SOLIDARITÉ

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Editorial Preface

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As the pages of Solidarité are written, a concrete struggle is being waged. Expressed in a myriad of ways, the battle between wage-labor and capital is becoming ever more intense. Neoliberalism is fueling the greatest destruction of public assets since the fall of the Soviet Union, while the Dow Jones – the lifeblood of finance capitalism – is doing better than ever. What is being seen by many as a crisis of capitalism is in fact a great success...

Capitalism is fulfilling its purpose in some senses better than ever. But this does not mean better for us. The strength of the logic of capital lies in its ability to be cohesive yet antagonistic. It also has as its weapon the force of habit and ideology. All of this must be taken into consideration. Such is why this project has been formulated. Marx, Engels, and countless other revolutionaries have held above all one principle: the working class must emancipate itself. Self-published by workers and students, Solidarité offers a forum for serious discussion in the field of radical left theory, philosophy, and politics. However, the words written on these pages are meaningless until gripped by the masses. Lenin stated that newspapers could be the collective propagandist, agitator, and organizer of the people. Though a journal, it is with this spirit that Solidarité is being built. Our goal is not to inform the working class from above, but as fellow workers. To collectively engage in a ruthless critique of all that exists. To demystify and expose the exploitation and alienation inherent in capitalism in the only way possible i.e., through profound class consciousness. To elucidate the doctrine of our collective emancipation as well as to facilitate it. As Adorno once said, the bourgeois' love of man stems from his hatred of what man might become.

Long live the revolutionary class struggle!

Until victory, always!

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THE LEADERLESS ORGANIZATION: OUT OF NECESSITY

Matthew Carson

The emergence of protests with no figurehead, no leadership organizations has been hailed by some as a success and as the new progression within the left.

There is a problem of relationship to authority that is addressed improperly by the 'Communist' intellectual. In this we see the modern and postmodern generational divide. Those who have existed exclusively in the postmodern context do not thirst for central authority; they despise it. Beyond this underlying sentiment which is present in discourse, there lies something else. A way of curtailing authority. The hidden anonymity of the disposable multitude. One person can be tortured, humiliated, dissected. One person can betray the interest of a group. The problem is many fold, but relates to the ability to neutralize charismatic figures within resistance movements. A leader can be humiliated through their sexuality, a leader can be exposed as criminal, can be the subject of tabloid reporting. A leader can be dissected publicly. There motivations can be assigned by a narrative. This systemic correction is a product of state agencies and media's ability to find out information about individuals which can be used to divert understandings of situations away from the substantial claims of an organization., Instead, they have a person that can be envisioned as responsible for the actions of the group.

American media apparatuses that exist to serve this function, that of the scaffolds and executioners, do not either have the format to do so nor the attention of the demographics necessary to witness such an event. The medium is limited, and the message must fit into the parameters of the sixty second

sentence. Instead what we see is vague explanations of motivations which surely can not encapsulate these new non-organization organizations. What we see in this is a perverse dream of the anarchists come alive, but through the productive methods of the Internet. The Internet was promised to change the way we do everything, and it has done so. No longer is there an effective blackballing of the McCarthy era. Those dismissed, ignored or unknown to the 'mainstream' become Internet spectacles.

There was no media blackout that television and news agencies could put in place to block the effects of Tahrir Square. It was the start of a resistance movement that would not stop. It was the start of a resistance movement that could not stop. The assassinations and castrations of leadership left this disposable multitude to organize differently. There was no leader to bargain with. There was no longer an effective system of repression. The state structures used for repression depend on internal structures within resistance movements to exploit, to work within. There must be a structural element to suppress.

The lack of leadership, caused by late capitalism's repressive apparatuses had caused a change within these movements. Their organizational structure was a constant flux. No longer could a handful of undercover police officers identify leaders to arrest, discredit or at the very least bargain with. The failure of the concept of leadership had been removed.

But this resistance is not purely digital. It exists in constant flux between hopeful radicals and Internet pirates. It exists within a realm of that which is possible on a cellular phone, a commodity designed for communication through capitalist production. It exists in a group of people in the street. These new media, 'the Internet', is an inversion of the old medias, still the death rattles of this old functions of the media echo in the new media, and in the statements and iterations of internet users. The reproduced race, class and genders come with them.

Copypasta will ruin everything. And everything must come to ruin in order.

In this we find ourselves, as lone subjects, isolated in chairs experiencing the spectacle of revolution: no participation required. Until it's your turn to stand in a park and scream. You too can be part of the spectacle. Late capitalism has come to a breaking point with its apparatuses for reproducing narratives. Their truths must compete on the artificial markets that were hastily constructed by opportunistic businesses working in tandem with state agencies, trying to contain this new imaginary space as fast as it could be constructed. It has outsourced the most important function in media: it has crowd sourced the news' narrative function. It no longer has a way to construct the narratives and can not possibly dismiss every counternarrative. Huffington Post can be owned by whomever has the capital to assert control over it, yet its content can not be monitored. Wikipedia can be edited by anyone, but anyone editing must answer to the disposable multitude. There is a different sort of information order emerging, and it is not suited for repressing information: this information could be purely fantasy or it could correspond directly to states of affairs.

In the vast body of information, larger than any that has ever existed, this information is reposted and reproduced a million fold. This sort of historical momentum is not to be trifled with, can not be bargained with, and can not be dissected. There can be no show trial. It can not accuse it of perverse sexual acts. It can not bring it into the fold. It can not have it work within the confines of a party.

The failure of the new media to address the demand for unfettered information leads to a system of information production unlike the system that was in place to produce "news". This new system is that of a system of networks beyond a model of comprehension. Analogies would fall shorter than to provide meaning. Instead we can look at particulars of these systems and speak in limited ways about what they indicate of the whole.

The new communication and the new resistance are in the response to specific conditions of production and specific relationships developing to protect production.

The distinction between the state spying apparatuses and media is not there to be made. To understand the functioning of said apparatus, you must understand that through observation, the media constructs around your interests that are performed through your actions. Clicking on things, on links on the Internet, indicates an interest, and that interest is tracked by state apparatuses that "tailor" your experience to match the ideology that you yourself have demonstrated by your performance of actions. This demonstration is the interest of the state in so much as it allows for marketing to be targeted towards you, and identifies aberrant behavior which can be in turn addressed by enforcement agencies. The distinctions between these media and security apparatuses are purely bourgeois distinctions. To the subjects participating it is a unified phenomena.

Your subjectivity is not only known and produced through your consumption in this new media. It is known and produced through your productive capacities. The new revolutionary practice without leadership is simultaneously undefeatable and ineffectual. Demanding change will inevitably lead to changes in arrangements in superstructural elements and in forces of production. Relations of production, at least the all important "who benefits" will maintain as long as leaderless social movements maintain.

SCHOOL OF HARD SHOCKS: THE CHICAGO SCHOOL CLOSINGS, ECONOMIC SHOCK THERAPY, AND THE POTENTIAL FOR A RADICAL FUTURE

Scott D. Folsom

"A subjugated land and its people becomes both the laboratory and the raw material for reinventing the imperial self[.]" – Sarah Hogan, "Utopia, Ireland, and the Tudor Shock Doctrine: Spenser's Vision of Capitalist Imperialism"[1]

INTRODUCTION

May 22 ordinarily marks the beginning of the end of the traditional American school year. Graduation ceremonies are planned, final exams are administered, and students daydream of that temporally displaced utopia called "summertime". For Chicagoans, the most recent May 22 was a more somber beginning-of-the-end: it was the starting point of the closure of fifty public schools – forty-nine elementary buildings, and one high school – ostensibly due to budgetary constraints and underutilization.[2] Immediate public response carried a uniform outrage, and the Chicago Teachers Union continues to pursue a response strategy that involves both rhetoric and the utilization of the legal ideological state apparatus[3].

The closures themselves are part of a broader American trend in education – as public funds for education become scarcer, so do public schools, with the buildings becoming infrastructural framework for the burgeoning charter school industry. In a sense, code words like "underutilization" are used as justification for the slow but orderly march of privatization into the territory of the public school system. This spread of the

capitalist project through the destruction or forcible seizure of public goods calls to mind the work of Naomi Klein, specifically her bestseller *The Shock Doctrine*, in which she outlines "the rise of disaster capitalism"[4]. The core theme of her analysis – that, during the postwar period, the Chicago School economists' discovery the power of violent change to ease the implementation of *laissez-faire* economic policies – offers the most coherent means of understanding the motivation and potential endgame of the Chicago public school liquidation sale.

The school closures also embody the Marxist class struggle, in that they highlight the inequities caused by funding education through a tax framework that relies upon the fiction of private property. Consider the words of the Rev. John Thomas, responding to an editorial in the *Chicago Tribune*:

> "At New Trier High School in one of the wealthier suburbs of Chicago, all students will have iPads for their course work by the fall of 2014. The district will pay about 40% of the costs, leaving families to come up with the remaining $350 in purchase or leasing options. School officials justify this by touting the educational benefits and by pointing out that this will allow the school to phase out some of its 1200 laptops. One page away is an article about the school board of the City of Chicago which voted yesterday afternoon to close 50 public elementary schools. In thousands of districts like New Trier, students are getting iPads; in Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, and many other places, students are

getting moving orders and teachers
are losing jobs[5].”

Thomas also highlights the ideological orientation of the paper he critiques by describing their allocation of column inches: plenty of space for the lambasting of teachers who dare to question the board's decision, with precious little space for critics of said decision. His real contribution to the discussion, however, comes with this mention of New Trier's iPad acquisition. The quality of one's education in the United States is proximately caused by one's neighborhood, which is ultimately caused (as are all things, per the Marxist hermeneutic) by one's class.

However, the response, both in terms of the level of involvement and the broad coalition of participants, embodies an increasingly rare glimmer of hope for the ability of the American populace to organize in opposition to the continued neoliberal seizure of the commonwealth into the market. The prolific philosopher and social critic Slavoj Žižek offers this framework for understanding "radical emancipatory outbursts" such as the protests surrounding this sale in his most recent work, *The Year of Dreaming Dangerously*:

"Radical emancipatory outbursts cannot be understood in this way: instead of analyzing them as part of the continuum of past and present, we should bring in the perspective of the future, taking them as limited, distorted (sometimes even perverted) fragments of a utopian future that lies dormant in the present as its hidden potential."[6]

While Žižek cautions his readers against putting "too much energy into a desperate search for the 'germs of Communism'," calling these events "signs that, paradoxically,

precede that of which they are signs," it remains possible to detect whether an event can be considered the "germ" of some possible future change in the organization of society.[7] This analysis will, thus, make provisional attempts to "read" the future from these utopian shards, but cannot, for lack of clairvoyance, achieve anything more than a well-evidenced hypothesis.

Together, Klein and Žižek offer a complete way of reading the Chicago school closure strike. The combined framework provides a means of reconciling the decidedly dystopian recession of the public sector from the education system with the utopian possibilities that stem from the results.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS AS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ECONOMIC "SHOCK THERAPY"

The process of disaster capitalism that Klein analyzes in *The Shock Doctrine* often affects the educational institutions of any body politic subjected to the economic shock treatment. Klein herself notes two examples of this intersection: one in her case study of the Pinochet regime, and the other in her analysis of the Bush administration response to Hurricane Katrina[8]. It is the latter of these examples, the one closest to home, that embodies the role of the charter school in American education: that of the option of last resort when public resources are either unable to meet the educational needs of the people, or when public authorities are removed from the role of education policymaking.

In the case of Chicago, charter schools are rarely established due to the inability of the city to supply education resources to its youth, but rather out of the capitalist desire to profit in the name of innovation. Surprisingly enough, one such example comes from a previous set of school closings in Chicago, during the directorship of now-Education Secretary Arne Duncan – the charter established in place of one of the three schools he closed is now "on academic probation with the threat of closure"[9]. Charter schools, for better or for worse, have been solidly engrained into the collective mind of the American

education reform movement as a panacea for school systems in struggle. With so many school buildings about to come on the market, the raw material for charter school operators yearning to reinvent the education system is in abundant supply.

The mounting evidence suggests, however, that charter schools lack any overwhelming proof of their claims of efficacy. The most common argument made in favor of charter schooling is that the provision of subsidized private education[10] offers a greater level of "school choice". This is usually accompanied by calls for the use of public funds to offer "vouchers" to families who wish to send their children to privately operated schools. This effectively rerouting public education funds to the private sector at both the client and provider ends of the system. This is carried out with the belief that parents will respond positively to their experiences with charter schools, but the research provides no conclusive evidence of this[11].

Charter schools make a number of promises. Parents come to them seeking enhanced rigor, superior safety provisions, greater individual student guidance, and an atmosphere that emphasizes the importance of future plans[12]. Do charter schools live up to these promises? No. Numerous studies and analyses indicate that charter schools are not superior to their publicly administrated counterparts, and may actually be lagging behind them[13]. Despite this, charters have become an increasingly popular policy option among both major capitalist political parties in the U.S., and:

> "The worry is that President Obama and others are getting seduced by the movement because they're looking at the results from boutique charters [like KIPP and Aspire] rather than at the wide array of charters that don't outperform regular schools," says Bruce Fuller, an education

professor at the University of California at Berkeley. Professor Fuller remains "cautiously optimistic" about charters and says they seem to do some things well, such as attracting energetic young teachers. But, he adds, "It's irresponsible that President Obama would [push] all 50 states to create more charter schools in light of such sketchy evidence.[14]"

Prior to the lack of definitive evidence about parent response, and the definite negative evidence about the effectiveness of charter schools in fulfilling their promises, are fundamental socialist objections to Chicago's relinquishment of public school facilities onto the private market. First, when the likely event comes that these school buildings are captured by the various charter school businesses that operate across the United States, the previously secure, unionized teaching jobs that they once embodied will be replaced by "publicly funded but mostly non-unionized charter schools"[15]. The result is that, while the teachers whose jobs are sacrificed due to the closures will likely be able to return to work, it will be in a workplace that does not recognize their fundamental right to collectively bargain. On a more philosophical level, the sale of public goods embodies the sale of political power – teaching is, after all, in the properly Freirean sense, a political act – to the private sector. When education becomes a product, it comes to embody the capitalist ideology of its salespeople.

The future of Chicago's vacated school buildings remains to be seen. The omnipresence of the charter school industry – the specter hanging over the American educational establishment – provides the most likely, and most problematic, path forward. The financial disaster that has struck the Chicago Public Schools will go down in history as yet another moment at which the

neoliberal exploitation and creation of societal and economic shock for capital gain.

SHARDS OF A POSSIBLE UTOPIA: THE RESPONSE TO THE CHICAGO FIRESALE

Before continuing, we must clarify a theoretical issue – that of the Žižekian stance on the prediction of the future through the events of the present. A critique of Žižek's assertion of the impossibility of reverse historicism rests on the relatively uncontroversial ground upon which Žižek himself builds his analysis. For, when Žižek writes that there "is a delicate balance between reading the signs from the (hypothetical Communist) future and maintaining the openness of that future," he permits the "desperate search" that he simultaneously decries as being excessively limiting when practiced without attention to openness. The ambivalence toward a sort of utopistic tea-leaf reading presents an openness to use the notion of reverse historicism much the way Žižek does for the entirety of *The Year of Dreaming Dangerously*: as a means of exploring the potential future outcomes of events, rather than imposing a universal meaning upon a given occurrence[16].

Perhaps the most iconic image coming from the response to the events in Chicago is that of nine-year-old Asean Johnson, whose "impassioned", extemporaneous oration on the subject won the protests a temporary boost in media attention[17]. The victory, however, does not simply come from this momentary elevation in reporting, but rather from the hope that Johnson embodies for the future. The most central locus of hope comes from Johnson's stated intention:

> "I wanted to be there to support my school and for the other schools that are closing, because really, I think that no school should be closing," he told theGrio."[18]

There is no way to reasonably predict that Johnson will hold the same attitudes at 19 or 29 that he holds at nine. But these feelings speak to a broader reality, in that they are likely not uncommon – Asean Johnson may speak to a generational shift on the issue of demonstrative activism. His remark that the demonstrations were "a team help, a team effort" provides at least a glimmer of hope. More importantly, however, Johnson's use of demonstrative politics worked – the school that he attended was removed from the list of schools to be closed[19]. The success of this act of resistance, however meager in comparison to the scale of the problem, indicates a shift in the balance of power. Nonviolent activism retains the power to change the status quo, despite the dominance of a narrative that indicates that protest politics is a dying medium.

Significant work has also been done within the worker's movement, specifically on the part of the Chicago Teacher's Union. The CTU is taking Mayor Rahm Emanuel's endorsement of the school closures as a well needed motivation to "change the political landscape in the city," a euphemistically-worded indication of their plans to thwart the mayor's reelection[20]. Further, the aforementioned use of the legal system to challenge school closures indicates that the CTU is perfectly willing and currently able to resume a multifaceted mode of attack[21].

Rather than pointing to a future for the struggle concerning the schools, though, this points to a future for the strength and legitimacy of organized labor itself. Since the neoliberal project began in the 1980s, a concentrated attempt to discredit the process of collective bargaining (and, in the case of recent legislative measures, disable unions from engaging in said process) has left workers in a position of relative helplessness. Thus, one should expect to see a response similar to that which met the CTU's 2012 strike: public outrage directed toward educators who dare to care about their own working conditions[22]. The response, in this case, is far from that. Public opinion is decidedly against the closings, thanks in large part to the vocal opposition of the CTU[23].

Activist responses such as those mentioned above come together to form a coherent narrative. After years of suffering crippling publicity attacks at the hands of the neoliberals, the revolutionary tools of collective bargaining and demonstration are regaining ground. These elements, read together, also point to a distant future in which this localized regaining of ground finds broader acceptance, eventually leading to a broadened acceptance of the legitimate place of labor in discussions about the economy (and, ultimately, their seizure of the means of production, culminating in the dawn of communism). The more likely story in the near term, of course, is that the neoliberal capitalist project will survive the protests, and continue largely unscathed. However, as Žižek would remind us, we must maintain the openness of the future, and recognize the possibility of authentic, sustainable political change.

NOTES/REFERENCES

[1] Hogan, Sarah. "Utopia, Ireland, and the Tudor Shock Doctrine: Spenser's Vision of Capitalist Imperialism." *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 42.2 (2012): 462-86. Print. Here, Hogan is describing the early capitalist colonialist attitudes of Edmund Spenser's *A View of the Present State of Ireland*; her remark on subjugated peoples and lands seems appropriate for the discussion of the neoliberal (and perhaps neoimperial) project of never-ending privatization.

[2] Reuters. "Chicago School Closings: Board Set To Vote On Mass Shutdown Plan."*The Huffington Post*. TheHuffingtonPost.com, 22 May 2013. Web. 01 June 2013.

[3] Bellware, Kim. "CTU, Rahm Emanuel School Closings: Union Vows Political Shakeup -- And Mayor's Ouster."*The Huffington Post*. TheHuffingtonPost.com, 23 May 2013. Web. 01 June 2013, and Erbentraut, Joseph. "Chicago School Closing Lawsuit: Teachers Union, Parents File Third Suit Against Closures."*The Huffington Post*. TheHuffingtonPost.com, 29 May 2013. Web. 01 June 2013.

[4] Klein, Naomi. *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. New York: Metropolitan Books: 2007. Print.

[5] Strauss, Valerie. "The Rev. John Thomas: No Act of God Caused Chicago Schools Closings." *The Answer Sheet By Valerie Strauss*. The Washington Post, 23 May 2013. Web. 6 June 2013.

[6] Žižek, Slavoj. *The Year of Dreaming Dangerously*. London: Verso Books. 2012. Print.

[7] ibid, p.128-9.

[8] Klein, op. cit. pp. 84, 410.

[9] Strauss, Valerie. "The Biggest Irony in Chicago's Mass Closing of Schools." *The Answer Sheet By Valerie Strauss*. The Washington Post, 30 May 2013. Web. 1 June 2013.

[10] We must remain vigilant against falsehood, and always remember that, while charter schools make the claim that they remain public through the acceptance of public funds, their lack of accountability to the standards set for traditional public schools, and their operation and ownership by private entities make them as private as any other school.

[11] Buckley, Jack, and Mark Schneider. "Are Charter School Parents More Satisfied With Schools? Evidence From Washington, DC." *Peabody Journal of Education* 81.1 (2006): 57-78. Print.

[12] See Almond, Monica (2013) "The Great Migration: Charter School Satisfaction Among African American Parents," LUX: A Journal of Transdisciplinary Writing and Research from Claremont Graduate University: Vol. 2: Iss. 1, Article 1, in which Almond also provides advice "for traditional public school leaders to consider the

implementation of these practices," demonstrating that there is nothing inherent to the supposed superiority of the charter school.

[13] Miner, Zach. "Charter Schools Might Not Be Better - On Education (usnews.com)."*US News & World Report*. US News, 17 June 2009. Web. 2 June 2013. Also, Paulson, Amanda. "Study: On Average, Charter Schools Do No Better than Public Schools."*The Christian Science Monitor*. The Christian Science Monitor, 29 June 2010. Web. 02 June 2013. The study cited by Paulson comes from the federal government, and finds that "Middle-school students who were selected by lottery to attend charter schools performed no better than their peers who lost out in the lottery and attended nearby public schools[.]"

[14] Paulson, ibid.

[15] Reuters, ibid.

[16] Žižek, op. cit., p. 128-9

[17] Workneh, Lilly. "Meet Asean Johnson: 9-year-old activist fights Chicago school closings." *TheGrio*. NBC News, 31 May 2013. Web. 06 June 2013.

[18] Workneh, ibid.

[19] Workneh, ibid.

[20] Bellware, ibid.

[21] Erbentraut, ibid.

[22] The New York Times Editorial Board. "EDITORIAL: Chicago Teachers' Folly." *The New York Times*. The New York Times, 12 Sept. 2012. Web. 06 June 2013. If the title is any indication, the protests were certainly not well received by the institutions of capitalism, especially not the media ideological state apparatus. Opponents to the strike action were able to sway the conversation in their favor using students as political pawns, never mind that the aims of the teachers in question ultimately served the students as well.

[23] Strauss, op. cit., "The Rev. John Thomas: No Act of God Caused Chicago Schools Closings."

BECOMING-GHOST, SPECTERS OF REVOLT: THE GHOSTS OF
GEIST AND CAPITAL

Richard Gilman-Opalsky, Ph.D.

Ghosts are real and normal. What is truly "paranormal" is their absence. [1]

To understand the meaning of this proclamation, we start by defining, or by redefining, its key terms.

I do not use the term "ghost" to specify anything supernatural or in any celestial sense. Rather, let's begin with the question of what a ghost, or a specter, does. A ghost may do many things, but its primary activity—the one which distinguishes the ghost as a ghost—is to haunt. To be haunted is to be troubled or followed by the presence of some invisible thing, some unseen entity that one nonetheless feels or knows to be present. Indeed, a ghost may haunt as an invisible presence, or as a scarcely visible phenomenon, which affectively transforms the context in which one lives or acts. Ghosts are typically understood to haunt particular locations, objects, or people with which they are associated in some intimate and historical way. All of this is quite conventional to the common definition of ghosts, and yet it is a language that can be used to describe the normal—perhaps universal—experience of being haunted by personal or political history, being haunted by the bad things we have done or that have been done to us. On the personal level, when we speak of one's "baggage," or of being troubled by a memory, by a traumatic event, people can even name the specific ghosts that haunt them. Of course, there are other ways of speaking of these things, but I shall argue that none of them are as useful as the language of ghosts for diagnostic and prescriptive purposes.

We do not have to go out on any shaky limbs to reclaim the language of ghosts from its supernatural and religious captors. Let us consider the meanings of the German word "*Geist*." Depending on context, "*Geist*" can be translated as the English words "mind," "spirit," or "ghost." The word *Geist* is etymologically identical to the English word ghost. But for a long time, English renderings have reduced the tripartite meaning of the word to "spirit/mind" or "spirit (mind)," and choosing which one to go with has a complex philosophical history dating back (at least) to G.W.F. Hegel's *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, or *The Phenomenology of Mind*.[2] Both of these are titles for the same book that can still be found in English publication today. We cannot finally settle the choice between one and the other title, because understanding Hegel's philosophy requires both spiritual-metaphysical and rationalist connotations. Hegel's work depends upon a more robust conception of *Geist* and resists reductive translation. In cognitive science and neuropsychology, and in the philosophical work that centralizes these, for example that of Daniel Dennett, spirit has fallen off entirely, because science is more confident than ever before that everything that was mysterious enough to be called "spiritual" can now be demystified as some complexity or another of human brain function.[3]

We must notice the tendency in philosophy and science to strip *Geist* of all its ghostly meaning, whilst even phonetically, the word "*Geist*" is closer to the word "ghost" than any of its more common renderings. But there is more than a phonetic force for ghosts left in the concept and meaning of *Geist*, for the ghosts that I want to speak of are those that haunt our minds, as individual persons and collectivities, in psychological, social, and psycho-social senses. The tripartite meaning of the word "*Geist*" already embodies the idea we shall be working out in the present essay, because that meaning conceives the domain of the mind as also the domain of ghosts, and the brain (or mind) is where haunting takes hold of us. On this point, even the most materialistic cognitive scientist would agree, such as when the scientist debunks ghostly activity as "your mind playing tricks on you." We need not refute the debunking, but can go farther to say

that every person's mind plays tricks on them and that, in this sense precisely, everyone has ghosts.

Recall the opening proclamation: Ghosts are real and normal. What is "paranormal" is their absence. What is meant by "paranormal" in this proclamation is the rather literal and etymological sense of the word, scrubbed of its supernatural and religious encrustations. "Paranormal" is a relatively new word, a 20th century term that designates experiences outside of the range of normal human experience. If we consider ghosts vis-à-vis *Geist*, in the context provided above, then we can understand the assertion that ghosts are real and normal, and that their absence is paranormal. There is no semantic sorcery here, for the word-forming prefix "para" always indicates "alongside, beyond, contrary to, irregular, or abnormal," hence "paralegal" indicates action beyond, outside of, or against the law, and paranormal indicates some experience beyond, outside of, or against what is normal.

Given this, it is fair to say that some ghosts may be paranormal, but only in a differently qualified sense. For example, if you are haunted by some experience from your past that haunts scarcely anyone else, an experience that is un-relatable to others within the social context, if the ghosts that haunt you are beyond the world of common experience, then your ghosts are paranormal indeed, but they are not, for that reason, celestial apparitions. Holding off, for now, specific considerations of some one particularly un-relatable haunting or another, we can establish the general premise that everyone is haunted by something, that every human person with a history of experiences in the world is haunted by some ghost(s). It is upon this general premise that we may say, ghosts are real and normal.

If we invert the logic of fear that usually attends discussions of ghosts, we also invert its normative underpinnings. For example, a social system full of exploitation and human suffering, we could say, *should be* haunted by the miseries it proliferates and sanctions. Extreme wealth in the face of growing and widespread impoverishment should be haunted, if not on moral or ethical grounds, then by the threat of mutinies on the

horizon. An everyday life of generalized anxiety and despair could and should be haunted by the possibility of renewed pleasure and joy. Sometimes a haunting is a good thing, as in the case of a perpetrator of an awful crime being haunted by what he's done. Sometimes the haunting is a reassuring thing, a thing that afflicts and worries the existing state of affairs. Political systems are haunted by revolutions, whether from the past or possible ones in the future, and every capitalist hierarchy is haunted by the possibilities of insubordination. In this essay, I argue that ghosts can be part of what disfigures and harms us, or part of what emancipates us and transforms the world for the better.

In what follows, I argue four specific lines in relation to this introduction. First, I argue that every human person has ghosts, and that these may be good or bad. Second, I argue that ghosts haunt institutions, social and political. These ghosts comprise an ethical conscience, a revolutionary potentiality, or both. Third, I argue that some ghosts need to be busted, and that ghost-busting can be a liberatory and rehabilitative praxis. Finally, I argue that every society is haunted by its ghosts, but that this haunting is too localized and anchored to particular scenes of historical crimes. Often what are needed are ever more ghosts and deterritorialized haunting. This requires a kind of "becoming-ghost" politics according to which existing relations of power are troubled and spooked by forces beyond—beyond the state, outside and against it, often invisible, scarcely visible, but which can transform the contexts in which we live.

I. HAUNTED PERSONS: YOUR/MY GHOSTS

Each of us is haunted. Class analysis may be of little help in determining the nature of a personal haunting. The question of what haunts a person can only be answered in highly differentiated personal contexts. Your ghosts might remain a private matter were it not for the fact that what haunts you colors the nature of your relationships. Either you would have to tell us what haunts you, or we might be able to guess after we've had

some sustained and intimate relationality. Your ghosts could be many things that haunt you. If you were betrayed by a lover you once trusted with confidence, the possibility of betrayal might haunt you. If you did wrong to another, the memory of the pain you inflicted might haunt you. You might be haunted by something that you said, something you shouldn't have said, even something you said by accident, which can nonetheless create a memory that is present and recurring throughout your life. You can be haunted in more obvious ways, by the memory of a dead parent or friend, but these ghosts have no need for supernatural explanations for they already make sense in a materialist framework, in the psychological contexts of regret, longing, sadness, or in the affirmation of life.

Almost any memory can haunt, because ghosts are memories, but not all memories are ghosts. Prior to consideration of the social and political dimensions of ghosts, we should establish the basic diagnostic value of the language of ghosts here.

Each of us has many memories, some of them readily available, others buried beneath the detritus of more pressing concerns at the forefront of our consciousnesses. Occasionally, to access a memory requires some kind of provocation or stimulus, prompting the memory to "come back to us," as we say. Within the multilayered field of memories, only some have the status of ghosts. For example, much of what we remember does *not* haunt us. The most banal memories of everyday life are not, each one on their own, ghosts. But the banality of everyday life, taken as a whole, may well be a haunting thing. The question of what memories haunt, and what do not, depends very much upon a person's ghosts, and is only answerable as a highly individuated and personal question. In the first instance, the language of ghosts can help us to distinguish which memories haunt us and why.

It is important, however, to keep in mind that a memory is not a simple fact. What one remembers has much to do with *how* one experiences a thing. In any human relationship, whether between siblings, friends, or lovers, certain facts are remembered in very different ways, and memories tend to preserve particular

transmuted realities. That is, a memory is the product of some interpretation of some affectation, which puts us in touch with how something seemed to us to be, or what was its significance at that particular time in our lives. This is why, in some cases, the memory of an apparently boring or incidental affair can haunt a person, because the subject that it haunts remembers it in a particular way, has given it a certain signification, and has thereby inadvertently converted it into an active ghost.

Something must also be said about good ghosts, or "friendly ghosts." To speak in moral terms (although we could just as easily make the point in other terms), we may be reassured of a person's good character by the fact that they are haunted by the bad things they've done. Good ghosts can be antagonistic too. As shall be argued below, it may be good and necessary to participate in a kind of "becoming-ghost" whereby our actions contribute to haunting the conscience(s) of others, of institutions and their human representatives. Victims of rape, of torture, or even victims of capital, or any other of the many real victims of the world, can move beyond the law and all of its failings by way of haunting their perpetrators. This haunting need not take the form of vengeance, and it may well be an important part of what is called justice, or a perfectly sensible indignation. In another context, to be haunted by the reassuring memory of a lost loved one, by the warm memory of some experience of love or friendship, shows that certain ghosts make good company.

Each of us is haunted, and yet we cannot judge this fact as good or bad. The goodness of a haunting depends upon the nature of the ghosts, upon how they haunt us, upon why they haunt us, and how the haunting changes things. The tricky thing about ghosts is that they can be invisible, and at the same time, they can make themselves known beyond any shadow of a doubt. Each person comes with some ghosts, and usually, you cannot see them right away. If a person denies having any ghosts, they are either lying, delusional, revealing a deficit of self-understanding, or they have not yet experienced the active haunting of their ghosts. Any of these possibilities is more tenable than the assertion that absolutely none of one's memories haunts. The total absence of conscious reflection and conscientious

consideration may minimize our awareness of ghosts and might eliminate the effects of being haunted, but thoughtful people, and I would say most people, aren't spared so easily. Ghosts are a feature of the apparatus of thinking, and thinking people have them. If such assertions seem overly categorical, they should not. It is worth recalling that these assertions merely affirm the etymological and conceptual imbrications of *Geist* with both mind (the mind thinks) and ghost (ghosts haunt).

Some of a person's ghosts are not a problem and never will be. Some ghosts are welcome to stay. Other ghosts should be gotten rid of for they stand in the way of our desires and obstruct our being-in-the-world until they are "exorcized," until they are busted. But the fact is that a great many of the ghosts we'd like to bust will haunt us forever.

II. HAUNTED COMMONS: OUR GHOSTS

Everywhere in the world, people are haunted. Ghosts are not the private property of the cultural imaginary of just some people somewhere. There are, to be sure, many differences across cultures in discourses on ghosts, but it is more to our present purposes to consider commonalities. Ghosts are typically "found" in places where horrible things have happened to people, things not easily reconciled with the good consciences of people. We can highlight at least three tendencies:[4] (a) the ghosts of the despised, locked-up, and vilified, (b) the ghosts of exploitation, and (c) the ghosts of power and war. These tendencies often overlap. For example, despised and vilified people are often the most exploited, and war typically requires despising or vilifying the "enemy." In what follows, I shall touch upon some of the ghosts that haunt in common ways around the world.

The overarching aim of the present discussion is to articulate an understanding of *our* ghosts, that is, haunting on the level of collectivity. Quite obviously, I make no mention of most of the haunting of the world. There are uncountable purportedly haunted sites related to freak accidents, suicides, rapes, hangings,

drowning, fires, murdered and dead celebrities, and tragic lost lovers. I gloss over such locations to draw special attention to some of the more institutional and social memories that haunt.

(a) Throughout history, institutions have been built to incarcerate the manifold of despised and misunderstood peoples, including prisoners, slaves, and all those deemed "mad" or "dangerous." Throughout history and still to this day, massive subsets of the human population are removed from the public and locked up in various spaces of privation from the world. There is a common tendency to later find ghosts wherever the despised, the criminals, and psychological misfits have been institutionalized and mistreated. Alas, one of the many problems of morality is that it often arrives on the scene too late.

In Australia, the Ararat Lunatic Asylum was opened in 1867, where an estimated 13,000 people died. Also in Australia is the purportedly haunted Beechworth Lunatic Asylum. It is not so much that we are haunted by the "lunatics" themselves, but rather, by what happened in the places where we kept them, by what happened to them. In Indonesia, ghost sightings have been reported in the basement of a building called Lawang Sewu, formerly a prison. In Ireland, ghost tourists can visit Leap Castle, where so many were imprisoned and executed. In the U.S., the list of sites haunted by the ghosts of the despised is too numerous to account for here, since every state is full of such locations, including many prisons and slave haunts. In Louisiana, for example, the former Magnolia Plantation is reportedly haunted by slaves. The Myrtles Plantation in St. Francisville is reportedly haunted by the ghost of a slave known as Chloe.

Even where the ghosts of the despised, enslaved, and abused do the haunting directly, these are typically the ghosts of those who have died from maltreatment, abandonment, egregious disregard. In this way, the ghosts of the despised are part of a reckoning with a history of institutional—*and institutionalized*—violence. The ghost tours in the slave haunts of the French Quarter in New Orleans, as in many other locations, convey this sense of historical reckoning. It would be reasonable to expect that other despised people, such as gays and lesbians who have

been "bashed," detained, killed, "suicided," and sent to "heterosexualizing" programs will produce a new wave of ghosts. Indeed, inasmuch as societies have already become consciously haunted by their historical treatment of gays and lesbians, the becoming-ghost of despised sexualities is well underway. Would any reader be surprised to learn that, in the future, a shuttered Guantanamo Bay "Detention Camp" may be reportedly haunted too? Haunting such as this even begins as something rather tepid, like the good conscience of a liberal.

(b) A second tendency is to find ghosts wherever workers have been fatally exploited, expropriated, or abused, in the process of constructing some grand fortress or bourgeois monument, some site to be haunted later on by the very ones who built it. This tendency, as you might expect, often overlaps with the first one, for it specifies haunting by the abused. But in this category, we don't have the refrain of lunacy to confuse us about whether the haunting comes from the people who we feared or what has been done to them. In other words, the ghosts of exploitation come from the maltreatment of everyday people, "regular people" who we could relate to without much difficulty of imagination.

Back again to Australia, there is Brisbane City Hall. There, stories of deaths spanning the time period of the construction of the building feed into stories about the ghosts that haunt it. During construction, many workers are said to have died while placing the foundations. Beyond this, there is haunting associated with the fact that Brisbane City Hall is purportedly built on top of a sacred aboriginal site, either a meeting place or a camp ground. In China, there are stories of the ghosts of the exploited workers who died constructing the Great Wall. Throughout the world, similar stories accompany massive undertakings, such as railroads that depend on the total exploitation and exhaustion of human energies. In the Brisbane example, with the aboriginal dimension of the story, we can pick up another common thread: Indigenous peoples around the world are often said to haunt their former places of being-in-the-world, places from which they were almost always forcibly expropriated by the interests of capital and foreign powers.

Within this tendency of haunting, we find a certain resistance to erasure. The ghosts of exploitation remind us that there were bodies and brains there before, and that people suffered and died to leave us some monument of human undertaking. The building or construction site (or its human representatives) might wish to erase the memory of those who died to build it, of those who were expropriated from the geographic space it rests on, yet the ghosts stand in the way of such erasure. The ghosts remind us of what would be erased, or of what was "erased" in some fatal episode of violence, but the persistence of active haunting prevents the total erasure of that history. The tendency of such haunting, observable in purported haunts around the world, further explains why ghosts are often thought to be anchored to specific architectural structures. Whereas the first tendency largely regards the unconscionable things that have happened *within* physical spaces and buildings, this second tendency regards the unconscionable things that have happened *before* buildings or constructs, the exploitation and expropriation that made them possible, or more simply, their foundational violence.

(c) The third tendency, like the first two, often overlaps with them. Throughout the world, it is quite common to find ghosts wherever official political power has been deployed to torture and kill by way of militarism, imperialism, or war in general. These are things (i.e., militarism, imperialism, war) that nation-states do with great efficiency, even if we recognize that states are instruments in the service of capital. Historically, certain forms of violence (the worst forms) have been monopolized by official institutions of governance, and have not been available to everyday people.

In China, we could visit the so-called "Forbidden City," located in Beijing, and home to the Palace Museum. For 600 years, from the Ming Dynasty to the end of the Qing Dynasty, the Forbidden City was the Chinese imperial palace. The Forbidden City was the home of the imperial family, complete with a massive store of "concubines" and "servants." Thousands lived and died there as human fodder for the pleasures of dynastic regimes. It is no wonder that visitors and workers have long

claimed to see ghosts there. In France, at Château de Versailles, home to the royal family from 1682 and 1789, there have been reports of sightings of the ghost of a beheaded Marie Antoinette. In Germany, it is hardly surprising that the Reichstag building in Berlin has been reported haunted and, in Heidelberg, the Hexenturm Witches Tower and the Nazi Amphitheatre are said to be haunted. In Malaysia, the Victoria Institution is said to be haunted, a school in Kuala Lumpur that was turned into a torture chamber for prisoners of war and civilians by the Japanese during World War II. In England, airfields around the country are claimed to be haunted by the ghosts of airmen who died fighting in World War II. In Russia, the Kremlin is said to be haunted by Lenin and Stalin, although it is possible to say that all of us (including communists) are haunted by them.

The main thing to distinguish in this category of haunting is that political power, militarism, and imperialism have been the causes of so much carnage throughout human history that they cannot but leave a legacy of ghost activity along with the corpses. Of the three tendencies discussed above, the ghosts of power and war are the most deterritorialized. That is, these ghosts are attached to human eventuality more than to architecture, physical structures, or national boundaries. In a certain sense, the ghosts of power and war have long forecasted the definition of empire made famous by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri: "In contrast to imperialism, Empire establishes no territorial center of power and does not rely on fixed boundaries or barriers. It is a *decentered* and *deterritorializing* apparatus…"[5] Indeed, the ghosts of war, as accessories of empire, cannot but travel the world beyond fixed boundaries or barriers to follow the trauma of every military invasion.

In fact, to better highlight the literal and materialist discourse on ghosts in the context of the ghosts of war, we should consider the recent crisis in the U.S. of soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan with dangerous and widespread outbreaks of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Of course, long before this crisis of PTSD, it was on the level of common sense that war is traumatic. But now, the epidemic crisis of PTSD

haunts the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan in concrete and impactful ways.

The ghosts discussed in this section may be considered real and unreal, depending on what exactly one means by ghost. Using the definition provided in the present essay, all of these ghosts are real. Simply put, that generations of people have been and continue to be haunted by the awful things that people do cannot be gainsaid. Such ghosts are a part of historical understanding, of moral reckoning, or of what is called justice. The abovementioned ghosts can only be condemned as unreal in the sense that would specify celestial apparitions, although just as it is with God, we can never really prove the non-existence of those ghosts to everyone's satisfaction.

In the present text, my opposition to the celestial form of ghosts as metaphysical apparitions is more political than phenomenological. We mustn't only confront the metaphysical ghosts that are attached to something outside of ourselves. Such ghosts are too easily seen as external to us, and even the assertion of their existence relieves us of the burden of having to confront some collective memory and historical self-understanding. But we should go farther. Indeed, my sense of the ghost is far less questionable than the more operational and widespread sense that identifies every haunting with some celestial apparition. Every day, people deny celestial apparitions and they can always find an easy way to do so, but not so with the PTSD that accompanies war. Post-war PTSD can be established as certain a fact as any.

It is no coincidence or surprise that the ghosts of the despised, the ghosts of the exploited, and the ghosts of war haunt the world. The question is: What to do with our ghosts?

III. GHOST-BUSTING

Ghost-busting refers to any process that brings a haunting to its end, any process that lays an active ghost to rest, such that the person or place is no longer haunted by it. In many of the examples I've described, it is actually good news to be haunted

by ghosts. Not all ghosts should be busted. While, on the one hand, we might wish for a victim of abuse to bust the ghosts that haunt her, on the other hand, we might wish for the haunting of her perpetrator.

But some ghosts should be busted.

In political, cultural, and psychological contexts, certain ghosts keep us from participation; certain ghosts stymie feelings of solidarity, alienate and depress us, *both individually and collectively*. Although she does not rely in any way on the language of ghosts, Julia Kristeva has done much to help us understand the nature of the ghosts I seek to discuss and the ghost-busting that should and could be done here.

Kristeva wants to diagnose what haunts a culture of revolt, or more specifically, what keeps us from revolting. "Stalinism no doubt marked the strangling of the culture of revolt, its deviation into terror and bureaucracy. Can one recapture the spirit itself and extricate new forms from it beyond the two impasses where we are caught today: the failure of rebellious ideologies, on the one hand, and the surge of consumer culture, on the other?"[6] Kristeva then asserts that "[t]here is an urgent need to develop the culture of revolt starting with our aesthetic heritage and to find new variants of it."[7]

We should note that when Kristeva uses the term "revolt," she does not mean the politically specific sense of a civil society in revolt against its government (although her sense of revolt *does* include that more common, narrower meaning). Kristeva begins with the etymological and conceptual richness of the word and idea "revolt" from the Latin verbs *volvere* and *revolvere*, which indicate consultation, rereading, return, and repair, among other meanings. Revolt has both individual and collective meanings, and as a psychoanalyst, Kristeva explores what she calls "psychic revolt" (discussed more fully below). What Kristeva calls psychic revolt requires, using the language of the present work, a confrontation with ghosts.

The relationship between the notion of a haunting ghost and the notion of analysis appears for us in Kristeva's description of Freud's problematic as "a remembrance and representation of

the initial murder."[8] In Freudian psychoanalysis, analysis is used to go back to scenes of the crime to which a person's ghosts can be traced. An analyst begins by trying to understand the nature of the ghosts that haunt the person being analyzed, and the process of analysis attempts to return to, uncover, consult, reread, and ultimately repair, the damage that was done some time ago. Considering the exploratory and revelatory dimensions of analysis, and the etymological and conceptual meanings of "revolt," we begin to understand how and why ghost-busting might require a form of psychic revolt. Thinking about revolt in a psychoanalytic context, Kristeva proposes three forms of analytical or psychic revolt: "revolt as the transgression of a prohibition; revolt as repetition, working-through, working-out; and revolt as displacement, combinatives, games."[9]

So, as we have been saying, every person has ghosts, some of which should be busted, and analysis provides certain ways of thinking about how to do that. Utilizing Kristeva's psychoanalytic theory, one way to ghost-bust may be to confront and transgress rules, including expectations for behavior and aspirations. If you are haunted by the rules, and you do not want to be, then break the rules. Another way to ghost-bust may be to confront and think about the nature of one's own ghosts, going over again and again their origins, their raison d'être, and working through or working out the issues that have left one so haunted. Finally, displacement, combinatives, and games, brings us to Kristeva's interest in aesthetics and new variants of creative artistic praxis. This last form involves experimentation in modes of play and expression. Revolt always involves acts of questioning, and Kristeva says that such a questioning "is also present in artistic experience, in the rejection and renewal of old codes of representation staged in painting, music, or poetry."[10] None of these figures of revolt precludes the other, and most likely, a good healthy revolt would employ some combination of two or three of the above.

We do not simply rename Kristeva's "psychic revolt" as our "ghost-busting." We wouldn't want to, for the limits of psychoanalysis leave out too much. There may be other ways to bust ghosts than through the various pathways of analysis that

Kristeva outlines. Some ghosts can be outgrown, forgotten, busted by love, or replaced by new ones without any warning. No science or discipline has it all figured out. It's not easy to bust the ghosts that haunt in ways that paralyze us with fear, anxiety, and that cut us off from others and from the possibility for a culture of revolt. But inasmuch as we are talking about busting the ghosts of *Geist*, the ghosts of the human mind, Kristeva's analytical revolt is well calibrated to the task.

Especially useful in the resources of Kristeva is her rejection of the dichotomy between the individual and collective crisis. The crisis of the individual is directly and causally related to the crisis of the collectivity, and vice versa, so working through problems by way of revolt is a necessarily multifarious process of individual and collective action, and never one without the other.

All of this is clear in Kristeva's numerous volumes on revolt,[11] and is sharply articulated in *Revolt, She Said*: "First of all, this incapacity to rebel is the sign of national depression. Faltering images of identity (when they're not lacking altogether) and lost confidence in common cause, give rise at the national level to just what the depressed individual feels in his isolation: namely, feeling cut off from the other person (your nearest and dearest, neighbors, politics) and from communication, inertia, your desire switched off. On the other hand, people who rebel are malcontents with frustrated, but vigorous desires."[12]

But how can we make the more resolutely political side of ghost-busting appear? What we can say, with the help of Kristeva's psychoanalytic social theory, is that individual people and collectivities are often haunted into isolated and depoliticized states of acquiescence and hopelessness by personal and political ghosts. And, increasing precariousness and privatization around the world have only consolidated the problem. People are haunted by their pasts, as well as by their uncertain futures. We have no security in the present, and no certain future, which largely explains the widespread resonance of the term "precariat" throughout Europe in the early part of the millennium. Following Kristeva, we could say that a person who wants to bust her ghosts

can engage in psychic or analytical revolt, whereas society needs a culture of revolt in order to remain in a state of healthy questioning, renewal, and renovation. It is within this context that I propose revolt as a form of ghost-busting. By way of revolt, the ghosts that haunt can be confronted and busted.

But there is another side to the story: Sometimes, what is needed is to become the ghosts ourselves, to become the ones who haunt.

IV. BECOMING-GHOST, SPECTERS OF REVOLT

Communism is one of the most notorious ghosts, one that has haunted the world since the 19th century. Communists and anti-communists alike have been happy to accept that claim, albeit from opposing points of view. Karl Marx, the great materialist himself, makes numerous mentions and uses of the language of ghosts, as well as of sorcery. In perhaps the most well-known line, *The Communist Manifesto* begins: "A specter is haunting Europe—the specter of Communism. All the powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this specter: Pope and Czar, Metternich and Guizot, French Radicals and German police-spies."[13]

Marx's normative assessment of the communist haunting was complicated. On the one hand, much of the fear of communism was (and still is) the result of slander and ideological misrepresentation, much of which Marx and Engels sought to refute in the *The Communist Manifesto*. But, on the other hand, the specter of communism is admittedly something that *should* haunt and frighten the existing capitalist world, or what Marx and Engels called "bourgeois society."[14] The complexity of these two sides can only be grasped when we understand that the ideal starting position of communism would be for the specter of communism to actively haunt the world. That is to say, if communism really threatens to abolish or transform the existing world, then this world must be haunted by communism. Today, the specter of communism continues to haunt, but in other

locations than those Marx imagined in Europe in 1848. Today, the specter of communism actively haunts in the Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) states, in Turkey, in India, in China, in Spain, and throughout Latin America. "Communism" also haunts, in especially ideological forms, in the U.S. and the U.K. (I use "communism" in quotes to specify an idea of communism that is not recognizably communist to serious inquiry, but that has been commonly deployed as a vilification that derives its force from Cold War discourses.) I discuss the distinctions between communism and "communism" at greater length elsewhere.[15] For now, suffice it to say that both communism and "communism," that is, both what it means and its spectacle (i.e., the vilified form)—retain their old power to haunt the world.

The central argument advanced here is that the structure of human relationality that organizes the actually existing world today—a world governed by the logic of capital—should be haunted by its past, present, and future. Let's make mention of a particular instance, from which readers can imagine other historical and possible examples.

The uprisings that erupted in Turkey in May and June 2013 constitute a certain modality of haunting. Also, since late 2010, regimes across numerous MENA countries south of the Mediterranean Sea have been haunted by the so-called "Arab Spring." Even where civil societies were not in revolt, the spirit of uprising that appeared to come from Tunisia was understood as a shape-shifting phenomenon that could travel across boundaries, with different nodal points in different locations. We could perhaps speak of a ghost of Mohamed Bouazizi, or at least, a mobile *Gemeingeist* that could grow and animate subsets of populations in revolt.

From outside in the West, and from many on the inside, Turkey has come to be seen as a positive example of the power of capital and neoliberalism to "develop" a region in "good" directions. The uprising was triggered in part by contestation over the future of green public space in Istanbul, beginning with a sit-in in Gezi Park on Taksim Square, where fewer than 100 protesters gathered on May 27, 2013. The gatherings quickly

grew into fierce nationwide opposition to Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's ten-year rule and provided an open space for the expression of society's disaffection about the country's political, economic, and social crises. Erdogan immediately forgot his publicly stated position during the uprisings in Egypt and Syria, when he demanded that Mubarak and Assad yield to their people and step down. When Erdogan became the target, that old advice became inapplicable, as he denounced his opponents as "vandals" and "terrorists."

Given the differences between Syria and Egypt, on the one hand, and Turkey, on the other, Erdogan mistakenly took for granted the "fixity" of the spirit of revolt in neighboring and nearby countries. But ghosts can travel. They do not stay put as obediently as powerholders might wish.

The uprisings in Turkey—like those before in the so-called "Arab Spring"—have to do with problems that also occur elsewhere, so the tendency to describe them as "Egyptian," "Turkish," or even as "Arab," reduces and misunderstands the phenomena in dangerous ways. We are in fact looking at confrontations with rather general (or generalizable) problems of the existing world, a world that has been governed by the global logic of capital, a world that people everywhere want to throw into question.

In Turkey, the revolt articulates a number of widely applicable grievances clearly and directly. Consider one of them: The opposition in Istanbul, in Gezi Park and Taksim Square, to building a shopping mall was opposition in defense of the open green space that the mall would be built upon. The uprising sprang from the peoples' defense of the common's space (public) against capital's space (private). Erdogan understood this objection well, which is why he insisted that the shopping mall would not be "a traditional mall," for it would include cultural centers, an opera house, and a mosque.[16] In the original plans, an Ottoman-era military barracks would be rebuilt near the site and the historic Ataturk Cultural Center would be demolished. Kalyon Group, a company with ties to the Erdogan government, was contracted to carry out the project. The whole idea embodies

and reflects with perfect accuracy one of the most malignant lies of neoliberalism: Namely, that privatization and the logic of capital do no harm to culture, to the natural world, or to public space. If the shopping mall is built, it will be haunted by the uprising of the summer of 2013, and it will continue to be a site, indeed a target, for future haunting.

Ghosts are not only a shadowy lurking that follows the failure or death of some personal or collective being. Ghosts can be active, they can intervene in the world and change things, and often, the problem with the world is not that it is too haunted, but that it is not haunted enough.

There is, after all, something rather absurd (and suspiciously convenient) about the ghost-tour-notion of haunted sites, according to which ghosts are anchored to fixed locations where we can leave them locked in buildings we might pay to visit for an hour's entertainment. Moreover, there is something regrettable about the reduction of ghosts to dastardly villains instead of transformative forces, or figments of the consciences of the world. If a global social system increasingly reorganizes human relations according to exchange relations, and that social system is not haunted, then it *should be*. If space, time, and culture, are increasingly subordinated to the logic of capital, then those disaffected by such subordination—the casualties—should actively haunt the system. It is in this context, although not in this context alone, that I recommend "becoming-ghost."

To develop this recommendation, we shall draw upon Félix Guattari's conception of "becoming-woman."[17] Guattari writes:

> "On the level of the social body, libido is caught in two systems of opposition: class and sex. It is expected to be male, phallocratic, it is expected to dichotomize all values – the oppositions strong/weak, rich/poor, useful/useless, clean/dirty, etc

> Conversely, on the level of the sexed body, libido is engaged in becoming-woman. More precisely, the becoming-woman serves as a point of reference, and eventually as a screen for other types of becoming…"[18]

What does this mean? In a social context, which includes behavioral expectations and human aspirations, as well as interpersonal relations, we can make class- and sex-based analyses, for example, in the classical Marxist mode of "class analysis" or in the orientations of those feminisms that look primarily at the social positions of women. Within the context of class- and sex-based analyses, critical theory (including many Marxisms and feminisms) works with certain dichotomies, i.e., you belong to one class or another, one gender or another. But the concept of "becoming" undermines the fixity of class- and sex-based analyses, and specifically, becoming-woman means that we can become more or less "feminine" or "woman-like" as an act of subversion against the sexed dichotomy. It must be stressed that Guattari was always fascinated with the politics of subversion.

Guattari's concept of becoming-woman clearly foregrounds some of the radical directions of queer theory and transgender politics today, and becoming-woman is a term that can have multiple literal and figurative meanings. Perhaps the most obvious literal meaning of becoming-woman can be seen in transgender movements, instances of anatomically "male" persons becoming "female." But to be clear, such a becoming as this, as much as it troubles conventional tendencies within second wave feminism, *is not at all the form of becoming Guattari intends*. Notice that becoming-woman in the physical and literal sense above operates *within* rather than *against* the very dichotomy that Guattari wants to throw into question by way of becoming-woman. Such a physical and literal becoming-woman remains trapped by one or another form of sexed becoming.

Becoming, in Guattari's sense, can move between and beyond the conventional dichotomies of social analysis, which means that there are many ways to subvert the phallocratic order of the world. Becoming is about subversive forms of life—ways of being-in-the-world, and becoming-woman is only one particular subversive modality. This is why Guattari speaks also of "becoming-child in Schumann, becoming-animal in Kafka, becoming-vegetable in Novalis, becoming-mineral in Beckett."[19] He utilizes the concept of becoming-woman for the purposes of criticizing reactions to what is both seen to be and actually subversive in homosexuality.

Guattari insists on this overarching point: "In a more general way, every 'dissident' organization of libido must therefore be linked to a becoming-feminine body, as an escape route from the repressive socius, as a possible access to a 'minimum' of sexed becoming, and as the last buoy vis-à-vis the established order."[20] A politics of subversive becoming makes us slippery, makes it difficult to establish people with fixed identities, and thus makes it difficult to hold people down or to lock them out on the grounds of who they are. A politics of subversive becoming is not easy, it is fraught with difficulties and material limitations, but for Guattari, becoming is an emancipatory project, and emancipation is never easy.

Also, Guattari does not want us to faithfully preserve and defend his conception of becoming-woman, for it is only one possible nodal point of becoming, for being-in-the-world. He says that "it's important to destroy 'big' notions like woman, homosexual… Things are never that simple. When they're reduced to black-white, male-female categories, there's an ulterior motive, a binary-reductionist operation meant to subjugate them."[21] Hence, even if we would become-woman in any certain way, we would need another becoming still, possible and desirable, in order to keep new emancipatory horizons open.

Following this, to speak of becoming-ghost is a perfectly fitting turn. We know the usual story that death makes ghosts, but we also know, in the case of authors with posthumous influence, that there is a very real sense of life after death there. We can

speak of the life of ideas and arguments, we can even write the histories of their fortunes and failures.

Like with Guattari's sense of becoming-woman, we too are not after a specific literal form of becoming-ghost, a becoming from which we can never return or move into any other state. Becoming-ghost means that, yes, we are haunted by some ghosts, but we can haunt too, and we can become-ghosts in subversive ways. We regard becoming-ghost in the context of possible subversions and emancipations, just as Guattari intended with becoming-woman.

What, then, are the subversive and emancipatory forms of becoming-ghost?

In the first place, there is something subversive about the discourse on ghosts presented here. On the discursive level, what is subverted is the metaphysical, celestial, and religious ownership of ghosts. We reclaim the language from a proprietary regime, and in our hands, it helps us to speak of human experience in new ways. Franco "Bifo" Berardi has done something similarly subversive with the language of the soul.[22]

But, a more hopeful subversive aspiration is that, by way of becoming-ghost, more of what should be haunted will be haunted. Erdogan is haunted by his advice to Mubarak and Assad, and uprisings in other countries—such as the revolt in Brazil that took the world by surprise on June 17, 2013—will go on to haunt regimes elsewhere. If Erdogan could be taken by surprise in a neoliberal beacon like Turkey, if the most massive uprisings in two decades in Brazil can erupt overnight, then it is not out of the question that regimes in countries like the U.S. and U.K. might be similarly surprised. Uprisings do not come from nowhere; they are manifestations of haunted regimes and, like people, all regimes have ghosts. Becoming-ghost is a movement toward active haunting, a movement of ghosts making themselves known.

The ghosts in Turkey and Brazil were there before the latest active haunting of their social systems, just like the disaffected indigenous populations in the mountains of Chiapas, Mexico were living in oblivion long before the Zapatista

rebellion of 1994. The Zapatistas needed to make the people of Mexico see what was previously invisible. And Mubarak's regime was haunted by Egyptian civil society for nearly thirty years before the regime was frightened into retreat. There are many examples of haunted systems with ghosts that needed to haunt more actively. The global effect of this activity depends upon the proliferation of deterritorialized haunting, that is, of a becoming-ghost that travels across borders and takes hold of people in unexpected ways, places, and times.

There may be a temptation to say that, in the cases I've mentioned, ghosts become flesh, to say that in instances of presence and visibility the disaffected cease to be ghosts. But that would miss the point. We must always remember what ghosts do. They are defined by their activity, and what they do is haunt. Haunting is subversive in an immediately understandable way: To haunt is to unsettle what is settled, to disrupt the semblance that there is nothing here to see. An active haunting shakes us and wakes us, making us see something that we didn't (or couldn't) see before. Often, an active haunting scares us, but if it is convincing, it also makes us explore, look for what is really happening, look for explanations that make sense, and reject the world as it appears on the face of it. That is what a haunting does. There is nothing new in this definition. Haunted people and places are, even on the most conventional view, unsettled people and places. Too much is too settled. Becoming-ghost is a way to unsettle things.

Emancipation is the more difficult issue; less can be said about it, and infinitely more than could be said here. This is because the question of emancipation must always be qualified with "from what" or "to what" and the nature of any real emancipation is that we only understand it when we see it. Nonetheless, some very general things can be said about the emancipatory dimension of becoming-ghost.

Emancipation requires some kind of transformation in forms of life, in being-in-the-world. Therefore, emancipation implies becoming. There can be no emancipation without some process of becoming, without something becoming something

else. But why becoming-ghost? The answer to this question is already indicated in the common logic of haunting. Ghost hunters typically engage in one form or another of ghost-busting, and to deal with the ghosts, they say that the ghosts will continue to haunt until, X, Y, or Z is done. Typically, ghosts will haunt until there is some kind of reconciliation with the past, some kind of reckoning, some kind of justice, as it were. In the supernatural world of ghosts, it is often said that the spirit of some being must be set free to put an end to the haunting. Another way to put it is to say that the haunting only ends in liberation—the liberation of the spirit, which is to say *Geist*, the mind, ghosts.

Can the existing world rid itself of its ghosts without becoming something else? That is the question. Is ghost-busting merely a matter of policy? Will the ghosts of the economic crisis stop haunting with the implementation of austerity measures, or with their defeat? Even without austerity, even before the latest crisis, things have been getting worse for precarious people everywhere: there is more inequality, less opportunity, more disaffection, less security, no certain futures, not even in the stock market. Some systems are haunted without even knowing it. We should haunt them more actively, making them afraid, sharing our precariousness with them to make their own futures uncertain. There is a necessarily revolutionary—or transformative—imperative at work in all of this, which can be expressed as the conclusion: *The existing world cannot rid itself of its ghosts without becoming something else*.

NOTES/REFERENCES

1 I would like to thank the students in my spring 2013 class, "Postmodern Theory: Politics and Possibility," at University of Illinois, Springfield. The idea for this article first emerged in discussion with them, on a beautiful spring evening, during our final session outside by the university library. It was the students who pressed me to articulate a materialist conception of ghosts, and to realize that there was something to be done here. I hope those who were there on that night will find this piece, and will find something useful in the directions I have taken.

2 Hegel, G.W.F., *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (Oxford University Press, 1977); Hegel, G.W.F., *The Phenomenology of Mind* (Dover Philosophical Classics, 2003).

3 Dennett, Daniel C., *Consciousness Explained* (Back Bay Books, 1991).

4 The three tendencies discussed here are not the only possible tendencies we could discuss that would reveal cross-cultural commonalities in discourses on ghosts.

5 Hardt, Michael and Negri, Antonio, *Empire* (Harvard University Press, 2000), p. xii.

6 Kristeva, Julia, *The Sense and Non-Sense of Revolt: The Powers and Limits of Psychoanalysis* (Columbia University Press, 2000), p. 7.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid., p. 15.

9 Ibid., p. 16.

10 Kristeva, Julia, *Revolt, She Said*, (Semiotext(e), 2002), p. 121.

11 In addition to the two texts cited here, Kristeva has a third book relevant to this subject that I shall only mention: *Intimate Revolt: The Powers and Limits of Psychoanalysis* (Columbia University Press, 2002).

12 Kristeva, op. cit., pp. 83-84.

13 Marx, Karl and Engels, Frederick, *The Communist Manifesto* (International Publishers, 1994), p. 8.

14 Ibid., p. 9.

15 Gilman-Opalsky, Richard, *Manifest(o) Mutations: Communist Détournement of "Communism"* (Autonomedia/Minor Compositions, 2014).

16 7 June 2013, Turkey Clashes: Why are Gezi Park and Taksim Square so Important?, BBC News, cited at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-22753752, accessed 6/21/2013.

17 The use of Guattari here should extinguish any false impression, possibly given by Section III of this essay, that we are making a Freudian analysis of ghosts. We must simply allow ourselves to make use of diverse and contradictory resources.

18 Guattari, Félix, "Becoming-Woman" in *Hatred of Capitalism: A Semiotext(e) Reader* (Semiotext(e), 2001), p. 356.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid, pp. 356-357.

21 Ibid., p. 357.

22 Berardi, Franco "Bifo", *The Soul at Work: From Alienation to Autonomy* (Semiotext(e), 2009).

IDEOLOGY AND CLASS STRUGGLE:

A SHORT INTRODUCTION

Jacob Pointon

Typically, ideology is defined as a "body of ideas reflecting a certain individual, group, class or culture." This being said, the number of ideologies is limitless, and their production incessant. However, to develop a scientific theory of ideology, it must be understood by its *general role* in society, which means a general analysis of ideology as it exists within its corresponding social and material context must be accomplished. Rather than a "body of ideas," philosopher Louis Althusser defined ideology by noting that it "represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence." For example, liberalism claims to be the embodiment of liberty, justice, and equality. However, in practice, it gives rise it its own antitheses. The reverence liberalism grants to the institution of private property allows for global exploitation, socio-economic stratification, etc. In a bigger context, the role of ideology is the part it plays in the reproduction of day-to-day life i.e, it provides the "glue" which binds the individual to dominant social practices.

THE HISTORY OF IDEOLOGY

'Ideology' was coined in 1796 by the French philosopher Destutt De Tracy, who assigned ideology as the object of a general "science of ideas." However, the dominant and modern understanding of the word is derived from the term's usage by Napoleon Bonaparte to castigate the "ideologues," a group which included Tracy, who were his political opponents. (Hart) Eventually, ideology began to transform from a pejorative into a word which was neutrally employed in the analysis of political sciences and philosophy.

Decades after Tracy and Napoleon's usage of ideology, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels employed the term in a very different manner. At that time, viewing it in a social context, Marx and Engels would define ideology as a system of representations which have a tendency to reflect the prevailing socio-economic order. However, subsequent philosophers would come to the conclusion that this definition was not sufficient. In *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels conceive ideology as the residue left from day-to-day practices where all reality is external to ideology i.e., "[i]deology is thus thought as an imaginary construction whose status is exactly like the theoretical status of the dream among writers before Freud." (Althusser) However, Althusser audaciously claims that although Marx's formulation is a theory of ideology, it does not offer us an authentic *Marxist theory of ideology*. It ignores the material existence of ideology, a fundamental flaw which seems to contradict Marx's materialism. Althusser puts forward a definition which conceives of ideology as being "the imaginary relation of [man] to the real relations in which they live." (Althusser) This change, which may seem simple, has far reaching implications in the social sciences and philosophy.

THE BIRTH OF IDEOLOG*IES*

Before we can ask how "the imaginary relation of [man] to the real relations in which they live," translates into this aforementioned 'social glue,' we must ask, how do ideologies come about? First, it is important to differentiate between ideolog*y* and ideolog*ies*. Ideolog*y* is the general concept we are exploring, whereas ideolog*ies* are various, specific expressions of ideology.

In the materialist tradition, Marx and Engels maintained that any individual ideology (i.e, a specific expression of ideolog*y*) was born out of the reflection of objective material conditions on man's consciousness and that, as Marx said, "[t]he

ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas." By studying history and abstracting these relationships and their individual components, it can be seen how material and ideological development is realized, and how they relate. At a certain stage of development in various epochs, the way in which people relate to the production of their own existence "come[s] into conflict with the existing relations of production." (Marx) For example, we can look at history's most recent socio-economic development. During feudalism's slow transition to capitalism, the dominating ideas of the time — such as Monarchism — became barriers to the further development of the capitalist productive forces. New socio-political relations had to be actualized before the productive forces could make any qualitative leap. A philosophy which reflected the emerging (capitalist) mode of production would need to take root (classical liberalism). The anti-Monarchic revolutions which became abundant in the 18th and 19th centuries gave capitalism the very basis it needed to flourish by establishing a socio-political system which based on liberalism, i.e., the natural rights of life, liberty, and most importantly private property. Thus, it can be seen how liberalism — a specific expression of ideology — was born out of the material conditions which necessitated its existence.

THE HEGEMONY AND FUNCTION OF IDEOLOGY

Now to further define and understand ideology, Althusser introduced the concept of "ideological state apparatuses," or "ISA's" which function to maintain ideological hegemony. These apparatuses are seen as "a certain number of realities, which present themselves to the immediate observer in the form of distinct and specialized institutions." (Althusser) Such institutions can be separated into distinct apparatuses, with varying magnitudes of autonomy and influence: the religious ISA (church systems), the educational ISA (public and private school systems), the family ISA, the political ISA (political parties,

political system), the legal ISA, etc. These institutions all function in a similar manner: *by ideology*. This means that what unites them, even in their diversity, is that they all function subordinated to what is fundamentally the same ideology.

In the United States, for example, legal, political, familial, and educational systems all function by their accordance with the dominant system of ideology, namely capitalist democratic-republicanism. That isn't to say somewhere, in small amounts, some "members" of such institutions do not exist that challenge the dominate ideology, but that their existence is meaningless insofar as they exist in minuscule numbers. Ideology presents itself everywhere, from popular culture to politics. Michel Foucault went so far as to define ideology as a discourse: "Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true." Thus ideology, or in this case, "discourse" functions to unconsciously "control" society to enable its functioning. Never has a society existed which did not establish ideological hegemony — *especially* in popular institutions — for "no class can hold power over a long period of time without at the same time exercising its hegemony over State Ideological Apparatuses." (Althusser) Just as in economics, the ultimate condition of social existence is the reproduction of the conditions of production. Ideology functions as a means to ensure social cohesion: to bind the individual to day-to-day practices, and to establish an acceptable discourse which dominates our culture.

IDEOLOGY AND THE CLASS STRUGGLE

Studying the role of ideology in society is of vast importance, *particularly* for its implications in the class struggle. In order to grasp an accurate picture of the world around us it is

necessary to apply these concepts to our analysis of society. First and foremost, we *mus*t look at the material circumstances which condition our consciousness. This includes the material existence of ideology embedded within the dominate social institutions.

The intellectuals and orators of bourgeois ideology speak of the "end of ideology" (ideology in the sense of bodies of ideas). For they see liberal-capitalism as the be all end all, the most progressive and developed organization of society. However, it can be seen how bourgeois ideology ultimately fails by professing its inherent permanence. The philosophical liberal foundation of bourgeois ideology sees individuals as abstract beings outside of concrete socio-economic relations by assigning individuals with 'natural rights,' chiefly the right of property. However, these 'rights' cannot be natural *per se* because they are merely the naturalized conditioned modes of socio-economic relations (i.e., the reflected material conditions). The significance of this conclusion is simply that capitalism is only a stage of development within the arena of history; the socio-economic conditions which ultimately produced bourgeois philosophy differed in the past, and can change again. Only by understanding the laws which set in to motion the development of society can we theorize the proper way in which emancipation can occur. This is what Marx expressed his famous *Theses on Feuerbach*, "The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it."

In conclusion: [1] the materialist conception of history allows us to understand how consciousness is conditioned by modes of production [2] therefore the dominant ideas of any epoch are merely an expression of the dominant material relations [3] liberal (idealist) philosophy exists to reinforce capitalist relations of production [4] with the development of society emerges the seeds for a new social order, and [5] our recognition of these concepts allows us to theorize how emancipation can be realized.

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THE FOCUS OF MULTITUDES

Scion Tumult

There is perhaps nothing more dangerous to socialism than sectarianism. Sometimes it seems we forget that there are goals to meet tomorrow, and goals to fight over years from now. We forget how much we agree on. Instead of a large organization with an answer for everything which invariably splits into numerous contending parties, it may be better to avoid creating organizations which attempt to have a wide range of goals, and focus on creating numerous organizations with a small set of specific goals and practice. If we all come to the table focused on a project which we find agreeable with our ideologies,even if we vehemently disagree with other projects or aspects of some ideology, we can come together by the thousands. It might mean more emails, phone calls, and snail mail, but it could also mean larger,more powerful communities which find solidarity easier to make into a reality.

One organization which allows for anarchists and communists and so on to work together organizing workplaces is the Industrial workers of the World. They are a growing radical rank and file industrial union. They are defined as a non-political organization, meaning simply that they are a union and not a party. They won't endorse a candidate, won't donate money to one, etc, they are focused on their task:organizing workers into one big union. They allow members to be in political parties and other unions(with some minor restrictions). This allows them to be larger, network better, and so on, than if they also entered into the political mechanizations of supporting candidates or if they were overly restrictive on the affiliations of their members.

The left needs to work together and the IWW sets an example on how various leftists can act in solidarity. Could that example help solve the rifts in our political choices through having us move from the broader programs, to single issue or

closely related issue parties? If two leftists disagree on a few issues, they should find ways to work together on what they do agree with. We have a world to win, and nothing to lose but our chains.

THE STUDENT MOVEMENT AND THE PROLETARIAN STRUGGLE

Salrab Miran

Like almost any progressive political movement that receded in the early 90s, the international Left student movement likewise has suffered and is in the stage of rediscovering its sense of balance and purpose. In the US particularly, the student movement had seen more glorious days. At its peak, it was capable of considerable influential power; it threw a wrench in the works of imperialism when it mounted a formidable mobilization and protest against the war on Vietnam. The threat to the ruling class from Leftist student radicalism was so great that widest means of state repression were brought down upon it to weaken, break up, and destroy the movement. FBI infiltration, university expulsions, imprisonment and murder were all employed by the oppressive state apparatus in characteristic fashion. The decline of the student movement was further precipitated by factional splits, ideological dogmatism and adventurist acts of violence. And when the restoration of capitalism in the USSR itself occurred in 1991, intellectuals widely discarded Marxism as a revolutionary force. It is from such a series of setbacks that the student movement now emerges in the new world, and must now build again.

Many modern communists might even be tempted to ask: where do students and the student movement fit in to the struggle for Socialism? To some Communists, it is an appealing thought that students are an unreliable petty-bourgeois force, and that since the primary antagonism that defines world capitalism is a conflict between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, all the focus should go towards the task of building a party of the proletariat.

After all, was it not Marx who wrote in the Communist Manifesto that the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class? The tendency among some participants to think of the Socialist movement in black or white exclusivist terms has long persisted in the Socialist movement, but it is a non-dialectical way of thinking. It is true that the proletariat is the only really revolutionary class for several reasons. The tendency of capitalist development is to proceed in the direction of eliminating the old classes associated with previous economic systems. For instance, capitalist development converts the peasants into wage laborers gradually and definitely by abolishing the system that was compatible with the peasant class (still very much existing in less advanced third-world capitalist countries). In production, capitalist development creates the appropriators of surplus value (the capitalists), the managers of production, and the wage laborers who create the surplus value (the proletariat) who cannot end this historically most recent form of exploitation without abolishing capitalism itself. It is in that way that the proletariat is the only revolutionary class. However, it is an obvious fact that the proletarian movement, like any other force or object, is in constant interaction with other forces. The working class has seen its own share of political splits, vacillations, ideological confusion and support for downright reactionary regimes or movements, i.e., it is not a magically pure class incapable of making grievous mistakes. It does not and cannot move in a linear direction because it does not exist in isolation from what surrounds it. And this is precisely why the question of the student movement bears such high importance for Socialism.

It must not be forgotten that Lenin's own involvement in politics began as a student radical at Kazan University. And who can forget that Fidel Castro's ascent into radicalism began in the turbulent atmosphere of the University of Havana? Many of the present day mobilizers of labor in the United States received their

early training in student outfits such as SDS. We have hundreds of other such examples of major revolutionary careers around the world being forged in the fires of university activism. The fact is that the student movement is a critical component of the proletarian struggle and no struggle for Socialism has ever occurred in the absence of a student movement.

But the real significance of students in the proletarian struggle can be understood from Lenin's observation:

> "The history of all countries shows that the working class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade union consciousness, i.e., the conviction that it is necessary to combine in unions, fight the employers, and strive to compel the government to pass necessary labor legislation, etc. The theory of socialism, however, grew out of the philosophic, historical, and economic theories elaborated by educated representatives of the propertied classes, by intellectuals. By their social status the founders of modern scientific socialism, Marx and Engels, themselves belonged to the bourgeois intelligentsia. In the very same way, in Russia, the theoretical doctrine of Social-Democracy arose altogether independently of the spontaneous growth of the working-class movement; it arose

as a natural and inevitable outcome
of the development of thought
among the revolutionary socialist
intelligentsia. In the period under
discussion, the middle nineties, this
doctrine not only represented the
completely formulated programme
of the Emancipation of Labour
group, but had already won over to
its side the majority of the
revolutionary youth in Russia."
(Lenin's What Is To Be Done?)

Part of the reason that this is true is that the working class
is often so steeped in intense labor and an everyday struggle for
survival that it rarely has the luxury of pursuing deep intellectual
pursuits. Exploring Marxism as a theory of political struggle is
definitely a time consuming venture, and it is even intimidating
for beginners given the vast body of literature it has created. The
intensification of labor, besides serving the purpose of extracting
as much surplus value, also serves the purpose of draining the
working class mentally and exhausting it physically. It is a means
to chain them to a life of stasis. Thus the working class needs
class traitors at its side who come from backgrounds that allow
the time and luxury of contemplating Socialist ideas that can then
be widely disseminated. Students have the potential to be
valuable allies of the working class.

So just how should one go about building a student
movement? Building a student movement is not as simple a task
as catching students in a net and exclaiming to them, "Now you
shall struggle for the workers!" Students always have their own
preoccupations which will often take precedence over the
Socialist struggle, such as playing video games or socializing. It

is frankly very similar to the situation of an ordinary worker who comes home from a hard day's work and the last thing on his mind is, "Finally, now I have time to study about the tendency of the rate of profit to fall in Das Kapital!" It is much more likely that the worker will sit down on his couch, open a can of beer and watch TV, which will probably be the source of most of his intellectual diet. And this really is just perfect for the capitalists who do everything they can to rear generations of people into a lifestyle of consumerism to keep them preoccupied and distant from the real prize: Socialism. Interestingly, this is not a problem faced only by present day activists in the student movement. This problem has always existed in different forms everywhere and in every country. The old SDS for example faced this problem numerous times and activists would grumble about the apathy of most students in periods when the conditions just weren't there. When there is an absence of revolutionary conditions which can jolt masses of people into action, there is a lull which is hard to break people out of, and yet, it is precisely the ability of revolutionaries to patiently and imaginatively energize people in such difficult times that provides the surest measure of the vitality of the Socialist movement. Also, students are for all intents and purposes as wary, if not more, as workers who make contact with revolutionary activists for the first time. Until the time a union or pressure group is formed, there is a fear on the part of the worker that association with an activist may result in his dismissal by the management. It is quite similar for students who fear expulsion from the University because they have only heard spook stories about the evils that Communists might do. In every domain, capitalism places these obstacles that Communists must work around.

It should thus go without saying that those who are involved in student activism must bear this in mind and adopt methods of struggle which capture the imagination of students

and excite them. The venerated anti-Fascist stalwart Georgi Dimitrov strongly emphasized in one of his works that it was not enough to "be right" in one's view of politics, for to pursue a dull approach to agitation is to agitate against one's own cause. Capitalism knows of thousands of ways to dazzle, amaze and inspire with its false dreams. But unfortunately, Socialist activists persist in decades old methods of interaction with students. Socialist activists ought to also use concerts, music, artistic expression, humor and standup comedy, street theater performances, movie and documentary screenings among others to propagate their political ideas. It is false that one cannot mix entertainment with politics. History furnishes many examples of popular, influential and profound music and filmography that has been in the domain of politics. That is not to say that this should be a substitute for regular Marxist Political Schools, leaflets, posters, literature, or demonstrations. But it is of high importance that Socialist activists should not appear to ordinary students as something out of the past or as an unacceptable oddity.

It is necessary to be able to relate to your audience, to understand what they want, and be able to make your politics as relevant as possible and present it in as interesting a way as possible. One certainly cannot thrust one's views on to anyone and expect success. It is important not just to understand the consumerist obstacles capitalism has placed in the way of Socialists who wish to reach out to students, but to also be able to relate the Socialist struggle to the unique problems that students face. It is important, for instance, to pick up the issue of tuition, the issue of student loans which capitalism uses to keep students in chains for years even after they graduate, or the issue of the deteriorating quality of education, for few things are as effective for mobilizing a class as those based on self-interest. And for all other political issues, it is well worth evaluating additional methods of struggle to prepare a movement.

One issue also worth mentioning that separates American student politics from that of other countries is that it has historically maintained an independence or reluctance to affiliate with a revolutionary political party, and has suffered as a result. To be sure, political parties such as the Black Panther Party and the Progressive Labor Party did compete over SDS in the 1960s without much success (in fact contributed to the destruction of SDS). But in India or Greece for instance, the student movement is much stronger and holds real sway over educational institutions. This is in no small part due to the experienced leadership and consultation that the political parties they are associated with can provide. There is a strong tendency among student Socialists to be against affiliation with a revolutionary political party, which is an inherently contradictory way of thinking since the struggle for Socialism is a political one that never has and never will occur in the absence of a party of the proletariat, and furthermore, upon graduation, the common way to continue activism is through a political party. On the flipside, it is equally common to meet students who immediately associate themselves with the first political party they come into contact with, irrespective of how inane its politics may be. Although it is true that the various Socialist or Communist Parties in the United States have their own student chapters in colleges and universities, the fragmentation that occurs from this state of affairs is detrimental to the student movement. There are at least two ways for the student movement to overcome this fragmentation, or factionalism rather, and the confusion about political parties. One is through open theoretical and political debates conducted in an atmosphere of integrity. The other, more difficult and sometimes bitter way, is through experience. Either way, it is the truth that must unite the students.

The final, most important point that any sincere discussion of the student movement must cover is what its

ideological foundations must be. Although practically all student movements that have changed anything for the better in the world have been Leftist in orientation, this is a sub-optimal scenario. The student movement must be a Marxist-led one. This is of course, easier said than done, because student mobilizations frequently to strive to be large and inclusive. And furthermore, it is impossible for any movement to be completely Marxist in character. "Unity" is often the watchword. However, history shows that unities built on compromise over principles are often short-lived, they sooner or later break apart, or in other cases, some forces get shortchanged while others emerge stronger. There are tactics such as the "United Front" that have been used to success, but these too are mostly temporary alliances. The goal of Communists at the end of the day is not to unite with the irreconcilable; it is to bring about a Communist revolution.

It was Marx who once said, "the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch, the ruling ideas, that is, the class which is the ruling material force of society is at the same time its ruling intellectual force." In other words, in order to defeat an oppressive ruling class, one must start by challenging its ideas. Once the ideas of oppressors no longer rule over us, that is when their time will run out and they must face the music. It is precisely in these institutions of learning, the universities and colleges, where a capitalist society churns out its next generation of leaders who must prop up the system. So, it is in the colleges and universities where the battle of ideas must take a sharp and pronounced turn, presenting a decisive challenge to the ideas of the ruling class. This is the significance of the student movement to the proletarian struggle.

Salrab Miran is a member of the Communist Mazdoor Kissan Party of Pakistan and was the Founding President of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) at the University of Texas at Dallas.

Essay Submissions

Submissions for publication must relate to one of the following:

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