

THE OCCUPATIONS ARE CONTINUING ON RUE DE LA REPUBLIQUE !

October 2021, around forty people living in the building on 1 place Sadi Carnot, were evicted: mainly unaccompanied minors, families or simply people without a roof over their heads. The French justice and its police are no longer hesitating to evict small children, schoolchildren or simply people who are trying to survive and get along without legal papers, and this just before the start of the winter eviction break (every year from November 1st to March 31st). In the meantime, all their belongings have been dumped within one hour, some have even lost their documents in the process.

In November 2021, the residents organised themselves and occupied a new building a few metres away, still on rue de la République.

Let's remember the context. In 2004, under the administration of the previous mayor of Marseille, Jean-Claude Gaudin, more than half of the rue de la République was sold to a real estate company based in Paris and called "SCI MARSEILLE CITY". This company itself belongs to a "portfolio management company" called PRIMONIAL REIM, which boasts on its website that it "manages €30 billion of assets and more than 1,400 buildings in 9 european countries". The objective is to achieve what the former mayor called "a requalification of the rue de la République".

In truth, it was a matter of removing what was creating a lively, popular and supportive street over there: its population, its activities and its shops are to be replaced by luxury shops and fancy expensive housings.

Almost 20 years later, the street is now empty. No one is rushing to buy anything in these new shops, among other things because the new clientele has never arrived.

"Un Centre Ville pour tous", an association from Marseille that struggles to ensure that the public authorities respect the right to live with dignity in the center of the city, states in a 2016 report:

"Out of 208 buildings and 3947 premises for residential use today, a quarter of the buildings are abandoned or undergoing work. Of the renovated housing lots, one third of the private stock is not rented out. Concerning the 205 ground floor business premises, two thirds are abandoned. Only the pool of almost 500 social housing units is fully renovated and occupied".

Since November, the families who were evicted from 1 place Sadi Carnot are occupying a building on rue de la République that belongs to one of these famous social landlords: UNICIL, a subsidiary of the "ACTION LOGEMENT" French group, a company that provides social and real estate services to local authorities throughout France. On its website, under the heading "Our purpose", UNICIL says: "We want to fight against undignified housing, manage degraded co-ownerships revitalize the center of medium-sized towns. We intend to achieve this goal by providing practical responses to the social challenges of local authorities with whom we are continually in touch and with whom we are working in a close and collaborative manner".

So we wonder why the building was closed by an anti-squatting door, closing up the place in a livable state that required only some work that craftsmen have done for free in solidarity with the newly inhabited families.

The answer may lie in the fact that half of UNICIL's Board of Directors are members of Medef, a union of company owners that are well known for its appetite for profit and speculation. Doesn't this smell like socialwashing for the benefit of local companies? One also wonders if the flats in this building were part of the "nearly 500 renovated and inhabited social housing units" listed in 2016 by Centre Ville pour Tous. If this is the case, one can legitimately worry about the rest of social housings in rue de la République. Just like this building was, before it was occupied by the families of Sadi Carnot, have they all become abandoned, empty and dusty building sites as well?

About 1 place Sadi Carnot, a rumour that we tend to believe suggested that the building is the target of a luxury hotel project, just a few steps away from the "Panier", a famous city quarter that attracts so many tourists. For whom? When? Well, we'll let you imagine the answer.

In truth, investors don't mind leaving their buildings empty nor turning them into projects that don't address the housing crisis that is affecting a large part of the population of Marseille.

In order not to waste their speculative money, they would rather make sure that these buildings remain empty by destroying the flats inside, by putting security guards all night long in front of them, and by spending money on ridiculous devices such as anti-squatter doors.

Their profits will not enrich Marseille or its population. Their management will not solve the problems in Marseille of unhealthy housing, of homeless people, of ever-increasing rents.

We will not let Marseille be taken over by big business investors who don't care about the people who live in this city! We will continue to ask the city council to take its responsibilities and specially to give its empty properties for those who do not have a roof over their heads.

We are tired of waiting for them to have the courage to publicly reclaiming all the empty buildings that are left to speculation by private investors. So, we will also continue to consider that the right of people in need to use those housings is much more relevant than the liberal right to private property that cultivates the absurd and criminal vacuum of capitalism. We will give ourself the right to take back all the spaces they seek to despoil in order for us to create combative solidarity everywhere it is needed.

Occupations rather than speculation!

Decent housings for all and death to capitalism!

From every borders to every cities, solidarity with the exiled people!