

Guattari and Negri, (2010) *New Lines of Alliance, New Spaces of Liberty*.

Autonomea. Originally published in French (1985) as *Les Nouveaux Espaces de Liberte*, and then in English (1990) as *Communists Like Us*.

Matteo Mandarini—Introduction: Organizing Communism

Introduction to the republication. Strange, sloppy consideration of Zizek, Badiou, and Negri vis Lenin. Main point is that Negri and Guattari are concerned with how to organize communism without the old-party ways, but not by relying on spontaneity. Lenin vs. Luxemburg. New forms of organizing and associating. They first met in 1977. Communism is the liberation of work, transformation of consciousness, a process of singularization. Rejects hierarchical organization, but seeks to create centers of decision-making with excellent communication, centers that are always appearing and then disappearing. Both are a bit ambiguous on the State [#Mandarini thinks]. Must contend with it. For Negri, maybe its strata can be opened up and given new composition. Negri: passage from movement to party [# ??]. In Lenin there is a debate between vanguard and popular power. Debates about the autonomy of the political (Badiou's event posits a gap). Negri: important to go from the economic tendencies affecting the working class to the composition of their political subjectivity. Negri affirms the party is the tool for producing the antagonistic class subject [# ??]. Because subjectivity does not flow necessarily from economic conditions, some intervention is needed [# the author wants to suggest that Negri thinks]. The insurrectionary moment has to be organized [#cf Commonwealth]. Once the political subject is created, it needs a political form adequate to it so that communist society can be built. Can labor govern itself, or does it need to be governed? [#Author thinks there is still a need for vertical political structures to organize class struggle. Not sure he can be trusted as an interpreter.]

1 – Communists Like Us

The goal is to junk capitalism and socialism and to rescue communism, which is, properly, the struggle to liberate work as creative, to transform consciousness toward autonomous social beings, to reappropriate our own power, to create a new way of working together, a new communal life style in which each is free, appropriating our collective intelligence as a new capital, reaffirmation of singularity/singularization. The creation of a new consciousness in the act of collectively working together.

2 – The Revolution Began in 1968

The importance of the emergence of a new collective consciousness: not just

emancipation, but liberation, popular direct participation must be central (no mediation), no longer a dialectic confrontation between classes, but an exit and creation of a new life in which people directly control and derive happiness from production, they liberate bodies to produce. Communism as enrichment, diversification, maximization of singularities, as struggle for the happiness of singularity. Old communist parties and their centralized structures are dead, killed by the extant self-organizing movement. All of society is, now, the factory; work and life are no longer separate; labor precarity and uncertainty are the norm. Structures of state representation get even more pallid. Refusal of work becomes an important response, but we must use the powers we are developing in the productive process to create something other. New networks of alliances, of singularities, a new consciousness as a nodal articulation of the proliferating singularities. The women's movement, for example, made it clear to the worker's movement that reproduction is not secondary, and that it must be articulated as a peer with other struggles. The larger thrust is, for G&N: the reaffirmation of democracy as people directly managing their affairs (production and beyond) for themselves.

3 – The Reaction of the 1970s: No Future

Depressing chapter that details a proto-Empire called “Integrated World Capitalism,” a networked and flexible global power increasingly subsuming the world into itself. Work is now integrated with all of life. The goal of IWC is to force people to condone their own impotence. [# I like this...though 'force' might be better conceived as 'entice'.] IWC is a reaction to the insurgencies of the 60s. It is capitalism showing its most pitiless face. But the new subjectivity produced in the 60s endures. A reconsideration of democracy is needed. Proletariat in the South is a new figure, both of terror and of liberation. There is a split between the included workers and the precariat (both globally and within a given society. The Old Left preference for the included (industrial) worker is arcane. The precariat and the knowledge worker are the key now. The new power of the proletariat is in molecular multiplicity of desire. There is resistance about, but they admit it is currently weak. We must always win the war for “the collective imaginary,” and we must form up a new collective consciousness out of the activities of singularities...

East and West of Cold War (socialism and capitalism) are equally exploiting the rest of the globe in capitalism.

4—The Revolution Continues

Three poles of IWC: elite, guaranteed workers, precarious workers. The revolutionary subjectivities work in some relation to these poles, trying to negotiate the guaranteed/precarious split, catalyzing singular becomings,

self-composing new subjectivities, new collective self-makings. Chain of struggles starting in Italy in 1977. Autonomy, self-production, and quality of life are central now as the primary objectives. Don't forget the precarious urban proletariat. How will new subjectivities be created, and how will they organize themselves in a new way? Red terrorism was a disaster. It was in part the result of internal illness, of a desire for what diminishes us. We must be attentive to and disengage with such negative desires. The living, real body may be a model for organization. Each singular revolutionary movement must be allowed to operate on its own terms, but then it can find intersection with other movements (e.g. nuclear and ecology). Importance of the struggle over science. We aim not at a utopia but at continuing the existing real movement. What is the organization of a communist political economy? We must refuse Jacobinism and Leninism in this transition. To find the new forms of organization we should study how existing experiments have achieved some success (e.g. 1982 Latin America) and build on that. Peace movement as a key model as well; a loom on which other strands can be woven together. Democracy in which people can decide production and the *res publica* for themselves. Neither capitalism nor socialism. Affirm happiness and life.

5—The New Alliance

We need a new organization: machines of struggle. It is an open question what these will be like. Mostly we know how to define these negatively: not “democratic” centralism, not Leninism, not anarchism. Anything that repeats the constitutive model of separating will formation from execution and administration, of alienating people from their power. No ideological unification. New forms must honor plurality and singularity—a functional multicentrism that can ward off capitalism and expand the self-productive capacities of the singularities. Each movement is autonomous and then links with others (maybe with molar struggles). Must create permanent mechanisms that prevent the emergence of sectarianism [#wtf?]. Organizations that continually remake themselves. No reduction to unity, and yet try not to degenerate into passive and mute divisions. They need organizational devices for functional multicentrism that can aid in the singularization process, ward off capitalism, and yet be open and renewing [#to be honest it is all very contradictory]. The source of consistency is a crystallization of desire and generosity. Renewal of constitutional mechanisms, promoting a higher rationality through juridical innovation. Yet against the state, against strategies of corporatism (these undermine autonomy). The machines of struggle must develop their particular productive activities in the context of their struggle; they must define themselves. The goal is to develop the collective capacity for autonomy and self-management of production. Show the capitalists that they are not necessary for maximizing production. We must also each of us work on ourselves, reconstruct ourselves as multiplicities connected out into other multiplicities [#and thereby render moot much of the

concern about individual freedom vs. collective good].

Alliance between the included working class and the precariat. Workers are no longer any more important or central to struggle. We need not unification, but multivalent engagement and articulation and this will occur through the immanent process of self-production, of collective self-transformation. Production is key, cooperation in production [#for N this is where the whole thing starts, or is already starting]. Increasingly capitalism is subjecting all workers to the same discipline, so the alliance above should get easier to create. But there is a sense that the current precariat is the “hot zone” of struggle. The key is for this new alliance to self-produce a new subjectivity, a new idea of itself as active and engaged in the project of production in common.

[#It is all quite vague and often obfuscatory, like they often struggled to agree and so ended up being vague or obfuscating in order to get something on paper...N wanting more structure and control for the new organization and G wanting more freedom. The result is a bit of a morass.]

6—Think and Live in Another Way

Against resentment. We must refashion our collective subjectivities autonomously. We must draw on actually existing practices of economic production. Affirm singularity. We must also organize the activity of this new subjectivity. Experiment with new forms of organizing ourselves. Communism must “reterritorialize” political practice. The working class is no longer *dirigente*. We must create new lines of alliance between knowledge and material workers in the North and the emerging proletariat in the South. Then G&N offer the lazy line that these groups must be “unified” in the same revolutionary will. We must also attack the repression of the IWC.

To be clear: the State is not a partner. The new movement must distance itself from any thought that it can fix the state and make it safe for communism. Not just the capitalist state as it is, but all the different derivatives of that state. The state will be cordoned off and fall into disuse and be put out to pasture. If it reasserts itself, we must ward it off by being active.

Communism’s reterritorialization is entirely different from repressive reterritorialization: it unglues the dominant realities and creates the conditions for people to make their own territory, to manage their own destiny. We must create determinate fronts and machines of struggle; invent new territories of desire and political action (without the state and without the IWC). We must work on ourselves, extract form our being the powers of implosion and despair [#of wanting to let the state do it for us]. Peace key as a response to the war of the IWC.

Postscript, 1990, Antonio Negri

He says G&N wanted to create a discourse of hope in the midst of the years of lead. He opines against the “weak thought” that is one response to those defeats. He reiterates the importance of the formation of new subjectivities, for giving a new territorialization to desire. He thinks G&N should have stressed the ecological movement more fully. North-South alliance has not come to fruition at all. The Eastern bloc is of course key. Communism is totally different from socialism. Socialism is a mode of capitalism—state-centered management of production that exploits producers. Marx gives us the means to analyze capitalism, Lenin gives us a certain kind of political way forward (need a strong party-vanguard to organize the democratic-participatory energy of the masses). Luxemburg criticized this idea even then, insisting on the permanent refusal of any mediation of workers’ self-organization. This self-organization will create its own institutions (e.g. Russia/soviets and Germany/workers’ councils). Communists today have to reconsider the Lenin-Luxemburg ‘debate’ [in favor of Luxemburg]. After Lenin’s death there were two ways to go: Trotsky/permanent revolution or Stalin/centralization-bureaucratization. The choice of the latter means state socialism was nothing like communism. [Hungary 1956 might be seen as a communist revolt against socialism.]

Communism is the form society takes after capitalism has been destroyed. It is born directly from workers’ refusal of work and its organization by capitalists or by socialist states. It “is an absolutely radical political economic democracy and an aspiration to freedom.” We don’t transition to communism through socialism. There is only the development of communism within capitalism, the “retaking of freedom into one’s own hands and the construction of collective means for controlling cooperation in production.” It is already developing within capitalism as production becomes more autonomously organized by workers. Production driven by the social base, not by the party or the corporation. The Eastern bloc points to a new model of non-liberal democracy. Democracy is not just political but social and economic liberation. Democratic government [#?] must yield a form of free organization of cooperation in production. Question is: how can we do democratic management of economic production? We are already experiencing it, already organizing it. Intellectual labor is key in this regard.

Communism defined by Marx as “the real movement that abolishes the present state of affairs.”

Guattari—The New Spaces of Freedom (1984)

Spaces of freedom are a key idea for G. Rights and juridical structures and formal freedoms should be seen as part of the struggle for spaces of freedom.

Judicial apparatuses, the state, laws, etc. are something we have to learn to deal with, to struggle in the presence of. The IWC is trying to close down freedoms. We have to organize to defend and expand these freedoms, concrete freedoms (or better, degrees of freedom in relation to others, in particular contexts). Maximize this relational freedom. Axes of a new social practice: human rights, peace, development of human potential. We must overcome the subjective stupefaction of obedience. Must do so without vanguards, state parties, and hierarchies in our organizations; no seizing of state power. Rather: transversal rhizomatic relations through which society seizes itself. The state is what we get when we offload the responsibility to govern ourselves. The state is not an exterior monster that governs us, it is our own creation, when we are at our most passive. But even if we are not to seize the state, the new society must still establish *centers of decision* to enable analytical collective procedures to ensure decisions are made by people themselves. Maximize collective and individual processes of singularization. Groups subjects can carry these processes out: Greens in Germany, Solidarnosc in Poland. The organizations we build will have to be continually renewed, they are never permanent. Multivalent alliances, open to connecting to similar desires in others who seems at first to be quite different [e.g. the Tea Party].

Negri—Archeological Letter. October 1984

It is crucial to retain the link between liberation and destruction; destruction of the IWC's new totality. This destruction will open up possibility. Communism is an augmentation of being—the destruction that it engages in affirms life because it makes possible the growth that the totality closes off. Destruction and doubt can be generative if used against that which stifles. Again: the importance of organizing the process of liberation. Withering away of the state is a problematic idea: the segments of the state must be liberated and re-purposed into “an open composition with more deterritorialized phyla.” We need consistency and composition. Liberation with organization. We must take seriously the old debates about the party: between the forces of base agency and efficient institutions. Leninism subsumed anarchism, but now Leninism is being subsumed by a new form of social organization. Again, destruction of the current totality will make it possible to experiment with such new forms. Destruction frees the segments to create on their own terms. Social practice must both destroy in this way and create, to develop the constituent tendency. Solidarnosc, Greens in Germany, English miners: all are innovations in revolutionary organization. What is required is an “irruption of the other,” of a thought and practice that shows the claims of totality to be false and that inaugurates an alternative social practice. [very R here of course]. But the event that irrupts doesn't do so entirely spontaneously (and so we are not to just wait around for it to happen), rather it can be constructed, and we have to understand *how* to do so. Radical democracy that has a form of organization with the efficiency of

Leninism and the freedom of autonomism. [#pipedream]. Love is key as an organizing force.