# 1NC – nontopical

## Cap

#### Identity politics forecloses potential for radical change by creating insurmountable rifts based on difference. Only Marxism solves by providing a framework for large-scale political action. We can’t cede the political and allow capitalist oppression to continue.

ISR ‘08

International Socialist Review 2008 (The ISR is dedicated to advancing socialist theory and practice in the United States “The Politics of Identity” February 2008 ISR Issue 57 [http://www.isreview.org/issues/57/feat-identity.shtml accessed 7.11.14](http://www.isreview.org/issues/57/feat-identity.shtml%20accessed%207.11.14) .nt)

LaClau and Mouffe describe society as made up of a whole range of autonomous, free-floating antagonisms and oppressions, none more important than any other—each is a separate sphere of “struggle.”14 But this concept falls apart once it is removed from the world of abstraction and applied to the real world. **Separate struggles do not neatly correspond to separate forms of oppression. Forms of oppressions overlap, so that many people are both Black and female, or both lesbian and Latin[x]. If every struggle must be fought separately, this can only lead to greater and greater fragmentation and eventually to disintegration, even within groups organized around a single form of oppression.** A Black lesbian, for example, faces an obvious dilemma: If all men are enemies of women, all whites are enemies of Blacks, and all straights are enemies of gays, then allies must be precious few. In the real world, choices have to be made. **If** LaClau and Mouffe are correct, and **the main divisions in society exist between those who face a particular form of oppression and those who don’t, then the likelihood of ever actually ending oppression is** just about **nil**. At its heart, **the politics of identity is extremely pessimistic, implying not just a rejection of the potential to build a broad united movement against all forms of exploitation and oppression, but also a very deep pessimism about the possibility for building solidarity even among people who face different forms of oppression.** **The only organizational strategy identity politics offers is for different groups of oppressed people to each fight their own separate battles against their own separate enemies.** The second key problem with LaClau and Mouffe flows from the concept of autonomy that is so central to their theory. Most importantly from a theoretical standpoint, Laclau and Mouffe go to great lengths to refute the Marxist analysis of the state, or the government. Marxist theory is based upon an understanding that the government is not a neutral body, but serves to represent the interests of the class in power—which in the case of capitalism is the capitalist class. This should not be too hard to imagine in the era of George W. Bush, when the capitalist class has brazenly flaunted its wealth and power. But Laclau and Mouffe insist that the state is neutral and autonomous. Even the different branches of government are autonomous from each other. Apparently, the Senate and the House of Representatives have no real relationship, and the White House is similarly autonomous. If that is the case, then the stranglehold of neoconservatives and the Christian Right over U.S. politics since 9/11 must have been a figment of liberals’ imaginations. Thus, there is a serious flaw in this logic. **Oppression is built into the capitalist system itself, and the state is one of the key ways in which oppression is enforced—through laws that discriminate and the police who serve and protect some people while harassing and brutalizing other groups of people.** But the theory of autonomy leads to another theoretical problem as well: every separate struggle warrants equal importance, no matter how many people are involved on either side, and whether or not demands are being made against the state or other institutions. Indeed, LaClau and Mouffe carry this logic a critical step further, noting that “struggle” need not involve more than one person. It can simply denote a matter of achieving “increasingly affirmed individualism.”15 **The personal struggle in this process substitutes for political struggle, leaving the system that maintains and enforces oppression intact.** Like LaClau and Mouffe, **theorists who advocate** the most extreme forms of **identity politics do not actually aim to build a movement, large or small. They prefer small groups of the enlightened few**, who remain content in their superiority to the “ignorant masses.” **Marxism offers a way forward for those interested in ending oppression in the real world.** As Marx remarked of his generation of smug academics, “The philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world in various ways. The point, however, is to change it.”16

#### Strictly identitarian queer theory is a dismissal of political economy, which reinforces late capitalism.

Kirsch 10

Kairsch, Max, PhD. Florida Atlantic University. 2010. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1300/J082v52n01\_02

The emergence of queer theory represents a transformation in the approach to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered peoples. It has claimed new ground for treating sexuality and gender as worthy subjects in their own rights, rather than offshoots of gay and lesbian studies or of general cultural theory. The author contends, however, that it is doubtful that this approach can lead to social change. **Queer theory has dismissed the usefulness of the disciplines that were the foundation of the social movements that initiated gay and lesbian studies, such as political economy**, and in doing so**, it has** surreptitiously **mirrored the social relations of reproduction that constitute late capitalism**. This mirroring has had unseen consequences for the individual in society, and with queer theory's insistence on the relativity of experience and the dismissal of identity, has set the stage for a benign reinforcement of internalized homophobia. The author argues that **this approach can be mediated by** recognizing that identity is fluid, and that by **focusing on identifying with social movements rather than centering analyses on the problems associated with identifying as a particular category** of status and being, **we can refocus our energies on the building and maintenance of mutual support and collective recognition** that can lead to resolving the stagnation now dominating attempts to **develop coalitions around issues that matter.**

**Capitalism destroys everything good about day-to-day life and controls society as a whole. Social well-being is ignored for the sake of profit.**

Shaviro 15  
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The problem may be summarized as follows. Capitalism has indeed created the conditions for general prosperity and therefore for its own supersession. But it has also blocked, and continues to block, any hope of realizing this transformation. We cannot wait for capitalism to transform on its own, but we also cannot hope to progress by appealing to some radical Outside or by fashioning ourselves as militants faithful to some “event” that (as Badiou has it) would mark a radical and complete break with the given “situation” of capitalism. Accelerationism rather demands a movement against and outside capitalism—but on the basis of tendencies and technologies that are intrinsic to capitalism. Audre Lord famously argued that “the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house.” But what if the master’s tools are the only ones available? Accelerationism grapples with this dilemma. What is the appeal of accelerationism today? It can be understood as a response to the particular social and political situation in which we currently seem to be trapped: that of a long-term, slow-motion catastrophe. **Global warming, and environmental** pollution and **degradation, threaten** to undermine **our** whole **mode of life.** And this mode of **life is itself increasingly stressful and precarious, due to the depredations of neoliberal capitalism**. As Fredric Jameson puts it, **the world today is characterized by** “heightened **polarization**, increasing **unemployment, [and] the** ever more desperate **search for new investments and** new **markets.” These are all** general **features of capitalism** identified by Marx, but in neoliberal society we encounter them in a particularly pure and virulent form. I want to be as specific as possible in my use of the term “neoliberalism” in order to describe this situation. I define **neoliberalism** as a specific mode of capitalist production (Marx), and form of governmentality (Foucault), that **is characterized by the following specific factors: 1. The dominating influence of financial institutions, which facilitate transfers of wealth from everybody else to the already extremely wealthy** (the “One Percent” or even the top one hundredth of one percent). **2. The** privatization and **commodification of** what used to be common or **public goods** (resources **like water and green space, as well as public services like education, communication**, sewage and garbage disposal, **and transportation). 3. The extraction, by** banks and other large **corporations, of a surplus from all social activities: not only from production** (as in the classical Marxist model of capitalism) **but from circulation and consumption as well**. **Capital accumulation proceeds** not only **by** direct **exploitation** but also by rent-seeking, by debt collection, and by outright expropriation (“primitive accumulation”). **4. The subjection of all aspects of life to the so-called discipline of the market**. This is equivalent, in more traditional Marxist terms, to the “real subsumption” by capital of all aspects of life: leisure as well as labor. **Even our sleep is now organized in accordance with the imperatives of production** and capital accumulation. 5. The redefinition of human beings as private owners of their own “human capital.” Each person is thereby, as Michel Foucault puts it, forced to become “an entrepreneur of himself.” In such circumstances, we are continually obliged to market ourselves, to “brand” ourselves, to maximize the return on our “investment” in ourselves. There is never enough: like the Red Queen, we always need to keep running, just to stay in the same place. Precarity is the fundamental condition of our lives. All of these processes work on a global scale; they extend far beyond the level of immediate individual experience. My life is precarious, at every moment, but I cannot apprehend the forces that make it so. I know how little money is left from my last paycheck, but I cannot grasp, in concrete terms, how “the economy” works. I directly experience the daily weather, but I do not directly experience the climate. Global warming and worldwide financial networks are examples of what the ecological theorist Timothy Morton calls hyperobjects. They are phenomena that actually exist but that “stretch our ideas of time and space, since they far outlast most human time scales, or they’re massively distributed in terrestrial space and so are unavailable to immediate experience.” Hyperobjects affect everything that we do, but we cannot point to them in specific instances. The chains of causality are far too complicated and intermeshed for us to follow. In order to make sense of our condition, we are forced to deal with difficult abstractions. We have to rely upon data that are gathered in massive quantities by scientific instruments and then collated through mathematical and statistical formulas but that are not directly accessible to our senses. We find ourselves, as Mark Hansen puts it, entangled “within networks of media technologies that operate predominantly, if not almost entirely, outside the scope of human modes of awareness (consciousness, attention, sense perception, etc.).” We cannot imagine such circumstances in any direct or naturalistic way, but only through the extrapolating lens of science fiction. Subject to these conditions, we live under relentless environmental and financial assault. We continually find ourselves in what might well be called a state of crisis. However, this involves a paradox. A crisis—whether economic, ecological, or political—is a turning point, a sudden rupture, a sharp and immediate moment of reckoning. But for us today, crisis has become a chronic and seemingly permanent condition. We live, oxymoronically, in a state of perpetual, but never resolved, convulsion and contradiction. Crises never come to a culmination; instead, they are endlessly and indefinitely deferred. For instance, after the economic collapse of 2008, the big banks were bailed out by the United States government. This allowed them to resume the very practices—the creation of arcane financial instruments, in order to enable relentless rent-seeking—that led to the breakdown of the economic system in the first place. The functioning of the system is restored, but only in such a way as to guarantee the renewal of the same crisis, on a greater scale, further down the road. Marx rightly noted that crises are endemic to capitalism. But far from threatening the system as Marx hoped, today these crises actually help it to renew itself. As David Harvey puts it, it is precisely “through the destruction of the achievements of preceding eras by way of war, the devaluation of assets, the degradation of productive capacity, abandonment and other forms of ‘creative destruction’” that capitalism creates “a new basis for profit-making and surplus absorption.” What lurks behind this analysis is the frustrating sense of an impasse. Among its other accomplishments, neoliberal capitalism has also robbed us of the future. For it turns everything into an eternal present. The highest values of our society—as preached in the business schools—are novelty, innovation, and creativity. And yet these always only result in more of the same. How often have we been told that a minor software update “changes everything”? Our society seems to function, as Ernst Bloch once put it, in a state of “sheer aimless infinity and incessant changeability; where everything ought to be constantly new, everything remains just as it was.” This is because, in our current state of affairs, the future exists only in order to be colonized and made into an investment opportunity. John Maynard Keynes sought to distinguish between risk and genuine uncertainty. Risk is calculable in terms of probability, but genuine uncertainty is not. Uncertain events are irreducible to probabilistic analysis, because “there is no scientific basis on which to form any calculable probability whatever.” Keynes’s discussion of uncertainty has strong affinities with Quentin Meillassoux’s account of hyperchaos. For Meillassoux, there is no “totality of cases,” no closed set of all possible states of the universe. Therefore, there is no way to assign fixed probabilities to these states. This is not just an empirical matter of insufficient information; uncertainty exists in principle. For Meillassoux and Keynes alike, there comes a point where “we simply do not know.” But today, Keynes’s distinction is entirely ignored. The Black-Scholes Formula and the Efficient Market Hypothesis both conceive the future entirely in probabilistic terms. In these theories, as in the actual financial trading that is guided by them (or at least rationalized by them), the genuine unknowability of the future is transformed into a matter of calculable, manageable risk. True novelty is excluded, because all possible outcomes have already been calculated and paid for in terms of the present. While this belief in the calculability of the future is delusional, it nonetheless determines the way that financial markets actually work. We might therefore say that speculative finance is the inverse—and the complement—of the “affirmative speculation” that takes place in science fiction. Financial speculation seeks to capture, and shut down, the very same extreme potentialities that science fiction explores. Science fiction is the narration of open, unaccountable futures; derivatives trading claims to have accounted for, and discounted, all these futures already. The “market”—nearly deified in neoliberal doctrine—thus works preemptively, as a global practice of what Richard Grusin calls premediation. It seeks to deplete the future in advance. Its relentless functioning makes it nearly impossible for us to conceive of any alternative to the global capitalist world order. Such is the condition that Mark Fisher calls capitalist realism. As Fisher puts it, channeling both Jameson and Žižek, “it’s easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism.”

#### The alternative is to join the Party – coalitional politics are the only viable way forward for a socialist movement in the 21st century.

Escalante 19

Alyson Escalante, Marxist Leninist activist, read her articles thx, <https://theforgenews.org/2018/09/21/party-organizing-in-the-21st-century/>, “Party Organizing in the 21st Century”, kiv

I would argue that within the base building movement, there is a move towards party organizing, but this trend has not always been explicitly theorized or forwarded within the movement. My goal in this essay is to argue that base building and dual power strategy can be best forwarded through party organizing, and that **party organizing can allow this emerging movement to solidify into a** powerful **revolutionary socialist tendency** in the United States. One of the crucial insights of the base building movement is that the current state of the left in the United States is one in which revolution is not currently possible. There exists very little popular support for socialist politics. A century of anticommunist propaganda has been extremely effective in convincing even the most oppressed and marginalized that communism has nothing to offer them. The **base building** emphasis on dual power **responds directly** to this insight. By building institutions which can meet people’s needs, **we are able to** concretely **demonstrate that communists can offer the oppressed relief** from the horrific conditions of capitalism. Base building strategy recognizes that actually **doing the work to serve the people does** infinitely **more** to create a socialist base of popular support **than electing** democratic **socialist candidates** or holding endless political education classes can ever hope to do. Dual power is about proving that we have something to offer the oppressed.The question, of course, remains: once we have built a base of popular support, what do we do next? If it turns out that establishing socialist institutions to meet people’s needs does in fact create sympathy towards the cause of communism, how can we mobilize that base? Put simply: **in order to mobilize the base which base builders hope to create, we need to have already done the work of building a communist party**. It is not enough to simply meet peoples needs. Rather, we must build the institutions of dual power in the name of communism. We must refuse covert front organizing and instead have a public face as a communist party. When we build tenants unions, serve the people programs, and other dual power projects, we must make it clear that we are organizing as communists, unified around a party, and are not content simply with establishing endless dual power organizations. We must be clear that our strategy is revolutionary and in order to make this clear we must adopt party organizing. By “party organizing” I mean an organizational strategy which adopts the party model. Such organizing focuses on building a party whose membership is formally unified around a party line determined by democratic centralist decision making. The party model creates internal methods for holding party members accountable, unifying party member action around democratically determined goals, and for educating party members in communist theory and praxis. A communist organization utilizing the party model works to build dual power institutions while simultaneously educating the communities they hope to serve. Organizations which adopt the party model focus on propagandizing around the need for revolutionary socialism. They function as the forefront of political organizing, empowering local communities to theorize their liberation through communist theory while organizing communities to literally fight for their liberation. A party is not simply a group of individuals doing work together, but is a formal organization unified in its fight against capitalism. Party organizing has much to offer the base building movement. **By working in a unified party, base builders can ensure that local struggles are tied to** and informed by **a unified** national and **international strategy**. While the most horrific manifestations of capitalism take on particular and unique form at the local level, we need to remember that our struggle is against a material base which functions not only at the national but at the international level. The formal structures provided by a democratic centralist party model allow individual locals to have a voice in open debate, but also allow for a unified strategy to emerge from democratic consensus. Furthermore, **party organizing allows for local organizations** and individual organizers **to be held accountable** for their actions. **It allows criticism to function not as one independent group criticizing another** independent group, **but** rather as comrades with a **formal organizational unity working together to sharpen each others strategies** and to help correct chauvinist ideas and actions. In the context of the socialist movement within the United States, such accountability is crucial. As a movement which operates within a settler colonial society, imperialist and colonial ideal frequently infect leftist organizing. Creating formal unity and party procedure for dealing with and correcting these ideas allows us to address these consistent problems within American socialist organizing. Having a formal party which unifies the various dual power projects being undertaken at the local level also allows for base builders to not simply meet peoples needs, but to pull them into the membership of the party as organizers themselves. **The party** model **creates a means for sustained growth** to occur **by unifying organizers in a manner that allows for skills, strategies, and ideas to be shared with newer organizers.** It also allows community members who have been served by dual power projects to take an active role in organizing by becoming party members and participating in the continued growth of base building strategy. It ensures that there are formal processes for educating communities in communist theory and praxis, and also enables them to act and organize in accordance with their own local conditions. We also must recognize that the current state of the base building movement precludes the possibility of such a national unified party in the present moment. Since base building strategy is being undertaken in a number of already established organizations, it is not likely that base builders would abandon these organizations in favor of founding a unified party. Additionally, it would not be strategic to immediately undertake such complete unification because it would mean abandoning the organizational contexts in which concrete gains are already being made and in which growth is currently occurring. What is important for base builders to focus on in the current moment is building dual power on a local level alongside building a national movement. This means aspiring towards the possibility of a unified party, while pursuing continued local growth. The movement within the Marxist Center network towards some form of unification is positive step in the right direction. The independent party emphasis within the Refoundation caucus should also be recognized as a positive approach. It is important for base builders to continue to explore the possibility of unification, and to maintain unification through a party model as a long term goal. In the meantime, individual base building organizations ought to adopt party models for their local organizing. Local organizations ought to be building dual power alongside recruitment into their organizations, education of community members in communist theory and praxis, and the establishment of armed and militant party cadres capable of defending dual power institutions from state terror. Dual power institutions must be unified openly and transparently around these organizations in order for them to operate as more than “red charities.” Serving the people means meeting their material needs while also educating and propagandizing. It means radicalizing, recruiting, and organizing. The party model remains the most useful method for achieving these ends. The use of the party model by local organizations allows base builders to gain popular support, and most importantly, to mobilize their base of popular support towards revolutionary ends, not simply towards the construction of a parallel economy which exists as an end in and of itself. It is my hope that we will see future unification of the various local base building organizations into a national party, but in the meantime we must push for party organizing at the local level. If local organizations adopt party organizing, it ought to become clear that a unified national party will have to be the long term goal of the base building movement. Many of the already existing organizations within the base building movement already operate according to these principles. I do not mean to suggest otherwise. Rather, my hope is to suggest that we ought to be explicit about the need for party organizing and emphasize the relationship between dual power and the party model. Doing so will make it clear that the base building movement is not pursuing a cooperative economy alongside capitalism, but is pursuing a revolutionary socialist strategy capable of fighting capitalism. The long term details of base building and dual power organizing will arise organically in response to the conditions the movement finds itself operating within. I hope that I have put forward a useful contribution to the discussion about base building organizing, and have demonstrated the need for party organizing in order to ensure that the base building tendency maintains a revolutionary orientation. The finer details of revolutionary strategy will be worked out over time and are not a good subject for public discussion. I strongly believe party organizing offers the best path for ensuring that such strategy will succeed. My goal here is not to dictate the only possible path forward but to open a conversation about how the base building movement will organize as it transitions from a loose network of individual organizations into a unified socialist tendency. These discussions and debates will be crucial to ensuring that this rapidly growing movement can succeed.

#### The role of the ballot is to orient political and social struggle toward the communist horizon – this redirection is crucial to redefine the imagineable political futures – anything less is mere apologism for continued leftist failure

Dean 12

(Jodi, Professor of Political Science at Hobart and William Smith Colleges, *The Communist Horizon*, Verso: Brooklyn, NY, 2012, p. 1-12)

The term "horizon" marks a division. Understood spatially, the horizon is the line dividing the visible, separating earth from sky. Understood temporally, the horizon converges with loss in a metaphor for privation and depletion. The "lost horizon" suggests abandoned projects, prior hopes that have now passed away. Astrophysics offers a thrilling, even uncanny, horizon: the "event horizon" sun-ounding a black hole. The event horizon is the boundary beyond which events cannot escape. Although "event horizon" denotes the curvature in space/time effected by a singularity, it's not much different from the spatial horizon. Both evoke a fundamental division that we experience as impossible to reach, and that we can neither escape nor cross. **I use "horizon"**not to recall a forgotten future but **to designate a dimension of experience that we can never lose**, even if, lost in a fog or focused on our feet, we fail to see it. The horizon is Real in the sense of impossible-we can never reach it-and in the sense of actual (Jacques Lacan's notion of the Real includes both these senses). ***The horizon shapes our setting***. We can lose our bearings, hut the horizon is a necessary dimension of our actuality. Whether the effect of a singularity or the meeting of earth and sky, the horizon is the fundamental division establishing where we are. With respect to politics, the horizon that conditions our experience is communism. I get the term "communist horizon" from Bruno Bosteels. In The Actuality of Communism, Bosteels engages with the work of Alvaro Garcia Linera. Garcia Linera ran as Evo Morales's vice presidential ru1ming mate in the Bolivian Movement for Socialism-Political Instrument for the Sovereignty of the Peoples (MAS-IPSP). He is the author of multiple pieces on Marxism, politics, and sociology, at least one of which was written while he served time in prison for promoting an armed uprising (before becoming vice president of Bolivia, he fought in the Tupac Kataii Guerrilla Army). Bosteels quotes Garcia Linera's response to an interviewer's questions about his party's plans following their electoral victim)': "The general horizon of the era is communist."1 Garcia Linera doesn't explain the term. Rather, as Bosteels points out, Garcia Linera invokes the communist horizon "as if it were the most natural thing in the world," as if it were so obvious as to need neither explanation nor justification. He assumes the communist horizon as an irreducible feature of the political setting: "We enter the movement with our expecting and desiring eyes set upon the communist horizon." For Garcia Linera, **communism conditions the actuality of politics**. Some on the Left dismiss the communist horizon as a lost horizon. For example, in a postmodern pluralist approach that appeals to many on the Left, the economists writing as J. K. Gibson-Graham reject communism, offering "post-capitalism" in its stead. They argue that descriptions of capitalism as a global system miss the rich diversity of practices, relations, and desires constituting yet exceeding the economy and so advocate "reading the economy for difference rather than dominance" (as if dominance neither presupposes nor relies on difference).2 In their view, reading for difference opens up new possibilities for politics as it reveals previously unacknowledged loci of creative action within everyday economic activities. Gibson-Graham do not present Marxism as a failed ideology or communism as the fossilized remainder of an historical expe1iment gone horribly wrong. On the contrary, they draw inspiration from Man:'s appreciation of the social chamcter of labor. They engage Jean-Luc Nancy's emphasis on communism as an idea that is the "index of a task of thought still and increasingly open." They embrace the reclamation of the commons. And they are concerned with neoliberalism's naturalization of the economy as a force exceeding the capacity of people to steer or transform it. Yet at the same time, Gibson-Graham push away from communism to launch their vision of postcapitalism. Communism is that against which they construct their altemative conception of the economy. It's a constitutive force, present as a shaping of the view they advocate. Even as Nancy's evocation of communism serves as a horizon for their thinking, they explicitly jettison the term "communism," which they position as the object of "widespread aversion" and which they associate with the "dangers of posing a positivity, a nonnative representation." Rejecting the positive notion of "communism," they opt for a term that suggests an empty relationality to the capitalist system they ostensibly deny, "post-capitalism." For Gibson-Graham, the term "capitalist" is not a term of critique or opprobrium; it's not part of a manifesto. The term is a cause of the political problems facing the contemporary Left. They argue that the discursive dominance of capitalism embeds the Left in paranoia, melancholia, and moralism. Gibson-Graham's view is a specific instance of a general assumption shared by leftists who embrace a generic post-capitalism but eschew a more militant anticapitalism. Instead of actively opposing capitalism, this tendency redirects anticapitalist energies into efforts to open up discussions and find ethical spaces for decision-and this in a world where one bond trader can bring down a bank in a matter of minutes. I take the opposite position. The dominance of capitalism, the capitalist system, is material. Rather than entrapping us in paranoid fantasy, an analysis that treats capitalism as a global system of appropriation, exploitation, and circulation that enriches the few as it dispossesses the many and that has to expend an enormous amount of energy in doing so can anger, *incite*, and *galvanize*. Historically, in theory and in practice, **critical analysis of capitalist exploitation has been a *powerful weapon* in collective struggle**. It persists as such today, in global acknowledgment of the excesses of neoliberal capitalism. As recently became clear in worldwide **rioting, protest, and revolution, linking multiple sites of exploitation**to narrow channels of privilege c**an replace** melancholic **fatalism with**new assertions of will, desire, and ***collective strength***. The problem of the Left hasn't been our adherence to a Marxist critique of capitalism. It's that we have lost sight of the communist horizon, a glimpse of which new political movements are starting to reveal. Sometimes capitalists, conservatives, and liberal democrats use a rhetoric that treats communism as a lost hmizon. But usually they keep communism firmly within their sight. They see communism as a threat, twenty years after its ostensible demise. To them, communism is so threatening that they premise political discussion on the repression of the communist alternative. In response to left critiques of democracy for its failure to protect the interests of poor and workingclass people, conservatives and liberals alike scold that "everybody knows" and "history shows" that communism doesn't work. Communism might be a nice ideal, they concede, but it always leads to violent, authoritru·ian excesses of power. They shift the discussion to communism, trying to establish the limits of reasonable debate. Their critique of communism establishes the political space and condition of democracy. Before the conversation even gets going, liberals, democrats, capitalists, and conservatives unite to block communism from consideration. It's off the table. Those who suspect that the inclusion of liberals and democrats in a set with capitalists and conservatives is illegitimate are probably democrats themselves. To determine whether they belong in the set of those who fear communism, they should consider whether they think any evocation of communism should come with qualifications, apologies, and condemnations of past excesses. If the answer is "yes," then we have a clear indication that liberal democrats, and probably radical democrats as well, still consider communism a threat that must be suppressed-and so they belong in a set with capitalists and conservatives. All are anxious about the forces that communist desire risks unleashing. There are good reasons for liberals, democrats, capitalists, and conservatives to be anxious. Over the last decade **a return to communism has *re-energized the Left*.** Communism is again becoming a discourse and vocabulary for the expression of universal, egalitarian, and revolutionary ideals. In March 2009, the Birkbeck Institute for the Humanities hosted a conference entitled "On the Idea of Communism." Initially planned for about 200 people, the conference ultimately attracted over 1,200, requiring a spillover room to accommodate those who couldn't fit in the primary auditorium. Since then, multiple conferences-in Paris, Berlin, and New York-and publications have followed, with contributions from such leading scholars as Alain Badiou, Etienne Balibar, Bruno Bosteels, Susan Buck-Morss, Costas Douzinas, Peter Hallward, Michael Hardt, Antonio Neg1i, Jacques Ranciere, Alberto Toscano, and Slavoj Zizek. The conferences and publications consolidate discussions that have been going on for decades. For over thirty years, Antonio Negri has sought to build a new approach to communism out of a Marxism reworked via Spinoza and the Italian political experiments of the 1970s. The Empire trilogy that Negri coauthored with Michael Hardt offers an affirmative, non-dialectical reconceptualization of labor, power, and the State, a new theory of communism from below. Alain Badiou has been occupied with communism for over forty years, from his philosophical and political engagement with Maoism, to his emphasis on the "communist invariants"-egalitarian justice, disciplinary tenor, political volunteerism, and trust in the people-to his recent appeal to the communist Idea. Communism is not a new interest for Slavoj Zizek either. In early 2001 he put together a conference and subsequent volume rethinking Lenin. Where Negri and Badiou reject the Party and the State, Zizek retains a certain fidelity to Lenin. "The key 'Leninist' lesson today," he writes, is that "politics without the organizational form of the Party is politics without politics."4 In short, a vital area of radical philosophy considers communism a contemporary name for emancipation, egalitarian politics and has been actively rethinking many of the concepts that form part of the communist legacy. These ongoing theoretical discussions overlap with the changing political sequences marked by 1968 and 1989. They also overlap with the spread of neoliberal capitalist domination, a domination accompanied by extremes in economic inequality, ethnic hatred, and police violence, as well as by widespread militancy, insurgency, occupation, and revolution. The current emphasis on communism thus exceeds the coincidence of academic conferences calling specifically for communism's retum with the new millennium's debt crises, austerity measures, increased unemployment, and overall sacrifice of the achievements of the modern welfare state to the private interests of financial institutions deemed too big to fail. Already in an interview in 2002, prior to his election to the Bolivian presidency, Evo Morales had announced that "the neoliberal system was a failure, and now it's the poor people's turn." Communism is reemerging as a *magnet of* political *energy* because it is and has been the *alternative to capitalism*. The communist horizon is not lost. It is Real. In this book, I explore some of the ways the communist horizon manifests itself to us today. As Bosteels argues, to invoke the communist horizon is to produce "a complete shift in perspective or a radical ideological turnabout, as a result of which capitalism no longer appears as the only game in town and we no longer have to be ashamed to set our expecting and desiring eyes here and now on a different organization of social relationships." **With communism as our horizon, the *field of possibilities* for revolution**ary theory and practice **starts to change** shape. ***Barriers to action fall away*. New potentials and challenges come to the fore**. Anything is possible. Instead of a politics thought primarily in terms of resistance, playful and momentary aesthetic disruptions, the immediate specificity of local projects, and struggles for hegemony within a capitalist parliamentary setting**, the communist horizon impresses upon us the necessity to abolish capitalism and to create global practices and institutions of egalitarian cooperation. The shift in perspective** the communist horizon produces **turns us** away from the democratic milieu that has been the fmm of the loss of communism as a name for left aspiration and toward the reconfiguration of the components of political struggle-in other words, away from general inclusion, momentary calls for broad awareness, and lifestyle changes, and **toward militant opposition, tight organizational forms** (party, council, working group, cell), **and the sovereignty of the people over the economy** through which we produce and reproduce ourselves.

## Topicality

**Interpretation: The 1AC must include a resolutionally topical advocacy text**

**Violation: It doesn’t**

**Standards**

1. **Clash – non-topical affs are unpredictable because there are infinite non-topical positions. That kills clash by forcing the neg debater to extemp responses. Students don’t gain real world advocacy skills because they can’t interact with the aff’s arguments; they’re too vague and unexpected. Advocacy skills are a voter because they enable students to make real change to improve the world and they help the student in their further education and career. It’s also impossible to engage in high quality conversations about queerness if I can’t predict your argument pre-round. That link turns the case because I end up reading generics instead of meaningfully engaging with the aff – worse for education and activism.**
2. **Inclusion – strategies for countering non-topical affs are almost exclusively taught at camps and elite schools. That makes non-topical debate super inaccessible to debaters without access to those resources. Access to debate is good because it provides education, a positive community, and opportunities like college scholarships. Accessibility comes first because it is necessary for any other theory impacts.**

**TVA: They could’ve read \_ while still affirming the resolution…**

**Paradigm issues**

**Drop the debater – only dropping the debater effectively deters behavior that makes debate and the world in general worse. The ballot carries power, it changes how people debate.**

**No RVIs –**

**a) it doesn’t make sense to reward a debater with the ballot simply because they didn’t do anything bad, debaters have to do good things to win.**

**b) RVIs chill legitimate theory, justifying more abuse.**

**Competing interpretation:**

**a) it forces students to defend a model of debate and**

**b) reasonability is arbitrary and irresolvable**

**No impact turns:**

**a) This is just a critique of your method like any other argument – there’s no warrant for why theory is uniquely violent compared to the cap k.**

**b) We’re not forcing you to debate in any way – you can win a counter-interpretation if you want to read the case in its current form**