# Glenbrooks r1

## 1

#### Forms of fragmented politics completely cedes the political to capitalism. Engagement in undercommon communication is too individualized and resists collective and concrete change. This constitutes enjoyment of melancholic pleasures of being distanced and accommodated to the real world, and as a result remains stuck in parasitic oppression without change – Dean 13:

“Communist Desire”, Jodi Dean, , 2013, LHP AM

An emphasis on the drive dimension of melancholia, on Freud's attention to the way sadism in melancholia is 'turned round upon the subject's own self', leads to an interpretation of the general contours shaping the left that differs from Brown's**. Instead of a left attached to an unaclmowledged orthodoxy,** **we have one that has given way on the desire for communism, betrayed its historical commitment to the proletariat, and sublimated revolutionary energies into restorationist practices that strengthen the hold of capitalism**. **This left has replaced commitments to the emancipatory, egalitarian struggles of working people against capitalism - commitments that were never fully orthodox, but always ruptured, conflicted and contested - with incessant activity** (not unlike the manic Freud also associates with melancholia), and so **now satisfies itself with criticism and interpretation, small projects and local actions, particular issues and legislative victories, art, technology, procedures, and process**. It sublimates revolutionary desire to democratic drive, to the repetitious practices offered up as democracy (whether representative, deliberative or radical). **Having already conceded to the inevitably of capitalism, it noticeably abandons 'any striking power against the big bourgeoisie',** to return to Benjamin's language. For such a left, **enjoyment comes from its withdrawal from responsibility, its sublimation of goals and responsibilities into the branching, fragmented practices of micro-politics, self-care, and issue awareness**. Perpetually slighted, harmed and undone**, this left remains stuck in repetition, unable to break out of the circuits of drive in which it is caught** - unable because it enjoys. **Might this not explain why such a left confuses discipline with domination, why it forfeits collectivity in the name of an illusory, individualist freedom that continuously seeks to fragment and disrupt any assertion of a collective or a common?** The watchwords of critique within this structure of left desire are moralism, dogmatism, authoritarianism and utopianism - watchwords enacting a perpetual self-surveillance: has an argument, position or view inadvertently rukeo one of these errors? Even some of its militants reject party and state, division and decision, securing in advance an inefficacy sure to guarantee it the nuggets of satisfaction drive provides. **If this left is rightly described as melancholic, and I agree with Brown that it is, then its melancholia derives from the real existing compromises and betrayals inextricable from its history - its accommodations with reality, whether of nationalist war, capitalist encirclement, or so-called market demands.** Lacan teaches that, like Kant's categorical imperative, the super-ego refuses to accept reality as an explanation for failure. Impossible is no excuse - desire is always impossible to satisfy. A wide spectrum of the contemporary left has either accommodated itself, in one or another, to an inevitable capitalism or taken the practical failures of Marxism-Leninism to require the abandonment of antagonism, class, and revolutionary commitment to overturning capitalist arrangements of property and production. **Melancholic fantasy (the communist Master, authoritarian and obscene) as well as sublimated, melancholic practices (there was no alternative) shield this left, shield Ltd, from confrontation with guilt over such betrayal as they capture us in activities that feel productive, important, radical.**

#### Using the state for social progress and support pacifies the left, re-entrenching capital’s control, Laursen

Laursen, E., 2021. The Operating System An Anarchist Theory of the Modern State The Operating System An Anarchist Theory of the Modern State. pg 128-129

**Many of those on the left**—or at least those who are left-of-center—still **feel** **loyalty to the State based on its social policy accomplishments, which undoubtedly improved the lives of large sections of the working class**. **Progressives and social democrats tend to understand contemporary politics as a contest between conservative “antigovernment” forces and people like themselves who believe in an expansive government that serves society’s needs.** They believe strongly—emotionally—that social progress is only possible within the context of the State. **This is how the State retains the loyalty of women, ethnic minorities, sexual minorities, and much of the working class, who often see capturing the State as the most powerful means of securing equality**. **It’s also how the State retains the support of white liberals, who have a deep desire for social reconciliation and unity and tend to believe the only way to achieve a resolution of social conflicts is through the State. All of these means—cultural assimilation, careful control of its relationship with the masses, provision of social services—enable the State to construct an organism that saturates every part of our lives with the meaning it creates while subsuming or remaking our social relations in its image to render us useful to its purposes. Growth fueled by capital is perhaps the most important element of these, but it can only be achieved as part of, and in harmony with, the larger operating system of the State.** **This totalizing urge disempowers us and blocks the development of a sense of mutual interdependence because the State sets itself up as the filter through which we must think about our relations with each other. Any time we attempt to tighten our community (through cooperatives, social insurance, or social welfare programs, for example), it must be done through channels recognized, controlled, or presided over by the State and subject to standard budgeting.** **The task of the State is to create a cultural context in which this outcome feels inevitable, even without specific commands and directives.** Addressing the controversy surrounding the State’s response to COVID in 2020, the anarchist collective CrimethInc. observed, “Fundamentally, the problem is that we lack a discourse about health that is not premised on centralized control. Across the political spectrum, every metaphor we have for safety and health is predicated on the exclusion of difference (for example, borders, isolation, protection) rather than the aim of developing a positive relationship with difference (for example, extending health-care resources to all, including those outside the borders of the US).” 3 The result is a great narrowing of our perceived political, economic, and cultural options. **The State spins its web, but, of course, the operating system neither operates perfectly nor perfectly realizes its creators’ aspirations. Social movements and political and labor revolts, riots, and insurrections bedevil it, forcing it to make economic and political accommodations**, admit new parties to the Core Identity Group, and rethink its means of control. **But it has been** astonishingly **successful at subsuming dissenting movements** and co-opting insurgents **because**, thanks to the modes of thinking it forces us into, **we** **accept that it’s there—even those of us who hate the inequality, oppression, and environmental destruction that come with it.** **This process is one reason the mass appeal of (state) socialism of various types surpassed that of anarchism in the early twentieth century**. Thanks to the rise of the technocratic Progressive movement in the United States, the success of the Russian Revolution and the achievements of the New Deal, and the social-democratic governments that took power in much of western Europe after World War II, the State seemed to emerge as the locus of political activity; if you were outside the State—outside of politics as defined and organized by the State—you consigned yourself to irrelevancy. This argument continues to recommend itself as a political fact of life.

#### The alternative is the politics of the comrade – one that is oriented toward a shared communist horizon – only our methodology can fight capitalism, anything else allows it to take over co-opting any movement – Dean 19:

Dean, Jodi. Comrade: An essay on political belonging. Verso, 2019. // LHP BT + LHP PS

The term ***comrade* indexes a political relation, a set of expectations for action toward a common goal**. **It highlights the sameness of those on the same side—no matter their differences, comrades stand together**. As Obama’s joke implies, when you share a politics, you don’t generally distance yourself from your comrades. **Comradeship binds action**, **and in** this binding, **this solidarity, it** collectivizes and **directs action in light of a shared vision for the future**. **For communists, this is the egalitarian future of a society emancipated from the determinations of private property and capitalism and reorganized according to the free association, common benefit, and collective decisions of the producers.** But the term comrade predates its use by communists and socialists. In romance languages, comrade first appears in the sixteenth century to designate one who shares a room with another. Juan A. Herrero Brasas cites a Spanish historical-linguistic dictionary’s definition of the term: “*Camarada* is someone who is so close to another man that he eats and sleeps in the same house with him.”[2](about:blank) In French, the term was originally feminine, *camarade*, and referred to a barracks or room shared by soldiers.[3](about:blank) Etymologically, comrade derives from *camera*, the Latin word for room, chamber, and vault. The technical connotation of *vault* indexes a generic function, the structure that produces a particular space and holds it open.[4](about:blank) A chamber or room is a repeatable structure that takes its form by producing an inside separate from an outside and providing a supported cover for those underneath it. Sharing a room, sharing a space, generates a closeness, an intensity of feeling and expectation of solidarity that differentiates those on one side from those on the other. Comradeship is a political relation of supported cover. Interested in comrade as a mode of address, carrier of expectations, and figure of belonging in the communist and socialist traditions, I emphasize **the comrade as a generic figure for the political relation between those on the same side of a political struggle. Comrades are those who  tie themselves together instrumentally, for a common purpose: *If we want to win—and we have to win—we must act together*.** As Angela Davis describes her decision to join the Communist Party:I wanted an anchor, a base, a mooring. I needed comrades with whom I could share a common ideology. I was tired of ephemeral ad-hoc groups that fell apart when faced with the slightest difficulty; tired of men who measured their sexual height by women’s intellectual genuflection. It wasn’t that I was fearless, but I knew that to win, we had to fight and the fight that would win was the one collectively waged by the masses of our people and working people in general. I knew that this fight had to be led by a group, a party with more permanence in its membership and structure and substance in its ideology.[5](about:blank) **Comrades are those you can count on. You share enough of a common ideology,** enough of a commitment to common principles and goals, **to do more than one-off actions. Together you can fight the long fight. As comrades, our actions are voluntary, but they are not always of our own choosing**. **Comrades have to be able to count on each other even when we don’t like each other and even when we disagree. We do what needs to be done because we owe it to our comrades.** In *The Romance of American Communism*, Vivian Gornick reports the words of a former member of the Communist Party USA, or CPUSA, who hated the daily grind of selling papers and canvassing expected of party cadre, but nevertheless, according to her, “I did it. I did it because if I didn’t do it, I couldn’t face my comrades the next day. And we all did it for the same reason: we were accountable to each other.”[6](about:blank) Put in psychoanalytic terms, the comrade functions as an ego ideal: the point from which party members assess themselves as doing important, meaningful work.[7](about:blank)Being accountable to another entails seeing your actions through their eyes. Are you letting them down or are you doing work that they respect and admire?In *Crowds and Party*, I present the good comrade as an ideal ego, that is to say, as how party members imagine themselves.[8](about:blank) They may imagine themselves as thrilling orators, brilliant polemicists, skilled organizers, or courageous militants. In contrast with my discussion there, in the current book, I draw out how **the comrade** **also functions as an ego ideal, the perspective that party members—and often fellow travelers—take toward themselves**. This perspective is the effect of belonging on the same side as it works back on those who have committed themselves to common struggle. The comrade is a symbolic as well as an imaginary figure and it is the symbolic dimension of ego ideal I focus on here. My thinking about the comrade as a generic figure for those on the same side flows out of my work on communism as the horizon of left politics and my work on the party as the political form necessary for this politics.[9](about:blank) **To see our political horizon as communist is to highlight the emancipatory egalitarian struggle of the proletarianized against capitalist exploitation—that is, against the determination of life by market forces; by value; by the division of labor (on the basis of sex and race); by imperialism (theorized by Lenin in terms of the dominance of monopoly and finance capital); and by neocolonialism (theorized by Nkrumah as the last stage of imperialism).** **Today we see this horizon in struggles such as those led by women of color against police violence, white supremacy, and the murder and incarceration of black, brown, and working-class people. We see it in the infrastructure battles around pipelines, climate justice, and barely habitable cities with undrinkable water and contaminated soil. We see it in the array of social reproduction struggles against debt, foreclosure, and privatization, and for free, quality public housing, childcare, education, transportation, healthcare, and other basic services. We see it in the ongoing fight of LGBTQ people against harassment, discrimination, and oppression.** It is readily apparent today that **the communist horizon is the horizon of political struggle** not for the nation but **for the world**; it is an international horizon. This is evident in the antagonism between the rights of immigrants and refugees and intensified nationalisms; in the necessity of a global response to planetary warming; and in anti-imperialist, decolonization, and peace movements. In these examples, **communism is a force of negativity, the negation of the global capitalist present.** **Communism is also the name for the positive alternative to capitalism’s permanent and expanding exploitation, crisis, and immiseration, the name of a system of production based on meeting social needs**—*from each according to ability to each according to need*, to paraphrase Marx’s famous slogan—in a way that is collectively determined and carried out by the producers. This positive dimension of communism attends to social relations, to how people treat each other, animals, things, and the world around them**. Building communism entails more than resistance and riot. It requires the emancipated egalitarian organization of collective life.** With respect to the party, intellectuals on the contemporary left tend to extract the party from the aspirations and accomplishments it enabled. Communist philosophers who disagree on a slew of theoretical questions, such as Antonio Negri and Alain Badiou, converge on the organizational question—no party! **The party has been rejected as authoritarian**, as outmoded, as ill-fitting a society of networks. **Every other mode of political association may be revised, renewed, rethought, or reimagined except for the party of communists**. **This rejection of the party** as a form for left politics is a mistake. It **ignores the effects of association on those engaged in common struggle.** **It fails to learn from the everyday experiences of generations of activists**, organizers, and revolutionaries. **It relies on a narrow, fantasied notion of the party as a totalitarian machine.** It neglects the courage, enthusiasm, and achievements of millions of party members for over a century. **Rejection of the party form has been left dogmatism** for the last thirty years **and has gotten us nowhere**. Fortunately, the movements of the squares in Greece and Spain, as well as lessons from the successes and limits of the Occupy movement, have pushed against this left dogmatism. They have reenergized interest in the party as a political form that can scale; a form that is flexible, adaptive, and expansive enough to endure beyond the joyous and disruptive moments of crowds in the streets. A theory of the comrade contributes to this renewal by drawing out the ways that shared commitment to a common struggle generates new strengths and new capacities. Over and against the reduction of party relations to the relations between the leaders and the led, comrade attends to the effects of political belonging on those on the same side of a political struggle. **As we fight together for a world free of exploitation, oppression, and bigotry, we have to be able to trust and count on each other. Comrade names this relation. The comrade relation remakes the place from which one sees, what it is possible to see, and what possibilities can appear**. It enables the revaluation of work and time, what one does, and for whom one does it. Is one’s work done for the people or for the bosses? Is it voluntary or done because one has to work? Does one work for personal provisions or for a collective good? We should recall Marx’s lyrical description of communism in which work becomes “life’s prime want.” We get a glimpse of that in comradeship: **one *wants* to do political work**. **You don’t want to let down your comrades**; you see the value of your work through their eyes, your new collective eyes. **Work, determined not by markets but by shared commitments, becomes fulfilling**. French communist philosopher and militant Bernard Aspe discusses the problem of contemporary capitalism as a loss of “common time”; that is, the loss of an experience of time generated and enjoyed through our collective being-together.[10](about:blank) From holidays, to meals, to breaks, whatever common time we have is synchronized and enclosed in forms for capitalist appropriation. Communicative capitalism’s apps and trackers amplify this process such that the time of consumption can be measured in much the same way that Taylorism measured the time of production: How long did a viewer spend on a particular web page? Did a person watch a whole ad or click off of it after five seconds? In contrast, the common action that is the actuality of communist movement induces a collective change in capacities. Breaking from capitalism’s 24-7 injunctions to produce and consume for the bosses and owners, the discipline of common struggle expands possibilities for action and intensifies the sense of its necessity. The comrade is a figure for the relation through which this transformation of work and time occurs. **How do we imagine political work? Under conditions where political change seems completely out of reach, we might imagine political work as self-transformation**. At the very least, we can work on ourselves. In the intensely mediated networks of communicative capitalism, we might see our social media engagements as a kind of activism where Twitter and Facebook function as important sites of struggle. Perhaps we understand writing as important political work and hammer out opinion pieces, letters to the editors, and manifestoes. When we imagine political work, we often take electoral politics as our frame of reference, focusing on voting, lawn signs, bumper stickers, and campaign buttons. Or we think of activists as those who arrange phone banks, canvass door-to-door, and set up rallies. In yet another political imaginary, we might envision political work as study, whether done alone or with others. We might imagine political work as cultural production, the building of new communities, spaces, and ways of seeing. Our imaginary might have a militant, or even militarist, inflection: political work is carried out through marches, occupations, strikes, and blockades; through civil disobedience, direct action, and covert operations. Even with the recognition of the wide array of political activities, the ways people use them to respond to specific situations and capacities, and how they combine to enhance each other, we might still imagine radical political work as punching a Nazi in the face.Throughout these various actions and activities, how are the relations among those fighting on the same side imagined? How do the activists and organizers, militants and revolutionaries relate to one another? During the weeks and months when the Occupy movement was at its peak, relations with others were often infused with a joyous sense of being together, with an enthusiasm for the collective co-creation of new patterns of action and ways of living.[11](about:blank) But the feeling didn’t last. **The pressures of organizing diverse people and politics under conditions of police repression and real material need wore down even the most committed activists.** Since then, on social media and across the broader left, **relations among the politically engaged have again become tense and conflicted, often along lines of race and gender. Dispersed and disorganized, we’re uncertain of whom to trust and what to expect. We encounter contradictory injunctions to self-care and call out. Suspicion undermines support. Exhaustion displaces enthusiasm**. **Attention to comradeship, to the ways that shared expectations make political work not just possible but also gratifying, may help redirect our energies back to our common struggle.** As former CPUSA member David Ross explained to Gornick:I knew that I could never feel passionately about the new movements as I had about the old, I realized that the CP has provided me with a sense of comradeship I would never have again, and that without that comradeship I could *never* be political.[12](about:blank)For Ross, the Communist Party is what made Marxism. The party gave Marxism life, political purpose. This life-giving capacity came from comradeship. Ross continues: “The idea of politics as simply a diffused consciousness linked only to personal integrity was—*is*—anathema to me.” His description of politics as “a diffused consciousness linked only to personal integrity” fits today’s left milieus. Perhaps, then, his remedy—comradeship—will as well. Various people have told me their stories of feeling a rush of warmth when they were first welcomed into their party as a comrade. I’ve had this feeling myself. In his memoir *Incognegro: A Memoir of Exile and Apartheid*, the theorist Frank Wilderson, a former member of uMkhonto weSizwe, or MK, the armed wing of the African National Congress (ANC), describes his first meeting with Chris Hani, the leader of the South African Communist Party and the chief of staff of MK. Wilderson writes, “I beamed like a schoolboy when he called me ‘comrade.’”[13](about:blank) Wilderson chides himself for what he calls a “childish need for recognition.”[14](about:blank) Perhaps because he still puts Hani on a pedestal, he feels exposed in his enjoyment of the egalitarian disruption of comradeship. Wilderson hasn’t yet internalized the idea that he and Hani are political equals. “Comrade” **holds out an equalizing promise, and when that promise is fulfilled, we confront our own continuing** yet **unwanted attachments to hierarchy, prestige, inadequacy. Accepting equality takes courage.** Wilderson’s joy in hearing Hani call him “comrade” contrasts sharply with another instance Wilderson recounts where comrade was the term of address**. In 1994, shortly before Wilderson was forced to leave South Africa, he encountered Nelson Mandela** at an event hosted by *Tribute*magazine. **After Mandela’s public remarks, Wilderson asked a question in which he addressed Mandela as “comrade.”** “Not Mr. Mandela. Not sir, like the fawning advertising mogul who asked the first question. **Comrade Mandela. It stitched him back into the militant garb he’d shed since the day he left prison.”**[15](about:blank) **Wilderson’s recollection shows how comrade’s equalizing insistence can be aggressive, an imposition of discipline. This is part of its power. Addressing another as “comrade” reminds them that something is expected of them. Discipline and joy are two sides of the same coin**, two aspects of comradeship as a mode of political belonging. As a form of address, figure of political relation, and carrier of expectations, comrade **disrupts capitalist society’s hierarchical identifications of sex, race, and class.** It **insists on** the **equalizing sameness of those on the same side of a political struggle** and **renders that** equalizing sameness **productive of new modes of work and belonging. In this respect, comrade is a carrier of utopian longings** in the sense theorized by Kathi Weeks. Weeks presents **the utopian form** as **carrying out two functions**: “One function is to alter our connection to the present, while the other is to shift our relationship to the future; one is productive of estrangement, the other of hope.”[16](about:blank) **The first function mobilizes the negativity of disidentification and disinvestment**. **Present relations** **become** strange, **less binding on our sense of possibility**. The second function **redirects “our attention and energies toward an open future** … providing a vision or glimmer of a better world.”[17](about:blank) **The power of comrade is in how it negates old relations and promises new ones—the promise itself ushers them in,** welcoming the new comrade into relations irreducible to their broader setting.

#### The role of the ballot is fidelity to the truth – dedication to a shared horizon is liberatory, Dean 19:

Dean, Jodi. Comrade: An essay on political belonging. Verso, 2019. // LHP BT + LHP PS

The idea that comrades are those who belong to the same side of a political struggle leads to the fourth thesis: **The** relation between comrades is mediated by **fidelity to a** truth**;** practices **of comradeship** materialize **this** fidelity**. The “same side” points to the truth comrades are faithful to—the political truth that unites them**—**and the fidelity with which they work to realize this truth in the world.** “Belonging” invites attention to the expectations, practices, and affects that being on the same side generates. The notions of truth and fidelity at work here come from Alain Badiou. In brief, **Badiou rejects the idea of truth as a proposition or judgment, arguing instead that** truth is a process**. The process begins with the eruption of something new, an event.** **Because an event changes the situation, breaks the confines of the given, it is undecidable in terms of the given; it is something entirely new**. Badiou argues that this undecidability “induces the appearance of a *subject* of the event.”[60](about:blank) **This subject isn’t the cause of the event. It’s an effect of or response to the event,** “the decision to *say* that the event has taken place.” Grammar might seduce us into rendering this subject as “I.” **We should** avoid this temptation and **recognize the subject** **as** designating an inflection point, **a response that extends the event.** **The decision that a truth has appeared, that an event has occurred, incites a process of verification**, the “infinite procedure of verification of the true,” **in** **what Badiou calls an “exercise of fidelity**.”[61](about:blank) **Fidelity is a working out and working through of the truth, an engagement with truth that extends out into and changes the world. We should recognize here the unavoidably collective dimension of fidelity: in the political field, verification is a struggle of the many.** Peter Hallward draws out some implications of Badiou’s conception of truth. First, it is subjective. Those faithful to an evental truth involve themselves in working it out, exploring its consequences.[62](about:blank) Second, fidelity is not blind faith; it is rigorous engagement unconcerned with individual personality and incorporated into the body of truth that it generates. Hallward writes:Fidelity is, by definition, ex-centric, directed outward, beyond the limits of a merely personal integrity. To be faithful to an evental implication always means to abandon oneself, rigorously, to the unfolding of its consequences. **Fidelity implies that, if there is truth, it can be only cruelly indifferent to the private as such.** **Every truth involves a kind of anti-privatization, a subjective collectivization. In truth, “I” matter only insofar as I am subsumed by the impersonal vector of truth—say, the political organization, or the scientific research program.**[**63**](about:blank) **The truth process builds a new body**. This body of truth is a collective formed to “work for the consequences of the new” and this work, this collective, disciplines and subsumes the faithful.[64](about:blank)Third, collectivity does not imply uniformity. The infinite procedure of verification incorporates multiple experiments, enactments, and effects.Badiou writes, “An organization lies at the intersection between an Idea and an event. However, this intersection only exists as process, whose immediate subject is the political militant.”[65](about:blank) We should amend this statement by replacing *militant* with *comrade*. Comrade highlights the “discipline of the event,” the way that political fidelity cannot be exercised by a solitary individual—hence, the Marxist-Leninist emphasis on the unity of theory and practice, the barren incapacity of each alone. Comrade also affirms the self-abandonment accompanying fidelity to a truth: its vector, its unfolding, is indifferent to my personal experiences and inclinations. For communists, the process of truth has a body and that body is the party, in both its historical and formal sense. Already in *Theory of the Subject*, Badiou recognizes the necessity of a political body, the party as the “subject-support of all politics.”[66](about:blank) He writes:The party is the body of politics, in the strict sense. The fact that there is a body by no means guarantees that there is a subject … But for there to be a subject, for a subject to be found, there must be the support of a body.[67](about:blank) **As a figure of political belonging, the comrade is a faithful response to the evental rupture of crowds and movements, to the egalitarian discharge that erupts from the force of the many where they don’t belong, to the movement of the people as the subject of politics.**[**68**](about:blank) **Comrades demonstrate fidelity through political work; through concerted, disciplined engagement. Their practical political work extends the truth of the emancipatory egalitarian struggle of the oppressed into the world.** Amending Badiou (by drawing from his earlier work), we can say that the comrade is not a faithful subject but a political relation faithful to the divided people as the subject of emancipatory egalitarian politics.[69](about:blank) **For us to see the revolutionary people as the subject in the struggles of the oppressed, for their subject to be found, we must be comrades.** In *Ninotchka*, Nina Ivanova Yakushova can’t tell who her comrades are by looking at them. The party has told her who to look for, but she has to ask. After Iranoff identifies himself, Yakushova tells him her name and the name and position of the party comrade who authorized her visit. Iranoff introduces Buljanoff and Kopalski. Yakushova addresses each as comrade. But it’s not the address that makes them all comrades. They are comrades because they are members of the same party. **The party is the organized body of truth that mediates their relationship. This mediation makes clear what is expected of comrades—disciplined, faithful work.** Iranoff, Buljanoff, and Kopalski have not been doing the work expected of comrades, which is why Moscow sent Yakushova to oversee them in Paris. That Kopalski says they would have greeted her with flowers demonstrates their *embourgeoisment*, the degeneration of their sense of comradeship. But they are all there for work. Gendered identity and hierarchy don’t mediate relations between comrades. The practices of fidelity to a political truth, the work done toward building that truth in the world, do. The solidarity of comrades in political struggle arises out of the intertwining of truth, practice, and party. It’s not reducible to any of these alone. **Comrades are not simply those who believe in the same truth—as in, for example, the idea of communism. Their fidelity to a certain truth is manifested in practical work.** Work for the realization of a political truth brings people into comradely relation. **But carrying out similar tasks in fidelity to the same truth isn’t sufficient for comradeship. The work must be in common; no one is a comrade on their own. Practices of comradeship are coordinated, organized. The party is the organization out of which comradeship emerges and that comrade relations produce. It concentrates comradeship even as comradeship exceeds it.**

# Case

#### Technology mutated capitalism by allowing fractalization of time which separates work from the worker. This produces conditions of precarity that overwhelmingly advantage the employer over the worker in class conflicts. The aff’s commitment to old legal methods dooms us to fail in our war with capital. Berardi 2,

Berardi, Franco. *After the future*. AK press, 2011.

In February 2003, the American journalist Bob Herbert published in the New York Times the results of a cognitive survey of hundreds of unemployed youths in Chicago: none of the interviewees expected to find work in the next few years; none expected to be able to rebel, or set off large-scale collective change. The general sense of the interviews was a sentiment of profound impotence. The perception of decline did not seem focused on politics, but on a deeper cause, a scenario o fsocial and psychic involution that seemed to cancel every possibility of build­ ing alternatives. **During the zero zero decade, precariousness has spread throughout the organization of labor, becoming the prevailing feeling of the new generation**. The fragmentation of the present is reversed in the implosion of the future. In lhe Corrosion of Character: The Transformation of Wt.irk in Modern Capitalism, Richard Sennett reacts to this existential condition of precariousness and fragmentation with nostalgia for a past epoch in which life was structured in relatively stable social roles, and time had enough linear consistency to construe paths of identity: "Time's arrow is broken; it has no trajectory in a continually re-engineered, routine­ hating, short-term political economy. People feel the lack of sustained human relations and durable purposes" (Sennett 1 998, 98) . But this nostalgia has no hold on present reality, and attempts to reactivate the community remain artificial and sterile. **Precariousness is itself a precarious notion, because it defines its object in an approximate manner**, but also because from this notion derive paradoxical, self-contradictory, in other words precarious **strate­gies. If we concentrate our critical attention on the precarious character of job performance, what kind of program can we propose, to what target can we aspire? That of a stable job guaranteed for life? This would be (and actually is) a cultural regression, the definite subordination of labor to the rule of exploitation.** Notwithstanding the idea of "flexicu­rity," we are still far from any strategy of social recomposition of the labor movement that might extricate us from unlimited exploitation. We need to pick up again the thread of analysis of social composition and decompositon if we want to discern possible outlines of any re­ composition to come. In the 1970s, the energy crisis, the consequent economic reces­sion, and finally the replacement of workers with numerical machines resulted in a large number of people with no guarantees. The question of precariousness soon became central to social analysis, but also to the ambitions of the movement. We began by proposing to struggle for forms of guaranteed income, not linked to work, in order to face the fact that **a large part of the young population had no prospect of guaranteed employment.** The situation has changed since then, because what seemed a marginal and temporary condition has now become the prevalent form of labor relations. **Precariousness is no longer a marginal and provisional characteristic, but it is the general form of the labor relation in a productive, digitalized sphere, reticular and recombinant**. **The word "precariat" generally stands for work that no longer has fixed rules about labor relations, salary; or the length of the work day. However, if we analyze the past, we see that these rules functioned only for a limited period in the history of relations between labor and capital. Only for a short period at the heart of the twentieth century, under the political pressures of unions and workers**, in conditions of (almost) full employment, and thanks to a generally strong regulatory role played by the state in the economy, some limits to the natural violence of capitalist dynamics could be legally established. **The legal obligations that in certain periods have protected society from the vio­lence of capital were always founded on political and material relations of force (workers' violence against the violence of capital) . Thanks to political force, it became possible to affirm rights, establish laws, and protect them as personal rights. With the decline in the political force of the workers' movement, the natural precariousness and brutality of labor relations in capitalism have re-emerged**. The new phenomenon is not the precarious character of the job market, but the technical and cultural conditions in which infolabor is made precarious. **The technical conditions are based on digital recom­bination of infolabor in networks**. The cultural conditions include the education of the masses and the expectations of consumption inherited from late twentieth century society, which are continuously fed by the entire apparatus of marketing and media communication. If we analyze the first aspect, the technical transformations in­ introduced by the digitalization of the productive cycle, we see **that the essential point is not that the labor relation has become precarious (which, after all, it has always been), but the dissolution of the person as active productive agent, as labor power**. The cyberspace of **global production can be described as an immense expanse of depersonalized human time**. Infolabor, the provision of time for the elaboration and recom­bination of segments of infocommodities, takes to the extreme the tendency, which Marx analyzed, for labor to become abstracted from concrete activity. **This process of abstraction has progressively stripped labor time of every concrete and individual particularity**. The atom of time of which Marx wrote is the minimal unit of productive labor. But **in industrial production, abstract labor time was impersonated by a physical and juridical bearer, embodied in** a worker in flesh and bone, with a certi­fied and political identity. Naturally, capital did not purchase a per­sonal disposition, but the time for which the workers were its bearers. **But if capital wanted to dispose of the necessary time for its valoriza­tion, it was obliged to hire a human being**, to buy all of its time, and therefore it had to face up to the material needs and the social and political demands of which the human was a bearer. **When we move onto the sphere of infolabor, there is no longer a need to buy a person for eight hours a day indefinitely**. **Capital no longer recruits people, but buys packets of time, separated from their interchangeable and occasional bearers**. Depersonalized time has become the real agent of valorization, and depersonalized time has neither any right, nor any demand. **It can only be either available or unavailable, but this is purely theoretical be­cause the physical body, despite not being a legally recognized person, still has to buy food and pay rent**. The informatic procedures of the recombination of semiotic ma­terial have the effect of liquefying the "objective" time necessary to produce the infocommodity**. In all of the time of life, the human ma­chine is there, pulsating and available, like a brain-sprawl in waiting**. The extension of time is meticulously cellularized: cells of productive time can be mobilized in punctual, casual, and fragmentary forms. The recombination of these fragments is automatically realized in the net­work. The mobile phone is the tool that makes possible the connection between the needs of semiocapital and the mobilization of the living labor of cyberspace. The ringtone of the mobile phone calls the workers to reconnect their abstract time to the reticular flux. It's a strange word-"liberalism"-with which we identify the ide­ology prevalent in the posthuman transition to digital slavery. Liberty is its foundational myth, but the liberty of whom? The liberty of capital, certainly. Capital must be absolutely free to expand in every corner of the world to find the fragment of human time available to be ex­ploited for the most miserable wage. But liberalism also predicates the liberty of the person. In neoliberal rhetoric, the juridical person is free to express itself, to choose representatives, and be entrepreneurial at the level of politics and the economy. All this is very interesting, except that the person has disappeared; what is left is like an inert object, ir­relevant and useless. The person is free, sure. But his time is enslaved. His liberty is a juridical fiction to which nothing in concrete daily life corresponds. If we consider the conditions in which the work of the majority of humanity, proletariat and cognitariat, is actually carried out in our time, if we examine the conditions of the average wage glob­ ally, if we consider the current cancellation of previous labor rights, we can say with no rhetorical exaggeration that we live in a regime of slavery. **Globally, the average wage is hardly sufficient to buy the mere survival of a person whose time is at the service of capital. And people have no right over the time of which they are formally the proprietors, but from which they are effectively expropriated. That time does not really belong to them, because it is separated from the social existence of the people** who make it available to the recombinant cyberproduc­tive circuit. **The time of work is fractalized, that is, reduced to minimal fragments for reassembly, and the fractalization makes it possible for capital to constantly find the conditions for the minimum wage. Precariousness is the black heart of the capitalist production pro­cess in the global network, where a continuous flow of fragmented and recomposable infowork circulates**. **Precariousness is the transformative element of the whole cycle of production. Nobody is outside its reach. At unspecified times, workers' wages are reduced or cut, and the life of all is threatened**. Digital infolabor can be fragmented in order to be recomposed someplace other than where that work is done. From the point of view of the valorization of capital, flow is con­tinuous, but from the point of view of the existence and time of cog­nitive workers, productive activity has the character of recombinant fragmentation in cellular form. Pulsating cells of work are lit and ex­tinguished in the large control room of global production. **Infolabor is innately precarious, not because of the contingent viciousness of em­ployers but for the simple reason that the allocation of work time can be disconnected from the individual and legal person of the worker**, an ocean of valorizing cells convened in a cellular way and recombined by the subjectivity of capital. It is appropriate to reconceptualize the relationship between re­combinant capital and immaterial labor, and it is advisable to obtain a new framework of reference. Given the impossibility, from now on, of reaching a contractual elaboration of the cost of work by basing it on the legal person-because productive abstract labor is disconnected from the individual person of the worker-the traditional form of the wage is no longer operative, since it can't guarantee anything anymore. Therefore, the recombinant character of cognitive labor seems incom­patible with any possibility of social recomposition or subjectivation. The rules of negotiation, collaboration, and conflict have changed, not because of a political decision, but because of a technical and cultural change in the labor relationship. The rules are not immutable, and there is no rule which forces us to comply with the rules. The legalist Left has never understood this. Fixed on the idea that it is necessary to comply with the rules, it has never known how to carry out confronta­tion on the new ground inaugurated by digital technologies and the globalized cycle of infolabor. The neoliberals have understood this very well and they have subverted the rules that were laid down in a century of trade union history. In the classical mode of industrial production, the rule was based on a rigid relationship between labor and capital, and on the possibil­ity of determining the value of goods on the basis of socially necessary working time. But in the recombining stage of capital based on exploi­tation of fluid infowork, there is no longer any deterministic relation between labor and value. We should not aim to restore the rules that neoliberal power has violated; **we should invent new rules adequate to the fluid form of the labor-capital relation**, where there is no longer any quantitative time­ value determinism and, thus, where there is no longer any necessary constant in economic relations**. How can we oppose the systemic depersonalization** of the work­ing class and the slavery that is affirmed in the command of precarious and depersonalized work? This is the question that is posed **with insis­tence by whomever still has a sense of human dignity**. Nevertheless, no answer comes, because the forms of resistance and struggle that were efficacious in the twentieth century appear to no longer have the ca­pacity to spread and consolidate, nor, consequently, can they stop the absolutism of capital. We have learned from the experience of workers' struggle in re­cent years that the struggle of precarious workers does not become a cycle, does not leave a social sediment of consciousness, organization, and solidarity. Fractalized work can also intermittently rebel, but this does not set any wave of struggle in motion. The reason is easy to un­derstand. **In order for struggles to form a cycle there must be** a spatial proximity of laboring bodies and **an existential temporal** continuity. Without this proximity and this continuity, we lack the conditions for cellularized bodies to become a community.

#### Recognizing a right to strike reduces revolutionary potential and fractures class organizing – turns the perm.

Crépon 19 Mark Crépon (French philosopher), translated by Micol Bez “The Right to Strike and Legal War in Walter Benjamin’s ‘Toward the Critique of Violence,’” Critical Times, 2:2, August 2019, DOI 10.1215/26410478-7708331

If we wish to understand how the question of the right to strike arises for Walter Benjamin in the seventh paragraph of his essay “Zur Kritik der Gewalt,” it is impor­ tant to first analyze the previous paragraph, which concerns the state’s monopoly on violence. It is here that Benjamin questions the argument that such a monopoly derives from the impossibility of a system of legal ends to preserve itself as long as the pursuit of natural ends through violent means remains. Benjamin responds to this dogmatic thesis with the following hypothesis, arguably one of his most impor­ tant reflections: “To counter it, one would perhaps have to consider the surprising possibility that law’s interest in monopolizing violence vis­à­vis the individual is explained by the intention not of preserving legal ends, but rather of preserving law itself. [This is the possibility] that violence, when it does not lie in the hands of law, poses a danger to law, not by virtue of the ends that it may pursue but by virtue of its mere existence outside of law.”1 In other words, nothing would endanger the law more than the possibility of its authority being contested by a violence over which it has no control. The function of the law would therefore be, first and foremost, to contain violence within its own boundaries. It is in this context that, to demonstrate this surprising hypothesis, Benjamin invokes two examples: the right to strike guaranteed by the state and the law of war. Let us return to the place that the right to strike occupies within class struggle. To begin with, the very idea of such a struggle implies certain forms of violence. The strike could then be understood as one of the recognizable forms that this violence can take. However, this analytical framework is undermined as soon as this form of violence becomes regulated by a “right to strike,” such as the one recognized by law in France in 1864. What this recognition engages is, in fact, the will of the state to control the possible “violence” of the strike. Thus, the “right” of the right to strike appears as the best, if not the only, way for the state to circumscribe within (and via) the law the relative violence of class struggles. We might consider this to be the per­ fect illustration of the aforementioned hypothesis. Yet, there are two lines of ques­ tioning that destabilize this hypothesis that we would do well to consider. First, is it legitimate to present the strike as a form of violence? Who has a vested interest in such a representation? In other words, how can we trace a clear and unequivocal demarcation between violence and nonviolence? Are we not always bound to find residues of violence, even in those actions that we would be tempted to consider nonviolent? The second line of questioning is just as important and is rooted in the distinction established by Georges Sorel, in his Reflections on Violence, between the “political strike” and the “proletarian general strike,” to which Benja­ min dedicates a set of complementary analyses in §13 of his essay. Here, again, we are faced with a question of limits. What is at stake is the possibility for a certain type of strike (the proletarian general strike) to exceed the limits of the right to strike— turning, in other words, the right to strike against the law itself. The phenomenon is that of an autoimmune process, in which the right to strike that is meant to protect the law against the possible violence of class strugles is transformed into a means for the destruction of the law. The diference between the two types of strikes is nevertheless introduced with a condition: “The validity of this statement, however, is not unrestricted because it is not unconditional,” notes Benjamin in §7. We would be mistaken in believing that the right to strike is granted and guaranteed uncondi­ tionally. Rather, it is structurally subjected to a conflict of interpretations, those of the workers, on the one hand, and of the state on the other. From the point of view of the state, the partial strike cannot under any circumstance be understood as a right to exercise violence, but rather as the right to extract oneself from a preexisting (and verifiable) violence: that of the employer. In this sense, the partial strike should be considered a nonviolent action, what Benjamin named a “pure means.” The interpretations diverge on two main points. The first clearly depends on the alleged “violence of the employer,” a predicate that begs the question: Who might have the authority to recognize such violence? Evidently it is not the employer. The danger is that the state would similarly lack the incentive to make such a judgment call. It is nearly impossible, in fact, to find a single instance of a strike in which this recognition of violence was not subject to considerable controversy. The political game is thus the following: the state legislated the right to strike in order to con­ tain class strugles, with the condition that workers must have “good reason” to strike. However, it is unlikely that a state systematically allied with (and accomplice to) employers will ever recognize reasons as good, and, as a consequence, it will deem any invocation of the right to strike as illegitimate. Workers will therefore be seen as abusing a right granted by the state, and in so doing transforming it into a violent means. On this point, Benjamin’s analyses remain extremely pertinent and profoundly contemporary. They unveil the enduring strategy of governments confronted with a strike (in education, transportation, or healthcare, for example) who, afer claiming to understand the reasons for the protest and the grievances of the workers, deny that the arguments constitute sufcient reason for a strike that will likely paralyze this or that sector of the economy. They deny, in other words, that the conditions denounced by the workers display an intrinsic violence that jus­ tifies the strike. Let us note here a point that Benjamin does not mention, but that is part of Sorel’s reflections: this denial inevitably contaminates the (socialist) lef once it gains power. What might previously have seemed a good reason to strike when it was the opposition is deemed an insufcient one once it is the ruling party. In the face of popular protest, it always invokes a lack of sufcient rationale, allow­ ing it to avoid recognizing the intrinsic violence of a given social or economic situ­ ation, or of a new policy. And it is because it refuses to see this violence and to take responsibility for it that the left regularly loses workers’ support.