VOICES OF RESISTANCE

2008

WINTER

#4

LONDON

FROM OCCUPIED

Free, but...

This journal is free, as always. This time however we are asking for donations, all of which will go toward December's prisoners support in Greece - see page 60 for more.

In memory of Alexandros Grigoropoulos, assassinated on
6.12.2008 at the age of 15 by the police in Athens.
The struggle of humanity against authority, as always, continues.

"Show me some contents!"

editorial

We missed the deadline for Occupied London #4 by a few seconds - the seconds it took a cop to shoot and kill 15-year Alexandros Grigoropoulos on the night of December 6th in Athens, Greece. Suddenly, the deadline for this issue was irrelevant. The first flight out there. The hurried set-up of a blog* to send out updates and articles from the ground. Day in, day out, demo after demo, assembly after assembly. The rage of the thousands who met on the streets over those long, long weeks. *"We are an image from the future"*. And the hope, the feeling that this time we might be really getting somewhere, that we might finally make it.

This could seem like a feeling that isn't yet vindicated; that we are not quite there. But what we all lived on the streets of Athens wasn't just a glimpse of a possible future; it also contained the seeds that could one day get us there. In-between all the darkness of state repression and the panicked attacks from the side of the crumbling capital things have already started to look promising. People are organising in their neighbourhoods; high school students are becoming politically aware and active. They are taking the lead on the demonstrations. By now, everyone hates the police and at the same time everyone feels the need to take things further: *Sometimes, a few seconds can push us deep, deep into the future.*

For now we are still standing against a mal-functioning system, yet you won't find any terms like *"crisis"* or *"recession"* here – they've been repeated and reprinted enough times mostly by those who, as usual, are both responsible for and beneficiaries of this latest capitalist so-called "crisis".

A question is, of course, just how we could use the latest capitalist restructuring for our own collective advantage. But the long-term question (because similar restructuring "crises" are sure to follow) has to be how we build communities and movements that can resist the advance of state and capital – and how to go on the offensive. Athens' December revolt was an excellent example of this and of what is to come. It's paradoxical - this is a time when the anarchist movement sees its analyses and predictions turn true; its ideas, demands and tactics used more than ever before. And at the same time (or is it because of this?) our collective strength as a movement seems to be dissolving. The challenge must be, then, to look for ideas, tactics and strategies that are not copy-able and cannot be claimed by those we are fighting against.

In this issue we tried to put together some thoughts and ideas not just on the current "crisis" but also on how life and our struggles might look from now on. So here are, among many others, some thoughts on love &riot *(p. 14)*, on torture *(p.20)*, a discussion we had with Manuel Castells *(p.4)*, a solidarity letter we received for Daniel McGowan *(p.17)* and a presentation of some recently surfacing works, on the occasion of the even more recent arrests in France *(p.10)*... and of course, some ideas and suggestions on how "cracks" can turn into landscapes, based on previous moments of rupture *(p.26)* along with some first few texts that have come out of Athens *(p.54-60)*. Many more to follow...

* www.occupiedlondon.org/blog

(T.I.N.A.'s death song)

And it only takes/
the frozen smile of a stock broker/
and the smirk of the homeless person
on the street/ "I have been saying it all
along"/ In a moment, sanity in their
insane world is exposed for what it truly
is – insane.

And it only takes/
A police dog barking at the
demonstrators/ and the deafening silence
of the shopping crowds/ the uneasy silence
and the echoing bark, two/ aural preludes
to the uproar/

And it took/
Three gunshots, yet another state murder/
and an outflow of rage/ a spontaneous
celebration of destruction of the capitalist
structure/ a glimpse into the future.

Keep fighting Athens, Hamburg,
Montreal, New York, Oaxaca, Moscow,
Oakland, Riga, London, Gaza/
We are getting close.

...between a present yet to go and a future yet to come

Of WaLls and FLoWs:

Manuel Castells is one of the most widely cited social science scholars; his works include *"The Rise of the Network Society"*, *"The Urban Question: A Marxist Approach"* and *"The City and the Grassroots: A Cross-cultural Theory of Urban Social Movements"*. The interview that follows was taken in November 2008 by Christos c/krümel, Dimitris D and Antonis V.

an interview with Manuel Castells

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In "The Rise of the Network Society" you provide a portrait of the new political economy of the globalisation of sovereignty. There, you suggest that in the 1990s there were a number of institutional shifts which lifted the barriers set in the 1930s and 1940s as a response to the 1929 depression (ibid: 152-153). These shifts evidently comprised a cornerstone of the neoliberal, free market project... But could they also be signalling the beginning of its end?

In the 1980s capitalism proceeded to a successful restructuring that lifted it from the crisis of the 1970s by escaping many of the regulations set up in the late 1940s to escape the crisis of the 1930s and its sequel of wars. Then followed in the 1990s until 2008 a period of high growth and global expansion, of course punctuated by crises as usual, but with the capacity to incorporate into capitalism hundreds of millions of people around the world. This is not neoliberalism (an ideological term that does not have much analytical value) but simply unfettered global capitalism. Social movements and alternative policies challenged this new form of capitalism, particularly in Latin America, but overall it was a triumphant moment for capitalism, not the least because its rival system, statism, collapsed entirely – China surviving and prospering by joining global capitalism. The 2007-2008 financial crisis, to be followed by a global recession, signals a halt of this model of unregulated capitalism and opens a new era whose contours cannot be predicted as they depend on the outcomes of social struggles and political competition, including the new perspectives created by the election of Obama in the U.S.

The iconic event symbolising the collapse of state socialist ideology was, undoubtedly, the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Is there an event, a moment that has occurred (or might occur in the near future) that the future historians would dub neoliberalism's Berlin Wall?

While I do not accept to characterize the recent period as neo-liberalism, there is indeed a significant historical shift in 2007-2008, directly linked to the crisis of what I call virtual financial capital. As for an event, I think the collapse of Lehman Brothers, epitomizing the end of investment banks based on derivatives and futures will be retained by history as the defining moment, together with the election of Obama, not entirely independent from the financial crisis.

An elementary concept of proponents of "free market" and neo-liberalism had been that state intervention in the economy ought to be as minimal as possible. Recent events have shattered this principle and, while they could be signalling the death of free market ideology, an

alternative reading of the events would parallel them to Giorgio Agamben's understanding of the state of exception: A condition, that is, which through its very exceptionality comes to confirm the rule. A new form of sovereignty might therefore be emerging: a weaving net between the sovereignty of the state and its affiliate yet nevertheless dicey market. If this is the emerging landscape of sovereignty, what is the corresponding (to use Agamben's terminology) form of bare life? And where do the potentials for political action and resistance lie in this very landscape?

Too many questions folded together! The notion of a non-interventionist state is pure ideology. The state plays a substantial role in all forms of capitalism, and not only politically but economically. Nation-states were the subjects of globalization, even if they lost margin of maneuver through their own actions. Financial deregulation was a state policy decision. Trade liberalization resulted from an agreement among states. Thus, the current wave of state re-regulation is not the return of the state (it never went away) but a new form of state intervention characterized by giving priority to the stability of the system over the benefit of financial oligarchies. The state was never fully sovereign and it is still dependent on markets and on connections to other states. This is why I coined the concept of the network state as the state that characterizes the Information Age. The chances for political action increase in this context because the ideology of consumption is weakened by the difficulty to actually consume and because the open politicization of the economy offers a clearer target for social mobilization than the abstract enemy of the global financial market.

In 1903, Georg Simmel referred to the blasé attitude as the most typical psychological condition in the metropolis: "The psychological foundation, upon which the metropolitan individuality is erected, is the intensification of emotional life due to the swift and continuous shift of external and internal stimuli". In that way Simmel touched upon the results of this continuous shift of stimuli during the early development of the metropolis. His position brings to mind Walter Benjamin's metropolitan shock as well as Bauman's liquid modernity. They all highlight the importance retained in stable structures and relationships in the urban setting precisely at a time when these come under threat. Network technologies intensify the level of swift and shift of these stimuli, in turn intensifying

the threat of rupture in stable relationships and structures. What is your position in relation to the said danger? What levels can the blasé phenomenon reach within the network condition (see for example the hikikomori phenomenon in Japan)? And how can the notion of community be defined today, amidst a fluid and network condition of constant shifts, swifts and transmutations?

I published a book in 1972, "The Urban Question" to debunk what I called "the myth of the urban culture". Although the books presented a Marxist framework that by and large I consider superseded, it did make a number of important points, this being one of them. Spatial forms per se do not produce certain psychological reactions or social behavior. The notion of community was ideological nostalgia, and most of the so-called effects of the metropolis were in fact characteristics linked to the expansion of capitalism, the individualization of relationships under the influence of market relationships, and the dissolution of traditional forms of association. Similarly today, my empirical studies on the Internet have shown that we do not have less but more sociability in a networked context, but it is a different kind of sociability, what is known as networked individualism. There are communities, but of different types, from instant communities of practice to self-defined communities of resistance or of projects. The major trend, supported but not caused by communication technologies, is the culture of autonomy and the ability of people to define their own projects and build their own communication networks. Most of the characterizations are built by contrast to a mythical view of the industrial society or of the traditional societies. Most sociological theory nowadays is based on words, not on observation.

The notion of networks and by extension, the technologies resting upon them seems on the one hand to rely on the capacity for spontaneous-instant action and on the other, on complicating the conception and signification of space. It seems, in other words, to prioritise time over space, ending up nullifying the latter: nullifying space. Given this condition, what is the future of space and the relationships with it? And what is the future of physical presence?

I never say anything about the future. But what we observe is the formation of a different type of space,

what I have characterized as the space of flows, in interaction with the space of places. In fact, space is the dominant dimension of our society because people build their practices of resistance in their places in opposition to the space of flows that characterizes the organization of power (finance, global deciders, the media), and articulate their places of resistance over the Internet making it the network of global resistance. On the other hand, contemporary capitalism uses technology to annihilate time, compressing it to the smallest possible fraction, so to squeeze more return in shorter time, and commodifying the future by transforming it into a futures market. Space organizes social life, time is obliterated by the negation of sequence in the new technological environment.

In relation to the previous question: When Hannah Arendt insists upon the importance of the presence of others for political action, she presupposes an in-between space, a political topos wherein freedom gains meaning – freedom as is visible in the eyes of others (e.g. in the agora, the polis). And when she touches upon the classic notion of the law (nomos) she reminds us this refers to the relationships between subjects and that these relationships require an in-between space in order to be articulated. In a network condition where the notion of space is liquefied, how can the political action in the presence of others exist? What type of in-between space is produced via network technologies and relationships?

This question is simply too complicated for me. Hanna Arendt is a normative philosopher, not an analyst. If you mean how network technologies enhance the chances for political action it is very simple: by increasing the chances for people to network with each other. Since state power and capital power is based on disconnecting people, workers, and citizens, so to make their common interests more opaque and their fighting chances less coordinated, anything that helps connection helps social change. You do not need fancy words to say that. Make things simple, they are usually more simple than our concepts. Some social scientists use abstraction to enhance their status rather than their knowledge.

Could it be argued that contemporary technologies are politically neutral? They might offer exceptional capacities in the age of information, yet they

simultaneously hold a decisive role in the process of the creation of citizen-subjects. For example, the capacities of mobile telephony train the user to accept the condition of being always approachable, always available. In this sense, they seem to create, together with closed circuit surveillance systems, a condition of complete and permanent presence and of control of that very presence. Visual access meets the compulsory aural response and thus, aural detection (aural omnipresence).

Effects of technologies depend on the social practice in which they are embedded, so in principle they are not conservative or progressive. On the other hand, some technologies have properties that maximize certain effects, such as the Internet or wireless communication supporting mobility and free communication. However to reinforce freedom does not solve the problems of the uses of freedom. You can be free to kill. And yes, digital communication both increases freedom and the chances for surveillance. This is why discussions of technology in general are useless. It all depends on context, on process and ultimately on the specific research on specific technologies in specific contexts.

An example highlighting the inversion of technology's potentially liberating capacities: The demands of the autonomist movement (influenced by Deleuze and Guattari) for flexibility, ephemeral relations, nomadism etc. were absorbed and recuperated by capital and state formations in such ways, that today we witness the descendants of this movement organising against the precarity brought with the way of life it had itself demanded. This brings up, once again, the element of stability and continuity, this time at the level of social movement procedures. To what extent could it be argued that these demands were unbearable first and foremost for those who were the first to experimentally set them? And what space exists for redefining them today, when the technologies of information impose this liquid condition as an urban axiom built upon the importance of control and security?

No idea about what is meant by liquid condition, another of these fancy terms to say societies have changed (but were they solid earlier? When? How?) What we observe is that social movements are constructed around sharing practices rather than formal organization and around the capacity to connect global networks with local existence. Thus, networking technologies are a constitutive element

of new social movements such as the movement for global justice or the environmental movement.

In dealing with networks there are two distinct elements, the flows within them and their physical disposition – the networks' own materiality. An archetypal network is that of the roads: Paul Virilio suggested that modernity is a dromocratic revolution, naming the motor-roads as the exemplary signifier of modernity. While you talk about spaces of flows and in particular, about the flows as such the motorway networks seem to be under-reported in your work. Can you elaborate on the materiality of road networks and their role in the contemporary network society?

Road networks and any kind of transportation networks are certainly a major component of the space of flows, particularly high speed, high volume transportation networks. I emphasized more on electronic networks because of their capacity to favor simultaneity without contiguity, the major feature of the space of flows. But in fact, all communication and transportation networks are electronic, since cars, trains, container traffic and the like are based on networked computer systems.

In an article published by Catalonia's La Vanguardia you argue that anarchism might seem to be "an ideology for the 21st century". This is a very tempting proposition and yet, the following question emerges from it: Given that as you state yourself, it is the "old" anarchist doctrine that has become suitable for our time (after being ahead of its own), why is there a need to describe it as "neo-" anarchist? And secondly, if it is true that anarchism's newly-found relevance is based more on a structural disposition, a failure of communist governments to absorb productive forces and equally of capitalism to prevent undermining the foundations of the nation-state that fed it: If anarchism's relevance is being initiated by these structural failures, to what extent could we be talking of anarchism, rather than anarchy emerging? And crucially, how can social movements and civil society make sure that we head for the one, rather than the other?

The main ideas of anarchism (anti-statism, freedom, communes, peace, international solidarity, rejection of bureaucratic organizations, love of nature, gender equality, and the like) are present today as they were in the 19th century. But similar ideas in entirely different historical contexts have a somewhat different meaning, this is why I call it *neo-anarchist*. The main proposition is that the new technological environment and the network society induce social and political conditions in which Marxist categories appear to be obsolete while the Anarchist themes resonate with current social movements. Anarchy is utopia, anarchism is ideology. Social movements are increasingly rooted in anarchist themes, even if they would not call themselves anarchist. However, what will be the historical outcome of the practice of these social movements is an open question. Some times, resistance movements block a society without the capacity to advance an alternative organization and they provoke a violent reaction from conservative forces that restores the law and order of bureaucracy and capitalism. What some militants propose in a variety of social movements is to conceive a society made of local free communes that become able to manage the complexity of a large-scale society via networking technologies and deliberative virtual spaces. Since we are fast moving to a hybrid social organization in which virtuality and face-to-face interaction are intertwined, this is an interesting mobilizing utopia. The current global crisis (financial, economic, environmental) is creating the conditions for mass support to alternative projects. The glue of the system has been consumerism. The market economy is based on relentless expansion of demand and social integration is based on the endless desire to consume everything, thus transforming life into a commodity. Now, if we cannot get credit to consume, the economy stops, but so does culture. We are moving, objectively, toward an economy of austerity in which demand cannot be fueled artificially by irresponsible lending and borrowing. This is the moment when many people may start asking questions about their lives, about the profound stupidity of our system, running and ruining our lives without knowing what for, and burning out ourselves for some consumption that does not actually make sense for us. So, our ideas may change on a mass scale, we can communicate these new ideas on a mass scale, and if we start living differently on a mass scale, those trapped in the impossible dream of keeping on consuming may join their nearest commune. In the choice between dying capitalism, repressive statism, and experimentation with freedom I think alternative ways of living have a chance to offer hope. ◗

Human Strike after Human Strike

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Silently, and without much notice until recently, a series of collective, anonymous French texts appeared between 1999 and 2007 that effectively slashed open a gap into the seamless fabric of banal political critique. Packed within the two issues of the journal *Tiqqun*—subtitled, at one point, *Conscious Organ of the Imaginary Party*—is a minefield of ideas barely tapped and hardly translated, including *Theory of Bloom, Theses on the Imaginary Party, Man-Machine: Directions for Use, First Materials for a Theory of the Young Girl, Introduction to Civil War, The Cybernetic Hypothesis, Theses on the Terrible Community, This is Not a Program,* and *How is it to be Done?* Subsequently, an anonymous *Call* surfaced which responded to *Tiqqun's* provocations, laying out more clearly just how it is to be done. Finally, in 2007 the Insurrection to Come emerged, that searing text by the "Invisible Committee" which the French government has recently described as a "manual for insurrection." Using it as their only evidence, the Minister of Interior has accused the alleged writers of "conspiracy to terrorism" in relation to the recent rail sabotages.

Perhaps, at the risk of becoming accomplices in a thoughtcrime, it is time to seriously look at this family of texts. For as we will see, although the government is wrong to accuse them of terrorism, they are right to be afraid of the ideas housed within. For if they are to be thought through, then what they are describing is nothing less than the dissolution of the modern world as such. But this goal is nothing to fear for all those who desire worlds other than this one, worlds in which our ability to collectively exist outstrips any governmental, capitalist, or societal attempt to capture our desires. What follows is a skeleton that emerges from a reading of four of those texts—*Introduction to Civil War, How is it to be done?, Call, and Insurrection to Come*—which can hopefully guide one through the shifting fields of meaning that are produced therein.

In a series of theses and notes, the *Introduction to Civil War* lays out the biopolitical horizon in which our modern lives are situated. This horizon is conceived of as a global "civil war" amongst forms-of-life. *How is it to be done?* poetically marks the ethical necessity of becoming-anonymous, of dis-identifiying with all received and all possible forms of political classification. To realize this *en masse*, we must pass through the unchartered waters of the Human Strike, that form of action in which inoperativity becomes synonymous with possibility. In seven propositions and scholia, the Call critiques existing forms of activism as not only irrelevant, but reactionary as well. Once this is accomplished, the desertion of activism can begin, in which living communism and spreading anarchy constitute the dual sides of the same structure of revolt. The *Insurrection to Come*, after outlining the seven circles of hell in which contemporary French politics resides, opens up onto a strategy of resistance centered on the irreversible multiplication of articulated communes. The commune names both the work of self-sufficiency shared amongst comrades as well as the incessant blockages, liberations, and points of confrontation that populate and crack the metropolis itself. What is the reason for all of this? Survival and its correlate, joy.

There are two moments which these texts all are crafted around, two simultaneous and overlapping possibilities of action which are articulated within a widening zone of indistinction called the commune. These two moments, although empirically indistinguishable, are logically discrete; they signify the two sides of communisation. That is, on the one hand, a subjective decomposition occurs through becoming a whatever singularity in the human strike; and on the other hand, a collective reconstitution occurs through forming and experiencing a consistency of intense strategies of sharing, blockading, and liberating territory. Like a möbius strip, the inside flips outside in the "center" of this politics-without-name. For instance, describing the politics of the whatever singularity, it is written,

Becoming *whatever* is more revolutionary than any *whatever-being*.
Liberating spaces sets us free a hundred times more than any "liberated space".

(on the occassion of the
recent arrests in France)

More than putting any power into action, I enjoy the circulation of my potentialities. The politics of the whatever singularity lies in the offensive.[1]

Within the contemporary order of empire, where life itself is the object and ground of political power, the ability to evade capture is the same ability to confront power, for power itself is grafted onto an architecture of control which only needs to recognize something in order to neutralize it. "From now on, to be perceived means to be defeated."[2] Becoming anonymous while remaining singular is the modern task of resistance today, a task as offensive as it is defensive. This is, therefore, what grounds the imperative of the *human strike*:

Empire means that in all things the political moment *dominates*
the economic one.
A general strike is helpless against this.
What must be opposed to Empire is a human strike.
Which never attacks relations of production without attacking at the
same time
the affective knots which sustain them.
Which undermines the shameful libidinal economy of Empire,
Which restores the ethical element – the *how* – repressed in every
contact between neutralised bodies.[3]

What the human strikes creates is the possibility for shared worlds to communicate free of coercion on the basis of their needs. These shared worlds constitute the commune. "The commune is the basic unit in a life of resistance. The insurrectionary surge is probably nothing more than a multiplication of communes, their articulation and inter-connection."[4]

On one side of the commune then is the vector of self-dissolution, a process by which worn identities such as 'activist', 'squatter', 'environmentalist' etc., become utterly void of meaning. Against the triumph of "existential liberalism" and its emphasis on individual choice, distinct properties, social contracts, and the management of things,[5] we must instead form worlds created out of our own shared needs and desires. If we live in a world where politics is nothing but the consumption of an identity-of-resistance, then in order to outmanoeuvre politics, we must vomit up our identities wholesale. Becoming opaque to the managers of empire, we subtract ourselves from their forms of accounting as well. Hence,

the experience
of my own desubjectivisation. I become
a *whatever singularity*. My presence starts overflowing the whole apparatus of qualities that are usually associated with me.[6]

Evading the "imperial police of qualities," this dis-identification opens up a space in which a real singular existence can emerge.

Everything that isolates me as a subject, as a body provided with a public configuration of attributes, I feel melting.
The bodies fray at their limit. At their limit, become indistinct.[7]

This existence, while formally anonymous, is materially present. This is named the form-of-life. "The elementary human unity is not the body—the individual— but the form-of-life."[8] Expressing not the what of life but the how, this affective form traverses individual bodies, either joining with those which are compatible (friendship)

or repelling from those which are irreconcilable (enmity). The free play between forms-of-life is named civil war. "'Civil war' then, because forms-of-life are indifferent to the separations of men from women, political existence from bare life, civilian from military; because to be neutral is to take sides in the free play of forms-of-life; because this play between forms-of-life has no beginning or end that can be declared, its sole end being the physical end of the world that no one would be able to declare."[9] World civil war is nothing but this situation generalized across the planet. In this situation, the enemy is not something which we stand opposed to, but rather a milieu which we stand hostile within.[10]

If our forms-of-life are the parties to a world civil war, then how do they communicate without becoming identities, without mimicking the state-form? It is here that the force of the imaginary party and the invisible committee comes through. For in the collective drowning of one's own assignable qualities, zones of opacity emerge which, being empty of all predicates, effectively constitute the common. Rendering oneself inoperative alongside others—that is, engaging in the human strike—reveals the possibility of communication across bodies with no names.

I need to become anonymous. In order to be present.
The more anonymous I am, the more present I am.
I need zones of indistinction to reach the Common.
To no longer *recognize* myself in my name. To no longer hear in my name anything but the voice that calls it.
To give substance to the *how* of beings, not *what* they are but how they are what they are. Their life-form.

I need zones of opacity where the attributes,
even criminal, even brilliant,
no longer separate bodies.[11]

In other words, "the collective creation of a strategy is the only alternative to falling back on an identity."[12] In this zone of indistinction born of the human strike, comes the possibility that such a strategy may take hold. By unraveling the process of biopolitical desubjectivization on one side of the commune, we find ourselves exposed to the possibility for an insurgent resubjectivization on the other. Hence, we move around, in a torsion of being, from the logic of the human strike to the strategy of communisation. "Our strategy is therefore the following," says the *Call*, "to immediately establish a series of foci of desertion, of secession poles, of rallying points. For the runaways. For those who leave. "A set of places to take shelter from the control of a civilisation that is headed for the abyss."[13] These foci of desertion are not given but neither are they created; they are rather established within and through what is already present. They are topological mutations of the forms we are presented with, such that experience knows no name for our modes of relation with them, except through the link between sharing and needs. "Communism starts from the experience of sharing. And first, from the sharing of our needs." Here "needs" refers to "the relationship through which a certain sensible being gives meaning to such or such element of his world"[14] In this view, communism is another word for the "sharing of the sensible,"

the practice of coordinating worlds of meaning across the abyss of bare life.

Reconstituting worlds of shared experience "can only take the form of a collection of acts of communisation, of making common such-and-such space, such-and-such machine, such-and-such knowledge. That is to say, the elaboration of the mode of sharing that attaches to them."[15] Sharing here is not simply a gratuitous act between individuals, but a mode of survival across bodies and spaces in a consistent series of linked events. Communising a space, knowledge or object is not changing its relations of production, but rather abolishing those relations, rendering them structurally meaningless, indeterminable. "Communising a place means: setting its use free, and on the basis of this liberation experimenting with refined, intensified, and complicated relations."[16]

But communising without anarchizing is hopeless, for one must constitute a threat in order for communism to be more than an isolated affair. Following the logic of anarchy implies here the task of causing inscrutable confusion and damage to the enemy while simultaneously expanding one's power of self-organization with one's friends. Three notes on how to do this culled from the *Insurrection to Come:* one, fan the flames of every crisis. Why? Because "the interruption of the flow of commodities, the suspension of normality and of police control releases a potential for self-organization unthinkable under normal circumstances." Two, liberate territory from police occupation; avoid direct

confrontation as much as possible. Expose the police for what they are: shameless parasites of the fear of people. Don't fetishize police confrontation, rather confront the fetishization of the police. Finally, blockade everything. In a world where "power is the very organization itself of the metropolis," where life is suspended such that capital may be free, any and every interruption has the possibility of reopening the possibility of life again. "But a blockage can only go as far as the capacity of the insurgents to feed themselves and to communicate, as far as the effective self-organization of the different communes."[17] In other words, blockades must contribute to both the extensive mutilation of the metropolitan form as well as the intensive circulation of self-perpetuating knowledge and affects. Perhaps, if one maintains an attention of discipline, if one wagers on a thin ridge their entire existence, then what becomes possible is that as yet unachieved goal for every insurrection: *to become irreversible.*[18]

This is where we are left today. With comrades in jail, how are we to take this in, make it ours, consume it without deforming it? If the invisible has become identified, if the opaque has been made transparent, then there is no other solution but to disguise ourselves once more, opening

human strike
after human strike, to reach
the insurrection,
where there is nothing but,
where we are all,
*whatever
singularities.*[19]

Tiqqun 1 (French): http://www.archive.org/details/Tiqqun1
Tiqqun 2 (French): http://www.archive.org/details/Tiqqun2

Introduction to Civil War
English (partial): http://www.softtargetsjournal.com/v21/tiqqun.php

How is it to be done?
French: http://infokiosques.net/spip.php?article127

Call
English: http://www.indymedia.org.uk/en/regions/world/2007/05/371405.html
French: http://meeting.senonevero.net/spip.php?article37

Insurrection to Come
English (partial): http://deletetheborder.org/node/2216
French: http://www.lafabrique.fr/IMG/pdf_Insurrection.pdf

dispositions:

thoughts

on love

and riot

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> *"It is usually the essence of mob formation… to find some common signal that makes everyone confident that, if he acts on it, he will not be acting alone."*
>
> -Thomas Schelling, The Strategy of Conflict (1960)

We decided to ask a few short questions on love and riots as a way to understand not only what is lacking from liberal politics, but in order to find a pivot on which to exit those politics and recapture the forgotten affective elements (rage, desire, etc) that make revolt possible and communicable. Liberal politics have averted and suspended what is essential in the ongoing war.

In love, as in riots, there is always something that escapes classical political thought. By their nature, these explosions do not expand from sedentary ideas of justice, brotherhood or equality. Like a virus, they open up something communicable and collective. We are interested in intensifying the conditions for this communication: understanding its disposition.

A disposition is a preparation, inclination or a state of readiness to act in a particular way under particular conditions. Disposition has etymological roots in the Latin for affection (affectionem), meaning "inclination, influence, permanent state of feeling" the stem of which (affec- from afficere) means, *"to do something, to act on"*.

Dispositions always have two sides. There is on one side the occurrence of a disposition (which may not be apparent) and on the other side its manifestation. For example, an electron has a minimal electric charge often described as 'hidden'. "We have to do something very special to see that it is there. One might say that in the right kind of experiment the charge 'makes itself manifest'."

Like love, a riot can sometimes take us by surprise when we are not prepared. It would be in vain to say that we can prepare a riot, though we can at least prepare for riots: do what it takes to help ignite the fire, to release the charge.

At times we are pressed towards the game: towards the decision to riot or to love. When a situation arises it is always a question of an ethical disposition – we are forced to act upon our disposition, or to return, to flee. If you do not play, you cannot win.

The disposition towards love, as with riots, allows us to seize upon openings and situations. As such, we think there is a direct connection between the bonds that make up the way we live and organize, and our disposition towards riots; that is to

say, between our modes of organizing, and our relationship to the idea of communism. It is not born only from our rage towards the arrogance of power, but through our modes of living together. It is these modes that cultivate our dispositions, and our readiness to strike.

Like essentially all human desire, love and riots are events that are always a matter of relations between people. A riot always needs a crowd, just as the lover always needs the beloved. And further, the riot can only occur through a sufficient amount of confidence that others, too, will riot. There must be people gathered who have a disposition towards riot, and they must also believe that others in that crowd desire a riot too. As with love, it is a contagious confidence. The first nervous kiss, or the first window smashed, "is not a signal that tells a person what to do. It is a signal that tells a person what other people will probably do".

Why is the affective lacking?

None of what we hold in common is outside the war underway, most evident through the policing and management of our bodies, our ethos and emotions. Politics, reduced to a question of management, has become opposed to all that remains: we have left aside love, depoliticized friendship and art, become separated from the field of a deployment of passion. Politics has been hollowed of meaning.

This depoliticization of our lives has negated the development of a collective ethical foundation in favor of a mechanical management of the political. Affinity is seen as merely a matter for our private lives, while our private lives have been totally depoliticized. This is an essential part of liberal ideology. That which appears evident and desirable in our 'private' lives, what it requires and which is taken as an intimate truth, is hollowed out of all possibility for political organization. Personal lives are situated in the spaces of production and decision-making suspended from political problems of existence. All other questions become merely an after-thought to the way we interact with our roommates over a casual collective dinner after a laborious 'organizing' meeting.

Affinity has been abandoned to a lifestyle: nothing more, nothing less. Those who have resolved to live 'alternatively' have often become isolated in their 'alternative' experiences, effectively coexisting with capitalism. The attempts for collective living and the inclinations towards hedonistic utopias and other life-style adventures exchanged offensive strategies for good vibrations. Where they succeed in individual self-actualization, they abandon concrete attempts towards communization.

There always comes the moment, in the individual retreat or the cocoon of the community, where challenging questions arise from the world beyond. Faced with the inevitability of a political meeting with the rest of the world, a position is always taken. Distance from "world affairs" is never a neutral decision. "Private" salvation is always synonymous with dissociation and treason. We cannot justify distrusting all those who follow this aspiration. But we must mistrust this aspiration as a fundamental existential given. The story is already partisan. It is the liberal story of Locke to Thoreau through Smith. Individuals at work towards the processes of individualization. Not that communism was ever their goal. Their world is a small island in which they find comfort within. They abandoned class war to serve their own greed.

Changing individual modes of access and accumulation does not change the broader modes of production and exploitation. Our political connections of affinity, voided of a strategy and maintained only through subsistence, have been emptied of political content.

The misery imposed by liberalism over our lives will not decompose in the commune's dry toilet in the forest.

Returning to disposition

Reconnecting the disposition towards love with the disposition towards riots means reconnecting affinity and affect with political life. We cannot divide what we want from that which we fight against. On one hand there is what we wish to build (a shared usage of the world, communization), and on the other that which we wish to eradicate (bosses, prisons, borders, cops, patriarchy, the state). Construction and destruction are two movements within the same impulse. It is a development of dispositions grounded in the strength of emotions that pass beyond managed thought.

Developing our collective ethical position proposes first to understand the basis of our connection: "what is strong and what we intend not to surrender on any account". A centre of focus: a knot. Our ethical position, and our political position, cannot emerge as a material force if we avoid developing collective dispositions. ❧

Daniel McGowan is an environmental and social justice activist from New York City. One of the victims of 'greenscare' (www.greenscare.org), he was charged in federal court on counts of arson, property destruction and conspiracy, all relating to two actions in Oregon in 2001. He is now serving a seven-year sentence. After being moved around constantly during the summer, Daniel was finally trasfered to the Marion prison in Illinois, a unit created to heavily monitor communications of its prisoners. This letter was forwarded to us in summer 2008, at a time when reaching Daniel via mail from Europe was virtually impossible. More on Daniel's case:

www.supportdaniel.org/

(an open letter to Daniel McGowan)

It's been a while Daniel I know well actually I have not written since they took you and it's been quite some time since then well I have left the country now Daniel it was a bit after that night when our friend busted into the apartment and said it they took Daniel he said and it was one of those moments you know when you dont know what to say or do when it no longer matters that it is four in the morning when you dont understand much you are still half asleep but you know that a comrade is in trouble that they have taken a friend and you have many friends Daniel how could you not well I remember it all clearly the solidarity meetings outside the courthouse and all the plans we made well I left soon after that Daniel and I haven't done much since I know I havent been in touch not looking for excuses of course it is hard to write to a friend in prison but it is harder for the friend who is in prison so fuck that it's not an excuse well it was hard to write to you knowing where you were and now that I am writing to you it is hard to know where you are

they tell us the bastards keep moving you around they want to break you it must drive them crazy that some of you did not bow their head that some people stood up that they did not snitch well Daniel it is hard to describe exactly how proud I felt reading your plea agreement and knowing you were one of them of these people of our people who refused to cooperate who reminded us all why we are out here and what we are fighting for maybe it sounds a bit passe or a bit of over-sentimental crap but that's exactly how it felt and now to hear they wont leave you alone not even in there that they are moving you all around trying to fuck with you well they might have made it so that I dont know where to find you for now but I will make this one a public letter and that way I know it will reach you one day so that the bastards will know that they can move you around as much as they like but your friends will be close even closer that we will not leave you on your own

you know Daniel I copied the style of this letter from a book by an italian author called nani balestrini who was writing about the italian autonomia in the seventies it is an awesome book and I have been looking for its english version for years if I find it I will send it to you once you have exhausted your chasers I promise well in that book balestrini uses no punctuation marks at all how could I use question marks to describe a movement that questioned everything he says and how could I use punctuation marks since nothing could stop us he says what use would exclamation marks have how could I use them to describe us when nothing would impress us no more well you get the idea and well Daniel I will have to spoil it for you a bit here but listen the closing few paragraphs of the book describe one of the most beautiful the most sadly beautiful images you can imagine where he tells of how they are now in prison the main character of the book and most of his comrades they are in prison and even there they keep on fighting hard they organise between them and with other prisoners and they try to sabotage the operation of the prison and they block the water drains with sheets I remember that one and of course each time they would get beaten up locked up but they would continue and each time comrades from outside would visit they would bring bad news of how things outside are dying out and how people do not care and sometimes often more and more often those comrades would be locked in prison themselves and there were less and less comrades outside to bring them news and to report on their own struggle inside well in the closing scene Daniel I know I am spoiling it but here goes he describes how they are in a maximum security prison somewhere in the middle of nowhere think of the scene from the outside a huge building surrounded only by fields and they are in the middle of one of their final big revolts and things are escalating and one after the other they take their sheets they set them on fire and hang them from their cell windows what an image that must have been a whole prison building with all its windows on fire he says but how sad that there was no-one outside to see

only some cars cruising by somewhere in the distance well Daniel things are far from over here you know that and well you also know that already but there are many of us here watching and it is them well think of that picture the other way round it is them who have to keep moving you around to keep you at distance and it is us that are on fire

solidarity Daniel and dont let the bastards get you down love always 🔥

Gal Kirn
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At first sight, squatting as a political and cultural practice is not as radical in the Netherlands as it is elsewhere – this is, after all, one of those rare places where squatting is largely legal. Until recently, all a squatter would need when s/he entered an empty house was a chair, a table and a bed. Not any more: Nowadays squatters have to prove that the house/place they entered has been vacant for a year; they also need to have a good knowledge of legal matters and so, squatting demands a thorough and long-term planning. Squatters have to deal with law much more than they used to. In shark contrast to this reality, the '80s were the golden years of squatting[1], when a truly strong and substantial movement of squatters emerged. In Amsterdam only, this movement numbered twenty thousand activists. At the end of the eighties city authorities launched systematic operations against squatters. They used what were to become typical techniques: they would either criminalise the squatters – (the owner was given the right to anonymously sue them), or they would attempt a recuperation of the squat: Local authorities would enable squatters to use the space but they would have them sign the papers and slowly start paying a "symbolic" rent. Criminalisation and legal re-integration seemed to be the two central techniques of urban authorities.

Many squatted places across the Netherlands have managed to survive this two-edged attack. It is true that the majority of these squats is residential, yet some strongholds remain, organising substantial political and cultural activities: film screenings, "food not bombs", alternative public kitchen, concerts, sport activities, organizing exhibitions and of course, political events, which comprise of assemblies and organisation of different political actions. The "golden 80s" squatters' movement has nearly been swept away, now reduced to around 1000 people according to estimates coming from the squatters themselves. Merijn Oudenampsen, a squatter and an urban researcher summed up the difficult situation nicely: "Maybe our case is typical of present day Dutch squatting: we are a small living community of four, not strong enough to organise a political campaign around our house and isolated from the gentrified neighbourhood that we live in. The frontline of the battle over the house is no longer situated in the streets, but in court - through a formulaic process of legal conflict over technical and building procedures. In court, there's a small chance we will win some time. Yet, in the months to come, we are bound to lose. We will have to move (and the process will repeat itself)."[2] These legal conflicts still explode to street battles, as happened last year, when the squatters witnessed – and attempted

to resist - a wave of evictions. The battle's climax was reached on the March 13th 2007; just on this one day, seven squats were evicted[3]. The major problem of the squatting scene is its fragmentation and very poor mobilization for the defense of the autonomous spaces.

In order for the authorities to successfully fight against autonomous spaces all types of ammunition are used: from criminalisation and repressive methods to media campaigns and legal integrations. Yet the most effective and subtle weapon of anti-squatting struggle was invented already in the late 80s and is sadly experiencing a boom nowadays. Its inventors named it antisquatting (anikraak). The foundation for this economic practice was the change in the Housing Act (1988). The latter signaled the beginning of privatisation of social housing and simultaneously opened a way to private market of real estate.

The Netherlands witnessed a radical split on public social housing and a new private market. A special task in this process was assigned to antisquatter enterprises. So how do these antisquats work? First, these enterprises receive spaces in their management. They mainly manage emptied or ruined buildings or factories that are awaiting renovation or destruction. So-called "watchmen" move in and start living in these premises: their function is to watch out these spaces, in other words to prevent any squatting or trespassing. Then, the remaining spaces are sublet. Frequently, antisquatters are youth and artists: A monthly rent for the antisquat amounts to approximately one hundred and fifty euros. It is true that antisquats are located quite far away from the centre and in a bad shape, yet to get an apartment in Amsterdam is a very troublesome task... And when one finally gets an apartment, one often finds himself in illegal situation (i.e. without a contract) and paying a lot of money (one room might easily cost around five hundred euros). Despite the supposed social function of antisquatter enterprises (cheap rent), they are driven by a cold economic calculation. This calculation is guided by two basic goals: Firstly, antisquatting (as the name obviously suggests) aims at preventing the squatting of spaces and secondly, these enterprises guarantee the normal flow of financial speculations and investments. Owners can speculate and wait up until real investors appear; once that happens the transaction is executed as fast as possible. But what about the antisquatters living in these spaces? Simple enough: enterprises can kick out these renters, the antiquatters, in no time – simply on a one-, or two-weeks notice. Antisquatters and enterprises sign the contract where they agree to abandon all renters' rights. Voluntary servitude revisited! Thus they become flexible renters: Today it is not only workers'

A specter is haunting squatters in the Netherlands:
a specter of neoliberal antisquatting

conditions that are precarious and flexible; this flexible condition gets displaced and colonises living conditions in general. This is the famous dimension of the socialization of capital - its capability is precisely to permeate all spheres of social life, not just the one of labour.

Least but not last, we have to take into account the accessibility of antisquats. The applicant needs to be registered and to have a Dutch tax number. Right from this point all "illegal" and temporary migrants are excluded from the realm of contract. Besides this formal condition, applicants usually have to know someone already living in an antisquat since, in order to get an invitation an applicant would need to be recommended by an antisquatter. So, a personal guarantee that applicant is a trustworthy person is necessitated. This type of control is even clearer if we take into account the rules of living. If an antisquatter organises a party in the antisquat and the police arrive at the scene (e.g. too loud music) the antisquatter can be kicked out of the apartment immediately. And not just that - the person who recommended them in the first place would also get kicked out of the antisquat! Rigid control of life and flexible conditions of rent go hand in hand in Dutch antisquats… and this is no insignificant part of the population we are talking about here: today, there are more than 10 thousand antisquatters in the Netherlands. The tables have turned: it is the avant-garde of antisquatters that is setting the different form of living and not the squatters, who are, together with public housing, in a complete defensive. The disruption of order is thus exerted from the site of the dominant class. The current development reproduces and strengthens the ways of domination and exploitation.

It is easy to see that innovators and urban planners had a good sense in picking up the conceptual name to their economic-political practice. Even though it is neologistic, it signifies a complete negation of life and politics of autonomous spaces.

This subtle neoliberal management (urban struggle) is not a phenomenon limited to the Netherlands – it has been exported to the UK and other "developed" countries. The antisquatting recipe is integral in the function of the neoliberal agenda that privatises and commercialises urban space; a recipe that conceives the city as a commodity and not as a people's right.

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[1] For a detailed account of those years - see Adilkno's "Cracking the Movement", 1994, Autonomedia. [2] See http://www.flexmens.org/drupal/?q=A_Short_History_of_Kraken. [3] see also http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INqeWv_xMiQ&feature=related.

torture: three bodies and the mythical digit

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In his Thesis for a Philosophy of History, Walter Benjamin wrote: *"there are two ways to treat fascism: the one, as an exception to the rule of progress, an inexplicable "regression", a parenthesis in the evolution of humanity. The second, as the most recent and most violent expression of "a permanent state of emergency", that is the history of class oppression"*. For reasons inherent to the capitalist political economy, white hegemony and their ideological mystification, the torture exposé about the Baghdad prison of Abu Ghraib has been - in its being but mere scandal- a guarantee of the first way. Torture committed by American occupation forces has been consistently talked about as an anachronism, a medieval living-dead, an un-modern embarrassment.

Besides being a gross whitewash over one of the most widely exercised techniques of modern state power, this discourse reinforces a vital node of the bourgeois dialectic. Amidst the temporal dust of condemnation and disbelief, a truth-effect is silently
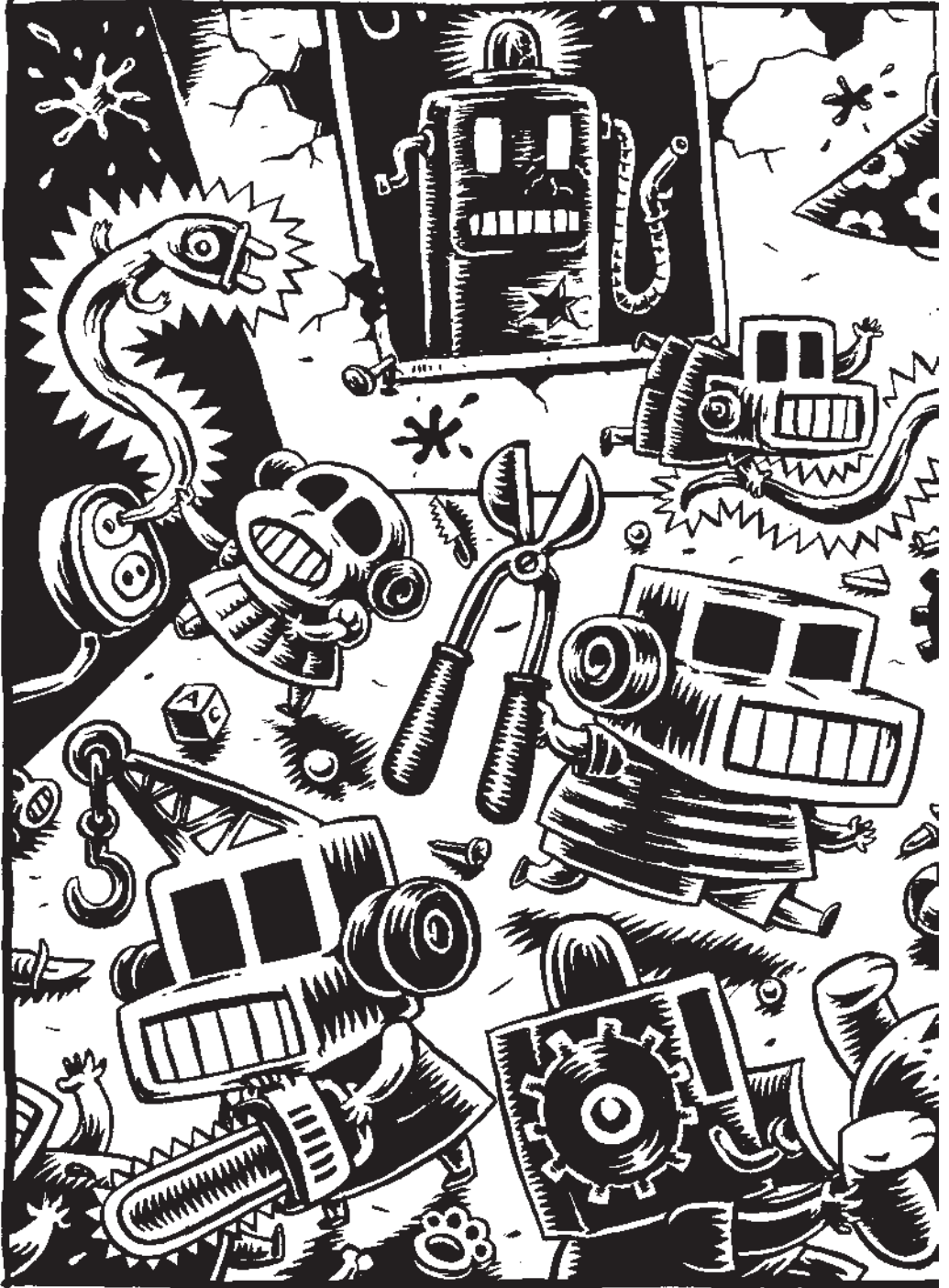
enforced: torture aims at information, or, to use the words of General Taguba, *"actionable intelligence"*[2]. It is thus an irregular, immoral or exotically brutal method for obtaining not just something concrete and universally recognizable, but the mythical/ digital telos of civilized society, the sublime object of late bourgeois ideology, the very doxa of capitalism; what these failed soldiers were after is the undeniable reality of all life, value and meaning: 0-1.

Thus, the Abu Ghraib debate painlessly degenerates into the old means-ends dilemma, leaving the core of our civility, our humanity, and above all our moral economy intact. And yet hundreds of state-power apologists since St Augustine openly admit that information obtained through torture is wildly unreliable. So why has this method been so widely employed and experimented upon in the last fifty odd years? As a relic of sovereign power in an age of discipline? As a sadistic perversion of some uniformed officers? Or as the irrational kernel of the rational, the mythological engine of a power taking pride in its reason? As Louis Althusser has claimed, *"we have to understand that the dominant ideology is indeed the ideology of the ruling class, and that it functions not only so that this class dominates the exploited class, but also so that it can itself be constituted as the ruling class, forcing itself to accept as real and legitimate its lived relationship with the world"*[3]. Keeping this in mind, it can be reasonably claimed that in fact torture has three interlaying planes of consistency: three bodies on which its power is constituted and exercised.

a) On the body of social reproduction, torture functions as a ritual of secrecy. This is achieved by constantly involving the civilian population as participant in the supposed restoration of truth and justice. In his work Divine Violence, Frank Graziano produces some truly valuable insights into this mechanism. Writing on the Argentine Junta, he claims that the rumour of torture creates an immense tension in social relations, suspending them in a plane of policed unresolved silence[4]. State violence as an abstracted spectacle *"is ever present in its absence, vague but insistent, never completed nor resolved, an endless ephemeral, indefinable, uncertain torture…the*

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precise nature of that secret was always suggested but never revealed: its enactment as a secret assured the abstract spectacle's efficacy[5]. Every repressive regime depends on the destruction of public bonds, on the experience of community loss, on the sensation of being in danger even amongst neighbours, family, comrades, *"on an implied condemnation to solipsism"*[6]. As meaning is necessarily a collective experience, now its agents have no other choice but to rely on symbolic acts that destroy its very means of production. Acts which *"construct the milieu in which an elite carries out the dirty sacred task, in which atrocity is not merely possible, but also essential and meaningful"*[7]. Thus social actors begin *"to retreat, to guard their silence, to modify their behaviour, to recode their perceptions and at the same time, without intention and perhaps against their will, to function solely by virtue of their presence in the panoptic system as agents causing the same reaction in others"*[8]. All social relations are reduced to this common experience of a secret-producing ritual, a desiring-production of doubt, silence and mistrust, a perverse investment by and reproduction of a panoptic anti-production apparatus which forges the citizen into the audience-guarantor of his or her own destruction.

b) On the body of revolutionary groups, torture functions as to transform a collective from a subject-group into a subjugated-group. The escalation of state violence with the introduction of torture has been shown to force open-ended organizations and movements characterized by an exceptional degree of social engagement and creativity into closed, secretive, ideologically entrenched cells relying not on social ties but on the force of arms. The repression apparatus puts in place *"anti-production, that is, signifiers which plug and prohibit the emergence of all subjective expressions of the group"*[9]. The scope is not to terrorize the group, but to lead it into getting caught up in its own representations of its own organization: to leave it no other means of expression than militarization; *"group subjectivity [will then] have no other means to express itself except in a phantasmatization which confines it to the sphere of the imaginary"*[10]. Thus, seeking *"not an escape point from reality, but…a social reality which will allow it to escape a traumatic desire"*[11], the revolutionary group initiates an intricate process of fetishising its organizational structures which soon acquire an autonomous value, a life of their own. As a result, social creativity gives way to an ideological ritual of survival, and the subject-group is subjugated by the desire to retain its symbolic consistency-as-Real despite the shifting conditions of concrete social

reality.

c) On the body of the individual victim, torture functions as to impair his or her affective abilities. In CIA's 1963 KUBARK manual on counterintelligence interrogation we read: *"all coercive techniques are designed to induce regression…the result of external pressures of sufficient intensity is the loss of those defences most recently acquired by civilized man…. the circumstances of detention are arranged to enhance within the subject his feelings of being cut off from the known and the reassuring, and of being plunged into the strange…once this disruption is achieved, the subject's resistance is seriously impaired. He experiences a kind of psychological shock, which may only last briefly, but during which he is far…likelier to comply…Frequently the subject will experience a feeling of guilt. If the "questioner" can intensify these guilt feelings, it will increase the subject's anxiety and his urge to cooperate as a means to escape"*[12]. The destruction of civilization within the victim as prescribed above is according to Graziano achieved by cultivating a sense of profound alienation brought about by *"converting the physical place and its objects into an arsenal implementing the prisoner's destruction"*[13]; *"made to participate in the annihilation of the prisoners, made to demonstrate that everything is a weapon, the objects themselves and with them the fact of civilization are annihilated… civilization is brought to the prisoner and in his presence annihilated in the very process by which it is being made to annihilate him"*[14]. This disappearance of objects of civilization in turn objectifies the disappearance of the social world, and enforces an unprecedented *"conceptual obliteration of social reality beyond the ritual context"*[15]. In what Elaine Scarry called a cyclical economy of embodiment and disembodiment[16], torture constitutes a ritual that denies the victim any reality beyond itself, any consciousness beyond pain.

The aim of this affective amputation is to leave the victim no course of action other than unconditional submission to the totalizing chain of repressive command. But rather than being a single moment, sensationalized in popular literature under the term confession, this is a gradual, contradictory and often unresolved process of subjectivation. Through generating an *"overwhelmingly painful confusion in which the prisoners themselves would entertain the possibility of their own guilt"*[17], torture confines the victims' desiring-production to a quest for the optimal position from which they can *"invest with passion the system which represses them"*[18]. A passion for truth, for as Foucault claimed, torture is always the torture of truth: *"rather than a means*

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of interrogation, torture is the ritual by which a reorganized truth is instituted and the power to defend that truth generated"[19]. A mythological construction, a theatre of identity, a terrible mnemotechnique, the body of the victim becomes an enchanted surface of inscription, a coding/ decoding flesh machine which is not limited to being coded by truth regimes or to codifying the social with these truth regimes, but pertains to the fundamental false consciousness that it is itself the producer of truth. This belief is what makes the process of confession much more similar to a psychoanalytic séance than to the Holy Inquisition, and what makes medical involvement in torture indispensable.

The complicity of medical doctors in torture is well documented. Only recently with regards to the Abu Ghraib case, M. Gregg Bloche and Jonathan H. Marks remark: "not only did caregivers pass health information to military intelligence personnel; physicians assisted in the design of interrogation strategies including sleep deprivation and other coercive methods tailored to detainees' medical conditions. Medical personnel also coaches interrogators on questioning techniques"[20]. And if the role of medicine in these brutal acts has been systematically downplayed as some form of mere complicity (clearly distinct from the Megele atrocities of the Nazis), this is because modern bourgeois society insistently refuses to recognize the "deeply rooted convergence between the requirements of political ideology and those of medical technology"[21].

In contrast to Graziano, however, it must be argued that this destruction is not unilateral or total, but a process strategically unresolved, an unfulfilled prophesy which always nears yet always escapes its logical conclusion through the employment of medicine and its ritual practitioner. The intervention of the doctor within the space of death goes beyond ensuring the viability of the victim during another course of the torture machine. It introduces a deus ex machina effect, a magical reappearance of purity and civilization within an environment where every trace of human culture has been liquidated. To paraphrase Michael Taussig[22], by bringing forth distinct historical modes of memory production and reproduction, the purpose of medicine is to rework and if possible to undo the history of civilization with the use of its memory. Memory, according to the tortured Argentinean publisher Jacobo Timmerman
"is the chief enemy of the solitary tortured man – nothing is more dangerous at such moments…I refused to remember anything that bore on life-experience… at times, something in the mechanism would fail, and

I had to devote several hours to reconstructing it: some lingering physical pain following an interrogation, hunger, the need for a human voice, for contact, for a memory. I always managed to reconstruct the mechanism of withdrawal and thus be able to avoid lapsing into that other mechanism of tortured solitary prisoners which leads them to establish a bond with their jailer or torturers"[23]. The doctor mobilizes a profound but tacit knowledge of society's collective representations to craft the appropriate myth that will rebuild the shattered experience of the victim into a sheltering architecture of significance, a spectacle of what has already been denied to the victim; life. This objectified Weltanschauung is not merely an assemblage of images, but a social relationship mediated by images[24]. A social relationship which aims to re-establish the codes and modes of emotional organization inherited from the family: shame, guilt, and the hope to rescue desire by desiring a place in the apparatus of order. We thus have a collapse of the symbolic, of the very background, the foundation against which human intersubjective communication takes place, followed by a process of transference where the doctor forges the delusional as a ground or guarantee for the symbolic. As Guy Debord said, in a truly reverted world, the real is a moment of the false[25].

Within this grotesque retournament, both the tortured, the revolutionary collective and society as a whole are able to find their proper place in the human grinding machine[26], in the moral debt/ doubt economy, and exclaim like A. Weissberg, German communist victim of the Stalinist Great Terror:
"I went over the events of the last ten years in my mind. I considered everyone with whom I had been in personal contact, or with whom I had corresponded. And in the end I found nothing at all which could reasonably offer grounds for suspicion…Suddenly a long-forgotten incident which had taken place in 1933 came to my mind and what calmness I had left was utterly destroyed. My god, I thought, that must be it!"[27]. That must be it, that's what it has always been: this is the only acceptable articulation in any repressive truth regime[28].

"That must be it, that's what it has always been": this is the only acceptable enouncement within all and every repressive regime of truth. The secret of the form, as Slavoj Zizek[29] insists, is far more significant than the secret hiding behind it.

For the essence of torture induced truth is not to be found in the hidden knowledge confessed, in some latent withheld content, but in the work which gives this truth its particular, secret form – the repressed-form: "that's what it really was all the

time, though I myself could not remember it". This is an anti-productive desiring machine, which sets in motion a truly pious return to debt. For guilty conscience, this act of always-returning-to-debt, to that which persists, is the metaphysical nucleus of every repressive regime, as the false-consciousness of its very self. This debt-guilt (Schulden-Sculd) is founded on the desire to discover again and again something that despite all your arduous efforts remains as lack: the accursed share, the irrepressible remain, the general equivalent. Torture is but the basest, bloodiest, most savage function of this mechanism of inscribing debt on the three bodies, thus verifying in a most frightening manner Nietzsche's ominous aphorism:

"Perhaps there is nothing more terrible, more upsetting in the prehistory of man than his mnemotechnique...when man decided to create a memory for himself, he always did so by recourse of torture, maim and bloody sacrifice"

This mnemotechnique is a machine both dyspeptic and bulimic. On the one hand, the tortures of truth suspending within the three bodies the active work of forgetfulness, the positive work of inhibition described so well by Nietzsche as a mechanism allowing humans to produce their present: «the man whose inhibitory mechanism has been damaged and can no longer function can be compared (and not only compared) with the dyspeptic – he cannot finish
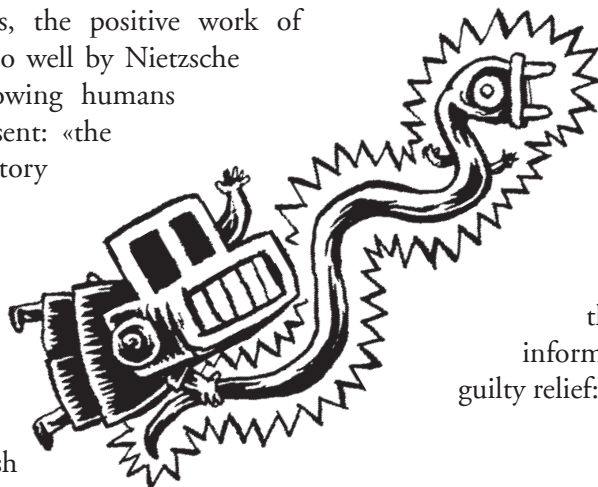
anything». He or she can only return, internalise, recycle, what he or she has already vomited. This is the bulimic aspect of this desiring machine. Like a cat that eats what it has just aborted from its sick entrails, the three bodies are urged to invent a new sense of the physical and psychological pain which transverse them, as the coordinate of an internal process which externalises and reifies its own violence. Thus, the three bodies are set to experience the cause of their suffering as imbedded in a piece of guilt, in a repressed morsel of the past. They no longer seek to understand what is happening to them as a synthesis of antagonistic relations, but rather abandon their experience to an internal point, a felt sign. This point of the Real, or rather on this process of signifying reality, is the target of torture. Torture aims not to detach information, the vital 0-1, for its victim, from the revolutionary collective, or form society itself, but rather to inscribe the mythical digit, the sign of guilt on these three bodies. Deadly mnemotechnique that mobilises all the resentful and suffocating closedness of christian confession mechanisms and all the metaphysical shine of modern technocracy, torture thus aims to encode the social, the revolutionary and the suffering body under a regime of information – to make it scream thrice in guilty relief: *Yes that is all I am, a series of digits!* ⟎

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turning cracks into landscapes: Rupture to revolution in Latin America

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Marina is a small r revolutionary anti capitalist militant, dreamer, student, teacher and thinker/writer based in Habana, Cuba.

This is an invitation to a conversation. A conversation of day to day revolution. A conversation on how we can make that day to day revolution last. How can we bring about the moments where history breaks open, where our imaginaries are freed and we are able to envision new landscapes towards new horizons? Movements and communities around the world are doing this, creating revolutions in and of the everyday. This piece is a brief look at two such movements, the Zapatistas in Chiapas and some of the autonomous movements in Argentina. These movements and communities are prefiguring the world they desire along the walk towards a desired world. They are creating forms of horizontal decision making, autogestion grounded in politica afectiva, autonomous from State and institutional power, and as a part of the walk, are creating new people and new subjectivities. These are not small "experiments," but rather are communities that include hundreds of thousands if not millions of people. Hundreds of thousands of people who have opened cracks in history and are creating something new and beautiful in the opening. These new social relationships have existed sometimes for years, enough time to have children born of the new experience who speak as new people. So the question for us, the one I invite us to discuss most seriously, is how do we listen and learn together, how do we question so that we are not only inspired, but we can learn to win. How do we find ways to hear the various experiences of the companeros, and make sense of it in our localities? The focus of this essay is on ruptures, imposed and invented, from which new creations are taking place. The intention is to find ways we can create breaks from capitalism and simultaneously open spaces of day to day revolutions.

Breaking to Open

Families sat at home, many watching television, as usual, on that hot December night that began as so many others, what to make for dinner, was it too hot to cook, would the humidity ever end, would the buses be delayed again tomorrow morning, was there a movie on channel 11 later … Then a TV newscaster appeared and announced that all bank accounts were frozen. Punto. If you had any money in the bank, sorry, there was no more information at the moment … Silence in the house. Middle and working class people sat in their homes in silence … Then it

was heard … what was that sound … outside one window and then another… one balcony and another … neighborhood by neighborhood

…

tac!, tac tac! …

People looked out their windows, climbed out onto their balconies and even saw it on TV … what they saw was a sound. It was their neighbors, banging spoons on pots, spatulas on pans … it was the sound of the cacerolazo. The neighborhood was out in slippers, flip flops, robes, shorts and tank tops, children on their father's shoulders, grandmothers with canes, entire families, out in the streets. Tac!, tac tac!, tac tac tac! … cacerolando. Bodies were speaking, and speaking together. Tac! tac tac!, cacerolando …

Hundreds of thousands joined the cacerolazo on the 19th and 20th of December 2001 in Argentina. Within days two governments fled, with Cavallo, the Minister of Economy, being the first to run. The institutions of power did not know what to do. On the 20th the State of Siege was declared, reverting to well established patters of State power and "law and order." But the people broke with the past, with what had always been done. They no longer stayed at home in fear. They came into the streets with even more bodies and sounds. And then the sound of the cacerolazo found a voice, a song. It was a shout of rejection, and a song of affirmation. Que se Vayan Todos! (They All Must Go!) was sung, and sung together with one's neighbor. It was not just a shout against what was, but it was a song of affirmation, sung together, by the thousands and hundreds of thousands. Ohhh Que se Vayan Todos, que no quede ni uno solo (they all must go, and not even one should remain). People sang, banged pots, and greeted one another, kissing the cheeks of neighbors. People were seeing one another for the first time, remembering the names of the children and kissing the abuelas. It was a rupture with the past. It was a rupture with obedience. It was a rupture with not being together. It was the beginning of finding one another, oneself, and of meeting again. The 19th and 20th was a crack that opened vast political landscapes. It is upon these landscapes that revolutions were and are created. Revolutions of every day life.

One No, Many Yesses

The 19th and 20th is how many in the movements refer both to the moment and process of what did and continues in various ways to take place in Argentina. They are the days when people's imaginaries broke, shattering into a million free pieces. To speak of the 19th and 20th is to speak of the social creation and all that it implies breaking from, it is not to speak of a fixed time or calendar date. "Ya Basta!" (Enough!) was shouted on that now infamous day of January 1st 1994 when the Zapatistas appeared to the world and took over 7 cities, declaring they would not disappear. They rejected 500 years of domination, declaring "Ya Basta!" to the world. They not only shouted "Ya Basta!" they simultaneously took over 7 towns, hundreds of thousands hectares of land and city hall, destroying property titles to the land in the region. They took back their land as they shouted no. "One no and many yeses" is one of the ways the Zapatistas speak of this break and opening. "Ya Basta!" "Que se Vayan Todos!" and the 19th and 20th are a few of the Nos, from which have emerged millions of yeses, the shouts and songs that have resonated around the world. The no that creates the yeses and the yeses that contain the no. These yeses are the every day changes in social relationships. The daily experiences of dignity and revolution, from self managed food, health care, education and land to autonomous forms of self government and horizontal decision making.

Variations on a Landscape, forged from a break

Throughout Latin America, over the past fifteen years, millions of people have been breaking with past ways of organizing themselves and their communities in relationship to institutional power and forms of hierarchy. Decisions are being made in the hands of people self organized in their communities, and is being done so collectively and democratically. New and various forms of democracy are being created as people organize. In Argentina this is called horizontalidad, in Chiapas, Mexico, Caracoles and "good government councils", in Oaxaca, Mexico, APPO, a people's assembly, in the regions around Cochabamba, Bolivia, Regantes, the autonomous communities, and in the highlands of La Paz, El Alto, neighborhood councils. Each of these examples of horizontal forms of decision making comes from a break with previous forms of organizing. This is not to argue that they are entirely new, and in fact in many of these cases the "new" forms of directly democratic decision making are part of reviving segments of old practices, whether "usos y custumbres", as with some indigenous communities, or forms of council decision making linked to older anarchist traditions in the more urban areas. These new forms of self-organization, autogestion and social relationships that emerge from the new experiences are the focus of this essay, and in particular the ruptures that help facilitate their creation.

From the new democratic processes people speak of new relationships that are formed with one another, and the creation of new selves, new collective selves, new subjects, protagonists, and social subjects. This is a part of the break from past ways of being, both as individuals and communities. It is a break from relationships of domination and oppression. It is a break with silence, a break from the State and a breaking with the silence that existed for so long with one another. It is a break with alienation.

It is a breaking with capitalist modes of production and value production. People, in the tens of thousands, are taking over workplaces and running them in common, they are taking over land to grow crops to feed their communities by the hundreds of thousands, they are creating alternative forms of education and health care. In some places the barter networks created have involved millions of people, battering services as well as goods, for example a child psychologist working with one families child in exchange for computer repair, and another exchanging French lessons for electrical work. This production of alternative ways of surviving, outside capitalist relations, comes together with alternative forms of being with one another and creates new people. This is a new value relationship, new value practices, and a rejection of the capitalist mode, whether said explicitly or not.

The break is also with how to think about and organize for change. Linked with horizontalidad, autonomy, autogestion and the desire for the creation of new people and subjectivities, there is a break with Political Parties telling people what to do and how. This is not just a break with parties from the formal institutions of power, but also with radical and revolutionary left political parties. People are breaking with the concept of power as a thing, a thing to take or to build for, and are rejecting that vision within the radical left and their various formations. Instead people are creating a power with, a power to, potencia , power as a verb .

Bringing on the Break

Rupture can come from many places. Sometimes it comes upon us, surprisingly or seemingly surprisingly, as is the case with the economic crisis in Argentina or the Water Wars in Cochabamba. Sometimes we create the rupture, as with the Zapatistas in Chiapas, Mexico or the unions and councils in El Alto Bolivia, fighting to nationalize their gas and doing so with autonomous councils and communities.

Outside Rupture can be a break that occurs because of outside circumstances, circumstances that is, that are not of our creation, even if their ramifications could have been within our prevention. Things like earthquakes, floods, fires or economic collapse. These ruptures often inspire thousands, even hundreds of thousands to come together and help one another. When massive collapse happens, often those formal institutions of power also collapse, or go into crisis. People then look to one another, begin to try and find solutions together, and often do so in such ways that are more "effective" and definitely more empowering, "affective," then had it been done elsewhere or by others. When left alone, when left with one another, people turn to one another and use forms of mutual aid and support. The wake of the break is a beautiful opening of possibility. It is a crack in history. This is what was seen in Argentina. The crisis caused the break, the rupture, and people filled the streets and with one another made the new social creation. A new landscape was created from the small opening, a day to day revolution.

These ruptures and cracks happen. How do we prepare? How do we open the crack into a horizontal landscape with liberatory relationships and new values? How do we create the rupture, and do so in a prefigurative way, not just in words but in the creation of new social relationships? Many in our global movements are doing just this. Through listening to their experiences we can not only be inspired as to what is possible, we can imagine what is possible where we are, in ways that make sense to our circumstances, histories and memories. From what are we breaking and how? ✍

Red Plan: The Image of the City in the Age of Late Capitalism

the Pula Group

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The Pula group is an informal group of architects from Pula, Croatia. Currently six persons work inside the group – Vjekoslav Gašparovi, Emil Jurcan, Jerolim Mladinov, Marko Peri, Helena Sterpin and Edna Strenja. The group is active since 2006. when it organised a student workshop in the ex military zone of Katarina in Pula. The workshop produced some conflict in the local political scene because its outcome, published in the book „Katarina 06 – openning of Pula`s coast", confronted official municipality and State plans. Since then the group has produced publications, organised demonstrations and exhibitions to agitate in public against official urbanism in Pula and in Croatia, especially on the current Adriatic coastline problems. Red plan of Pula is a synthesis-map of the latest conflicts produced by official urbanism in Pula.

Red plan is a plan for the city that is in an alarming (red) state. As a first step in the creation of such a plan, we needed to locate its red or critical spots. In order to do that, we created a "crisis map" of Pula: an image of the city in the age of late capitalism.

The neoliberal transition diminished the influence of public institutions and, consequently, created the basis for a continuing crisis that is most visible in cities. The effects of this crisis appear in many separate events that point out the inefficacy of today's city planning. These events are becoming more intense, frequent and more visible in the everyday life of the city. The city is disintegrating along the lines of infinite particular interests, torn apart by unrest and discontent. No one can predict where the next protest against some spatial intervention will take place -- the revolt is out of control. However, these revolts do not simply cause damage to the city; they are examples of how to act in this city. Since that system is based on conflict as the main mode of communication, we can speak of an emerging understanding of the city as a restless field of conflicts.

The citizens of the contemporary city cannot influence the redistribution of the surplus value produced in it. The accumulation of surplus in some parts of the city creates even more poverty in other parts. The neoliberal city destroys communal values and public institutions and directly damages the wider city system that depends on public investments. The never-ending transition from socialist to neoliberal economy did not result only in the creation of a free market and private entrepreneurship, it also brought about an escalation of corruption in the public sector. Corruption, an illegal deviation of the public system, takes place when the public interest is marginalized and private profit becomes the system's primary goal. Corruption is unavoidable in periods of transition, when old rules are no more valid and new ones have not yet been firmly implemented. It is then that corruption triumphs, as Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri argue in Multitude.

A corrupt system, that is otherwise supposed to guarantee the general interest, cannot in any way advance common values. As the center of those values, the city is left to its own devices in a process of autonomous development . It is in this context that we have to view various demonstrations, protests, petitions and other forms of revolt that are becoming more and more frequent in cities. They aim toward a critique of the unjust redistribution of value in public institutions, since it is uncertain whether these will reflect the general interest, or even remotely promote the public interest. The last protest that took place in Pula was directed against the modernization and enhancement of the city landfill Kaštijun. However, the protest was not aimed against new landfill technologies, but against the political power that makes decisions without actually representing the people who live in the landfill area, and whose quality of life will decline thanks to that intervention.

Since the beginning of modernity, urban planning has been the task of public institutions. Today, these institutions are going through an uncertain transition in which corruption is ever growing. Because of that, urbanism can no longer count on the support of the official authorities and their government apparatuses. The future urban planning must rely on new forms of transparent organizing that would be able to maintain a more sustained development of the city. Since these are social and political issues, contemporary urbanism can only observe and keep track of the

present disturbances and develop a theoretical model for new city planning. This map of Pula is a step in that direction.

Experiences

The data used for the creation of this map was taken from the city section of the local daily newspaper Glas Istre in the year 2007. The events are categorized according to the type of activity (revolts, demonstrations, complaints, occupations, evictions, unauthorized construction, small communal actions, volunteer work. Apart from that, the map shows the points of potential future conflicts: abandoned buildings in the city, substandard settlements and dirt roads.

The most common cause of revolt is the opposition to urban planning proposals (Park of the city of Graz and other city parks, Sisplac, Štinjan Bay, Katarina, Valelunga, Bunarina, Kaštijun, the road along Vidikovac elementary school, resistance to the proposed construction at the site of the school playground in Kaštanjer), to the lack of city services (Štinjan, Veli Vrh, Gregovica, Japodska Street, Busoler), then conflicts spurred by the eviction of Fort Bourgignon and the "Pink buildings" in Šijana, or individual cases of opposition to the privatization of communal property, like the case of temporary residents of the Valovine camp site who have been waiting for appropriate accommodation for years, the protest for a parking lot in Monte Zaro, etc. The revolt usually takes the form of a petition, a street protest, demonstration, planting of trees and various kinds of volunteer work.

Complaints refer to those cases that the public is informed about, but that didn't develop into open conflict. Citizens use local media as a tool for pressuring the authorities, hoping for a quick solution of their problems. Other reasons include: insufficient availability of roads, sewers, street-lights, play-

grounds, public transport (Veruda Porat, Valdebek, the Kralj Tomislav Square, Valmade, Škatari, Šikići, Monte Šerpo, Labinska Street, Štinjan), occupations and evictions (Pevec supermarket, the huts near the mill, the Brioni Pula garages, the central market, the multimedia center Rojc) and the general decline and neglect of the city (the whole historic center, the jetty, Stoja bathing area). Special complaints refer to unauthorized construction in Monte Turco and Stoja's Barake, the problem of the eastern city entrance, the Motorola party in Arena that was allowed by the city authorities or the inadequate location of the Agrokoka farm. All these are potential sites of new revolts.

Although most cases on the map represent a critique of the existing relations in the city, initiatives that would transform the existing conditions are very rare. These include cleaning of green areas and the sea bed, creation of walking paths, afforestation of city parks, graffiti writing and the painting of house fronts.

A special form of activity that connects institutional action and community initiative is the Small Communal Actions project. The project functions as follows: through their neighborhood councils, residents give suggestions about the needs of the neighborhood to the city authorities. The authorities then provide the funds for the realization of these proposals. However, the implementation of solutions cannot keep up with the pace of emergence of new problems, making the need for significant improvements of this project obvious. Apart from that, the structure of neighborhood councils has changed in the last decade: from self-management groups they transformed into political bodies composed of members of political parties. This change has resulted in the loss of autonomy for the local community. The councils now represent the tightest capillary of the corrupt political sphere. Neighbor-

hood councils are today a source of conflict, rather than a site of consensus.

As Ognjen Čaldarović writes, "in order for it to function, the decision-making about the everyday life has to come from small territorialized social units. Obviously, any decision-making without financial autonomy is only nominal. Hence all decisions made at the level of small territorial units have to be accompanied by adequate legal and financial autonomy that would secure their implementation." This observation equally applies to Small Communal Actions.

For orientation purposes, the map includes important roads that are being planned in the future - the expansion of the existing ring road and the construction of a new one. If the city ring road marks the limits of the city, then the new one will bring many substandard, even illegal settlements within the city's organism: Monte Šerpo, Monte Turco, Šikići, Škatari, even the Kaštijun landfill. The integration of those areas in the city organism is the greatest challenge to come. The neighborhoods along the existing ring road are still not completely integrated in the city, although they are considered to be the city's integral part (Šijana, Monvidal, Kaštanjer, Gregovica, Veruda Porat). Various revolts in those areas result from a lack of infrastructure which is not built although 40 years have passed . Complaints are common in the neighborhoods along the future ring road too, but the discontent still hasn't taken an organized, protest form.

Strategy

All the activities shown on the map should serve as a starting point for the development of clear and functional forms of urban intervention. So far, these have been limited to discrete and temporary tactics aimed at changing the living conditions in the city. The goal of this map is to structure these actions and develop a strategy that

would also change the living relations in the city. Here is a first draft of possible strategies based on the "crisis map":

* The case of the residents of Sisplac, who organized a tree-planting action in order to stop the construction in a green area, should be developed as a strategy for designing all green areas.

* The occupation of the Rojc former military barracks by cultural initiatives should become the strategy for the re-use of military buildings.

* The case of Monumenti, where music festivals have started to take place, should become the strategy for the development of cultural activities in the city.

* The collective action of expansion of apartments in Barake should become the strategy for the improvement of substandard living conditions.

* The Krupp association's initiative for the regulation of walking paths should become the strategy for the creation of a larger pedestrian network.

* The refashioning of the Kandler Street as an open market during the tourist season should become the strategy for the development of commercial activities in the city center.

* The Small Communal Actions project, that relies on the communication between the city authorities and the neighborhood councils, should become the strategy for the promotion of local communal values, with an added emphasis on local financial autonomy.

* The painting of substations and house fronts that is being carried out by the "Gradska Radionica" (city workshop) should become the strategy for displaying the city identity.

* Graffiti writing and the hanging of anti-NATO banners on the western city entrance should become the strategy for independent expression of alternative politics.

* The case of a dozen of families from Japodska Street, who signed a collective refusal to pay for the communal services until the road in their neighborhood is asphalted, should become the citizens' strategy for pressuring the city authorities that treat them unfairly.

By developing these strategies it is possible to create new tools for urban development. However, apart from a development strategy for the "red plan", a specific organizational form able to implement all the activities is required.

Elaboration proposal
The "crisis map" clearly points out the inequality of living conditions in different parts of town. In a situation where the living conditions differ, a consensus about the city priorities is impossible, and in a situation of a long transition based on corruption, it is impossible to build trust in the structures responsible for the creation and implementation of the plan. And it is precisely the consensus and the trust that form the foundations for the plan's implementation.
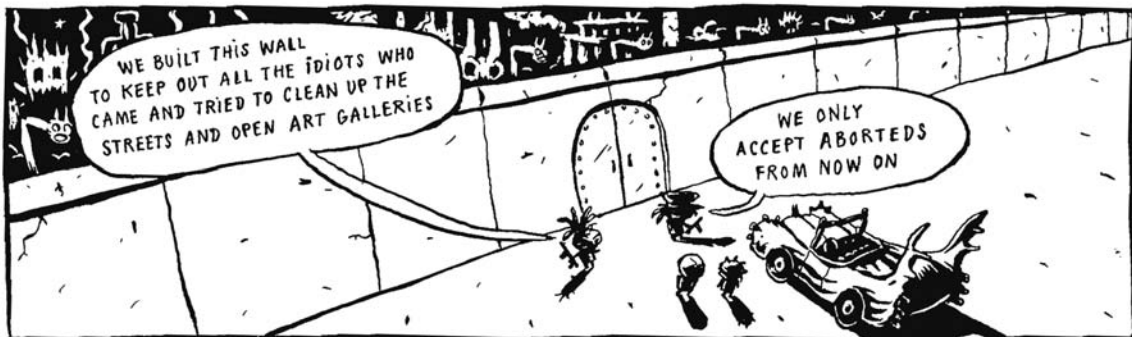
These can be achieved in two ways: by reforming the neoliberal, corrupt model of state administration, or by forming new organizations able to implement the plan. The first way is more ambitious, expansive and requires action on a global level; but it keeps urbanism within legal norms. The other way requires local-level activity on the part of groups of citizens who want to improve the quality of life in their neighborhood and city through collective action. Various theorists call such forms of activity cooperations, self-management groups or urban social movements. Manuel Castells describes urban social movements as "locally based and teritorrially defined movements mobilized around three basic goals: collective spending funded through surplus value (communal values, schools, hospitals, culture), cultural identity and political self-management. The described second way of implementation removes urbanism from the state and the law and makes it illegal.

Perhaps such a plan seems utopian, since it requires either a reform of the neoliberal state or its total avoidance. Nevertheless, this map points out all the injustices that are produced by the existing form of city administration and its inability to implement its own laws. In other words, the city appears to be a concrete jungle, and might makes right. Various cases of occupation clearly support this thesis (the Pevec supermarket, Brioni Pula garages, SM Mediteran marina, municipality owned office spaces). If that is the conclusion - that we live in a system that is unable to protect its own rules of operation while simultaneously creating injustice - then we live in a short-term and unnecessary system. If we persist in supporting it, the conflicts will only multiply: and when they reach a critical point, it is better to have a structured action plan with defined goals that can challenge the existing order.

"Of course, to accuse the order is not enough; it is imperative to prove that it is not omnipotent, it is necessary to find the spring beneath the concrete surface again, the voice beneath the silence, the debate beneath the ideology. That is the stake. If we lose it, we should renounce the faith in social movements, even in what we call society itself, and accept the fact that there are no more citizens, only subjects; that there is no more class struggle, only victims."
- Alen Turen

WE BUILT THIS WALL TO KEEP OUT ALL THE IDIOTS WHO CAME AND TRIED TO CLEAN UP THE STREETS AND OPEN ART GALLERIES

WE ONLY ACCEPT ABORTEDS FROM NOW ON

Štinjanska vala
Štinjan
Monumenti
Valelunga
Veli
M.K.A.
Katarina
Muzil
Park
grada
Graza
M.K.A.
Monte Carlo
Barake
Rojc
Valovine
Stoja
Trg Kralja
Tomislava
Sisplac
Fort
Bourgignon
Bunarina

Legend:

Symbol	Description
prosvjed / protest
žalba / complaint
okupacija / occupation
deložacija / eviction
demonstracija / demonstration
radna akcija čišćenja / volunteer work
sadnja stabala / tree planting
rušenje stabala / tree cutting
oslikane trafostanice - gradska radionica / painted substations - city workshop
pješačke staze - KRUPP / pedestrian paths - KRUPP
mala komunalna akcija / small communal action
bijele ceste / dirt roads
substandardna naselja / substandard neighbourhoods
prazne zgrade / empty buildings
bespravna izgradnja / illegal construction
vojska / army
gradski privezi / city mooring
predviđene obilaznice / planned ring-roads
granica Grada / municipality border

PULA
CRVENI PLAN MAPA KRIZE
RED PLAN
CRISIS MAP

Vrh

Sijana

Monte Serpo

Kaštanjer

Valmade

M.K.A.

Monte Turco

Busoler

Gregovica

Škići

Škatari

Valdebek

Veruda Porat

Kaštijun

Climate CAMP 3

7 → 9th august

a visual diary of the 2008
CLIMATE CAMP
(HOO PENINSULA, KENT, the UK)

artwork & words
by EDD LAST HOURS
www.lasthours.org.uk

I WENT to CLIMATE CAMP during the FINAL WEEK of the EVENT. THIS YEAR the camp was stood AGAINST the energy company E·ON & their plans to develop (A HIGHLY polluting!) new COAL FIRE station at kingsnorth. These images offer A SMALL snapshot of WHAT LIFE was like on THE CAMP.

kingsNorTH
(aka THE BIG BAD)

So the CAMP like previous years was split into different BARRIOS. This year it seemed to work more efficiently. EACH barrio represented DIFFERENT regions (as before), BUT THIS YEAR it felt like THE communities were SLIGHTLY more COHESIVE. Though that could have just been the CASE for London where I was —STAYING—

← Jet (ROCKET!) STOVES are FUCKING cool (though I'm not really sure how THEY ACTUALLY work

↑ I DON'T KNOW WHAT THIS IS — THOUGH it's going to the GATE

← POURING COFFEE FOR GATE

"PEOPLE DRINK SO MUCH COFFEE HERE, WE'RE GONNA HAVE TO PUT A STOP to it!" [LAUGHS]

THE C OPS

WELL what Would —

POLICE
at the backgate
(WHERE EARLIER IN THE WEEK
THEY TRIED TO RAID THE CAMP)
ANYWAY ——→

THIS LOT WERE FROM
SOUTH YORKSHIRE
THEY GOT wound UP
BY PEOPLE working
on the GATE

"THE OFFICER IN THE
MIDDLE — WHAT'S HER
NUMBER? —WHAT DO YOU
THINK of the OFFICER to YA
RIGHT?" "Have Ya got a thing
FOR HIM?" "WHAT KIND of
THING?" "WOULD YOU have
SEX WITH? HE'S WELL HOT"
HIM
[AWKWARD SILENCE]
"OH look SHE WOULD! WELL WILL
YOU ASK HER OUT THEN?!"
I CAN'T I'M —UHHHH, UMMM—
ON DUTY —I'M NOT ALLOWED!"

HAVE CLIMATE CAMP BEEN WITHOUT THE POLICE BRUTALITY

STOP & SEARCHES, BATON CHARGES, dawn choruses, (aka 'FAKE RAIDS')

and COMPLETE SHEER incompetency of despite having MORE COPS THAN 'WE' had -PROTESTORS- allowing PEOPLE to get to kingsNORTH on the DAY OF ACTION

THIS IS SOME OF THE FIT TEAM... THEY'RE ARSEHOLES ON A TRULY EPIC Scale

BUT! I gotta SAY I CAN MOSTLY IGNORE the COPS → EXCEPT FOR when they REFER TO ME as STOCKY ON THEIR STOP & SEARCH forms → WHICH is CLEARLY FAR, FAR, BELOW the BELT! (THOUGH to be fair NOT AS BAD AS MY friend WHO THEY just called FAT!

I think HE fancied HER giving a PERFECT LOVE TRIANGLE AND WHO SAID WE DON'T LIKE SOAP OPERAS?!

on thursday << MORNING >>

the TRANQUILITY TENT

fig 1.0

I WAS PRETTY JEALOUS OF MY FRIENDS IN THE TRANQUILITY TENT — THEY GOT TO HANG OUT W/ WALKIE TALKIES, DRINK TEA & CHAT TO COOL — PEOPLE —

fig 2.0

EXCEPT

FIG 2.1 → for the DOG that was left w/ one of THE TRANQUILITY "Cool" you might THINK, BUT whilst she WAS indeed a {SIC} "Beautiful DOG SHE VERY definitely DIDN'T like HER OWNER BEING IN a WORKSHOP! So she BARKED & whimpered & PACED before FINALLY falling ASLEEP → SHE WAS a beautiful DOG THOUGH!
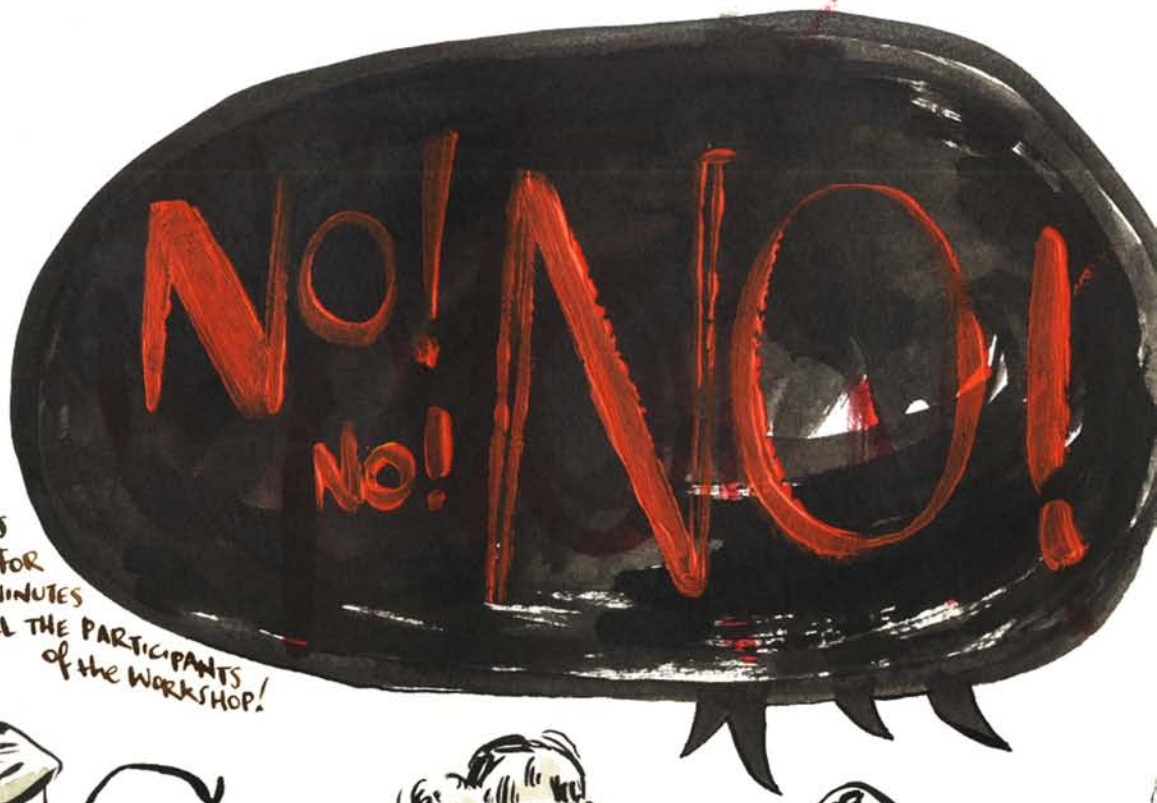
TRANQUILITY

{ fig 10.0 ?!

the WOMEN'S SELF-
DEFENCE workshop WAS
BADASS!
THOUGH I was disappointed
that the DAILY MAIL
didn't have a
**PHOTO
EXPOSE**
saying ~~THAT~~
"anarcho-
types were
PLOTTING
to use the
training
AGAINST e.on & the
POLICE"
(that'd been
— SWEET)

PEOPLE

SOME SKETCHES FROM THE
LONDON Barrio

(DON'T WORRY — THE
COPS AIN'T GONNA
RECOGNISE
ANY
OF THESE
FACES
'COS I
CAN'T
DRAW 'EM
VERY
WELL)

(a COOL WORKSHOP about SHELL
TO SEA HAPPENED in HERE

PLUS

yet **MORE** toilets
→ this time taking a
~~BATTERING~~ from
THE Summer ? 2008

THE
tent looked
v. **COOL**

and then I took the train back to LONDON

IT meant I MISSED all THE EXCITEMENT of
Saturday's 'day of **ACTION**' with people
going by **LAND**, Sea & AIR (WELL NOT REALLY 'AIR'!)
to shut down **KINGSNORTH** POWER
STATION

these images are only a very small slice of what I saw at
the camp & certainly don't serve as a full 'FEEDBACK' on all
the summer's events. For more details of what happened visit
INDYMEDIA·ORG·UK/EN/ACTIONS/2008/CLIMATECAMP OR **CLIMATECAMP·ORG·UK**

Antonis V.

as far as the I can see

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A glance to the right, a quick look around, then right again. And then it hits him. His building is positioned in a seemingly random direction; overlooking an alley, ignoring the sun's path and the horizon of the sea. He lived in that flat for most of his life but that he only realised on that very moment. He pauses to think. Where could his gaze rest? It could follow the outline of that ladder. Or follow the line drawn by the pathway so as to squintingly enter in the window across it. In one and every case, *to follow:* To repeat inscribed lines in the horizon which then, for an instant, become horizons for him alone. A line drawing an end to his viewpoint, a border mapping out where his eye can reach.

He rushes out of the flat. Walking on the street, the outline of his environ, yet more lines drawing, cutting, disconnecting and reconnecting the flow and movement of the city. Road grids, the edge of the pavement, pedestrian paths, bus lanes; ahead and above his head the silhouette of the buildings blocks off the horizon - or maybe even, it turns it vertical. The end of the sky he can only see above him and this only in the shape and form the surrounding buildings will allow him to.

Architecture, the design of buildings is inherently violent; lines drawn on paper dictate viewpoints which dictate lines of horizon. He tries to recollect all the moments when his positioning and movement was ever-so-subtly but strictly predefined, contained: Walking or jogging, sitting or standing, on a bus, on a train, in an airplane, at his desk... Wherever, whatever he was doing he would be moving along pre-drawn lines. He is an urbanite and so a follower by default, day-by-day finding himself at the receiving end of the city's visual violence.

In the urban web of lines the right to un-fragmented space becomes a contested field in itself. The outlines of the lush gardens of a suburban villa and that of shacks clustered together mark two trenches of an undeclared war. The walls of the villa don't just hide away their owners' guilty lifestyle: They also signal their right to set the horizons of both those inside and outside the walls. Moving beyond a mere right to some "privacy" this becomes a right to define one's experience of the city and the right to the city becomes *a right to see.*

Short-sightedness, the inability of the eye to see far is a quintessentially urban disease. The shortening of horizons renders the ability to see further than all those fake urban horizons mostly obsolete - and so the urbanite loses part of this only partially used sense.

What is hidden from him behind a wall, inside a skyscraper, does not stay the same over time. It occurs to him: empty urban space is never so. Take a construction site at night. An unused building, an abandoned square, some deserted train tracks. What they are is what everything around them is *not.* The train tracks of the present are different to the same a few years into the future. Empty urban space is never so: it is all it is contained in, minus it all. What the right to see comes to define, then, is the right to remember. Memory - that is, one's entire collection of seen images and experienced moments - is shaped from some viewing ability that is, in turn, under total control.

He walks past a CCTV camera. He pauses for a moment, just like the camera's operator could do: they could pause, play, fast-forward, rewind. Perhaps they could also shift the viewpoint a bit, change its angle... and that's about it. The operator does not live where their camera points - not only because of the physical distance from it but because of their inability to visually reach whatever location they are viewing, beyond some predefined limits.

How much more control has he got of his own viewpoint of the city? Advertising boards begging for his gaze, neon lights demanding it, the outline of the buildings putting it in order. He looks around and he can see it all, that is, no more than what his eyes can see.

contours of the neo-liberal city

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Nasser is an urban planner, researcher and self-declared Jerusalemite whose research interests revolve around the nexus between space, coloniality and contemporary restructuring with a secondary but stubborn fascination with systems theory. He currently lives between Jerusalem and Ramallah where he attempts to negotiate a discordant daily life and keep a lid on the rage!

Modernity, writes Marshall Berman [1988], is a state of perpetual becoming, a maelstrom of relentless disintegration and renewal that throws bodies and brick, flesh and stone into continuous upheaval. The modern city, partly constitutive, partly reflective of this 'creative-destruction', is in constant flux – the embodiment of a dialectical urbanism laced with fluid contradictions, irreconcilable conflicts and irreducible ambiguities. Think of cities, Thrift urges us, as performative, as in use, urban landscapes as incomplete [2000: 234]. This may be an idealistic assertion belied by the closed planning systems of the 'brittle city' [Sennett 2006], but it underlines a fundamental fact: cites are never static, they bespeak an inherent indeterminacy and open-endedness.

Yet it would be wrong to imagine a linear or teleological progression in urban change or transition. There are historical moments – 'moments of crisis' – when relatively ossified and embedded social structures and institutions, when established urban practices are rapidly reformed; 'openings' in which the rules can be re-written, from above or below, in which

new constellations appear (constellations that can hark back to past arrangements just as easily as leap into novel, unknown configurations). Ed Soja [1987] has demonstrated that modern urban transition parallels the wider reforms associated with official responses to the cyclical crises of international capitalism. With the global economic crisis and wide-reaching structural changes of the late 1970s and 1980s, urban policy-making and governance, and in turn form and morphology, similarly underwent significant (elite-led) change.

These political-economic and spatial transformations that were unfolding first across the cities of the advanced industrial core and then steadily over most other urban systems were described as a kind of 'restructuring' [Soja 1987; Brenner & Theodore 2005]. As early as 1989, David Harvey [1989] mapped out the shifts in urban policy that re-oriented governing institutions away from 'managerialism' and towards 'entrepreneurialism', or away from 'social reproduction' to a more strict concern with 'production' or 'accumulation' [Smith 2002]. Since then theorists and commentators have been steadily

observing and describing novel urban spatial patterns: Stephen Graham [2001] talks of the "splintering" of urban space and infrastructure; Ed Soja [2000] of "post-metropolitan landscapes"; Mike Davis [1990] coined the term 'fortress city'; Fainstein et al [1992] employ the concept of the 'dual city'; while Marcuse and van Kempen [2002] prefer the term 'partitioned city'.

All of these critical narratives reflect the fact that the established urban morphological patterns of the second half of the twentieth century and the relatively stable institutional structures they supported have undergone a tectonic and turbulent shift. At the same time a number of writers have begun to elucidate the causal relationship between these new spatial forms and the shift in accumulative structures associated with the neoliberal turn: Massey [2006], Caldeira [2000] and Rodgers [2004], in different ways, look at cities as the concrete reflection of new geographically proximate (and often violent) inequalities; Balbo [1993] emphasizes the withdrawal of the state-as-planner structure and the centripetal pressures of informal networks; Portes [2003] looks at a more mobile capital that complexifies

and 'localises' patterns of uneven geographical development, 'activating' and 'de-activating' different parts of the city; and Davis [2004, 2006] looks at Structural Adjustment programs that have levered hundreds of thousands of 'surplus' peasants into economically contracting cities and slums. More recently work has been done to frame these perspectives within a more holistic and overarching framework that examines the problematic of neoliberalism and speaks of the neoliberal(izing) urban order or the neoliberal(izing) city [Peck and Tcikell 2002; Brenner and Theodore 2002a; 2002b; 2005]. *"The point is not only that neoliberalism effects cities, but also that cities have become key institutional arenas in and through which neoliberalism itself is evolving"* [Brenner 2002a: 345]. What we have witnessed in effect is the neoliberalization of urban space and the urbanization of neoliberalism.

One reoccurring theme in all of this has been spatial fragmentation – both of the physical built environment and of political and social space. This essay seeks to critically examine urban fragmentation in Southern metropolises (where this phenomenon is most clear but by no means limited to) as an outcome and expression (and ultimately catalyst of) of broader neoliberlization processes. While some argue that the postcolonial city has always been a city of fragments, always marked by a *"continuously discontinuous pattern"* [Balbo 1993], some of the changes are new and need to be located in the multi-scalar process of political and economic restructuring associated with the neoliberal turn, many aspects of which are still evolving and at times in still illegible ways.

In the built environment fragmentation is manifest in deepening landscapes of inequality, acute socio-spatial polarisation and a fractalised morphological pattern that can be described as a kind of 'enclave' urbanism – the segregation of urban populations into self-enclosed 'islands' with parallel but distinct realities, physically proximate but institutionally and cognitively estranged. As Alsayyad and Roy [2006] point out the paradigmatic spaces of contemporary urbanism are the gated community, the slum and the camp. This fractured and exclusionary micro-geography is rationalised through a spectacular diffusion of security architecture (fences, fortified roads etc.), obligatory passage points (gates, checkpoints etc.), technologies of social control ('smart' CCTV, biometric tagging, etc.) and punitive revanchist urban policing. Once again, catalysed by class anxiety and paranoid

fanaticism, walls are becoming a ubiquitous feature of our urban (and international) syntax. Apart from the dissolution of notions of shared space, solidarity and responsibility, this spatial reality entails a political and institutional fragmentation of urban jurisdiction and spaces of citizenship with serious reverberations for the notions of urban representation, liveability and the promise of the city as locus of freedom and tolerance, conviviality and serendipity. To some, this seems to be the advent of a kind of frontier urban geography in which the continuous and linear divides associated with nation-state territoriality are steadily replaced by more flexible, patchy and localised, if less permeable, demarcations of the inside/outside binary [Weizman 2006; Graham 2006].

This paper is a conceptual paper, while it borrows from a variety of empirical sources it is not developed around specific case studies, fieldwork or an examination of a specific set of empirical data. The aim is to survey prevalent patterns in order to tease out some conceptual and analytic generalizations that will ultimately help us think about what kind of frameworks can best capture the connections between political-economic restructuring, institutional change and spatial transformation.

Neoliberalism(s) and the cities of the 'glocal' South

But how far can we talk about the universal 'neoliberal city'? Can we speak, in the same breath, so sweepingly about clearly diverse and distinct cities? And, why focus on the cities of the global South? In trying to map out general trends, tensions between the particular and the universal invariably surface; a certain contextual specificity, the particularities of place, the fine detail and delicate socio-spatial fabric of a city are all lost. Thrift, typical of the orthodoxies of 'postmodern' intellectual zeitgeist, rejects overarching and meta-narratives of the city, refusing any *"naturalizing espitemoligcal account that assumes there is a common urban order we can all access"* [2000: 257]. Yet as Jamie Peck illustrates, the ideational and ideological diffusion of neoliberal urban policy and orthodoxy has been startling and largely concurrent; there remains a remarkable coherence and doctrinal consistency even as it is transported and adapted to specific urban contexts [2006].

While neoliberal doctrine is partial and reiterative it is nonetheless hegemonic and pervasive

[Liu]. This is not to imply some kind of mechanical mediation, there is no automatic transmission belt from an etheral sphere of greater forces to reality on the ground [Massey 2007: 11]. Brenner and Theodore [2002b: 353] point out that neoliberal urban transition has been *"uneven, contentious, volatile and uncertain"*; it is path-dependent and place and context-specific, a complex mediation of *"agentic generalizing properties and local specificities"* [MacLeod 2002: 618]. They point to cities' inherited institutional and regulatory landscapes – policy regimes, historical legacies and political struggles – as forces that locally shape transition, giving neoliberal urban order a 'contextual embeddednes' [2002b: 358]. Nor has this rapid diffusion produced anything close to a 'flat world' or displaced the core-periphery relationship. On the contrary, neoliberalism has exarcebated uneven geogrpahical development. This is as true of cities as it is of states. Cities are crucial to neoliberal globalization, as Massey writes, but figure in very diverse, if relational, ways within it: London as a command and control centre is a powerful part of the same dynamic that produces elsewhere slum conurbations. Rather, with the partial integration of new hierarchies of cities, what we can observe is simultaneous convergence and divergence. While universal processes engender divergent spatial and temporal outcomes, the pervasive institutionalization, across different urban contexts, of a distinctly neoliberal production of space, and its contingent geographical imaginary, generates a kind of convergence in experience and urban form and challenges established binaries and dualities, or rather redraws dualities along new socio-spatial lines.

Keeping this in mind is important, because neoliberal restructuring has implied another shift: one in the primary location of experimental urban change. Neil Smith's now classic paper The New Globalism New Urbanism contains a reformulation of the hierarchy of the global cities thesis; in emphasising the participation of cities in the global production of surplus value (rather than command functions) Smith can argue that the frontier of change has radically shifted:

"The leading edge in the combined restructuring of urban scale and function does not lie in the old cities of advanced capitalism…rather, it lies in the large and rapidly expanding metropolises of Asia, Latin America and parts of Africa, where the Keynesian welfare state was never significantly installed, the definitive link between the city and social reproduction was never paramount, and the fetter of old forms and landscapes is much less strong" [2002: 436].

Neoliberal globalization, then, has rescaled and geographically re-oriented production; not only has the metropolitan scale come to dominate regions again, but the geographical diffusion of production means that Sao Paulo and Bangkok, Mexico and Shanghai, Mumbai and Seoul have emerged as significant, if still peripheral and subordinate, nodes in international circuits of accumulation [2002: 434]. It is in these *"production hearths of a new globalism"* that we witness the purest incarnation of neoliberal urban policy, that *"transnational architectures of control, wealth and power"* unleash a more pronounced fragmented and militarised geography.

This has led in a sense to a new kind of circularity of urban models and 'best practices': ideological formations, economic norms, spatial forms and governance styles forged in the command and control centres of the North and diffused through their pedagogic, media, cultural and institutional infrastructure reach a more 'pure' fruition in the South only to be 'recycled' back in the form of established practice. In this context, cities in the South can be seen as a new experimental frontier or laboratory, testing sites for non-linear change and wholesale urban restructuring and as such harbingers of potential futures. Witness Singapore's discriminatory electronic road pricing system touted in the UK as potential solution to congestion [Graham 2000]; or what Jamie Peck [2006] describes as a first-world Structural Adjustment Program drawn up for post-Katrina New Orleans; the speculative, monumental and spectacular architectural styles tested in China and Dubai and now sprouting in places like London; or Israel-Palestine the testing ground par excellence for military urbanism, urban counter-insurgency, racialized segregation as well as subversive spatial counter-practices. This, I believe, is part of what Jean and John Comaroff describe when they write that postcolonies have become especially critical sites for the production of social theory; that they are indispensable sites in this respect lies in *"the fact that many of the great historical tsunamis of the twenty-first century appear to be breaking first on their shores – or, if not first, then in their most hyperextended form – thence to reverberate around the Northern Hemispheric cosmopoles"* [2006: ix]. It is an epochal defining process well and truly underway...

Homo Sacer Quartet

(flesh machine*)

A boy resides out-of-place. Two pigs charge into the out-of-place. In the conjuncture of these two trajectories, an event is born. The boy challenges the violation of the border of his out-of-place by the pigs. The pigs park in-place and cross, once again, the limits of the heterotopia, this time on foot. The pigs injunct the boy. The boy responds to the injunction. The pigs shoot and destroy the life that "is not worth being lived". The pigs return in-place. The borders of the out-of-place are ruptured and urban space, from end to end, is recomposed into a thick burning network of heterotopia: *the city is on fire*.

For sovereignty, every life out-of-place is a life that is not worth being lived. The state of exception is imposed, even by suspension, on every life out-of-place, on every life that is acted not as a contemplation of privacy and its commodity-panoply, but as a social relation, as a self-constituted construction of the space and time of conviviality. The sovereign exception is not so much about the control or the destruction of a excess in itself, but about the creation or the definition of a space where juridico-political order can be perpetually validated. The state of exception classifies space and the bodies within it. It puts them in order. It imposes order upon them. With assimilation, commodification, surveillance and discipline. Executing the delinquent with prisons, psychiatric units, marginalisation. And wherever, whenever might be necessary with bullets, with bullets, with bullets.

In a society dedicated to the production of privacies the murder of a boy can only be conceptualised in the terms of the value of his privacy, the ontological base of property: the sacred right to one's own life. This is the only way in which death can be political: as a destruction of the source of property. The destruction of property, let alone of its source, is a dreadful crime in the bourgeois world. Even, or especially when it is committed by the apparatus charged with its protection. But to destroy properties in order to take revenge for the destruction of property, that is a doubly nefarious crime: Have you not understood a thing? All those tears, all the dirge, the requiems are not for a boy that attacked the power-that-safeguards-property, they are for the power that failed in its duty: the duty to defend life as the ultimate property, as privacy.

The body of an enemy now deceased can be sanitized, pillaged, transformed into a symbolic capital for the reproduction of sovereignty and finally, in the announcement or reminder of the capacity for the imposition of a generalised state of exception. An emergency confirming the sovereign monopoly on the definition of the real through the abolition of its symbolic legitimisation. The sovereignty, in tears, shouts: you are all private individuals, else you are all potential corpses. And society falls on its knees in awe of its idol and shows remorse: mea culpa; from now on, I will take care of myself only, as long as you safeguard its reproduction. The return to the normalcy of the private is paved with the spectacle of generalised exception. ⚸

10-12-2008, from the occupied Athens School of Economics and Business

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* Flesh Machine is an anarchist magazine *"on the body and its desiring machines"* published in Athens. It focuses on original publications and translations of articles and interviews on biopolitics, schizoanalysis, feminism, queer politics and the other wet aspects of capitalism and the revolution.

We are here/ we
are everywhere/
we are an image
from the future.

If I do not burn/ If you do not burn/ If we do not burn/
How will darkness come to light?

(Nazim Hikmet, "Like Kerem")

Clenching fear in their teeth the dogs howl: Return to normality – the fools' feast is over. The philologists of assimilation have already started digging up their cut-sharp caresses: *"We are ready to forget, to understand, to exchange the promiscuity of these few days, but now behave or we shall bring over our sociologists, our anthropologists, our psychiatrists! Like good fathers we have tolerated with restraint your emotional eruption – now look at how desks, offices and shop windows gape empty!"* The time has come for a return, and whoever refuses this holy duty shall be hit hard, shall be sociologised, shall be psychiatrised. An injunction hovers over the city: *"Are you at your post?"* Democracy, social harmony, national unity and all the other big hearths stinking of death have already stretched out their morbid arms.

Power, from the government to the family, aims not simply to repress the insurrection and its generalisation, but to produce a relation of subjectivation. A relation that defines bios - that is, political life, as a sphere of cooperation, compromise and consensus. *"Politics is the politics of consensus; the rest is gang-war, riots, chaos"*. This is a real translation of what they are telling us, of their effort to deny the living core of every action, and to separate and isolate us from what we can do: not to unite the two into one, but to break over and over again the one into two. The mandarins of harmony, the barons of peace and quiet, law and order, call on us to become dialectic. But those tricks are desperately old and their misery is transparent in the fat bellies of the trade-union bosses, in the washed-out eyes of the intermediaries, who like vultures perch over every negation, over every passion for the real. We saw them in May, we saw them in LA and Brixton, and we have been watching them over decades licking the long now white bones of the 1973 Athens Polytechnic. We saw them again yesterday when instead of calling for a permanent general strike they bowed to legality and called off the strike protest. Because they know all too well that the road to the generalisation of the insurrection cuts through the field of production: through the occupation of the means of production of a world that crushes us.

A day dawns tomorrow where nothing is certain… and what could be more liberating than this after so many long years of certainty? A bullet was able to interrupt the brutal sequence of all those identical days. The assassination of a 15-year old boy was the moment when a displacement took place, strong enough to bring the world upside down. A displacement from the seeing through of yet another day, to the point that so many think simultaneously: *"That was it, not one step further, all must change and we will change it all"*. The revenge for the death of Alex has turned into a revenge for every day that we are forced to wake up in this world. And what seemed so hard proved to be so simple.

This is what has happened, what we have. If something scares us is the return to normality. For in the destroyed and pillaged streets of our cities of light we see not only the obvious results of our rage, but the possibility of starting to live. We have no longer anything else to do than to install ourselves in this possibility, transforming it into a living experience: by grounding on the field of everyday life, our creativity, our power to materialise our desires, our power not to contemplate but to construct the real. This is our vital space. All the rest is death.

Those who want to understand will understand. Now is the time to break the invisible cells that chain each and everyone to his or her pathetic little life. And this does not require solely or necessarily one to attack police stations and torch malls and banks. The time that one deserts his or her couch and the passive contemplation of his or her own life and takes to the streets to talk and to listen, leaving behind anything private, contains (in the field of social relations) the destabilising force of a nuclear bomb. This is precisely because the - up to now - fixation of everyone with his or her microcosm is tied to the traction forces of the atom, the individual: Those forces that make the (capitalist) world turn. This is the dilemma: with the insurgents or alone… and this is one of the very few times when a dilemma can be at the same time so absolute and real. 🔊

11-12-2008 Initiative from the occupied Athens School of Economics and Business

a love letter
Burn baby, burn!
to Athens

I've been meaning to write you this letter for a while, from the moment I heard about Alex's murder… but there had been no time for love letters so far. There was no time to think, no time to write. Since it all happened you had been on fire. How can you hand a letter to a flaming city? I just tried to come back to you as fast as I could.

I knew this time would be no ordinary one as soon as I arrived. The talking heads on the TV screens were howling as usual yet there was something even more vicious and desperate in their tone, it had become something closer to the whining of a wounded and frightened dog. I gave up watching them pretty quick. For all my delight there was little use in listening to the sobbing for the crumbling of their order, there was little other than sheer joy to extract from that gaze, the gaze of the dog whose master has disappeared leaving it with nothing to defend but a hollow, burnt land. I knew I had to hit your streets. To get to you, I had to be out there. That I knew. What I didn't know was what to expect.

I stepped out of the front door.

Walking on your streets on the night of Alex's funeral felt like an odd dream. Like one of those dreams of mine where I see nothing, where I can only sense that I am falling. It's a free fall, dark all around and I feel this mixture of fear, exhilaration and perplexity. I can only think, "what next?". Street after street, corner after corner. Cops all around yet it was not them who worried me. What I was dying to find out was the situation at the Polytechnic.

Where any more of your children still out there? To be alone, on a night like this, would only bring back that horrible vertigo feeling. To express the rage I felt, I needed many on my side. We all did.

I was approaching the Polytechnic.

A banging sound getting louder. A slow roar coming from the distance. I could begin to sense what was happening. A couple of nights ago they had taken away one of your children. Tonight, like in the two previous nights, the rest of your wild, loyal children were at play. We wouldn't let you alone, we wouldn't let anyone alone anymore. I walked out on Patision Avenue to an unforgettable sight. I knew you were proud on that moment, I could feel it. Thousands and thousands of your children were there. This was no called-for demonstration, no official gathering, nothing to even come to resemble some negotiation with normality, with their murky order. This was a fool's feast, a delirious mass, a popular lighting up of the streets. I saw migrants from all over, I saw punks from Eksarhia, I saw your faithful crazies I usually find rambling your streets. The passers-by always see through them, they walk next, past, over them. Not on that night. That night there were no passers-by, that night we were all on the streets for Alex, we were there for us, we were there for you. That night we turned Patision Avenue into your flaming heart.

(…)

The morning after never came. What came was a morning no more; the evenings that followed were

evenings no longer. Nights and days all blended into one moment: our long, long moment of revolt. Do you remember that moment? What am I saying, how could you forget. At first, that odd feeling that people had abandoned you, that they had been scared, that the talking heads had finally won. Long assemblies in the universities, one demonstration after the other, two, three and four in the same day. We didn't want to leave you for a moment, we didn't want to leave your streets. If we went home, normality would win and so, living on your streets was our only protection against it. And from inside their homes more of your children would walk out. They would come out hesitantly

the talking heads breathing a sigh of relief. For a moment, I believed it. I started walking up the road past the still occupied general confederation of workers' building.

I stood still.

I tried to absorb the image in front of my eyes. The building was wrapped in banners and a huge red and black flag hanged proudly from its top. The speakers across the entire street were under the occupiers' control. They were blasting out that song...

> NOW EVERYTHING IS BURNING. WHAT DO WE DO NOW?

yet confident that something was happening. They had all seen the gaze in the talking heads' eyes, they knew something was wrong. But what? The only way to find out was on the streets. We became more. And more. Days turned into weeks. We were getting tired. Was that normality's plan all along? To let the children exhaust themselves in play? Couldn't it see (*you* could, I am sure) that this was no game any of us was playing, that it was changing us once and for all? Suddenly, as suddenly as it all started, it all began to reach an end. The dreadful moment was coming, we feared: we were going home. I was on Patision Avenue watching one of

Landlords and power whores/
On my people they took turns/
Dispute the suits I ignite/
And then watch 'em burn/
Burn, burn, yes ya gonna burn...

They were playing our song, they were playing your song, the song of the thousands of Alexis' that nestle on your streets. And on that moment, I knew it. I knew that we were not over, not by a long shot, that what we have lived so far was only a glimpse of the future. I salute you, I salute us and what is to come. ☭
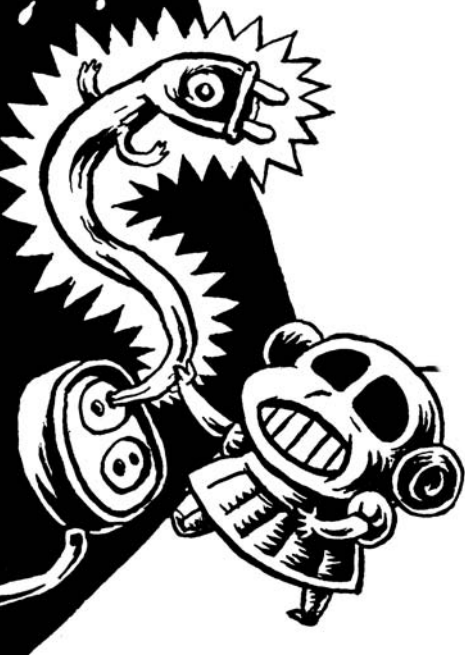
afterword: before we get to the future

Before we get to the future. Before we get to even see the future. We must see our comrades out of prison. *Now*. Those arrested during the December revolt in Greece so far number more than 300 and there are at least 60 of them still in prison, including those in pre-trial detention and those that have already been convicted. The number of migrants arrested, convicted and deported (through "legal" procedures that make a parody of whatever state "justice") is simply impossible to know. A movement that forgets its prisoners is a movement no more. This issue of Occupied London is free, as always. This time however we ask you to consider offering a donation for your copy. All donations will go towards the December revolt's prisoner support.

Prisoner updates: occupiedlondon.org/greece-prisoners

MAX ANDERSSON