage of all those offered to bid in the district over the next few years, 240 democratically operated schools will open. There would be 60 operated by politically connected nonprofits or profit-seeking corporations, though all of them would do so against the wishes of local parents.

LESSONS FROM SCHOOLTEACHERS: PERMANENT OCCUPATION

It is hard to overstate the radicalism of this spreading front of action. Teachers, supported by their unions, in partnership with students and parents, are taking back the schools – literally hijacking mechanisms designed by politicians to hand schools to religious, ideological, and capitalist control. Their intention is clear: permanent occupation of the schools, a full, rich inhabitation.

In the United States, it is all too common for those of us who inhabit the university to lord it over the schoolteachers. Often we play a role in training and certifying them; we sometimes produce some of the knowledge they share, write the textbooks they use, or review their curricula. We sometimes come from wealthier, worldlier families. Those of us with terminal degrees and tenure like to think we have enjoyed greater cultural capital or more cosmopolitan experience; we tend to have stronger loyalties to our profession than to any one community or campus. In our own minds, at least, we are the avant-gardes of knowledge production, the officer class: schoolteachers are in the trenches, education's infantry, the grunts.

It's not clear that our looking down on them does any harm to the schoolteachers – but it sure hurts us. Our sense of superiority keeps us from understanding basic things – that we work for a living, that we have to struggle with management to preserve the working conditions of a future faculty, that you can't convert status capital into hot meals, hospital beds, or a pension.

Long before there was a movement to unionize college faculty, U.S. schoolteachers joined with sanitation workers and other public employees to democratize their workplaces.

They struggled against some of the most hostile law in any industrialized nation in a series of imaginative direct actions. They rewrote the constitutions of "professional associations" that had kept them docile for decades, turning them into vehicles of unionism. They battled in the streets for the right to self-organize, boldly compelling the rewriting of unjust law after the fact of their illegal self-organization. Martin Luther King was murdered while supporting a wildcat strike of sanitation workers, demanding recognition of their illegal union.

Only after long years of bold action by schoolteachers, including the defiance of unjust law – not to mention similar defiance by the undergraduates educated by these militants – did anything resembling militant self-organization erupt among college faculty. And when that movement hit a few bumps in the road, it retreated; in many places it collapsed. Even the strongest organizations of college faculty today have already sold out future generations in bargaining multiple tiers of employment into existence.

Is it possible that the schoolteachers once again have something to teach the university?

I think so.

During 2009-2010 we saw a remarkable series of campus occupations in Europe and the Americas, with especially sustained, militant and broadly inclusive efforts in Austria, Italy, and Germany – not to mention Croatia, the month-long, eight-city, twenty-campus event that occasioned this cookbook.

There were at least a hundred occupations or related protests that year in the United States, where they are extremely unusual. Some of the earliest uprisings took place the preceding spring in New York, led by students attuned to international student militancy.

By far the most extensive, militant and successful occupation on U.S. territory was that at the University of Puerto Rico, which shut down the most important university in the Caribbean, involved tens of thousands of students for nearly three months, won the support of the full faculty of the 11-campus system as well as numerous trade unions, major artists and political figures.

The most influential U.S. protests, however, were those in California, which spread, as they say, virally, from an outbreak at UC Santa Cruz. It began with a small but diverse cadre of militants, many of them graduate students, but including tenured faculty, undergraduates, and unionized staff. Their manifestos and slogans were truly a shot heard round the world. Before the year was out, masses of students were joined in rallies and marches by the unions of schoolteachers and staff, as well as some faculty. Before it was over, California students' ambitions for direct action had escalated to the blockade of a major highway.

It is already clear that the occupations and related events will continue through 2010-2011. As I write this, the school year has just begun in parts of the U.S., and the University of New Orleans has already seen one occupation (swiftly suppressed by riot police). A major international planning committee is bringing together large-scale events for early October, and there will certainly be at least one other such coalition effort in the spring.

For the organizers of these coming events, especially those of the most democratic and direct of the directly democratic persuasion, the present manual has much to say. It is really an attempt to answer the question, "Well, what is this 'everything' in the injunction, 'Occupy Everything!'?" The Croatian occupations were not closures of the campus, but radical re-openings, maintaining control of the campus via direct-democratic means, preserving maximum openness and public access. Even the question of oratorical ability in plenary decision-making was carefully considered for maximum fairness. Of particular interest: its account of democratically scaling up an action that began in the imagination of a small group of activists across metropolitan and national borders.

The question all of these occupations raise for me is this: how to move from "occupation" as inspirational event or even regular protest practice to inhabitation? Is there a path to permanent occupation of the campus? Is victory to be measured in terms of a restoration of funding and/or the addition of student representation to bodies of administration?

I have already written in response to this question, suggesting that a permanent occupation of higher education would involve the militant inhabitation of all the organizations that comprise "the profession" of higher education, and those that intersect with it, such as metropolitan government:

> A relatively small number of graduate students could begin a peaceful "occupation" of all the institutions of the profession – especially if they coordinated with students, staff, contingent faculty, and fellow travelers in the tenure stream. What would happen if the submerged 80 percent of the profession – graduate student employees and contingent faculty – occupied the governing positions of the AAUP and of disciplinary organizations like the American Historical Association, the American Philosophical Association, and the American Psychological Association? What if they similarly occupied the governments of college towns – Ithaca, Bloomington, and Ann Arbor? What issues would they engage? Where would they direct the funds? How would they employ staff time? What improprieties would they commit in public? I, for one, would like to know.

The schoolteachers are showing us the way toward direct democratic control of education. If we can see, here in the U.S. – at the vain, dull epicenter of global inequality – bands of schoolteachers and parents in the most impoverished neighborhoods seizing control of their institutions and banishing the dead hand of administration: how can we not imagine the same for our universities? We can administer ourselves directly and democratically. And we must – if we are to make our colleges truly inhabitable.

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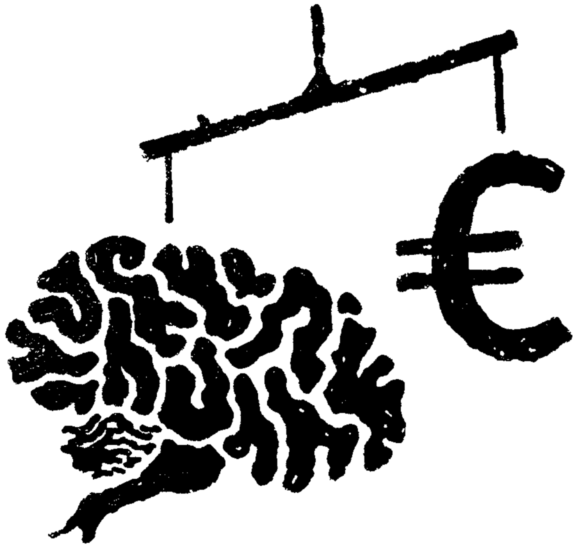
FOREWORD

A Miracle in Moscow

Boris Buden



Imagine: in Moscow, a miracle happened. Lenin has risen. Anyone who dreams of a radical change, hurries to hear from Vladimir Ilyich the answer to an old, well known question: What is to be done? But his words, the first after more than eighty years in his glass coffin, leave everybody speechless: I am hungry.

Now it is time for students in Zagreb. For they have a cookbook at the ready, or more precisely an *Occupation Cookbook* – a practical guide for the preparation and implementation of faculty occupations in the historical context of the struggle against neoliberal transformation of education. At the same time, the brochure tells a story of the actual occupation of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb, one of the largest and most prominent educational institutions in Croatia, which was under the student control for five weeks in the spring of 2009. So the booklet, which summarizes the experiences and reflections of the protagonists, is an account of a true event. Thus there is something to be learned here. The experience of the revolt is the lesson of those who learn.

But beware! To really learn means to question yourself. This is especially true for those who confuse their view on political reality with the view of the history itself. In principle, there is no center and no periphery. A gaze that imagines a periphery out there looking down on it, is the gaze of the current hegemony and not the one of the center itself, or rather, it is the gaze of a power relation. Thus, if one takes the Zagreb *Cookbook* thinking: 'Let me see if they, down there in the post-communist Southeast, have by now grasped something of the world', it is him that hasn't grasped anything. The reason that the student protest in Zagreb could have taken place at all lies precisely in the fact that it was, at the same time, articulated as a protest against global hegemony, which alone yields the local power relations their historical legitimacy. What we are talking about here is the teleology of the so-called post-communist transition that has been determining the whole political life in Eastern Europe since 1989/90. In this particular case: the introduction of the tuition fees, which has directly provoked the student protest, is justified in Croatia as a necessary process of modernization on the country's path to the European Union. In the jargon of post-communist transition, this is merely an adaptation to the 'European standards.' The local elites sustain, in the words of the students, 'the myth of the EU as a zone of general prosperity' thereby justifying 'the abolition of acquired social rights.' This also makes it clear where the true ideological effect of the European integration lies – not in spatial, but rather in temporal exclusion. It is not so much that it divides us into the ones that are inside and the ones that are out, but into those that are always in step with the times and those who are late and first have to catch up with the missed development. 'The belated modernism', was how the post-communist East was referred to twenty years ago. But today, this difference does no longer mark the outer borders of the EU. Rather, it is immanent to the project of European integration, insofar as it is bound by neoliberal reforms. In Europe today, wherever people resist in the name of the old social rights, they become the enemies of progress and prosperity, freedom and democracy; in short: they become the enemies of Europe whose acquired social rights, such as the right to education, appear as the privileges of the social parasites, which are to be abolished on the road to better future. So this is how it has been in Zagreb last year, this is how it was and is in Vienna and wherever one dares to challenge the existing hegemony. But what divides this world, what the students have stood up against to, unites them too, wherever they raise their protests. Thus, they are today fighting neither in the center, nor in the periphery of the neoliberal capitalism – they are fighting this very difference, that is to say the hegemony that forces us do differentiate the world in such a manner. Solidarity is neither the prerequisite nor the product of this struggle, but its actual form.

Therefore, a cookbook and not a manifesto or a proclamation, an open letter or theses, for example the 'April' or 'May theses' or the 'six' or, why not, '21 Theses.' One is invited to the kitchen and not on the stage of world history. In fact, the occupation of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb was neither a theatrical acting out, staged for the gaze of others, nor a passage à l'acte, the heroic leap into the chasm of radical negation. It was humbly called: 'the student control over the faculty.' Quite untypical for a classic youth revolt, in the *Occupation Cookbook* one talks time and again of control, meaning first of all self-control: order, discipline, punctuality, systematicity, coordination, cleanliness… Student protest in Zagreb was completely post-hysterical, there was no oedipal drama, no collective hormonal outburst, and no generational clash. After all, are not these traits today more typical for the ways of neoliberal appropriation and securing of power? Thus, the experiences of the Zagreb students are all the more useful. They have been gained, reflected and now presented in the *Occupation Cookbook*, 'in order to help other students (and members of other collectives, such as workers in factories) do the same in Croatia and abroad', for instance, to establish and organize a direct democratic, collective organ, the plenum. In Zagreb, it worked perfectly for five weeks. Nevertheless, the goal – the complete abolition of tuition fees, i.e. free education for all – was not achieved. And yet one continues to cook. This time, however, not without a cookbook.

And Lenin? Him we also bring a delicacy from the Zagreb miracle kitchen so he can, well fed, sleep once again.

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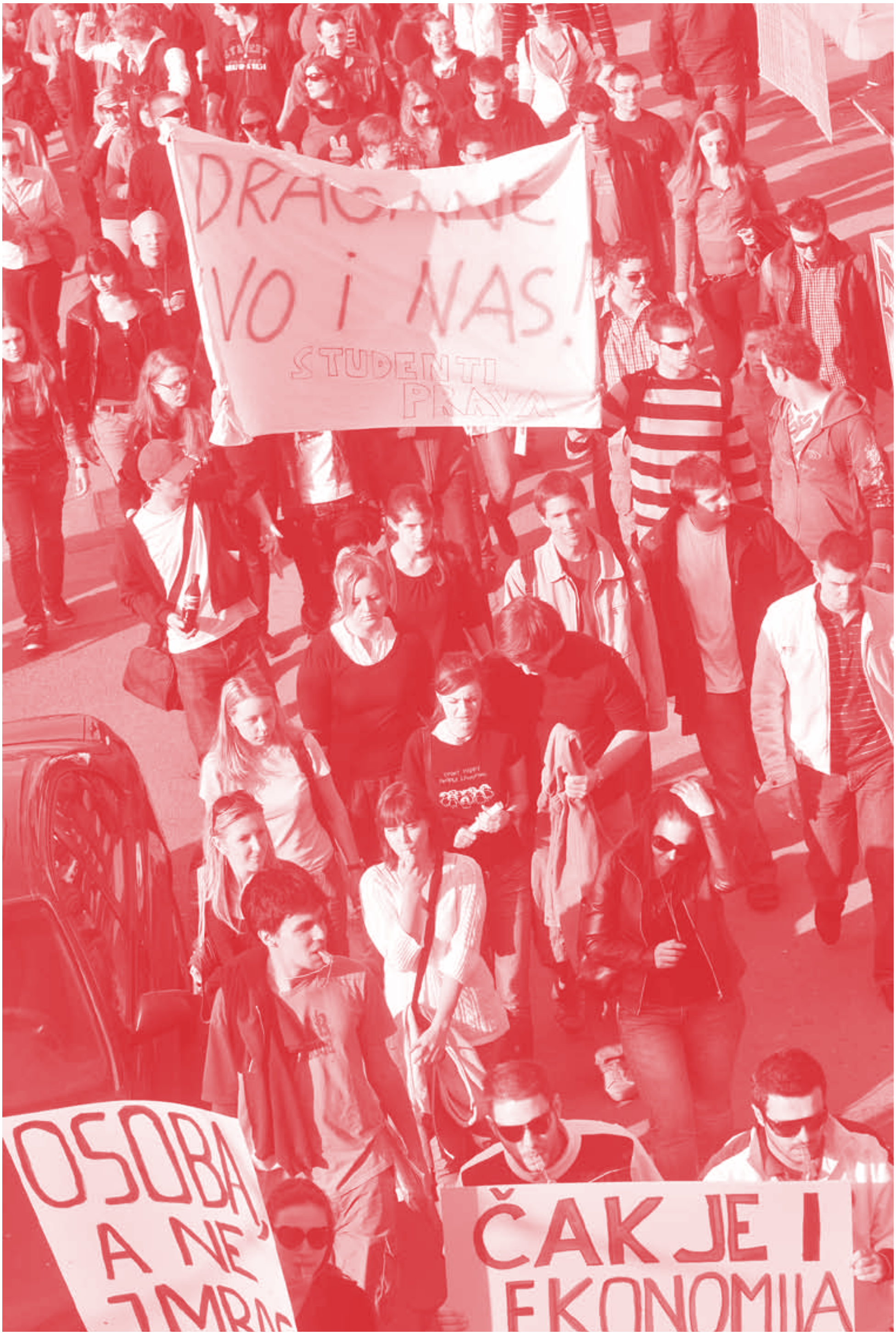
VO i NAS!
STUDENTI PRAVA
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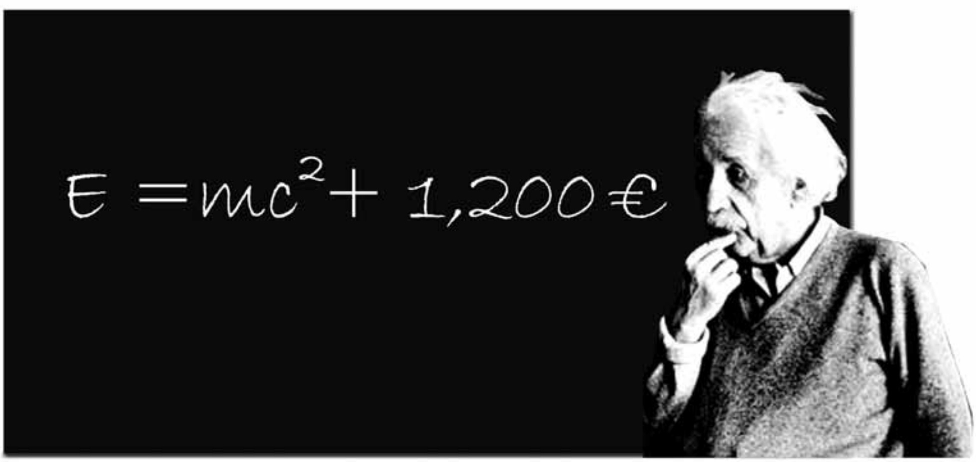
THE OCCUPATION COOKBOOK
FOREWORD



The purpose of this manual is to describe the functioning of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (Filozofski fakultet) in Zagreb while it was under student occupation in the spring of 2009. The occupation of the faculty lasted for 35 days. The students' demand was 'free publicly financed education on all levels available to all' i.e. legal abolition of all fees within the educational system. During those 35 days, around 20 faculties and universities in eight Croatian cities were occupied at some point.[01] The purpose of this manual is twofold. The first one, the less important one, is historical – a wish to record what happened. The other purpose, the main one, is to present our experiences in this way so that they might be of use to students at other universities (and perhaps members of other collectives, like factories etc.) who decide to undertake a similar action.

We believe that a description of our system of university occupation, which is somewhat unusual in certain regards, will be interesting to other student activists. First of all, the faculty was not occupied in such a manner that access into the building was physically forbidden to all but the occupying students, as is sometimes done. Therefore, it would be more appropriate to refer to this as 'student control over the faculty' than an 'occupation.' Only regular classes were blocked, everything else was allowed to function as usual (the administration, the library, the bookshop and other facilities within the faculty building were working normally while the professors could work in their offices as usual). Secondly, the faculty was open to everyone (students from other faculties, regular citizens, journalists etc.). Thirdly, plenums

01 During the November/December of 2009 (after the first published version of the *Occupation Cookbook*) there was a second wave of student occupations in Croatia, which lasted for two weeks and included around 10 faculties in 5 different cities. The demand and the method was basically the same.

(plenary assemblies) at which all decisions were made concerning the functioning of the occupied faculty was also open not only to the students of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb (FHSS) but to everybody. Anyone who came to the plenum had the right to participate in it and to vote.

It is necessary to point out that some of the issues are discussed more than once in the text, but we think this is appropriate as it is useful to explain certain details from more than one angle. The first chapter ('The Organization of the Student Control of the FHSS') gives a general overview of all aspects of the occupation. The second chapter ('How to Organize a Plenum?') functions as a sort of a less formal historical introduction and it anticipates some of the issues that will be later explained in more detail. After these chapters, a detailed description of the plenum, working groups and other aspects of the occupation is given. The last chapter focuses on the social context of the struggle for free education within which this student action took place.

Finally, a note on the authorship of this manual. Since all our actions are collective and anonymous in nature, this manual is anonymous as well. And it is a collective work indeed. Different authors wrote all of the chapters. The authors are mostly the people who have dealt with certain aspects of the action thoroughly and are quite familiar with the issues. However, the whole text was later edited, amended and corrected by all interested participants in a direct democratic manner.

NOTE: The English version of the ***Occupation Cookbook*** is an updated edition that contains minor supplements compared to the original Croatian version (like the addition of the chapter on the **Working group for the spreading of direct democracy**).

THE ORGANIZATION OF STUDENT CONTROL AT THE FACULTY OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES

The student control of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, which took place in the spring of 2009, was organized in the following manner: the three main organs of the student control of the faculty were the plenum, the working groups and the security.

THE PLENUM

The plenum (plenary assembly, general assembly) is the central organ of student decision-making at the occupied faculty. At it, all decisions are made in a direct democratic manner, including whether the student occupation of the faculty should be continued or ended. The plenum is an assembly of all interested students and other citizens (unlike some other plenums in Croatia, the FHSS plenum was open to everyone – the decision on the degree of openness is made by individual plenums depending on the circumstances). At the plenum, everyone has the right to speak and vote. All decisions are made by the majority of all present participants. Every plenary session is moderated by two different facilitators and at the end of each session two new persons are elected to moderate the next session. During the occupation, plenary sessions are held every day and in other times once a week (or more frequently if necessary).

THE WORKING GROUPS & TEAMS

The working groups and teams are specialized groups of the plenum whose task is to deal with specific important issues. The difference between a team and a working group is the fact that the plenum gives the ‘teams’ the mandate for the work they do, while working groups are, simply put, meetings that all interested participants are invited to. Teams have permanent members (although their names, of course, are not publicized – the mandate is given to the whole group and not to individual members), while working groups, being meetings of all interested participants, do not have permanent members and the participants of a particular working group are not known before the meeting itself commences. The teams are given mandates because they perform tasks which often need to be completed immediately and thus cannot go through the regular plenary or working group procedure, and also because of the specific nature of some tasks which cannot be performed by a different group of people every time or by a large group of people. The mandated teams are: the program team, the media team, the blog team, the security team and the *Skripta* team. Since one cannot expect that the whole plenum or regular working groups who have undefined members will deal with many practical problems of organizing alternative lectures, writing press releases, maintaining the web site, dealing with security or writing the *Skripta* (the official publication of the FHSS plenum), the plenum gives mandates to certain teams so they could perform those tasks, while retaining the possibility to recall a specific team's mandate or change the members of particular teams (the teams can also recruit new members if necessary). Some examples of the working groups are: the inter-plenary working group, the document analysis working group, the plenum technical issues working group etc. In some cases, there is both a team and a working group that deal with the same issues – for instance, there is the media-working group (a meeting of all interested participants) and the media team (the mandated team in charge of writing press releases and maintaining contact with the media). There is also one mandated working group and that is the mini-actions working group. Although it has no permanent membership the group was given the mandate to plan and perform smaller actions. This means that the group does not have to ask for plenum's permission for everything it does since it is not possible to plan all the details of a particular action at the plenum. Instead, all interested participants take part in the meetings, to which everyone is invited, and plan the actions.

The plenum can at any time recall the mandates it has given the teams and the mini-actions working group. Also, the actions of all working groups and teams can be discussed at the plenum. The working groups and teams are required to operate in accordance with the conclusions and decisions made at the plenum.

Just like the plenum, the working groups are also open to everyone but due to their very nature are not frequented by as many people, since only people especially interested in a particular topic would attend them (during the occupation period there are usually around 30 people at the working groups meetings, while in the post-occupation period there are generally 5-10 people). At the working groups meetings, the participants discuss particular problems and form suggestions that are then (together with a short overview of all arguments) presented to the plenum. The working groups do not have the power to make decisions on their own (except in the aforementioned case of the mandated teams/working groups, but they still operate within the boundaries set by the plenum) – every conclusion or suggestion proposed by the working groups must be approved by the plenum (or else it is sent back in order to be discussed again at the groups meetings). The working groups will discuss particular issues that cannot be resolved at the plenum (due to the shortage of time, a specific topic etc.). The purpose of a working group is to work out specific problems in details, to suggest possible solutions and to present them in a systematic and clear manner to the plenum so that the subject may be discussed as constructively as possible at the plenum and that an informed decision can be made. The working group can suggest more than one conclusion/suggestion, all of which are subsequently discussed at the plenum. This is in fact preferable since it gives the plenum a greater variety of choices and a greater possibility of coming up with a solution not thought of by the working group. The potential number of working groups is unlimited. They can be formed according to the need to deal with specific problems and they can be shut down if no such need exists anymore. In opposition, the number of mandated teams is more or less fixed because there is no need for a great number of them.

During the student occupation and after it ended, the following working groups and teams were in existence at the FHSS:

¶ The plenum technical issues working group – deals with the technical issues of the organization of the plenum, draws up the plenum agenda and prepares and instructs the facilitators on how to moderate the plenary session

¶ The media team – maintains contact with the media, implements the media strategy (sanctioned by the plenum) and writes press releases

¶ The inter-plenary working group – coordinates students from different plenums/faculties

¶ The mini-actions working group – deals with the organization of various (usually smaller) actions outside of the faculty in order to promote the idea of free education (actions include performances, protests, exhibitions etc.)

¶ The working group for situation assessment and further actions – analyzes current situation and discusses possible future actions

¶ The document analysis working group – analyzes in detail various official documents (laws, memorandums, statements etc.) that are important for the action

¶ The information working group – deals with the activities concerning the Skripta (the official publication of the plenum), its production and distribution

¶ The working group for spreading direct democracy – this working group, which was formed in the post-occupation period (the autumn of 2009), is concerned with spreading direct democracy outside the university and student framework (for example among workers, in factories etc.)

Besides these most important groups, there were/are some other groups, like the forum working group (which was concerned with organizing the internet forum connected to the official web site), the petition working group (which was in charge of organizing the petition for free education that collected some 100,000 signatures), etc.

SECURITY

The security group was in charge of the physical control over the faculty during the student occupation. The security group maintains the order on the premises and takes care of the faculty property. The membership in the security is free and rotating.

Except for the three mentioned axes of the student control of the faculty (the plenum, the working groups and security), the following are also important:

THE PROGRAM TEAM

The program team is a group of people in charge of organizing the alternative educational program that takes place instead of regular classes during the student occupation.

THE SKRIPTA

The ***Skripta*** is the official publication, i.e. the medium of communication, of the FHSS plenum. During the occupation, the ***Skripta*** is published every day or even twice a day while in post-occupation times it is published usually once a week. In it, one can find the student press releases, various notifications, and articles concerning education and related topics (such as social rights, transition in Croatia, neoliberalism, workers' movements etc.).

BLOG/PORTAL – THE BLOG TEAM

Since the very beginning, an important medium of communication was also the blog (later the web portal) named ***Free Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences*** (***Free FHSS***). The address of the Croatian version of the web site is www. slobodnifilozofski.com while information in English (and other languages) is available at **slobodnifilozofski.org**. ***Free FHSS*** functions as the virtual archive of the student action for free education.

THE FUNCTIONING OF THE FACULTY DURING STUDENT CONTROL

During the student occupation, the Faculty was, except during the night, open to all the citizens, as were the plenum, the working groups and the alternative educational program. The only exception was that the media could record only the beginning of the plenum (i.e. the notifications). After that, the journalists could participate in the plenum as citizens, but no recording was allowed.

During the student occupation, apart from regular classes (which includes the postgraduate courses), everything else at the faculty functioned as usual (the faculty administration, professors' consultation hours, the library, the Foreign Languages Center, the Center for Croatian as Foreign and Second Language, the private copying shop and bookshop at the faculty, as well as some forms of additional classes, the exams that were held in professors' offices and the exams for older (pre-Bologna) students, scheduled conferences etc.). In several cases, where some questioned whether a particular activity should or should not be allowed at the occupied faculty, the plenum discussed it and decided whether to allow the activity or not.

DIRECT DEMOCRACY

An important component of the student self-organization was the directly democratic manner of decision-making. Beside the goal itself ('free education available to all'), this was one of the main aspects of the whole action. Direct democracy is a system in which all (the most important) decisions are made in an absolutely democratic manner, with the majority of the votes of those present. As opposed to the system of representational democracy, in which a smaller number of representatives are elected in elections held every few years and given a mandate to make autonomous decisions, without immediate democratic supervision, in the direct democratic system all decisions are made directly by the majority. Thus direct democracy encourages people to be active and interested and to participate in decision-making. All decisions made during the occupation, as well as after it, are made in such a democratic manner. The direct democratic system is organized through plenums – general assemblies of all interested individuals at which everyone has equal right to express their opinion and at which everyone can vote. All decisions are made by the majority present. The plenum decides on the continuation of the student control of the faculty and on all further actions (during and after the occupation). Particular problems, if such a need arises, are first delegated to be discussed by the working groups (which are also open to all interested parties) and subsequently decided upon at the plenum.

The advantage of the directly democratic, plenary, manner of decision-making is in the fact that all actions and issues are decided upon in a completely democratic manner, that there are no leaders and that this manner of decision-making greatly decreases the potential for manipulation. Within the system of representative democracy, where elected leaders can make decisions on their own, there is a considerable risk of manipulation (during negotiations, one or several of the representatives could be persuaded to comply or even bribed or threatened). The advantage of the plenary way of decision-making is the fact that all decisions must be made collectively on plenums by the majority of the votes present. The plenum cannot at any time elect a representative that can make decisions or agree to certain terms on his/her own. The plenum can only elect delegates, which communicate the decisions and the will of the plenum, as well as pass back offers and questions to be considered by the plenum. This method of electing delegates, which is the only truly democratic way, excludes the possibility of manipulating individual representatives.

THE INDEPENDENT STUDENT INITIATIVE & THE PLENUM

The initial group of people that started organizing the faculty occupation, before the first occupation plenum was held, acted under the name the independent student initiative for the right to free education (ISI). However, the plenum transcends the ISI because it deals with more than just the right to free education and also because it expresses the will of all students, as everyone has the right to participate in and vote at the plenum. Thus, the decisions made at the plenum need to be considered as the decisions of all students and not as those of the ISI. Still, the ISI remains the name for the group of activists who are fighting for the right to free education, while the plenum is open to all students, regardless of their political orientation and their opinion on certain issues such as free education. The plenum, although an offspring of the struggle for the right to free education, is a central organ of the direct democratic decision-making of all students and should not be equated solely with the struggle for free education.

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HOW TO ORGANIZE A PLENUM?

01. INTRODUCTION

Simply put, the plenum is a meeting of all interested members of a collective. All members of that collective have a right to take part at the plenum, which makes the plenum democratically legitimate, although it is not necessary that all members of the collective participate at every plenary session. What is important is that, at the plenum, all those present participate equally in decision-making – there is no possibility of any one person representing another person or a group of people (and their votes). The plenary manner of decision-making implements the methods of participatory or direct democracy. The direct democratic manner of decision-making that is employed at the plenums is the only consistently democratic way of making decisions that concern the entire collective.

The main purpose of organizing plenums is to include all those interested in the process of decision-making, especially when it comes to issues of greater social importance, such as the right to free education, free healthcare, labor rights etc. The possibility of participating in the decision-making process motivates those often described as inert, uninterested or apathetic to participate in political actions. Reasoned public discussions demystify the decision-making process, giving importance to the opinion of every individual who participates. A decision that is made is binding for all. However, one might ask: who are those "all"? Behind a decision made on the grounds of rational argumentation stand all members of the organ that made that decision. The basis of this manner of decision-making is that anybody who wants to may take part in it. It must be noted that the plenum does not use force to implement its decisions, but the power of reasoned arguments – those that do not participate in plenary sessions are not obliged to except a decision that is made, but they are nonetheless informed about it. The important effect of this kind of decision-making is the dispersion of responsibility to all participants who are aware of the fact that the decision was not made by some superior authority, organized clique or executive committee, but by the participants of the voting process themselves only. Those who become actively involved in the decision-making process can no longer be set aside as passive, disinterested or irresponsible bystanders.

Here, we shall concentrate on the organization of a plenum in emergency situations such as occupations and takeovers of working or educational facilities. We deliberately make a distinction between an occupation and a takeover. The institution can be said to be taken over only when the plenum, which consists of all members of the collective, or at least those interested enough to participate at it, has voted to take over the institution.

Depending on the circumstances (like the size of a collective, the possibility of sabotage, threats of sanctions etc.), the occupation can, but need not be, planned in relative secrecy. In that case, the action itself is the first thing that must be done; afterwards, the takeover is finalized by post hoc legitimization of the action. Of course, it would preferable if all interested participants legitimized the action before it is done but that is not always possible for reasons already mentioned. If one were always to wait for the explicit previous consent of the majority, then it would often be the case that, for practical reasons, it is not possible to do anything. Complete democratic legitimization from the beginning cannot and must not be an obstacle to direct action, although it is of the utmost importance that the action itself be organized in a direct democratic manner from the very beginning. In case of relatively secretive action, it is important to set the grounds in such a way that as many members as possible know (or have some idea about) what is going on. This is also important because it gives an opportunity to try to assess the general opinion concerning the problems that are the reason for starting an occupation.

02. PLENUM – HOW & WHY?

The question that arises is how would one even organize a collective body that functions on the principles of direct democracy?

We shall not go into theory too much. Our aim is to describe the process of organizing this kind of direct-democratic collective body at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb and point out certain problems we have encountered. This experience should be of help to other collectives trying to organize a similar political body.

The action was prepared through unofficial channels, and was fully legitimized post hoc through the decision of all students who voted that the occupation be continued. However, it is important to note that anybody could have joined in the planning of the occupation (nobody was forbidden from joining), although it was not possible to openly announce it (except immediately before the beginning of the action itself). All meetings held during the planning of the occupation also functioned on the principles of direct democracy. Those were pre-occupation mini-plenums (although one should rather characterize them as open meetings at which decisions were made in a direct democratic manner). The first pre-occupation larger plenary session was held five days before the occupation of the faculty when a public discussion on free education (at which some 200 people participated) spontaneously turned into a plenum at which the majority voted for the occupation of the faculty. The occupation was then confirmed by a big plenum held on the first day of the student control of the faculty.

During the preparations for the action, there were some dilemmas with regard to who should have the right to participate at the plenary sessions and how to make them inaccessible to those who are deemed to not have that right. It has been decided that, apart from the students of the faculty, the right to participate should be extended to interested citizens as well – which would include the staff of the faculty, students of other faculties and universities, the workers, and so on. Since the demand for free education for all is one that concerns the general public and since the university is a public institution, the "open door policy" was considered to be the only consistent one.

This approach had proven to be the right one as the plenary sessions attracted both the citizens and students of other faculties – and occupations of other faculties soon followed ours. The major objection to this policy of unrestricted participation was the fear that malevolent individuals or groups might try to obstruct the functioning of the plenum. This did not happen. On the contrary, the equality of all participants and the inclusion of all into the decision-making process proved to be real cohesion builders. Before the occupation, some people feared that a direct democratic manner of organization might not function at all – however, the occupation clearly showed that those fears were completely unfounded. The dominant view was that if the fight for a fundamental human right such as the right of free education cannot attract enough interested participants, the moment for such a fight is obviously not right and the whole action is doomed to fail.

Already on the first day of the occupation, some 800 people gathered in the lecture room that has 350 to 400 sitting places. The decision to continue the occupation was made by a great majority of all the votes. During all 35 days of the occupation, there were no incidents at the plenum or inside/outside of the faculty building.

During the preparatory meetings, there were big discussions about the organization of the occupation. Is it necessary to block every activity at the faculty or should some activities be exempt? Should the entrance to the building be physically blocked? In the end, it was decided that only regular classes would be blocked, while the faculty staff and workers would have access to the building and their working places at all times. The entrance would be open to all, otherwise it would make no sense to have an alternative educational program (focused on free education and related topics).

Due to this kind of approach, some of the faculty employees supported the student action. Although it could be considered to be ideologically inconsistent, the decision to allow normal functioning of certain private businesses at the faculty was motivated by the wish to do no harm to the employees of those companies as well as to avoid conflicts with the police, which might be inclined to intervene in order to defend private property rights.

As the condition for the end of the occupation a single demand was made: free education on all levels for everyone that satisfies the criteria for enrolment into the faculty. The idea was that one firm demand of general interest would be much better than many disparate demands.

But how was the whole action prepared?

03. PREPARATIONS

The whole thing started with the idea to block classes as a means of warning the public about the dangers of the commercialization of the university sector. This was not particularly revolutionary since this is a method widely used in the world. However, this method was relatively unknown in Croatia. In Croatian, there had not been serious student protests for decades.

The initial group's basic task is to win support for the action from the wider student population. At the same time, they are trying to gauge the positions of teachers and professors. It should be mentioned that support for the demand for free education existed since the protest held on November 5th 2008, at which some 1500 people participated (primarily from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences). Further mobilization was done by organizing a public discussion on free education after the protest (the occupation itself began on April 20th 2009). It is important to point out that students were aware of the demand for free education as it had been made before. Thus the November 2008 protest, at which numerous students participated, gave a certain additional legitimacy to the organizers of the occupation.

Two issues were of essential importance for the organization of the occupation:

a) The organization of taking over the faculty building and blocking the classes

b) The direct democratic model of deciding whether to continue or end the occupation.

In the organization phase, the group expanded to include some 50 interested people. It was mostly made up of students who had been involved in student activism in one way or another, or of those who, sometimes accidentally, had come to one of the preparation meetings and decided to join. However, certain circumstances facilitated the organization of this type of complex action:

a) Previous political actions initiated by the students of the FHSS, such as the protest against the law on Student Council held in 1996; the protest against the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 and especially the petition against Croatia's entrance into NATO in 2008; the protest against masters course fees held on May 7th 2008, as well as the most important first protest for free education held on November 5, 2008;

b) Intensive discussions of issues and problems caused by the Bologna process reforms

c) The existence of active student organizations

d) The fact that, unlike at some other faculties, the legal student representative body at the FHSS was not corrupted or under the control of the political parties' youths

e) The existence of autonomous student space at the faculty (The Club of the FHSS Students)

However, the protest held on November 5th should be singled out as the crucial moment, as the idea of the fight for free education on all levels was defined during the preparations for that protest. This protest and the preparations for it drew people's attention to the problem of free education and helped to create an activist base that would later take part in the occupation of the faculty. Also, the result of the protest made it clear that conventional methods of protesting (such as one-day demonstrations) are very limited and non-efficient and that different and more radical methods of fighting would be necessary.

Those were some of the main preconditions that made it possible to organize a larger action at the faculty. After the occupation began, it became necessary to confront the widespread belief that precisely the FHSS was somehow predestined for this type of action. This type of romantic idealizing frequently leads to defeatism when reflecting on the chances of organizing similar actions elsewhere, which then results in nothing being done at all. The aforementioned favorable circumstances that facilitated the occupation of the FHSS are not in themselves inherent to social-humanistic educational institutions. Concrete actions, good organization and the determination to fight were crucial for the success of the organization, not the assumed favorable institutional context (although, of course, it is not unusual that students of humanities and social sciences are more inclined to reflect critically on social processes).

However, the question is what to do in a case when one has to start from scratch and whether it is even possible to organize a plenum in that kind of situation? Based on our experiences, we shall try to come up with ways to organize a plenum in a short period of time and in the conditions where basic infrastructure does not exist.

04. THE PLENUM IN A DESERT

As already said, the organization can start (and usually does) with a very limited number of people. Depending on the size of a collective, even just one person can provide the crucial initial momentum, but five to six people should usually be enough to get an action started. We would like to emphasize this in order to, at the very beginning, suppress the defeatism and inactivity that often appears in smaller collectives that falsely assume the masses cannot be moved without a large number of activists. The other common mistake is to naively believe that some kind of 'revolutionary' atmosphere, perceivable dissatisfaction or special conditions have to be present in order to even begin something. The fear of failure often hampers the starting of an action. What one has to always have in mind is that there is no ideal situation in which everything will just happen spontaneously. Even more importantly, the 'revolutionary' atmosphere does not occur spontaneously, it is created – usually by methods that, at first glance, may appear banal.

Let us start from the beginning. The first thing that needs to be defined is the goal. The goal should be clear, succinct and have its basis in one of the basic human rights. One might argue that something that is based on basic human rights cannot be clear and succinct but is rather by its nature abstract and hard to comprehend. But only goals that are based on the fight for equality have the potential for wider mobilization. Free education, free health care, and takeovers of the working collectives – these are some of the things we consider as examples of fighting for equality. The trap that must be avoided is setting a goal that does not concern all members of a collective. In spite of differences of opinion, different affinities etc, it is crucial to insist that everyone be included. Everyone has to feel invited to participate. If that is not the case, if certain members of the collective are excluded from the very beginning, the likelihood of the action's success is greatly reduced.

After the goal has been defined, the group of initiators needs to promote it. We used posters to promote our ideas. Handing out pamphlets that discuss important issues for the collective is another good way to encourage people to start reflecting on matters that concern them. The next step is to confirm that these actions have been successful. The ideal way to do those would be to organize a public discussion featuring a few well-know speakers who support the goal. The issues that were the subjects of the posters and pamphlets should be discussed at that event. The response to the discussion would be a good indicator of the number of interested individuals. The discussion would also be useful for motivational purposes as it can and should be used to clear up certain issues as well as to encourage those who might still be undecided. We could say that, after the goal has been set and actions have been taken to promote it, a public discussion would provide a real indicator of the current situation and a guide for further actions.

05. TWO SCENARIOS

After the public discussion, the situation could develop in either of two directions. The first one is the positive one. The discussion was a success; a large number of interested people were present, ready to go to action. The initial actions have been successful and now it is time to move on to the next phase, which is broadening the initial group of organizers to include all interested participants. This process has a specific dynamic to which we shall return later. First we must address a more challenging issue: what to do in case of a bad turnout at the public discussion or in case of fervent disagreement or attempted obstruction of the action.

So let us try and describe the second possible development. Again, the situation could develop in two different ways. In the first one, the public discussion went unnoticed. Obviously, a mistake was made in one of the first two steps: either in the setting of the goal or in the promotion of it. Therefore it is necessary to analyze what had been done, learn from the experience and correct any possible mistakes. Believing that the action should be abandoned because the community is apathetic or the moment is not right often turns out to be a premature and hasty conclusion. Starting an action is often the critical point after which the difficult part of the work has already been done and the rest is, often, just a matter of choosing the adequate tactical approach.

What needs to be done in case there is disagreement or obstruction?

Disagreement usually means that the turnout at the public discussion was not bad and that a certain success has been achieved. Disagreements are to be expected and should not be avoided. One could even say that this type of development is a positive outcome of initial actions, and is a result of a successful beginning. The process of discussing and resolving differences is something we shall elaborate in the chapters that describe the situation on our faculty. Before that, we shall consider an especially interesting issue of obstruction. Obstruction can usually be expected from the administrative structures and their devotees, who try to thwart all forms of self-organizing. This is something that was encountered at a number of faculties that started the occupations following FHSS. The basic problem there was the lack of time for quality preparations, as well as lack of organizational experience and positive practices in the past. Still, an obstruction is a clear indicator that the action has had a certain effect and that the scope of the action has to be broadened since the obstructions are a valid threat only to insufficiently organized movements. To an organized and self-aware movement obstructions will often ‘help’ to mobilize previously inert parts of the collective.

However, let us return now to the first development, which unfolded during the occupation and takeover of our faculty.

06. THE BEGINNING WAS SUCCESSFUL, WHAT NEXT?

A large number of people showed up at the public discussion, meeting or some other kind of assembly. Obviously, there is interest in the issues. What are the next organizational steps?

It is necessary to organize a meeting with all interested participants in order to discuss the strategy and further actions. The organizers must not fail to take advantage of the initial enthusiasm and increase the number of participants. However, the starting point should be a discussion on the goal of the action and the method of achieving it. Until there is agreement on these issues, it is not possible to move on to the next, practical organizational phase. It has already been briefly described what the goal should be like. What about the method? The method is the occupation and legitimization through direct democracy. From our experience, people are at first opposed because of ignorance or fear or because they have certain wrong, preconceived ideas which they had acquired through the media or through institutional education. But it is astonishing how quickly the people will rise to support the fight for basic human rights and direct democratic manner of decision-making if these are explained with clear arguments and positive experiences from real life. By adopting the direct democratic model of decision-making the organizational matrix of the action is set. In that situation it also becomes clear what it means exactly "decisions made by the plenum are binding for all."

After the participants have accepted the direct democratic model and the goal, supported by all members of the collective, has been formulated, it can be said that two basic components for the organization of a plenum are present. This, of course, implies that all previously described actions were done in a relative secrecy that will be ended at the moment of the occupation and subsequent takeover of the institution (working, educational or some other). In order for the plenum to be fully functional, it has to be completely public. In other words, everyone who might want to participate (and has a right to, in accordance with the model of participation set by the particular plenum) needs to know where and when the plenum is held.

What is left to be described is the third basic component of organizing a plenum, which becomes important after the first two have been formed, i.e. at the moment when there are clear indications of the future plenum. The issue in question is the issue of the relationship with the media and the closely related issue of leadership.

07. THE QUESTION OF LEADERSHIP & RELATIONS WITH THE MEDIA

Clearly, a non-hierarchical, direct democratic model of decision-making completely eliminates the need for leaders, 'expert' negotiators and representatives. It is extremely important that the movement decides on the question of leadership at the very beginning. In the plenary model of organization the decisions are made collectively; there are no representatives, which means that there can neither be prominent individuals who would aspire to be the voice of the movement. It is of utmost importance to suppress the 'leadership tendencies" from the very beginning. This should be done at the beginning because it is often hard to erase the first impression that is made as it leaves an imprint that is hard to get rid of – both internally, within the movement itself, and in the public perception. Leaders and the dangers they bring are easier to prevent than to annul once they have gained some weight in public perception and have become potentially outside of the control of the plenum.

The first real tests appear when it comes to dealing with the media. It is usually presumed that occupations and takeovers require professional spokespersons, i.e. one or more persons that will communicate with journalists. But this practice must be abandoned if one does not want the action to be personalized or the function of the plenum overshadowed by privileged spokespersons. The most efficient way to avoid these dangers is to preserve the anonymity of all members of the collective. The anonymity is a great defense against the formation of leaders – if the individuals who present the views of the collective in public are anonymous and never the same, there is no possibility of an individual standing out amongst the many and becoming a representative of the whole movement. Needless to say, this method of continuous rotation of members in public also leaves an impression of the strength of the movement.

A common opinion is that media attention can be gained only by playing by the rules set by the media, which mostly means submitting to the logics of the supply and demand of spectacles of personal stories and indiscreetness. Even purely politically motivated actions need to be translated into personal narratives and schematic 'human motivation' stories, supposedly in order to guarantee a better reception in the public. In this way the action's political aspect itself is sacrificed at the moment of its public articulation. An emancipatory movement must be progressive in all aspects of its actions, which includes the media relations as well. What the media want from the movement is unimportant; what is important is the message the movement is trying to convey. It has been shown that the most efficient way to coerce the media to convey the message as intended is by completely avoiding the personalized spectacle and by insistently controlling the articulation of the action's goals by means of written press releases.

It is necessary to reject the mistaken belief that a movement cannot succeed unless it has leaders and employs a conventional approach to the media. Just the opposite, it can be argued that amongst the major strengths of our movement were our specific media strategy and a complete lack of leaders.

Different spokespersons every day, carefully prepared press releases and the fact that we insisted on the importance of the collective averted two serious dangers: the impositions of leaders and media instrumentalization.

08. PLENUM: 1, 2, 3

What did the plenary sessions themselves look like? The first issue that needed to be addressed was the question of the facilitator, i.e. the person that would in a way mediate and coordinate the happenings at a plenary session. It was decided that two facilitators would be needed to facilitate the functioning of the plenum since the sessions were expected to involve many participants. The role of the facilitator was reduced to that of minimal technical contribution – the facilitator's tasks are to help during the preparation of the daily agenda and to observe the order in which participants at the session are allowed to speak. That means that the facilitator does not have the powers usually given to persons in that position. He is not above the plenum; his task is simply to implement a minimal set of rules devised by the plenum.

The rules and guidelines of the FHSS plenum (which define how the plenum and plenary sessions function) are a reflection of practical problems we have encountered. We would like to emphasize that these are not rules that must be valid for all circumstances and situations. They are essential procedural rules agreed upon and followed by the plenum, but can be changed by the plenum at any time if necessary. Naturally, this does not mean that the plenum functions according to obscure and arbitrary rules. The plenum has to follow democratic principles at all times, which means that any form of compulsion (bar the 'compulsion' to follow the plenum's decisions) is entirely unacceptable.

Over time, we have come up with certain technical solutions that significantly facilitate the functioning of the plenum. One such is the rule that a member may speak only if he or she holds the microphone – in this way, the participants learn not to interrupt the speakers but to wait until they get the microphone themselves. It has been shown that the use of microphone has a positive effect on the flow and manner of discussions at the plenary sessions. Another important innovation is projecting the minutes onto a wall during a plenary session, so that everybody can read them as they are being written. The minute keeping is thus completely transparent, which eliminates the possibility of a mistake or manipulation by the minute-taker.

09. CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES & THE FUNCTION OF WORKING GROUPS

The plenary model of decision-making is often criticized because it is allegedly illegitimate, orchestrated (claiming that the decisions are made beforehand), and because more skilled orators have a disproportionately higher influence on it. The question of legitimacy is easily countered. The plenum is open to everyone, every session is announced well in advance, everyone has the right to speak and influence the process of decision-making.

For practical reasons, because it was not possible to discuss all topics in great detail at the plenary sessions, the concept of working groups was introduced as a means of dealing with particular issues. The meetings of working groups were always publicly announced in advance and are also open to all interested participants. If a problematic issue arises during a plenary session, the advocates of opposing opinions are always encouraged to form a working group and try to find a platform that would offer a satisfying resolution to the issue in question.

The greatest problem is the third issue, namely the comparative advantage of those more talkative and more skilled orators. We have to honestly say that we have not resolved this problem; the only solution is to constantly appeal to those who speak often to be responsible, not to repeat themselves and not to privatize the plenum. It should also be mentioned that the working groups functioned as a kind of workshops where one could, in a smaller group, practice speaking in public and accepting different opinions, which contributed to the group cohesion. Encouraging unrestricted forming of working groups, which can (but need not) function as the plenum's advisory organs, has proved an excellent supplement to the plenary sessions.

10. CONCLUSIONS

The basic criteria for organizing a plenum:

a) Setting the goal

b) Direct democratic method of decision-making

c) Media relations strategy

d) Suppressing leadership and authoritarianism

The combination of these four criteria should result in:

a) Many people joining in

b) the formation of a strong plenum

c) opening a public discussion about the problem that the action is focused on

d) a step forward towards realizing the set goal


BLOKADA

THE PLENUM

The plenum exists only in those moments when members of a collective are taking part in the general assembly. There are no plenum members; there are only plenum participants. Outside that act of assembling in one place, discussing and making decisions, there is no plenum. The plenum is not a formal body like a parliament that has its own building and employees – the plenum does not constitute the collective, the collective constitutes the plenum.

THE FUNCTIONING OF THE PLENUM

TECHNICAL PERSONNEL

The technician – prepares the microphone, the sound system and other technical equipment used at the plenary sessions. Technical personnel arrive at the lecture hall ten minutes before the session is to start, in order to plug in and test the sound system, the computers and other necessary equipment.

Two facilitators – they moderate the plenum, read out the agenda, moderate the discussion, summarize the arguments and formulate the questions that the plenum will vote on.

The minute-keeper – s/he is in charge of keeping the minutes of every plenary session. During the sessions, the minutes are projected onto a wall and are thus visible to all plenum participants. After the plenum, the minute-keeper uses the rough draft of the minutes to compile a session report which is published on the plenum's official website. Thus all those who were unable to participate at the session can still be informed about the discussions and decisions made. The minute-keeper is also in charge of keeping track of how long the discussions last – after thirty minutes of discussing one particular topic, the minute-keeper informs the facilitators that they may interrupt the discussion and ask the participants if they wish to continue with the discussion, move on to vote or to discuss other issues. The minute-keeper also arrives some time before the plenary session is to begin, in order to prepare the materials needed – documents, videos etc.

One person is in charge of registering the order in which participants have asked to speak (it is recommended that there be two persons in charge of this at sessions with more than 200 participants).

It is also necessary that a number of security guards are present at a plenary session – their tasks are to maintain order during the session, pass on the microphone and count the votes. They also pass on written messages from the plenum participants to the facilitators.

The plenum's agenda is compiled at the meeting of the plenum technical issues working group, which takes place two hours before the plenary session. All clearly formulated suggestions sent to the working group via e-mail are included into the agenda (suggestions for the agenda can also be made by other means defined by the plenum, depending on technical possibilities, for instance by putting written suggestions into a suggestion box etc). The working group's meetings are, of course, open to all interested parties. At the group's pre-plenary meeting, the facilitators of the upcoming plenary session are prepared for their role (preparation is necessary because new facilitators are chosen for every session). In general, the facilitators of the previous plenary session should also be present at this pre-plenary meeting.

Insisting on having different facilitators for every plenary session comes from the very idea of direct democracy, which emphasizes egalitarianism and equal sharing of responsibility. It is also one way of getting a wider circle of people to participate more actively in the plenum. How often facilitators are allowed to reprise their role depends on the size of the collective.

THE COURSE OF THE PLENUM

The facilitators greet the plenum, introduce themselves and the session begins. At the beginning, one of the facilitators reads the first article of the plenum rules and guidelines. After that, the facilitators read out the agenda, note any possible objections to it and modify the agenda if necessary (the agenda does not need to be voted on).

The first item on the agenda is announcements and notifications. These topics are usually not voted on and the journalists are allowed to tape and photograph this part of the session. Announcements and notifications include various information that has been received via e-mail since the last plenary session, or news related to actions that involve the plenum, the Faculty, the general social situation etc. After the announcements, the facilitators ask the media to stop recording the session.

Following the agenda, the facilitators read out the materials or give the floor to members submitting reports on various working groups' meeting and actions. The working groups' reports are submitted first, and afterwards the plenum moves on to discuss particular topics that have been included in the agenda (that is, the topics that were submitted via e-mail before the beginning of the plenary session – although occasionally topics that are not on the agenda can be introduced in the middle of the session, if necessary). During the student control of the faculty, the regular (final) topic on the agenda is the issue of 'the continuation/ending of the occupation.' A vote can be held after every item on the agenda is discussed, but it is not always necessary. Sometimes, after one item more than one vote can be held. Some topics can be referred to the working groups for further elaboration and the voting on them postponed. Every decision of the plenum can be changed at the very next plenum.

After an item on the agenda is presented, participants can open a discussion on the subject which may last for thirty minutes before facilitators ask the plenum if it wishes to end the discussion (before doing so, the facilitators give a summary of the discussion up until that point and inform the plenum of what will follow if the discussion is ended: if the plenum will move on to another item on the agenda, vote on this item, or something else). Before the plenum votes on whether to continue the discussion, those members who had already expressed their desire to speak should be given the chance to do so. Technical personnel's task is to register the order in which participants have asked to speak and to pass on the microphone to the person who's turn is next. The facilitators are required to warn the plenum if certain arguments are being repeated and they should also, from time to time, summarize the arguments made so far. For a better overview of the flow of the discussion, it would also be useful if the minute-keeper would write down the arguments.

If it comes to a vote, one of the facilitators or any participant of the plenum suggests the form of the question which will be voted on and which needs to be written on the screen, visible to all participants. The question has to be formulated in a way that participants may vote in favor, against, or cast an abstention vote. If necessary, the question can be formulated in the form of a multiple-choice question (a, b, c, d...) and the plenum then votes for/against all of the options. If there are no objections to the formulation of the question, i.e. if the plenum agrees on the formulation of the question, the vote is held. Voting is by show of hands, and if the results of the vote are not apparent, the security guards count the votes. During the counting, no one is allowed to enter or leave the hall.

At the end of the session, the participants choose the date the next session will be held, the facilitators and, if necessary, delegates. Only those present at the plenum can be suggested for the roles of facilitators and delegates. Those who have been suggested must accept the nomination and the plenum must approve them by voting.

After the plenary session has finished, the facilitators must not leave before they obtain the contact information from persons who have been elected as facilitators and delegates. Two new facilitators moderate every session, and individuals may facilitate only one plenary session in the academic year. The minute-taker sends the minutes via e-mail to the plenum technical issues working group (in order for them to be able to refer later to the decisions made by the plenum) and writes a report of the plenum which is published on the plenum's official website.

THE RULES & GUIDELINES OF THE FHSS PLENUM

THE RULES AND GUIDELINES OF THE FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES PLENUM

The purpose of this document is not to formalize or codify the plenum but to help its functioning. Therefore, it is subject to suggestions, criticisms or improvements that can be sent via e-mail to the technical issues of the plenum-working group. All suggestions that are received will be discussed at the group's public meetings and at the plenary sessions.

A) RULES

01/ All interested people have the right to participate in the plenum – whether they are students of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences or not. The plenum makes its decisions by the relative majority of the votes during which the plenum tries to achieve consensus. The discussion before the vote is held in a respectable and orderly fashion according to the rules and guidelines set by the plenum, and which the facilitators implement. The decisions made by the plenum are binding for all.

02/ Plenary sessions are held when necessary, or at least once a month. All the participants decide the time and date of the next plenary session at the session. The plenum technical issues working group at the suggestion of any working group or individual can call an unplanned plenary session. The plenum technical issues working group must hold a meeting to discuss and decide on holding an unplanned plenary session, and the time and the topic of this meeting must be publicly announced (via the official website, notice boards at the faculty etc) at least 24 hours in advance. The time and date of the unplanned plenary session must be announced at the website at least 24 hours in advance as well.

03/ The technical personnel of the plenum includes:

a. security guards and their coordinator

b. the minute keeper

c. the technician (a person in charge of taking care of the microphones, loudspeakers, computers, the projector etc.)

d. a person in charge of registering the order in which participants have asked to speak

e. a person in charge of reading written suggestions that participants send during the course of the plenum

04/ Every plenary session is moderated by two new facilitators, with the condition that a person may take on the role of the plenum facilitator only once per academic year. Individuals who are not eligible to be facilitators (having already performed that function in the current academic year) may be elected as spokespersons, and the opposite is true also. In principle, when electing individuals to perform these functions, preference is given to individuals who have not yet performed either. Before facilitators and spokespersons are elected by the plenum, it is necessary to ask if there are any comments or objections regarding the candidates.

05/ During the plenary session, only technical personnel (listed in rule 3.) are allowed to sit at the table next to the facilitators. Nobody else has the right to sit at the head table. The plenum agrees that technical personnel need not rotate or be elected, although this option remains available if need arises. Both the facilitators and the technical personnel can voice their opinions at the plenum under same conditions as everyone else – by asking to speak and waiting their turn.

06/ The working groups that are crucial for the functioning of the plenum, like the plenum technical issues working group, have to be reachable at all times and thus need to have: a) their e-mail address posted on the official website, b) a clearly marked room at the Faculty where they meet, c) a meeting time in between two plenary sessions announced on the website twenty-four hours in advance.

The groups should reply to e-mails received in a reasonable timeframe, for example, within two days.

07/ The plenum technical issues working group is responsible for the technical preparation of plenary sessions, which includes:

a. coordinating technical personnel listed under rule 3.

b. instructing the facilitators on the rules and guidelines of the plenum, on previous decisions made by the plenum and on how to compile the agenda

c. calling unplanned plenary sessions.

The basis of the plenum technical issues working group is formed by the facilitators of the previous and the next plenary session, and everyone else interested in participating. Apart from holding a meeting in between plenary session, the group is also required to hold a meeting on the day of the plenary session.

08/ The suggestions for the agenda need to be sent no later than 24 hours before the plenary session. The plenum facilitators compile the agenda on the day of the session, during the meeting of the plenum technical issues working group. We would like to emphasize that the meeting is open to all interested people. A suggestion that was not sent in time, but which a plenum member believes is too important not to be included, can be suggested at the plenary session after the facilitators have read out the agenda. In order for this late suggestion to be included in the agenda, the member needs to explain why s/he was not able to send the suggestion in time and why it is important that it be discussed at that particular session. If there are suggestions that were received in time but were not included in the agenda, the facilitators are required to explain why this was so.

09/ The discussion is held after every item on the agenda is read out. If no members are interested in the discussion, a vote can be held immediately.

10/ Before any delegates are sent to an event, the plenum has to discuss if there is any need to send delegates. What functions delegates are expected to perform is not crucial – what is important is what functions the plenum is willing to allow them to perform. If the plenum decides to send delegates, the following requirements have to be met:

a. The plenum must clearly define the delegates' mandate.

b. If there is more than one meeting, different delegates should be present at different meetings.

When it comes to electing delegates:

a. There is no limit to the number of possible candidates.

b. The candidates have to be present at the plenum and accept the candidacy.

c. Arguments for and against a candidate need to be allowed.

d. Future delegates have to be confirmed by a vote.

11/ A decision should not be overturned at the same plenary session it was made at, unless in case of a procedural error or of additional crucial information coming to light.

B) GUIDELINES

01/ Plenary sessions are moderated by two facilitators; one follows the discussion and summarizes the arguments approximately every ten minutes. Meanwhile, the other performs other moderating duties, for example: s/he invites members to refrain from speaking if the argument they wish to present has already been presented by another speaker, or reminds them to shorten their argumentation if they have been speaking too long, etc. The facilitators take turns summarizing the arguments made during the discussion.

02/ Before asking 'Does the plenum wish to end the discussion?' the facilitators must summarize the discussion so far and announce what will follow if the plenum decides to end the discussion. Therefore, the question facilitators ask should be 'Does the plenum wish to end the discussion and move on to the next item on the agenda?' or Does the plenum wish to end the discussion and vote about (the topic)?' Facilitators must allow for at least 30 minutes of discussion before asking the plenum if it wishes to end it.

03/ The person who suggested an item for the agenda should, if possible, when presenting the topic also formulate the question that the plenum will vote on. Any participant of the plenum may formulate the question, not just the facilitators. The minute keeper should not influence the formulation of the question. Before the vote, the question needs to be clearly defined and, preferably, displayed on the screen, blackboard or the wall. The vote should not be held until the complete question is written and displayed for everyone to see. Once the question is formulated, before the vote, the facilitators ask: 'Does anyone wish to comment on the formulation of the question or object to the procedure before the vote?'

04/ All decisions made at previous plenary sessions are compiled so that facilitators can use them to adequately prepare for their tasks. The minute taker should be the one who compiles plenum's decisions.

05/ Technical advice for facilitators: one should be calm, restrained and objective; refrain from abruptly interrupting with off topic discussions; not be condescending towards participants; refrain from enforcing one's own conclusions upon the plenum; above all avoid any form of authoritarianism; employing humor is welcome etc. If participants suggest topics for the agenda that have been discussed before, these should be addressed at the beginning of the session, during announcements. Recurring topics need not be included in the agenda, but if a topic is not included, this should always be announced transparently in the introductory part of the plenary session.

06/ Participants who present reports from various working groups leave their seats and stand in front of the plenum to do so, after which they go back to their seats from where they answer questions.

07/ The basic structure of the agenda:

a. Reading out the agenda – during which facilitators also explain why some suggestions were not included and give participants the opportunity to suggest an urgent topic that they were unable to send in time;

b. Announcements;

c. Reports from the working groups;

d. Current issues – includes topics suggested for discussion;

e. Setting the time for the next plenary session and electing facilitators and spokespersons;

f. Miscellaneous – suggestions, comments, news and similar items that have been received in writing during the plenary session.

During b. and f. there is no voting.

08/ Successful functioning of the plenum will require:

— at least two microphones (one for the facilitators and a wireless one for the discussion);
— loudspeakers;
— a computer;
— video-wall/projector so that the participants can read the plenum minutes while they are being written and so that the voting question can be clearly displayed for all to see before the vote is held.

09/ If the decision is not clear, i.e. if there are many abstentions or if the number of those in favor and those against is close, the facilitators ask if the plenum needs to discuss whether to accept the voting results. The next step is to ask: 'Does the plenum accept the results of the vote?'

C) ANNEX

¶ The rules are binding while the guidelines are merely advisory. Every guideline may become a rule if the plenum so decides. The addition of new guidelines is welcomed. New rules should be added with caution in order to avoid excessive formalization of the plenum.

¶ All presented rules and guidelines have been discussed at the plenum technical issues working group and at the plenum itself.

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ZNANJE
NIJE
ROBA
SLOBODNA EDUKACIJA,
A NE SLOBODNO TRŽIŠTE!
PETICIJA


RADNICI
UZ STUDENTE

CODE OF CONDUCT DURING THE STUDENT CONTROL OF THE FACULTY OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES

01/ During the student control over the FHSS, entrance into the Faculty is allowed to everyone according to the Faculty rules that normally apply. Nobody has the right to prevent in any way Faculty staff from coming to work. The only activities that will be obstructed without exceptions are the regular classes. The faculty teaching staff will be prevented to hold lectures, seminars and exams in lecture rooms and halls. On the other hand, they are free to hold consultation hours, exams, etc., in their offices.

02/ All active participants in the occupation of the Faculty, as well as visitors and employees, will treat each other and the Faculty staff and property with utmost respect and will try not to jeopardize anyone or damage anything.

03/ Only the student security has the right to physically prevent someone from doing something, but even these interventions must be conducted in as peaceful and non-violently as possible. Others are only allowed to join the security in an intervention if the security guards decide that they cannot control a given situation on their own and ask others for help.

04/ Everyone must obey the guards' instructions without complaining. During the occupation, the freedom of movement at the Faculty will be restricted, and we must all understand that this restriction is necessary for the success of the action.

05/ All laws of the Republic of Croatia and the regulations of the FHSS that ban the consumption of illegal drugs and alcohol at the Faculty premises will be enforced without exceptions.

06/ If you see someone breaking the rules, you should warn them not to do it. If they persist, you need to report them to the nearest guard, who will act in accordance with the guards' duties.

07/ In case of a police intervention at the Faculty we will use passive resistance. If the police arrive, everyone should sit down on the floor and refuse to move. If provoked in any way, they must not respond with violence, whether physical or verbal. The only way to remove the protesters is to carry them away.

08/ All decisions concerning the further functioning of the student control over the faculty, the continuation of the occupation, the changing of the program or the code of conduct etc., will be decided at the plenary sessions in accordance with the rules and guidelines of the FHSS plenum.

09/ During the student control of the faculty, plenary sessions are held on a daily basis.

THE PLENUM MINUTES

What are plenum minutes for?

¶ They serve to inform all those who were not able to participate at a plenary session about what was discussed and voted;

¶ It is very useful to have in writing everything that the plenum voted on: as many decisions are made over time it becomes impossible to remember everything (or some things are remembered incorrectly) so it is necessary to consult minutes from old sessions;

¶ If the minutes are displayed on a wall via a projector the participants can follow the discussions more easily.

TECHNICAL SUGGESTIONS:

¶ The minute taker should use a laptop or a computer to take minutes as this facilitates archiving and later use of the minutes;

¶ If possible, the computer should be connected to a projector that should display the minutes in such a way that they are clearly visible to all participants. It would be best if the minutes were displayed on a wall above or beside the facilitator (if the minutes are projected onto a wall, all participants will be able to read them and thus control the minute keeper and intervene if necessary).

How to take plenum minutes?

Every record must contain:

- The date, for example: The minutes from the May 26th 2009 plenary session.
- The time when the session began and when it ended.
  After the session ends, the minute taker checks the time and at the end of the minutes writes: The session was concluded at 11.56 PM.
- An estimate of how many people were present (not always necessary).

¶ The session's agenda: the minute taker writes down the session's agenda, which was prepared by the facilitators, at the beginning of the minutes. If the minutes are being projected onto a wall, this part of the session's minutes needs to be displayed before the session begins so that the participants may comment or make an objection.

¶ After the session begins the minute taker simply follows the session's agenda and the facilitators: s/he writes down every agenda item in the form of a title, and records the happenings at the session related to it.
FOR EXAMPLE:
Item 2 of the agenda: reviewing the new draft of the law

The contents of the new draft of the law were presented to the plenum...

¶ It is not necessary to write down everything that is said but it is useful to write down the main arguments of the discussion.
FOR EXAMPLE:
— *Some plenum participants point out that this draft of the new law is unacceptable because it does not apply to part-time students...*

¶ After the facilitators open the discussion, the minute taker needs to write down at what time the discussion started.
FOR EXAMPLE:
The discussion started at 8.16 PM.

After 30 minutes the minute taker signals to the facilitators that half an hour has passed since the beginning of the discussion.

¶ If certain documents are needed for a discussion, the minute taker opens and displays the documents on the screen when instructed to do so. Additional documents are made available to the minute taker before the plenum begins and it is best to open them straight away and have them ready to be displayed.

¶ After the voting question is formulated, the minute taker writes it down so the plenum participants could comment on it if they wish so.

It is not the minute taker's task to formulate the question but s/he can make suggestions.

¶ The minute taker must not forget to write down the result of the vote!

Unless the situation requires, or the facilitators ask specifically, it is not necessary to write down the exact number of votes in favor and against and the number of abstentions.

TIPS & TRICKS:

¶ It's best to copy and paste the session's agenda below the original one, and leave spaces in between the topics on the second list – and then proceed to write down what is being said in those spaces between each item. That way, whenever the plenum finishes discussing (and voting on) an item on the agenda, the minute taker is ready to move on to another one without the need to scroll back to the top of the document to copy the title of the next item. This is useful since the plenum can sometimes move on to another topic quite fast.

¶ The agenda should not contain the names of the participants of the plenum.

The exceptions to this rule are: contact persons, delegates, spokespersons and facilitators of the next plenary session (but in these cases, only names or nicknames are given, but not surnames). It is allowed to write the names of public persons in the minutes.

¶ The minute taker should not panic if s/he is not sure if something is important enough to be included in the minutes – s/he should rely on her/his instinct and, if still in doubt, it is always better to write something down. Also, the minute taker can always rely on plenum participants to correct or add to the minutes.

¶ The minute taker should take note of the suggestions made by the plenum participants.

¶ It is useful to have a person sitting next to the minute taker and helping her/him with formulations, reading information from paper documents, remembering what needs to be written down (e.g. e-mail addresses, telephone numbers) when the minute taker doesn't have time to do all that by herself/himself.

¶ It is OK for the minute taker to be funny from time to time but s/he must not be frivolous and s/he should not impose his/her position or put himself/herself above the plenum by adding personal comments to the minutes.

DELEGATES & MANDATES

The plenum is a political subject that makes the decisions in a directly democratic fashion, by the majority of the votes of all present participants. It is at the same time a platform used for the articulation of the majority will and its symbolic representative. All political decisions are made collectively and are binding for all. That is why the plenum cannot be represented by anybody besides the plenum itself. It needs not representational structures, bureaucracy or administrative bodies to decide in its name.

However, the plenary decisions have to be either implemented in practice or distributed in the communication conditions that do not enable the participation of a great number of people. That is why it is necessary to pass the responsibility for the implementation of decisions to a few individual participants or smaller groups concerned with concrete problems. There are two functions that enable this: delegates and mandates.

DELEGATES

During the student occupations of the faculty, and after the suspension of the occupations, there have often been situations in which the decisions of the plenum had to be communicated or elaborated upon to different individuals, organizations, and collectives. Various invitations came in for the presentation of the political goal and the action itself on various round tables, conferences, other faculties, in various organizations and citizen groups. Also, during the occupations, there was a need for a more direct communication and more detailed information transfer among different plenums. Less frequently, there were also calls to engage in closed meetings with possible political allies.

In this kind of situations, the plenum first had to decide if it wants to establish a connection to one of these different actors at all and then it had to choose the delegates to do the job. Due to a very delicate problem of representing the plenum by a few people, and because of the implications of getting in touch with actors of different profiles, it was always necessary first to assess if the delegates are needed at all (or is it enough to just send a letter for instance) and, if they were, to precisely define their power and duties. Notwithstanding the differences in various missions and situations, one thing was always the same: THE DELEGATES HAVE NO RIGHT TO MAKE DECISIONS IN THE NAME OF THE PLENUM. They can act exclusively as transmitters of information and, when they are speaking in the name of the plenum, they have stay in the frame of the decisions made by the plenum (they, of course, need to know these decisions in detail). The delegates should always be very careful and should avoid making presumptions about outcomes of discussions that have yet not occurred at the plenum. If they are asked to make an opinion concerning a topic like that, they have to decline answering, since they cannot make decisions in the name of the plenum. It is also important that the delegates make a detailed report to the plenum concerning their activities and include all gathered information in it as well.

MANDATES

Mandates are trusted upon individuals or groups in order to implement the decisions of the plenum in practice. As opposed to the one-time duty as a delegate, the mandates are often longer and are trusted upon groups of people in charge of doing continuous or frequent tasks. These can be writing press releases, web mastering, communication with the faculty administration, creating art performances etc. As in the case of the delegate duty, the mandate has to be precisely defined. However, the individuals that were trusted upon with the mandate have a final say in the exact content and outlook of their tasks, i.e. they have a certain amount of freedom of creativity and individual assessment. This brings the possibility of manipulation and that is why the plenum can take away a mandate at any time. Mandates can be discussed upon at the plenum at any given moment and, if there are persuasive reasons for a mandate to be taken away, the plenum will do just that.

Notwithstanding the articulation freedom in concrete tasks trusted upon the mandataries, they do not have a right to act of their own free will if this had not been approved by the plenum. E.g. during the occupations, press releases were written (almost) every day without having to vote upon it every single time, but after the suspension of the occupations, the need to write a press release is first discussed upon at the plenum. Only after that, the mandateries of the plenum can do the assignment and this should additionally be done at the open group meetings if possible.

A mandate, as well as a delegatory duty, can also be a one-time job, like the role of a plenum facilitator or a spokesperson.

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THE MEDIA STRATEGY, THE MEDIA TEAM & THE MEDIA WORKING GROUP

MEDIA STRATEGY

The main goal of the media strategy was to clearly present the students' demands to the public, i.e. to clearly present the demand for free education. However, this was purposely not done in an usual way by indulging the media and their tendencies for sensationalism and spectacle. That is the reason why the media strategy was often met by journalists' disbelief and misunderstanding, especially in the beginning, as well as being praised as innovative. Because of the fact that the media could not be relied upon to be benevolent or supportive of student demands, the media pronouncements had to be as precise as possible and as little possible subject to different kinds of de-contextualization.

The most important trait of the media strategy was depersonalization. That means that there were no professional spokespersons and that there was no talking to the media in the name of the plenum while using one's personal name. The tendency was that even unofficial speaking for the media should be anonymous. The reason for this was not fear of possible sanctions. Rather this was the way the students tried to emphasize the collectivity of the action and the general demands which were of concern not to particular individuals but to the society in general. At the same time, in this manner the making of leaders and popular faces was avoided, since that would lead to media averting its attention from the action itself and its goals and making everything about producing new media stars from a couple of student 'leaders.' This conception of media strategy was in direct relation to the method of direct democracy by which the plenum and the student occupation functioned. Since there were no leaders and everything was decided together by majority of votes, it was logical that there would be no professional spokespersons to represent the students in public. Constant rotation of spokespersons (as well as delegates and plenum facilitators) was to be a basis for plenum to be the only political and collective body in the whole action.

This was the reason for the daily vote for three new spokespersons at plenums for every press conference (which were also daily during the occupation). There was no repeating of spokespersons. At the plenum, one time only delegates in charge of delivering a message (to specific organizations, public gatherings, media etc.) were also voted for. Every public appearance of such type in the name of the plenum had to be approved by the plenum. The students were, of course, always allowed to give statements in their own name to any media, but the principle of depersonalization was present in those cases as well: it was recommended that no personal names were given away to the media. The plenum has discussed the possibility of sending of delegates to various live TV-shows etc. on numerous occasions, but this was always turned down after the conclusion that it did not fit the media strategy and that it diminished the control of the plenum over the public presentation of the goals of the action.

Besides anonymous media statements, one always had to try not to represent an explicitly politically motivated action as an individual personal emotional story or adventure. The mode of media strategy and articulation was built in direct opposition to the dominant tabloid logic that depoliticizes political events by exploiting them in the media and using them as a motif to produce preordained genre narratives, starting with the genre of student rebellion which is politically necessarily a confused and naive 'spring cleaning.' This was the manner that the media approached the whole action, expecting the students to just delegate necessary faces to 'sincerely' play the predestined role in front of the cameras. Refusal to put the emphasis on the so-called microperspective of the 'human stories' had a main reason in the fact that the broader social and political dimensions of our efforts would have become incomprehensible by accepting the confessional first person mode and the obligations of presenting diffuse, generically pre-given impressions. Within these parameters its self-conscious political articulation would have necessarily been reduced to a redundant, 'overly intellectual' ballast.

Media relations were in charge of the media team of the plenum which had the plenum mandate, confirmed on several occasions. The media communicated with the student protesters in different ways – through the media phone (that was tended to by different rotating anonymous members of the media team), via e-mail, the web-portal ***Free FHSS*** etc. Main means of communication, however, were the press conferences that took place every day during the occupation (spokespersons have always alternated). At a press conference, the daily press release was read, which reported the decisions of the plenum, further explained the demand for the free education and answered different questions and problems according to the daily needs and circumstances. After reading the statements, the spokespersons would answer journalists' questions, always staying inside the already made plenary decisions.

It has to be said that the language of press releases did not match the usual journalistic style and manner of writing. It was a conscious decision to avoid the usual media empty phrases, clichés and stereotypes. In the language of the press releases, the ideology of communication that now predominates not only the marketing sphere, whence it was directly taken from, but also the field of party politics, was intentionally avoided. It is an ideology that attempts to induce uncritical agreement in listeners instead of addressing them as reasonable and full-fledged political beings. In such strategies, trivializations and simplifications are not only a welcome tool, but also a desirable professional standard. The final outcome of such logic is that under the assumption of an inadequate public this assumed inadequacy is just further produced and deepened. Furthermore, it was important to place the issue of commercialization of education in the framework of wider social processes out of which it was impossible to fully understand it. If the context itself could not have been fully analyzed in the press releases themselves, each of the releases contained enough signs and indicators pointing to the direction of social macroperspective. The apparent 'excess' information was what the dominant ideology of PR and communication strategies rejected as noise in the channel and unnecessarily complicating of the problem. The introduction of these indicators of the macrocontext and theoretically more dense spots stems directly from the fundamental trust in the possibility of politicization and political self-education of the democratic majority. The democracy not based on the assumption that the majority is capable of participating fully in a political process – and having adequate information is here a necessary assumption – ceases to be a democracy and becomes a mass manipulation by a meritocratic minority. The media produced and maintained political 'immaturity' of the masses in such a scenario becomes a cynical legitimacy of paternalistic manipulations of the same privileged groups who owe their privileged status to these very manipulations in the first place.

THE MEDIA TEAM & THE MEDIA WORKING GROUP

The media section has functioned since the pre-occupational meetings as a team with a mandate that was entrusted upon to deal with media relations. This mandate was confirmed at large, occupation plenums, and the media strategy itself was discussed in open workshops during the occupation. The media team had to have a mandate to be able to respond quickly when writing press releases, as well as having when having regular contacts with the media through the media phone, e-mail, etc. Beside the mandated media team there is also an open media working group, which as and other group has its meetings (on a daily basis during the occupation and in post-occupational times when necessary, i.e. when decided by the plenum). The media working group discusses the media strategy, suggests the problems to be addressed and topics which should be mentioned etc.

The press releases, due to certain circumstances, had to be written in a very short time during the occupation – between the noon news on the public TV, where one could find out the news and statements of the government, and the regular press conference at one o'clock at the student controlled faculty. The

press releases were written at regular meetings of the mandated media team in the following way: at the beginning, for practical reasons, arrangements were made on exactly what would be written (in the parameters of the discussions and decisions of the plenum and the discussion at the meeting of the media working group), and then one or two people made a rough draft of the text, which was then edited collectively. The media team wrote daily press releases during the occupation, as well as all other necessary correspondence (open letters, reactions of to some writings in the media, etc.). In addition, the media team was in constant contact with the media by telephone and e-mail. During the occupation, the members of the media team were constantly giving anonymous statements, interviews, etc., which were, of course, within the parameters set by plenary decisions. The media team also prepared press conferences during the occupation and coordinated the spokesperson preparation. At meetings of the media working group, the production of various publications and articles related to the initiative was largely coordinated – **5do12** (*High Time*), educational brochures, FAQ's, selection of texts for ***Free FHSS*** and ***Skripta***.

THE TEAM FOR THE OPERATIONAL TASKS, LOGISTICS & SECURITY

This mandated team was established primarily because of the implementation of control over the faculty during the occupation. In addition to the security issues, the team is concerned with providing the basic conditions for the plenum, which includes the preparation of the available technology (microphones, amplifiers, computer, video projector, etc.) and maintenance of order at the plenum.

The foundation upon which the whole organization of the control of the building and premises was built was the guards. The guards consisted of student volunteers (during the occupation of the FHSS it was initially demanded for tactical reasons that the guards would only be students of the FHSS), who carried out the control of the Faculty during the occupation. The guards were organized in shifts (determined by the shift manager). Every guard that volunteered got a shift, i.e. an assignment to report to duty at a specific time and he was in charge of monitoring a specific part of the faculty premises. Guard shifts existed not only during the day but also during the night, and not only the interior of the faculty was controlled, but also a ramp at the entrance to the faculty parking lot (during the occupation the part of the parking lot just in front of the faculty was also occupied and cleared from cars). One or more guards, depending on availability and circumstances, could carry out the guard shifts. There were no professional guards and there was a tendency for all participants of the occupation to serve as guards at least a few times.

The guard duties included guarding the facility and its assets, cleaning and other activities that require physical involvement, such as transfer of things, setting up and removing various forms of barriers where they were needed. Guards also had to, with the help of other students if needed, to interrupt lectures if some professors tried to hold classes despite the decision of the plenum (which was a common thing in the beginnings of the occupation). The interruption of classes was always a non-violent action, usually done through talking with the professor and students concerned or by making the class impossible by making continuous noise. With the end of the shift, the guard duty does not finish. Whenever the guards on duty need assistance it is expected from all other present members of the community to provide it. During the students' control of the FHSS this aid was mostly in the form of cleaning and obstructing the teaching process.

Guards were deployed in a way to keep all the strategic parts of the faculty under control – the ramp in the parking lot, entrance, and the corridors on all floors. The control over all parts of the faculty was essential to hamper any attempts of holding regular classes and to prevent possible attempts of stealing university property or any other incidents.

The regulation of the guard shifts and of other segments of the organization that the team for the operational tasks, logistics and security is responsible for is done by the coordinators that have a mandate for these tasks given by the plenum. Depending on the number and scope of the tasks other coordinators can also be engaged. If the initial group of coordinators have a mandate defined in these terms, they can enroll more coordinators on their own initiative when needed (of course, all are revocable through the plenum). Such a practice proved successful during the occupation.

The guards, through their coordinator, also held control over all the premises at the faculty and its keys, it determined the premises for meetings of working groups, sleeping rooms, etc. Its activities also included the logistics – procurement and deliveries of the required amount of food and beverages, its storage and preparation, as well as procurement and deliveries of necessary materials.

Thanks to this kind of organization, the student control over the FHSS proved successful. The faculty was more open to the public than ever before, all citizens were free to come to all alternative lectures organized by the students instead of regular classes, all were able to sleep and eat at the faculty, journalists could move around the building with a lot more freedom than at other times, all the university services operated without interference (library, bookstore, canteen, copy shop, administration office, dean's office, secretariat of the departments, etc.), two international symposia were held, and theft and damage to property were reduced to zero, which is something that was never the case during the regular operation of the faculty. During the occupation no incidents were reported.

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THE PROGRAM & THE PROGRAM TEAM

The program, which was organized at the FHSS during the occupation, was a kind of alternative to regular classes. Before the start of the occupation, the idea was to create a program to enable the students of the faculty, who at other times have a full schedule of regular classes, a platform for dialogue and education on important issues within the university system and the broader social and political situation. Throughout the whole day lectures, workshops, films, concerts were held in order to try to approach the students, teachers and all interested citizens with a program that focused on different aspects of the problem of social inequality.

Since it was considered that the higher education system is failing in many aspects, the first week of alternative lectures was devoted to these fundamental problems. Thus, the main topics of the week were 'What is the price of tuition fee?', 'Croatian education – general confusion,' 'Emancipatory education and social dimension of the Bologna Process' and 'Neoliberalism, democracy and economic transition.' The issue of tuition fees in higher education system is just one of a number of social issues we considered to be neglected and under-discussed in public. The occupation was, therefore, a unique opportunity to open discussion on such topics.

Creating a diverse and extensive program took place on a daily basis. The program was created in an unconventional manner – the e-mail of the program team was open to suggestion from all students, professors, intellectuals from various fields, NGOs, etc. All of them suggested topics for lectures, discussions and workshops they would have liked to see happen or wanted to hold them themselves. At the same time the program team was actively looking for lecturers and experts on specific topics of general or narrow interests of the students.

Thus some of the issues covered in the program during the occupation were: the problems in the health care system in Croatia, the problems of working rights, media censorship, commercialization of public space, transition, student movements in the region and the inequality of educational opportunities.

THE INTER-PLENARY WORKING GROUP

The task of this group is to establish contact, communication and meetings between students of different faculties in order to organize and coordinate joint actions, exchange information and knowledge related to the implementation of student occupations and achieving the goals of the occupations. The group also tries to help students of other faculties in organizing their own plenums and creating a network of student activists; it deals with resolving any problems and misunderstandings among students at different universities either through direct communication, or through assistance in organizing discussions etc. It also deals with issues that transcend individual plenums, concerning the joint decisions of the plenums included in the action. The group serves as a communication channel, i.e. the plenum gets information about the events at other colleges, plenums and cities via the inter-plenary group.

The group is open to everybody, but usually gathers students from different faculties at one place. Students of other faculties who come to the group (their participation is not only desirable – the group makes no sense without them) are equal participants and have the opportunity to convey specific information about events in their plenums or about other students and their faculties. Thus, in direct contact with colleagues from other faculties, the process of bringing

together individual plenum is advanced. The conclusions of the inter-plenary group (about necessary actions, events, suggestions and requests related to other plenums) are transferred to specific plenums. The participants of the group are not delegates and do not have the decision-making power, and the same goes for the group itself. But they have freedom to organize direct actions of organizational, operational and communicational character in order to improve coherence, organization and relations of different students and plenums. Due to the scope of the task, but primarily because of the desirability of maintaining permanent communication between different plenums, the group should meet regularly, preferably each day during the occupation, and at least once a week in inter-occupational time.

Actions that the participants of the group can take at its own initiative, if necessary, include addressing the current problems and ambiguities relating to the method of organizing students during the occupation and the methods and goals of the occupations. This is done via direct communication (in person, by phone, e-mail, etc.) with interested students, by going to informal meetings at other universities or by other kinds of assistance in organizing activist student bases at other faculties. The group also helps to organize panel discussions and workshops with the aim of educating students and in order to introduce the goals and methods of the action to hitherto less informed students. These actions are performed not on behalf of the plenum officially, but by each student personally, after the invitation of interested students of other faculties. In this sense, the inter-plenary working group represents a channel of direct communication and mutual education among students from different faculties with a common goal of spreading the knowledge and experiences on the objectives and methods of the fight (in addition to existing channels such as web-portals, brochures, and newsletters).

The group also monitors student affairs outside of the country and presents useful and relevant information to the plenum. The group also organizes large meetings of student activists from across the state (and beyond), and is open for cooperation with potential non-student (worker, farmer, etc.) plenums.

THE WORKING GROUP FOR THE TECHNICAL ISSUES OF THE PLENUM

This working group was created in order to resolve the issues concerning the functioning of the plenum in a transparent and directly democratic manner.

This includes receiving the proposals and feedback concerning the functioning of the plenum, collecting proposals for the plenum daily agenda, preparation of the facilitators, preparation of the agenda and any additional necessary information and documents relevant to the plenum. The group also has a responsibility to call for a convening of an extraordinary plenum if necessary.

In order to facilitate the functioning of the plenum, the Rules and Guidance of the FHSS Plenum (see above) were developed. They contain a description of the functioning of certain aspects of the plenum and proposed solutions of technical issues that arose during the plenum sessions.

The working group began to meet after a few days after the start of the occupation when the need for a systematic approach to solving current problems in the functioning of the plenum arose. It was also envisioned as a place of discussion on the plenary way of decision-making and direct democracy in general: what it is, what may be done via direct democracy, how it may be used and what the future of such a political organization could be. Over time, the working group profiled itself in a manner that it tended to resolve the practical problems of organization of the plenum and the working groups more than it was used for theoretical discussions on direct democracy.

During the student control over the faculty, the need for transparent and effective functioning of the plenum was resolved as follows:

¶ the working group for technical issues of the plenum had daily, publicly advertised, meetings, open to all interested parties, with the presence of a current plenum facilitator

- suggestions, comments and questions (general or topics for the next plenum) could have been put in a mailbox at the faculty lobby and there was an e-mail of the group as well
- each received suggestion was discussed at a meeting of the group, the group tried to reach a solution and the plenum was present with every such case

Through such action, the Rules and Guidance of the FHSS Plenum were formulated in order to facilitate the future functioning of the plenum and to avoid unnecessary daily return to the questions already discussed. Rules and guidance are nothing but a record of solutions that have proven useful in practice and as such are not a fixed law that would be above the plenum. All rules and guidelines were confirmed by voting at the plenum.

During the temporary suspension of student control over the faculty the group for technical issues acts as a sort of the plenum 'hard drive' – it provides transparent communication in terms of informing the plenum about the current topics and news through the drafting of the agenda of the next plenum, it deals with the preparation of facilitators and, if necessary, it calls for a convening of an extraordinary plenum. Working group meetings are open to all, and through obligatory presence of the facilitators of the previous and next plenum, the continuity and transfer of information on current topics is ensured. In addition to meetings between two plenum sessions, the group for technical issues is required to meet two hours before each plenum.

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THE WORKING GROUP FOR DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

To read without reflecting is like eating without digesting.
~ EDMUND BURKE ~

The group was formed during the 2009 spring occupation, primarily from the need to closely examine the writings and documents of governmental and other bodies, and to interpret them properly.

When it comes to official documents such as statutes, regulations, reports, etc., the task of the group is to read the text carefully and consider all the implications that arise from it. The group is free to consult any persons it judges that can assist it in the work, although it remains at the very participants of the group to present the final analysis.

Reading the official documents is the central task of the group, especially in situations when the pressure is being made on different institutions (e.g. on the Ministry of Education), and there are no open channels for direct communication (because, for example, the plenum decided that are to be no negotiations on the main demand). In this situation, the group has to read the official documents, interpret them and explain them within the parameters of the existing set of laws and regulations. Official documents are regularly not written in plain language, but in a relatively dense bureaucratic-legal jargon, whose primary function is to disable reading. Because of this, the group must carefully decipher each sentence and ultimately try to bring different parts of the text to a meaningful whole. This task requires a high level of concentration and composure. Therefore, it is recommended that the number of participants at a group meeting does not exceed ten people (although the group, of course,

is open to all). It is also recommended that the group do the work without any major breaks in between the sessions. Optimally, the work on a particular document should take two or more days in a row at a few hours long meetings. It can be counterproductive (although it cannot really be prevented) if the initial configuration of group changes, because it requires time for new participants in the group to get into the topic, which leads to the break in the work dynamics and creates a psychological pressure on the other present participants, while leading to superficiality. This is largely preventable by careful keeping of the minutes.

The group for the document analysis is typically convened ad hoc, according to need, and its constant and regular meetings are not necessary. Once the group is convened, in order to function effectively, it should act according to the above guidelines. The group inevitably needs a facilitator and a computer with an overhead projector so the document that is being analyzed would be visible to all group participants.

The point of direct democratic decision-making lies in the egalitarian approach to knowledge of all involved in decision-making. The purpose of the group for the document analysis is to contribute to this with its work.

THE MINI-ACTIONS WORKING GROUP

The mini-action working group was formed as a platform for organizing various actions and interventions in the public sphere and thus primarily sought to function operatively through the articulation of ideas in the form of public performances and/or actions. One of the main postulates of the group is an informal organization and a tendency to engage in unconventional and subversive activity. Such activities are for instance hanging of banners on public buildings, unannounced performances bordering on public assemblies, night actions of intervention in public space, as well as all actions that require coordination of large groups of people depending on the spatial-temporal context. It is important to stress that the activities are not illegal by themselves, but tend to affect the public in a direct fashion, which sometimes includes methods that are not entirely legal.

Like all other working groups, the mini-action group is open to all interested parties. For larger projects, it seeks a special mandate from the plenum, while it functions independently concerning the organization of smaller operations, i.e. not all actions, especially the ones being done continuously, require explicit confirmations of the plenum since the group has a plenum mandate for smaller actions. Such actions are not implemented as a consequence of the direct decision of the plenum, but as a personal initiative of the participants within the group. Reports on the work of the group are regularly submitted to the plenum, and, if necessary, all actions are subject to discussion at the plenum. The interdisciplinarity of the group has to be emphasized – cooperation with students of other faculties, artists and interested citizens, as well as cooperation with other working groups, such as with the information working group concerning the distribution of information materials, etc.

The functioning of the mini-action working group can best be illustrated by examples of the most important actions:

HIGH TIME

The action of *High time* was created in collaboration of contemporary artists and students of the mini-action working group. This is a kind of public performance that enables all citizens to symbolically express the solidarity with the demands of students. The action takes five minutes during which the participants wait in a row, while symbolically sending a message that it is high time to change the attitudes of the government towards education. The action has achieved an exceptional response and has expanded outside of Zagreb, where it was originally conceived, and has often been synchronized with other cities in Croatia. The advantage of this type of action is that it requires very little time from normal people to participate in, it is visually effective and done at the most frequent public sites and is therefore very attractive for the media. It should be noted that there is also a publication of the same name that tries to provide information about the students' demands and actions in a witty and informative manner.

HONK FOR EDUCATION

Honk for education is an action that allows people to express their solidarity with the students in a very clear and easy manner: by honking their car horns. A group of two or more students on a main road hold a banner with the message 'Honk for education' on it and the passing drivers honk in support. It is advisable to perform this action during the rush hour, i.e. around 8 A.M. or around 5 PM. This action is highly motivating for all participants and it is also interesting for the media because of the unbearable noise that tends to develop. This action was also undertaken not only in Zagreb, where it originated, but in other cities in Croatia as well.

MAX ART FEST

The FHSS plenum accepted the invitation to participate in a three-day art festival named **MAX ART FEST**. The mandate to do this went to the mini-action working group. By participating at the festival the students got a central position in a subway in down town Zagreb. The program was designed within the thematic framework of neoliberalization and privatization of education, efficiency of the Bologna process, and solidarity with other social groups and the principles of direct democracy. The program was comparable to the alternative program during the faculty occupation, consisting of informative screenings, photo exhibitions, classical and video wall lectures, workshops, a permanent table for the petition and the giving away of flyers, together with art installations and performances. The festival was visited by large number of intentional visitors and random passers-by. In addition to these actions raising the morale of the participants and to communication with the supporting citizens, a very important aspect of it was also the informing of passers-by. These larger projects, such as participation in the **MAX ART FEST**, require significantly more active participants, time and effort than one-time performances, but the message potentially reaches much more people.

THE ETHICAL INTERPELLATION ROW

This was a mini-action directed towards the Faculty Council of FHSS in Zagreb in order to force the members of the Council to show the concrete and not just declarative support of student demands. The students were standing in double row through which the professors, Council members, had to pass before entering the Council session. They were handed info materials, which reminded them of the presence of students and the students' ethical view on the views of the Council, in order to put pressure on them and to possibly influence the decisions made on the Council concerning tuition fees.

SUPPORT FOR THE FARMERS ACTION

This was a form of an ad hoc subversive night action that required coordination of a large number of people. The idea was to express direct support to farmers during their protest in front of the Ministry of Agriculture. The farmers got issues of the High Time magazine, ***Skripta*** newsletter and food and beverages. The action itself was organized in a little bit more than an hour by phone, and except for logistical and moral support to the farmers, has also involved a protest that included a prolonged blocking of a major avenue in Zagreb. The action was interrupted by police intervention.

Finally it should be noted that the mini-action group is a multidisciplinary working group based on student participants but open to all interested people. Although some of these actions tend to have the form of artistic performances, the primary intention is nonetheless political action. These actions allow citizens to express their support for the students' objectives and also allow citizens to deepen their understanding of the students' actions. Desirable results of such actions, therefore, are informing and mobilizing of the general public, either through media reports on the action, or through direct contact during the course of the action in public space.

JUTARNJI STRIKES AGAIN EXHIBITION

Jutarnji list ('The Morning Paper') is a Croatian daily newspaper notorious for its explicit neoliberal agenda and vehement opposition to rising students', workers', peasants' and some civil sector movements in Croatia. The mini-action working group organized a satirical public exhibition of some of the articles featured in Jutarnji list in order to try to unmask its ideological background.

THE WORKING GROUP FOR SPREADING DIRECT DEMOCRACY

This group was made with the aim of spreading the idea and establishing the practice of direct democracy. This kind of action necessarily also includes the criticism and active opposition to the capitalist political-economic system.

The group was first convened in autumn 2009 in order to make a 'Shipyards FAQ' (the pamphlet which attempts to encourage workers in shipyards, and the wider community, to oppose the shipyards privatization). During 2009, the group was convened only once more and it really started functioning only at the beginning of the year 2010 (after more intensive contacts have been established with workers during and after the second occupation of the FHSS).

One of the first steps was to gather people from different social groups and parts of the country, so that now there is a variety of participants from a number of cities within a group – students, university teachers, unionists, journalists, etc. The meetings of the working group, in accordance with the existing practice of the plenum and other working groups, are open to all.

Some of the actions of the group:

¶ Writing, printing and distribution of the brochure ***'Workers and Workers Rights'*** (complemented by the transcript of a the lecture on the successful struggle against privatization of the workers of the *Petrokemija* factory in Croatia) in cooperation with trade unions, which is a pamphlet dealing with the positioning of the working class in the existing political-economic system and de-masking concepts and processes such as 'social dialogue,' 'social partnership,' 'crony capitalism,' etc.

¶ Visiting occupied enterprises or enterprises in strike in order to express solidarity, discuss the future prospects and possible collaboration, distribute the brochures and organize screenings of documentaries related to workers' problems (like the screening of the film *The Take* about the workers' self-management of factories in Argentina).

¶ Lectures on direct democracy in high schools.

¶ The organization of public discussions at the FHSS on issues related to the working class (e.g. lectures by workers of occupied factories).

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THE BLOG/PORTAL & THE BLOGGER TEAM

At the beginning of the occupation of the FHSS in Zagreb, the blog named **Slobodni Filozofski** ('Free Faculty of Philosophy') began to function. Its Internet address is **www.slobodnifilozofski.com** (the Croatian version; the international version is **slobodnifilozofski.org**). The original purpose of the blog was to inform the students and the general public about the current events concerning the student occupation. The bloggers regularly published information concerning the functioning of the plenum and the coordination of working groups (the blog is a place where the time and place of the working groups is announced). **Slobodni Filozofski** (***SlobFil***) eventually evolved to a full-fledged web-portal. It monitors student activism at Croatian and foreign universities, and also publishes articles dealing with the commercialization of higher education. Besides the mentioned, it has an educational role and publishes texts and films concerning the broader issues of neoliberalism, the economy, the struggle for social rights, etc. This is done, for example, within the so-called ***SlobFil Summer School***.

The web-masters of the blog/portal (i.e. the blogger team) have a mandate from the plenum. The blogger team, therefore, has editorial freedom and autonomy, but within the parameters of plenum decisions. When needed, new members enter the editorial board. The website publishes original texts and translations, as well as texts taken over from other media. The texts from the site are mostly published in the ***Skripta*** as well. There is also an international version of the site in various foreign languages (***slobodnifilozofski.org***). Some of the texts (e.g. the translations of press releases) were made within the working group for the translation of texts during the 2009 spring occupation. The selection of the texts for the site is done in coordination with the media section and working group. ***SlobFil*** collaborates with other student websites in the country and abroad.

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THE SKRIPTA & THE INFORMATION WORKING GROUP

In the period of the preparation of the first occupation, the first printed material were the posters that informed the students about the decision that all students will pay the tuition fees for their graduate studies. After that the posters and leaflets announcing the public discussion *'Right to education'* were distributed. This public discussion was converted into a plenum and some two hundred students decided to go on with the occupation.

The first *Skripta* (the official newsletter of the occupation) was printed on the first day of the occupation in more than a thousand copies. It contained two proclamations of the independent student initiative for the right to free education, the text on direct democracy as a form of decision-making, the two FAQs, the code of conduct during the student control of the faculty and the alternative program for the first two days of the occupation. Announcements and FAQs were published in many subsequent editions as well. During the occupation, *Skripta* was published every day and sometimes even twice a day (morning edition mainly brought texts published on the blog and the afternoon one would include FAQs and the daily press release). In the post-occupational period, except during the short summer break, *Skripta* was published once (sometimes twice) a week, and the circulation varied from 1500 to 4000 copies, depending on donations and help from the supporters of the initiative.

The team working on *Skripta* has got a mandate from the plenum, and *Skripta* itself was conceived as a newsletter that should provide a wider number of people, interested in the student movement and the occupation, information about the occupation and the fight for the right to free education. Numerous theoretical texts published in it are also related to the struggle for social and labor rights. Their purpose is to put the fight for free education in the broader context of the struggle against neoliberal reforms that are putting these rights in danger. The purpose of *Skripta* is to contribute to the public circulation of critical analyzes of social and historical processes.

Therefore, *Skripta* is not only a student newsletter, but also a newsletter for all those who wish to gain a critical insight into the state of society, politics and economy, and to get the basic knowledge needed for the strategy of social resistance to destructive processes. Its distribution covers, from the FHSS itself, a number of other faculties in Zagreb and other cities and other places like the Student Center, Cultural and Information Center, cinemas, libraries, copy shops, restaurants, etc.

Skripta contained some of the following categories of texts: press releases, reports from the plenum, support for the students from various organizations and prominent individuals, including those from abroad. The students of the FHSS have also, after deciding so at the plenum, sent their support to other groups in Croatia, but also abroad – for example, to the students in Brazil, Germany, Pittsburgh, California, Austria, Tuzla, etc. There were also various special editions of ***Skripta*** on special occasions such as ***Skripta*** editions handed to the candidates on the entrance exam for the FHSS (***Skripta*** – the entrance exam), the high school ***Skripta***, The Economic ***Skripta*** (on the occasion of participation of the delegates of the plenum at an international student conference organized by the students of the Faculty of Economics) and a Review ***Skripta***, with the texts that provide basic insight into the context of the struggle for the right to free education.

During the occupation and during its suspension, many other faculties have also published and distributed their own newsletters, modeled on the original ***Skripta*** from the FHSS. They have published articles relevant to individual faculties and their problems, as well as texts on free education and the fight for free education. These editions had different names, such as ***SkRIpta*** (in the town of Rijeka) or Panda (in the town of Split).

To successfully publish a newsletter requires organization and teamwork in all phases of its production and distribution. A group of people works on selecting, gathering and translating texts for ***Skripta*** and the website SlobFil. Foreign texts are translated and Croatian texts are republished from other sources. The texts in ***Skripta*** are usually adapted to current needs, actions and events.

The folding of ***Skripta*** (the format of it requires folding) takes place at the meetings of the information-working group (but also in other circumstances, such as during the plenum and at various social events and actions). At the information group meetings, in addition to folding and talk, sometimes video-lectures and educational films are being watched, and new methods and forms of information spreading are discussed. The same working group takes care of the posters that advertise the plenums and workshops at the faculty and beyond. Handing out of ***Skripta*** is also organized by the group (if necessary).

Skripta can be downloaded online from www.slobodnifilozofski.com. There, a TV-program of ***Skripta***TV is also distributed, which was launched in late 2008, but is so far still in the initial phase. Its purpose is to bring primarily educational-activist TV-program of a similar content to the one that appears in the printed ***Skripta*** and on the SlobFil website to those interested.

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THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF THE PROTEST FOR FREE EDUCATION IN CROATIA & THE MOTIVATION BEHIND THE ACTION

The introduction of tuition fees into the process of higher education is not an issue about which there were any critical discussions in the public prior to the student actions in Croatia. Among the parliamentary parties and other 'social factors' (such as the media, various 'experts,' NGOs, etc.) there was an explicit or tacit consensus that the introduction of tuition fees in higher education was principally indisputable. This was typically represented as an issue of the necessary 'modernization' in the process of gradual abandonment of the so-called 'socialist legacy' and getting closer to 'European standards.' In the Croatian public space, after nearly twenty years of 'the transition process,' the interventions in the social structure are still easily justifiable by the ultimate goal of future membership in the European Union. In this way, the interventions are spared any critical questioning whatsoever.

EU membership is presented as a guarantee of the establishment of the welfare state so all the sacrifices that this purpose claims are automatically justified. Meanwhile, the media and the political elite avoid asking questions about the real structure of the European Union today and to what extent it is still compatible with the inherited notions of Western European welfare state. The Lisbon Treaty – the basic document of the new and neoliberal European Union – is mostly unheard of in Croatia, even by the so-called experts. It needs not be said that there is absolutely no public debate with the aim of informing the general public about it. Instead, the elite still uncritically supports the myth of the European Union as a zone of general welfare. Moreover, today it justifies the abolition of acquired social rights. A basic contradiction – the abolition of social rights that define the welfare state in the name of the future membership in the zone of prosperity – remains unsaid and thus unresolved.

THE ATTACK ON THE ACQUIRED SOCIAL RIGHTS

Uncritical claims of the EU as a guarantor of future prosperity is an aspect of the strong ideological justification for the attacks on the acquired social rights. It is a tactical maneuver, manufacturing the consent of the majority for the reduction of their rights and calculated subservience to the interests of capital (an important example of the latter are moves like the so-called 'flexibilization' of labor – that means nothing other than facilitating employers to layoff workers, which is ostensibly in the long-term interests of those same workers).

Another way to manufacture the consent is that the rights – such as the constitutionally guaranteed right to education – stop being treated as rights. Instead, the acquired rights are treated and attacked as irrational privileges inherited from socialism. Since socialism is treated as a historically defeated project, the insistence on the acquired social rights disqualifies from the space of legitimate debate anyone who insists on them. In this way, all criticism against the attacking of the social rights is silenced by symbolic intimidation and the threat of labels such as 'Yugo-nostalgia, 'backwardness' or 'parasitism.'

Another important aspect of these strategies of manufacturing consent is the narrative of budget deficit. Thus, the issue of tuition fees and their introduction into higher education is no more a question of a political turning point (against the interests of the majority), but rather a purely fiscal, administrative question, and therefore a question of objective necessity. After the irrationality of the system of socialist privileges, what follows is a supposedly necessary rationalization of public expenditures. However, even in the case of the actual budget deficit this type of argumentation remains problematic. That is to say, by such logic the question of the desirable social structure – and social rights are only its institutional minimalist framework – is implicitly subjected to the question of its technical feasibility. So, rather than asking the question: 'What needs to be done in order to preserve accessible health care, education and pensions for all,' these objectives are tacitly rejected by reference to fiscal limitations. Meanwhile, what is left unsaid is that the budget is filled by the taxes of the working majority precisely in the belief that the administrators of the state duties will deal with the collected funds in the interest of the majority. The conclusion that the fiscal deficit leads to a necessary reduction of social rights of the majority is not a matter of objective, logical necessity. On the contrary, such a conclusion is based on tacit political decision to act against the interests of the majority. The very fact that the possibility of a more progressive tax policy in the discussions about the budget deficit – for example, taxing profits of banks or telecommunication companies that leave the national economy without any legal obstacles – is a priori rejected or refused to be mentioned is a reliable indicator of a tacit consensus among the political elites in favor of capital and against the interests of the majority.

THE MEANING OF DEMOCRACY

From all that was mentioned, there necessarily arises a question about the nature of democracy in which it is conceivable for the political elites to work against the interests of the majority. As already said, the historically acquired social rights constitute the minimal institutionally defined interests of the majority. The attack on those rights is an unequivocal decision against democracy. That is, if the meaning of democracy really is the rule of the majority in favor of common good, and not an empty ritual of choosing among the members of the political elite, which differ only by the names of the parties of which they are candidates. Representative democracy is not a form without inherent dangers and contradictions. Nominal representatives of general interest are easily corrupted or subordinated to the very real power of capital. And a significant aspect of the power of capital is that it is exempt from the obligation to undergo even an imperfect democratic call to responsibility every four years. The power of private property is not subjected to questions about its contradictory relationship with the alleged rule of the people. In this context, anyone who takes seriously the idea of democracy is required to challenge these contradictions critically, especially where they result in what are obviously anti-democratic political practices such as the neoliberal attack on social rights.

In this light, the student fight for the right to free education should be understood as part of a more comprehensive struggle to defend the interests of the majority, and not as a particular and selfish aberration, as some media and politicians are trying to present it.

In addition to everything else already said about direct democracy as a form of decision-making, one should add this: at a certain level, direct democracy is a direct consequence of the unfulfilled promise of representative democracy. When the representative democracy is not fulfilling its promises, a directly democratic decision-making becomes a security measure and a reminder of its fundamental meaning – a specter that does not stop to haunt.

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