### 1

#### Our interpretation is the topic should determine the division of aff and neg ground – winning that states ought not recognize an unconditional right of workers to strike should always be sufficient condition for voting negative – hold the line, CX and the 1AC prove there’s no I-meet.

#### “Resolved” is a formal decision.

Merriam-Webster

[Unlike Words and Phrases ’64, this card actually exists on the internet! <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/resolved>] pat

a: to declare or decide by a formal resolution and vote

b: to change by resolution or formal vote

the house resolved itself into a committee

#### The Role of the Ballot is to vote for whoever does the better debating – any alternative framework must explain why we switch sides, why there has to be a winner and a loser, and why there are structural rules. The frame for evaluating offense is that debate is a game and we’re all here to win – that means procedural questions come first.

#### Vote neg for predictable limits – abdicating government actions sanctions picking any interpretation for debate – that incentivizes retreat from controversy and forces the neg to first characterize the aff and then debate it which eliminates the benefit of preround research – two impacts –

#### 1. Clash – a common point of engagement ensures effective clash, which is a linear impact – negation is the necessary condition for distinguishing debate from discussion, but negation exists on a sliding scale. The topic of discussion is up to the affirmative, but depth and nuanced engagement is determined by negative ground. Any impact intrinsic to debate, not just discussion, comes from negation because it starts the process of critical thinking, reflexivity, and argument refinement.

#### 2. Fairness – prioritize preserving the competitive aspects of debate – games cannot operate unless both sides can be confident in advance they have an equal chance of winning – the fact they’ve asked you to vote for them proves we all agree that debate is a competition.

#### Switch-side solves the 1AC – read critiques of normative labor organizing – any 1AR response to the substance of the strategy is offense for us because it proves our model allows for clear contestation and reading the rest of their theory on the negative solves their offense.

### 2

#### Capitalism causes massive violence and inevitable extinction – the fundamental task is developing tools for organization and tactics to bring about revolution.

Escalante ‘19

[Alyson, revolutionary Marxist (duh), philosophy at U of Oregon. 09/08/2019. “Truth and Practice: The Marxist Theory of Knowledge”. https://web.archive.org/web/20190910040756/https://failingthatinvent.home.blog/2019/09/08/truth-and-practic-the-marxist-theory-of-knowledge/] pat

The world we live in today is in a dire state. Climate destruction continues at a fast pace, and every with every passing day, capitalism proves itself to be incapable of addressing this. Capitalist production and its endless drive for resources to match artificial market demands has created a climate crisis that leaves us on the brink of potential extinction.

Governments around the world are turning to far right and fascist leaders to assuage their fears of an uncertain future, and the most marginalized and oppressed suffer because of it. Fascism is on the rise, and history tells us very clearly what that can result in without opposition.

The decaying US empire continues to lash out in violence across the globe in a desperate attempt to re-assert its power and hegemony. Whole countries are destroyed in its desperate bids for more fossil fuels. The world burns from America’s white phosphorus weaponry.

The need for a revolutionary movement capable of replacing capitalism with something better has never been so clear. The choice between socialism or barbarism has never been so stark. More and more people are starting to realize that reform cannot save us, that capitalism and imperialism themselves are the problem, and that we must unite and band together to fight for a better world.

The question then is: how will we know what strategies, what tactics, and what ideas to unite around? If the skeptics and postmodernists are correct that knowledge is always relative and localized, then we cannot built a global and universal strategy to unite around. If they are correct then we are doomed to small acts of localized or individual resistance in the face of apocalypse. To embrace such a vision of the world (with its accompanying epistemological skepticism) is to embrace defeat.

The masses do not want to embrace defeat, they want to know how to fight back. Marxism can provide the tools necessary to engage in that fight.

Marxism, with its self criticism and its insistence on incorporating the valuable ideas of its critics has created a means for unifying workers across the globe with anti-colonial and anti-imperialist struggles. The Marxist belief in the possibility of true ideas, tested and verified in practice, creates the possibility for unity on a global scale. The scientific status of Marxism means that as our climate changes, as our world looks more and more grim, Marxism will adapt through struggle and practice; it will provide us with the ideas and tools we need to fight and win.

There will be no victory for the workers of the world without the ability to wield a revolutionary science. What is at stake in questions of Marxist epistemology is the very possibility of creating a philosophical and scientific basis for revolution. We must defend this possibility. We must defend the scientific status of Marxism, and must insist on the possibility of victory.

#### The aff’s fear of vertical organizing is a reactionary infatuation with failure – naming oneself as a comrade is key to disciplined communist organizing.

Dean ‘19

[Jodi, politics at Hobart and William Smith Colleges. 04/11/2019. “Jodi Dean Comrade,” <http://stateofnatureblog.com/jodi-dean-comrade/>] pat – finders credit to Townes – interviewer questions are in italics

You are absolutely correct that that sort of thinking is the obstacle. It reflects an anti-communist, capitalist, reactionary mind-set that dooms the Left – the clue is the term ‘totalitarian’ which today is used to create a false equivalence between the USSR and Nazi Germany.

Part of the falsity also lies in the delusion that parties are outmoded. Political power is still achieved via parties. The Right knows this. But stupidly too much of the Left abandoned the party form, which then ceded the space to the Right. All over the world there are still communist and socialist parties. The Left embrace of failure is a cop out, a refusal to engage in politics. And the result is that the Right becomes the force channelling popular anger.

Communism is the name we have for the positive alternative to capitalism. It says that we cannot compromise with capitalism. There is no such thing as capitalism with a human face. Capitalism relies on exploitation. It’s as simple as that. Is it hard today to organise under the name communism in Europe and the US? Yes. It’s always been hard. And it has gotten particularly hard in Poland where a law has been passed outlawing the promotion of totalitarianism. Why, if communism had been defeated, was it necessary for the right-wing ruling party to pass this law? Anti-communism is being used to ward off opposition to capitalism; it’s being used to defeat democracy.

*In the book you explain that the comrade has ‘four primary characteristics: discipline, joy, enthusiasm, and courage.’ Are these the qualities that you feel are currently missing from much of contemporary Left political struggle? How might their resurgence change the kinds of political action we partake in and how we relate to it?*

I would say that it’s the combination that is missing. So there are of course courageous fighters on the Left. For starters think of Black Lives Matter, Standing Rock, all the environmental and climate activists who are fighting against coal, oil, and gas corporations, many of whom who have been killed. I’d also say that there is enthusiasm and joy: people come out for marches; they make hilarious signs; they demonstrate amazing creativity.

Discipline, though, may be what is missing. I don’t mean individual discipline: as every organiser knows, political work takes enormous discipline — showing up, getting people to show up, this isn’t easy. There’s always something else to do and it’s easy to get discouraged, like, will this protest even make a difference? The challenge is in a broader collective discipline where people realise that it’s good and important and necessary to follow a common line, pursue a common strategy.

Too many think that everyone needs to provide their original individual hot take, and that this hot take must be a take down. This kills Left solidarity. Some on the Left also think of discipline as bad, perhaps from (mis)reading Foucault or from embracing a view of the multitude they take from Hardt and Negri. But discipline generates capacity. The more coordinated and disciplined we are, the more we can pursue a collective strategy. And the more prepared we can be after we win.

*Another aspect you consider is how a politics built around comradeship works in relation to identity politics, clearly defined group struggles, and the notion of political ‘allies’. How does comradeship work as a unifying factor here without homogenising the particular issues and contradictions faced by different groups?*

It’s a matter of perspective. Comrade names a relation between people on the same side of a political struggle. It doesn’t name a relation between people and what they are struggling for or against. So comrade doesn’t say anything about particular issues.

One of the examples I use in the book comes from the Communist Party of the United States and its fight against white supremacy and lynching and for black people’s right of self-determination. This was a struggle that the whole party was instructed to pursue. No exceptions. That a comrade was white didn’t exempt them from the requirement to oppose white supremacy in all its forms, everywhere and all the time, that is, in personal life as well as political life. There’s no homogenising here. The struggle was against white supremacy and comrades were told that they had to be willing to act in defence of any black person. I should add that the CP’s work in this area was path-breaking – in the 1930s it was the leading interracial group fighting for black liberation.

The ‘allies’ idea makes politics seem like a possession, something that belongs to a person or group naturally, by virtue of their ascribed identity. Politics is somehow naturalised, as if everyone who shares an identity politics shares a politics – but of course we know that is not true. Politics has to be built, constructed.

*What is the relationship between comrades and party? How does the comrade ensure that the party does not become hierarchical, or a kind of superego figure, demanding ever greater fidelity, commitment and discipline?*

There are no guarantees, not in life, not in politics. The thing to keep in mind is that comrade operates as an interior force. We internalise the perspective of our comrades. So the force we feel is what we impose on ourselves. Our actual comrades are generally far more tolerant and forgiving than the internalised comrade. In fact, the comrade always becomes a super-ego figure demanding greater fidelity, commitment, and discipline. That’s part of the power of comradeship: our comrades (internalised) make us do more than we would otherwise.

And given the world we are in, given the absolute imperative of the fight for communism on a vastly unequal and warming world, we should embrace this. It follows directly from a Left analysis of the present as one of exploitation and inequality – why would we think that anything but commitment and discipline is demanded by our situation?

*A recent review of Comrade in Jacobin raises some similar questions: ‘Are there times when the comradely perspective can undermine socialist organisation? Can comradeship’s ego ideal become so persuasive in practice that it blinds us to dysfunction, discrimination, and abuse among ostensible comrades? Is it more useful than harmful to think of ourselves as equal and the same in contexts where we obviously aren’t?*’

I don’t see how a comradely perspective could undermine socialist organisation. The question doesn’t even make sense to me; there is no socialist organisation absent a comradely perspective. There might be a bunch of individuals who think of themselves as socialists who have paid dues to an association that claims to pursue socialist goals. I wouldn’t call that a socialist organisation myself, but even if it were, how would comradeship undermine rather than activate and inspire it?

The next question about being blind to dysfunction, discrimination, and abuse – comradeship is what lets us see dysfunction and abuse. And it provides us with the norm of equality through which to address it. A great example comes from Claudia Jones in her famous article, ‘An End to the Neglect of the Problems of the Negro Woman!’ She appeals to her white men and women and black men comrades for their failure to treat black women in the Party as equals.

And on the last bit: to think of ourselves as equal does not mean to posit an identity of capacity and experience. The context of comradeship is being on the same political side. For communists and socialists, this side has been organised in terms of party belonging. Equality is an attribute of this belonging: all are equally obliged to carry out the party’s work; all are equally important for the party’s work.

#### Global capitalism demands universal tactics to organize and unify the left – focus on the particularities sell out to neoliberal folk politics.

Williams and Srnicek ‘15

[Alex Williams and Nick Srnicek, fastest Leftists in the West. City University London. 2015. “Inventing the Future: Postcapitalism and a World Without Work”.] pat – ~~language~~ [modified]

To invoke modernity is ultimately to raise the question of the future. What should the future look like? What courses should we set? What does it mean to be contemporary? And whose future is it? Since the emergence of the term, modernity has been concerned with unravelling a circular or retrospective notion of time and introducing a rupture between the present and the past. With this break, the future is projected as being potentially different from and better than the past. Modernity is tantamount to ‘the discovery of the future’ and has therefore found itself intimately linked with notions such as ‘progress, advance, development, emancipation, liberation, growth, accumulation, Enlightenment, embetterment, [and the] avant-garde’. Suggesting that history can progress through deliberate human action, it is the nature of this progress that competing definitions of modernity have struggled over. Historically, the left has found its natural home in being oriented towards the future. From early communist visions of technological progress, to Soviet space utopias, to the social democratic rhetoric of the ‘white heat of technology’, what set the left apart from the right was its unambiguous embrace of the future. The future was to be an improvement over the present in material, social and political terms. By contrast, the forces of the political right were, with a few notable exceptions, defined by their defence of tradition and their essentially reactionary nature.

This situation was reversed during the rise of neoliberalism, with politicians like Thatcher commanding the rhetoric of modernisation and the future to great effect. Co-opting these terms and mobilising them into a new hegemonic common sense, neoliberalism’s vision of modernity has held sway ever since. Consequently, discussions of the left in terms of the future now seem aberrant, even absurd. With the postmodern moment, the seemingly intrinsic links between the future, modernity and emancipation were prized apart. Philosophers like Simon Critchley can now confidently assert that ‘we have to resist the idea and ideology of the future, which is always the ultimate trump card of capitalist ideas of progress’. Such folk-political sentiments ~~blindly~~ [ignorantly] accept the neoliberal common sense, preferring to shy away from grand visions and replace them with a posturing resistance. From the radical left’s discomfort with technological modernity to the social democratic left’s inability to envision an alternative world, everywhere today the future has largely been ceded to the right. A skill that the left once excelled at – building enticing visions for a better world – has deteriorated after years of neglect. If the left is to recover a sense of progress, however, it cannot simply adopt the classic images of history headed towards a singular destination. Progress, for these approaches, was not only possible, but in fact woven as a necessity into the very fabric of history. Human societies were thought to travel along a pre-defined pathway towards a single outcome modelled after Europe. The nations of Europe were deemed to have developed capitalist modernity independently, and their historical experiences of development were considered to be both necessary and superior to those of other cultures. Such ideas dominated traditional European philosophy and continued on in the influential modernisation literature of the 1950s and 1960s, with their attempts to naturalise capitalism against a Soviet opponent. Partly endorsed by both early Marxism and later Keynesian and neoliberal capitalisms, a one-size-fits-all model of historical progress positioned non-Western societies as lacking and in need of development – a position that served to justify colonial and imperial practices.

From the standpoint of their philosophical critics, these notions of progress were disparaged precisely for their belief in preconceived destinations – whether in the liberal progression towards capitalist democracy or in the Marxist progression towards communism. The complex and often disastrous record of the twentieth century demonstrated conclusively that history could not be relied upon to follow any predetermined course. Regression was as likely as progress, genocide as possible as democratisation. In other words, there was nothing inherent in the nature of history, the development of economic systems, or sequences of political struggle that could guarantee any particular outcome. From a broadly left perspective, for example, even those limited but not insignificant political gains that have been achieved – such as welfare provision, women’s rights and worker protections – can be rolled back. Moreover, even in states where nominally communist governments took power, it proved far more difficult than expected to transition from a capitalist system of production to a fully communist one. This series of historical experiences fuelled an internal critique of European modernity by way of psychoanalysis, critical theory and poststructuralism. For the thinkers of postmodernism, modernity came to be associated with a credulous naivety. In Jean-François Lyotard’s epochal definition, postmodernity was identified as the era that has grown to be suspicious of the grand metanarrative. On this account, postmodernity is a cultural condition of disillusionment with the kinds of grandiose narratives represented by capitalist, liberal and communist accounts of progress.

To be sure, these critiques capture something important about the chronological texture of our time. And yet, the announcement of the end of grand narratives has often been viewed by those outside Europe as being absolutely of a piece with modernity. Further, with the benefit of thirty years’ hindsight, the broader impact of the cultural condition diagnosed by Lyotard has not been the decline of belief in metanarratives per se, but rather a broad disenchantment with those offered by the left. The association between capitalism and modernisation remains, while properly progressive notions of the future have wilted under postmodern critique and been quashed beneath the social wreckage of neoliberalism. Most significantly, with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the rise of globalisation, history does appear to have a grand narrative. Throughout the world, markets, wage labour, commodities and productivity-enhancing technologies have all expanded under the systemic imperative to accumulate. Capitalism has become the destiny of contemporary societies, happily coexisting with national differences and paying little heed to clashes between civilisations. But we can draw a distinction here between the endpoint (capitalism) and the pathway towards it. Indeed, the mutual entanglement of countries means that the European pathway (heavily reliant on exploiting colonies and slavery) is barred for many of the newly developing countries. While there are broad paradigms of development, each country has had to find its own unique way to respond to the imperatives of global capitalism. The path of capitalist modernisation is therefore instantiated in different cultures, following different trajectories and with different rhythms of development. Uneven and combined development is the order of the day. Progress is therefore not bound to a single European path, but is instead filtered through a variety of political and cultural constellations, all directed towards instantiating capitalist relations. Today, modernisers simply fight over which variant of capitalism to install.

Recuperating the idea of progress under such circumstances means, first and foremost, contesting the dogma of this inevitable endpoint. Capitalist modernity was never a necessary outcome, but instead a successful project driven by various classes and a systemic imperative towards accumulation and expansion. Various modernities are possible, and new visions of the future are essential for the left. Such images are a necessary supplement to any transformative political project. They give a direction to political struggles and generate a set of criteria to adjudicate which struggles to support, which movements to resist, what to invent, and so on. In the absence of images of progress, there can only be reactivity, defensive battles, local resistance and a bunker mentality – what we have characterised as folk politics. Visions of the future are therefore indispensable for elaborating a movement against capitalism. Contra the earlier thinkers of modernity, there is no necessity to progress, nor a singular pathway from which to adjudicate the extent of development. Instead, progress must be understood as hyperstitional: as a kind of fiction, but one that aims to transform itself into a truth. Hyperstitions operate by catalysing dispersed sentiment into a historical force that brings the future into existence. They have the temporal form of ‘will have been’. Such hyperstitions of progress form orienting narratives with which to navigate forward, rather than being an established or necessary property of the world. Progress is a matter of political struggle, following no pre-plotted trajectory or natural tendency, and with no guarantee of success. If the supplanting of capitalism is impossible from the standpoint of one or even many defensive stances, it is because any form of prospective politics must set out to construct the new. Pathways of progress must be cut and paved, not merely travelled along in some pre-ordained fashion; they are a matter of political achievement rather than divine or earthly providence.

SUBVERSIVE UNIVERSALS

Any elaboration of an alternative image of progress must inevitably face up to the problem of universalism – the idea that certain values, ideas and goals may hold across all cultures. Capitalism, as we have argued, is an expansionary universal that weaves itself through multiple cultural fabrics, reworking them as it goes along. Anything less than a competing universal will end up being smothered by an all-embracing series of capitalist relations. Various particularisms – localised, specific forms of politics and culture – cohabitate with ease in the world of capitalism. The list of possibilities continues to grow as capitalism differentiates into Chinese capitalism, American capitalism, Brazilian capitalism, Indian capitalism, Nigerian capitalism, and so on. If defending a particularism is insufficient, it is because history shows us that the global space of universalism is a space of conflict, with each contender requiring the relative provincialisation of its competitors. If the left is to compete with global capitalism, it needs to rethink the project of universalism.

But to invoke such an idea is to call forth a number of fundamental critiques directed against universalism in recent decades. While a universal politics must move beyond any local struggles, generalising itself at the global scale and across cultural variations, it is for these very reasons that it has been criticised. As a matter of historical record, European modernity was inseparable from its ‘dark side’ – a vast network of exploited colonial dominions, the genocide of indigenous peoples, the slave trade, and the plundering of colonised nations’ resources. In this conquest, Europe presented itself as embodying the universal way of life. All other peoples were simply residual particulars that would inevitably come to be subsumed under the European way – even if this required ruthless physical violence and cognitive assault to guarantee the outcome. Linked to this was a belief that the universal was equivalent to the homogeneous. Differences between cultures would therefore be erased in the process of particulars being subsumed under the universal, creating a culture modelled in the image of European civilisation. This was a universalism indistinguishable from pure chauvinism. Throughout this process, Europe dissimulated its own parochial position by deploying a series of mechanisms to efface the subjects who made these claims – white, heterosexual, property-owning males. Europe and its intellectuals abstracted away from their location and identity, presenting their claims as grounded in a ‘view from nowhere’. This perspective was taken to be untarnished by racial, sexual, national or any other particularities, providing the basis for both the alleged universality of Europe’s claims and the illegitimacy of other perspectives. While Europeans could speak and embody the universal, other cultures could only be represented as particular and parochial. Universalism has therefore been central to the worst aspects of modernity’s history.

Given this heritage, it might seem that the simplest response would be to rescind the universal from our conceptual arsenal. But, for all the difficulties with the idea, it nevertheless remains necessary. The problem is partly that one cannot simply reject the concept of the universal without generating other significant problems. Most notably, giving up on the category leaves us with nothing but a series of diverse particulars. There appears no way to build meaningful solidarity in the absence of some common factor. The universal also operates as a transcendent ideal – never satisfied with any particular embodiment, and always open to striving for better. It contains the conceptual impulse to undo its own limits. Rejecting this category also risks Orientalising other cultures, transforming them into an exotic Other. If there are only particularisms, and provincial Europe is associated with reason, science, progress and freedom, then the unpleasant implication is that non-Western cultures must be devoid of these. The old Orientalist divides are inadvertently sustained in the name of a misguided anti-universalism. On the other hand, one risks licensing all sorts of oppressions as simply the inevitable consequence of plural cultural forms. All the problems of cultural relativism reappear if there are no criteria to discern which global knowledges, politics and practices support a politics of emancipation. Given all of this, it is unsurprising to see aspects of universalism pop up throughout history and across cultures, to see even its critics begrudgingly accept its necessity, and to see a variety of attempts to revise the category.

We can turn now to one final aspect of universalism, which is its heterogeneous nature. As capitalism makes clear, universalism does not entail homogeneity – it does not necessarily involve converting diverse things into the same kind of thing. In fact, the power of capitalism is precisely its versatility in the face of changing conditions on the ground and its capacity to accommodate difference. A similar prospect must also hold for any leftist universal – it must be one that integrates difference rather than erasing it. What then does all of this mean for the project of modernity? It means that any particular image of modernity must be open to co-creation, and further transformation and alteration. And in a globalized world where different peoples necessarily co-exist, it means building systems to live in common despite the plurality of ways of life. Contrary to Eurocentric accounts and classic images of universalism, it must recognize the agency of those outside Europe, and the necessity of their voices inbuilding truly planetary and universal futures. The universal, then, is an empty placeholder that hegemonic particulars (specific demands, ideals and collectives) come to occupy. It can operate as a subversive and emancipatory vector of change with respect to established universalisms, and it is heterogeneous and includes differences, rather than eliminating them.

#### The aff is an immaterial solution to material structures – queer theory’s fetishization of change for its own sake is unable to ground a collective subject to resist the violence of capital.

Gleeson et al ‘18

[Jules Joanne Gleeson, University of Vienna, Jose Rosales, Stony Brook University, and Andrew Culp, CalArts. 2018. “Love, Sex, Communism: A Discussion,” <https://www.identitiesjournal.edu.mk/index.php/IJPGC/article/view/333>] pat – ableist language [edited]

[AC:] New Materialism seems to offer a feminist alternative to low theory. But returning to “stuff” does not always sit well with Marxism or queer theory, in spite of many theorists’ best efforts. Training analysis on objects can easily slip into naïve commodity fetishism, and reversing the classic queer theory move of skipping past “being” to “doing” can turn into just another form of essentialism. Perhaps there are readings of Spinoza that split the difference?

JR: I think Andrew is absolutely right. The turn to Spinoza by people of that generation is wholly political. Especially as it is no secret that Althusser himself saw Spinoza as the means of correcting the Hegelian perversions that were said to be the real causes of Stalinism. However, it is worth noting that given the fate of Spinoza as a figure to whom various political positions are assigned, the association of Spinoza and Deleuze with what is at stake not simply in queer theory but in queer life is due to a set of shared problems that are materialist in nature. Materialist because they are problems encountered within the concrete, actuality, of daily life. And while one might be tempted to consider Butler’s remark as belonging to this materialist position insofar as these alternative family structures are concrete resolution to the problem of precarious housing situations, I would hesitate to endorse such a line of thinking. The solutions devised by already oppressed groups to the social problems generated by capital (housing, access to health care and services, etc.) are necessary and done out of survival. To put it bluntly: Butler’s remark is nothing but the excitement of bourgeois voyeurism. If there is something particular to queer life that is depicted in Paris Is Burning it would be the conditions that determine what is possible and not possible as a queer (these conditions being the need for alternative housing structures, the fact of one’s increased vulnerability simply by virtue of one’s job, e.g., sex work, or gender identity, etc.). So, it is true that even the most refined theories of performativity fall short of addressing the material conditions of queer life. And just as both of you have noted, the key problem that arises out of the recent attempts in queer theory to overcome the limits of Butler’s position are to be found in various positions that unwittingly make materialism into a variant of animism, or into a more one-sided account of the relationship between thinking and being where matter-itself is both problem and solution.

The latter of these two is best seen in Pheng Cheah’s article “Non-Dialectical Materialism,” where Cheah argues for a non-dialectical theory of change by relocating the possibility of real social transformation in matter and not form, in the world of matter-itself and not the immaterial domain of idealism and its abstractions. While Cheah argues that this is a position that is derived from Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of impersonal forces and pre-individual singularities, it is not at all clear to me how these notions require a redefinition of the materialism that begins with Marx and continues in their joint works. It is true that Deleuze and Guattari are singular in thinking through the existence of supposedly absolute processes of deformation, or deterritorialization where what is at work is something that evades the classical distinctions between matter and its forms, or a form and its variable contents. But this is a theory about change in general, whereas the specific interest of transforming the material reality of queer lives finds no political guarantees in general theories of how change occurs in the world. So, what a non-dialectical materialism really amounts to is not a confirmation of Deleuze’s many anti-Hegelian comments and rather amounts to neutralizing any possibility for a collective subject to change its material conditions and thereby transforming what the meaning and substance of their lives is in the process.

To detach any notion of revolutionary transformation from a materialism that begins from the concrete, reality, of queer life (and including its set of particular interests, desires, and needs) amounts to a vision of political struggle that understands itself to be revolutionary due to the (over-)emphasis placed and privilege granted to the reality of change in general. This is tantamount to saying that what is most revolutionary in terms of change is a change that remains blind [ignorant] to the consequences for any subject or group whatsoever. It is a theory of change that is universal and equal only to the extent that we are barred from saying how and why it is beneficial for everyone... let alone for queers and especially queers of color. If what is at stake is not life in general but specifically queer, intersectional, life, then any notion of change can only be revolutionary to the extent that it is a qualitative transformation for queer life. And here we also encounter what is promising with the recent work on queer Marxism since what was revolutionary in the vision of communism is also at work in queer Marxism and in a historical materialist understanding of change. The kind of change we are interested in has never been general in nature; it is always for someone such as the proletariat of the past or the queers of the present.

#### Vote negative for communist organizing – that requires collective struggle and the establishment of centralized organization to inform both theory and practice.

Kuhn ‘18

[Gabriel, Austrian-born writer and translator living in Sweden. Among his book publications is “All Power to the Councils! A Documentary History of the German Revolution of 1918-1919”. March 2018. “Don't Mourn, Organize! Is Communism a Pipe Dream—or a Viable Future?” <https://brooklynrail.org/2018/03/field-notes/Dont-Morn-Organize-Is-Communism-a-Pipe-Dreamor-a-Viable-Future>] pat

The forms of organization this requires must go further than the affinity group but stop short of the vanguard party. Affinity groups do not answer the demand for mass organizing that mass societies require. But neither do vanguard parties. They attempt to lead the masses, not organize them, and that’s a big difference. The party model might in general be insufficient for mass organizing today. The networks that movementism gave way to are perhaps more appropriate, but only if they can overcome the assumption that the looser the connections are, the better. This assumption is wrong. Loose connections might suit the needs of an ever more flexible market economy, but not of effective political organizing. To “have contacts” is not enough; you need to do something with them. And you need to stay committed to the projects you initiate. I will try to flesh this out by listing the aspects I consider most important in organizing today.

1. We need to leave sectarianism behind. The left is weak and each additional division weakens it further. In a 2011 article titled “Movement, Cadre, and the Dual Power,” Joel Olson made a simple, yet very important observation: “We believe that the old arguments between communists and anarchists are largely irrelevant today.” This must be our point of departure.

2. We need theory that is adapted to our times. It must overcome the false contradiction between “class struggle” and “cultural struggle.” There is a fruitful debate about a “new class politics” in the German-speaking world. Sebastian Friedrich, one of its main proponents, drew these conclusions in an article published by Counterpunch:

A new class politics does not relegate gender, race, and imperial legacy to issues that are supplementary to class relations. These issues, and the struggles they imply, are an integral part of class relations. In fact, feminist, anti-racist, and anti-colonial struggles are the base on which effective unified class struggles must be launched.… A new class politics must clarify where and how the specific experiences of workers based on gender, race, citizenship, and other factors converge. It must reveal the overlapping interests of workers as members of the class. This makes common struggles possible.

3. We must not rely on the “objective forces” identified by historical materialism. Subjective forces are important for change. It is easy to underestimate how much neoliberalism shapes the lives even of people opposed to it. In the Global North, political activism has become a leisure activity that people engage in or not, depending on their mood, the identity they are trying to create for themselves, or the road of “self-improvement” they have chosen. In almost all cases, it is secondary to professional careers and personal comforts. Under such circumstances, it is difficult to get anything done. There is nothing wrong with being “voluntaristic.” Radical change is dependent on people wanting radical change, no matter how much Marxists still insist on economic realities determining individual consciousness and, therefore, individuals’ capacity for political action. An organization’s efficiency relies on the individual qualities of its members, that is, responsibility, reliability, and accountability.

Making Things Concrete

If we want communism to be more than a pipe dream, we have to be willing to face reality, even if it confuses, challenges, or even frightens us. We cannot ignore struggles that refer to communist ideals, simply because they aren’t the struggles we’d like to see. If our enthusiasm for communism remains limited to lecture halls and conference rooms, it won’t be anything the powerful will lose sleep over.

The struggle that currently receives most attention among communists of all stripes in the Global North is the one in Kurdistan. In Rojava (Syrian Kurdistan), forces affiliated with the Kurdistan Workers’ Party, PKK, have established a direct-democratic council system, based on the “democratic confederalism” conceived by the imprisoned PKK leader Abduallah Öcalan. Öcalan describes democratic confederalism as “a non-state political administration or a democracy without a state,” and cites Murray Bookchin’s “libertarian municipalism” as a major influence. There are people who celebrate this as a form of anarchism. But as an observant friend of mine noted, an anarchism that is imposed by a leader is a strange kind of anarchism. Besides, there are reports from the ground that challenge the libertarian narrative. The editors of Lower Class Magazine, an online project dedicated to “low budget underground journalism,” travel regularly to Kurdistan and have the following to say:

The Western left sees Rojava as the realization of a democracy “from below”: communes, councils, a confederation; no hierarchies, no party, a spontaneous mass project. Anarchists and “libertarian” communists wax lyrically about the dawn of a direct-democratic Shangri-La. […] Yes, the change in Rojava comes “from below. It is based on the power of the people, no doubt. Communes and councils are at the heart of decision-making, that is true. But as essential is the following: None of this would be happening if it wasn’t for a vanguard leading the way. The revolution in Rojava proves that Leninist vanguardism is correct, not false.

Another European journalist visiting the region noted that the cadres of the People’s Protection Units, YPG, relate to the councils of Rojava in the same way the Bolshevists related to the councils of the Soviet Union. Furthermore, there are troubling pragmatic alliances, which have included collaboration with the U.S. military. Yet the people behind Rojava Solidarity NYC sum up the situation well:

Rojava, an autonomous region in Northern Syrian, the largest revolutionary territory of the 21st century, has projected anarchist and communist ideas to the forefront of political discourse and into the pragmatic and messy reality of everyday life. … From communal relationships to the councils and self-defense units, we can assess numerous potential routes by which we can create liberated communities at home, while learning from their possibilities and pitfalls.

Rojava won’t be the answer to our problems. No single struggle ever is. But the developments in Rojava challenge us to discuss real-life strategies for radical change. It is easy to focus on shortcomings, but if this is all we ever do, where will it get us?

Councils are essential for communist projects. Their power, which is based on the direct involvement and active participation of the masses, is curtailed as soon as political interest groups, such as parties, assume control over them. This conviction separated historical council communism, represented by figures such as Otto Rühle and Anton Pannekoek, from the Bolsheviks. Pannekoek wrote:

The councils are no government; not even the most central councils bear a governmental character. For they have no means to impose their will upon the masses; they have no organs of power. All social power is vested in the hands of the workers themselves.

Unless we want the transition to communism to entail enormous human suffering (which would be utterly absurd), we need to consider the fact that billions of people will need to be fed, sheltered, nursed, provided with access to clean water, and so forth. To produce according to the needs of the people rather than the needs of profit requires enormous efforts in planning, especially if current living standards are to be upheld. (Living standards don’t equal standards of consumption—the standards of consumption in the Global North cannot and should not be upheld, since they are unsustainable.) Furthermore, we must collectively dispose of industrial and nuclear waste, weapons of mass destruction, and ticking environmental bombs. None of this is possible without a level of centralization, no matter how visceral the reactions are that the word might provoke in some circles.

Only a council system can combine the centralization required by the complexity of modern societies with participative democracy. Centralization requires formal structures. Participative democracy requires these structures to be transparent. They need to be bottom-up rather than top-down, and delegates must be directly responsible to their constituencies. The council system is the only administrative framework to provide that.

Romanticizing particular struggles rarely does any good, no matter how council-based they are—or claim to be. If radicals in the Global North fail to address concerns with respect to struggles in the Global South, it is not respectful but condescending. To escape into the intellectual poverty of cultural relativism doesn’t help. We can only evolve from critical engagement. But real-life struggles are our starting point. It makes little sense to demand struggles for communism if we shy away from engaging with the ones that exist. Arundhati Roy put it simply after spending time with Maoist Naxalites in the forests of central India, an experience she chronicled in the book Walking with the Comrades. She said: “I went in because I wanted to tell the story of who these people are.” This informs revolutionary theory and, in turn, improves revolutionary practice. Most importantly, it is crucial for saving communist struggles from betraying their own principles. Everyone can watch failure unfold. The challenge lies in helping to prevent it.

#### Only communism can allow for an experimentation with sexuality outside of the bounds of productive labor.

Gleeson et al ‘18

[Jules Joanne Gleeson, University of Vienna, Jose Rosales, Stony Brook University, and Andrew Culp, CalArts. 2018. “Love, Sex, Communism: A Discussion,” <https://www.identitiesjournal.edu.mk/index.php/IJPGC/article/view/333>] pat

JR: It is my suspicion that one way in which Marxist feminism could be understood as offering a new understanding of the relationship of work and sex, or work and love, is on the basis of how Marxist feminism has been able to deepen the specificity of what exactly a communist politics promises and entails. The example that immediately comes to mind here is Silvia Federici’s seminal essay “Wages against Housework.” It is in this essay where Federici makes a comment that appears as nothing but a passing remark; a statement that is less a materialist description and more a declaration regarding just what exactly is entailed and implicitly asserted in the project of bringing about a communist future. So, and in the course of her analysis, Federici writes: “[W]e want to call work what is work so that eventually we might rediscover what is love and create our sexuality, which we have never known.” Given Federici’s insight, and inquiring into the opportunities afforded to us by Marxist feminism, we could begin by attempting to understand the precise sense in which she makes this remark. In other words, is it the case that Federici is implicitly arguing for a view that seeks out the meaning and social relations of love, intimacy, and familial bonds, insofar as they are stripped of their determinations by the social relations of capital?

My suspicion, however, is that the question with which Federici is occupied is one that is as difficult and profound as it is simple and concise: What would it mean to love as a communist? To love like a comrade, or as someone in solidarity, or as someone in a romantic relationship? And what are the modes of loving, both ourselves and others, that are made possible only by virtue of communism? This is to inquire into the possibility of an image of communism as one that is irreducible to its being the solution to the riddle of history. So, if what is implied by Federici’s remark is that communism is the historical condition upon which questions of love and sexuality can be posed, in its most profound and meaningful manner, then what is potentially discovered within the tradition of Marxist feminism more generally is a vision of communism as something more than historical resolutions; a communism that was to be the very condition through which the meaning and function of love no longer derives its sense or value through its participation in a time no longer defined as that of labor or of leisure.

And so, regarding the connection between love and the form of time adequate to it, and with respect to Federici’s insistence on the political necessity of maintaining a clear separation of the time of work from that of sex/love/life, we catch a glimpse of how this Marxist feminist analysis of the relationship between production and reproduction are immediately related to Marx’s own position on the differing forms of time proper to capitalism and communism. For example, Marx makes a relevant observation in the Grundrisse when he writes that: “For real wealth is developed productive power of all individuals. The measure of wealth is then not any longer, in any way, labor time, but rather disposable time.” This disposable-time that is said to be the true measure of the wealth produced under communism; this time with which we can do as we please and that structures one’s life as a life defined by this form of time that can only be attributed to communism; this time, then, is the form of time that not only corresponds to Federici’s separation of sex from work but does so in a way that moves beyond the brute opposition of labor-time vs. leisure-time (which is simply unwaged time put in the service of reproducing labor-power). In this way, one would be able to see how disposable-time is the form of time adequate to communism; as the form of time most adequate for a communist determination of the questions and experiences surrounding love and sexuality; as the form of time proper for our rediscovery of love, for the creation of sexualities we have never known.

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