

"In 2011, Occupy Wall Street and other Occupy movements throughout the world captured global attention with their championing of the interests of the 99% against the 1% which controlled the world's wealth. John Leveille's timely new book, *Searching for Marx in the Occupy Movement*, explores in great detail the rise and explosion of the Occupy movements, and argues for the need for a reconstructed Marxism to give the movement focus and vision. Grounded in his experiences of Occupy Philly, Leveille presents an important contribution to social movement theory."

—Douglas Kellner, UCLA; author of
Media Culture and Media Spectacle and *the Crisis of Democracy*

Searching for Marx in the Occupy Movement is a critical, participant observation study of the Philadelphia branch of the Occupy Wall Street movement. John Leveille spent over nine months with Occupy Philadelphia as the members organized and carried out their protests. This book describes and analyzes the rise, the organization, and the demise of this group. The important events and activities of Occupy Philadelphia are discussed and dissected, with specific attention given to the confusions and chaos that permeated the group, and Occupy Wall Street more generally, which contributed to its rather rapid decline. A revisionist Marxism, informed loosely by the critical theory of the Frankfurt school, is used here to understand and explain the happenings of this protest group. It is used here as an epistemological and methodological framework to conduct this sociological study and it is used as a theory to account for the observed behaviors. Leveille argues that an essential conflict between humanism and the forces of rational capitalism lies at the heart of this protest movement. This conflict contributed both to the rise of Occupy and to its operation. It was manifested in two intersecting ways. One of these concerns the destabilization of the self in contemporary capitalism, which provided fuel for the movement. The second revolves around the limited abilities of existing institutional arrangements to manage or channel the essential conflicts related to values that are produced by rational capitalism. Ultimately, *Searching for Marx in the Occupy Movement* makes a controversial claim that the movement was as much, if not more, about democracy, morality, and the organization and experience of social life as it was about economic matters. The argument is made that Occupy was as much an expressive movement as it was an instrumental one. It was expressing contradictions produced by capitalism through extra-institutional means because the existing institutional arrangements have been and continue to be unable to manage or contain them.

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