06 2017

Madrid is not for sale: La Ingobernable is born

Kike España Naveira

Translated by Kelly Mulvaney

On May 6, 2017, neighbors filled the building at Calle Gobernador 39 in Madrid in an act of disobedience, following a multitudinous demonstration composed of a great variety of collectives that denounced the process of gentrification endured by the city of Madrid in recent years with the slogan “Madrid is not for sale.” This was the birth of the social center La Ingobernable, The Ungovernable, a territory conquered in the “gold district” of (the) capital in order to reverse the process of expropriation. A horizontal and radically democratic space enunciates and puts into practice that the city center is not for sale, that it is created in common.

The occupation not only denounced the abandonment and disuse of the building, but also the evidence of mafioso practices of the former government of the City of Madrid under the governance of Ana Botella of the Partido Popular – in this case, gifting a municipal building to friends from its scene. La Ingobernable demonstrates its opposition while simultaneously creating an alternative to a model of the touristified city that has no shared spaces.

A multitude of persons tired of having to relinquish everything in a city that no longer belongs to them are putting their energy, time and bodies to work to convert 3000 square meters of dust into a new social machine capable of fighting the advance of financialization, individualization and fear. Whoever does not conform and move through the city like a stranger, as if a simple spectator of the limitless exploitation and speculation, now has the opportunity to link up with La Ingobernable and invent a new form of life.

The social centers were a key element of support in the camps of the 15M movement, together with the freshness of newcomers making up one of the most virtuous mobilization events of the last decades. La Ingobernable sets out from this composition of overflow and is furthermore open to a younger generation that can produce a new scale of contagion. The social centers have been residual and minoritarian for many years, a species in danger of extinction, but nonetheless they enjoy a very important political maturity today, which in many cases contrasts with that of some parties of change.

Some two years ago the social center Patio Maravillas was evicted by the municipal government of the Partido Popular, with Ana Botella at its head, in what was one of the final measures of a legislature marked by corruption and clientelism. A few hours later a new and promising grouping entered city hall, one characterized by the presence of a municipalist candidature that was the heiress to the struggles of 15M, and which was forged together with others by persons hailing from this social center and many meetings that developed between its walls and its people.

La Ingobernable is today an undeniable focal point of political experimentation that combines the experience of older social

centers with new vital fluids. To this is added the fact that the city government is composed, in part, of persons coming from similar experiential backgrounds, which draws out an opportune situation for reaching a kind of understanding that had not been created up to this moment. One of the greatest challenges of the municipalist movement today is knowing to recuperate with craftiness and conviction the central role of social centers in the generation and reproduction of new institutionalities, institutent practices and constituent processes. At stake is the true expansion of forms of democracy, the construction of effective urban counter-powers and the creation of "a life worthy of being lived".[1]

web: www.ingobernable.net

[1] Hacemos La Ingobernable: https://ingobernable.net/hacemos-la-ingobernable-comunicado/