# 1NC

## Theory

**Interpretation: If a debater reads any role of the ballot other than truth testing or comparative worlds, they must specify how theory and topical arguments function under the new ROB. To specify, they must explain which arguments matter, how weighing works, and how layers work.**

**Violation: They don’t specify – I asked what the ROB meant in CX and they just talked about what it means for education – not in round engagement.**

**The standard is engagement – knowing what counts under the ROB is a prerequisite to making strategic arguments, so I can’t engage with the case. They can infinitely shift in rebuttals by saying that my arguments don’t count, so I have no stable ground to stand on. My interpretation ensures that we know how to respond to the NC.**

**Multiple impacts:**

1. **Education – we can’t learn about their arguments if we can’t clash with them. And, we can’t learn advocacy skills if every speech I make is immediately shut down. Also turns their case because their impacts rely on people understanding \_ so they can act on it**
2. **Strat skew – We don’t know what’s most strategic under your ROB so my first speech is a shot in the dark – that means we can’t formulate a smart strategy, making the round unfair. And, you can recontextualize the ROB to preclude my arguments which means that no strategy of mine is viable.**

**Education is a voter: it’s the only exportable benefit of debate which spills over to real-world activism and action. That outweighs their critique on solvency because we can make educational norms but their reading will never destroy \_.**

**Fairness is a voter**

1. **Internal link to every impact – we need fair debates to have close and high-clash rounds that promote education and accessibility**
2. **Prerequisite to any adjudication because you assume the judge evaluates your kritik fairly**
3. **Competitive equity is necessary for the activity’s existence because the judge must vote for the better debater and that can’t be determined if rounds are unfair. Debate’s existence is a prerequisite to their kritik’s reading.**

**Their ROB can’t preclude this shell:**

1. **My shell constrains how you read the ROB so it’s incoherent to use the indicted ROB to preclude its indict.**
2. **It proves the abuse story because they destroy my strategy with shiftiness.**
3. **My interpretation is your ROB + specification so if I win any net benefit to specifying you vote for me.**

**No impact turns:**

1. **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.**
2. **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**

## K

#### Their re-tooling of Communication gets coopted within the university – that recreates capitalist communication and logistics

Webb, Darren. "Bolt-holes and breathing spaces in the system: On forms of academic resistance (or, can the university be a site of utopian possibility?)." Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies 40.2 (2018): 96-118. (Senior Lecturer in Education at the University of Sheffield)//Elmer

It is easy to be seduced by the language of the undercommons. Embodying and enacting it, however, is difficult indeed. Being within and against the university, refusing the call to order through insolent obstructive unprofessionalism, is almost impossible to sustain. Halberstam (2009, 45) describes the undercommons as “a marooned community of outcast thinkers who refuse, resist, and renege on the demands of rigor, excellence, and productivity.” A romantic and appealing notion for sure but **refusing and reneging on “the university of excellence” will cost you your job.** When Moten **describes subversion** as a “series of immanent upheavals” expressed through “vast repertoires of high-frequency complaints, imperceptible frowns, withering turns, silent sidesteps, and ever-vigilant attempts not to see and hear” (2008, 1743), **one is reminded instantly of Thomas Docherty, disciplined and suspended for his negative vibes.**7 Being with and for the maroon community is difficult too. First of all, “Where and how can we find/see the Undercommons at work?” (Ĉiĉigoj, Apostolou-Hölscher, and Rusham 2015, 265). Where and how can one find those liminal spaces of sabotage and subversion, and how does one occupy them in a spirit of hapticality, study, and militant arrhythmia that brings the utopic underground to the surface of the fierce and urgent now? Beautiful language, but how does one live it? Networks do, of course, exist—the Undercommoning Collective, the Edu-Factory Collective, the International Network for Alternative Academia, to name but a few. These are promising spaces for bringing together and harboring the maroons and the fugitives. But networks are typically **short-lived**, and—as Harney and Moten warned—**there is a danger of institutionalization, of taking institutional practices with you** into alternative spaces “**because we’ve been inside so much**” (Harney and Moten 2013, 148). And so, predictably, **meetings of the fugitives come with structure, order, an official agenda**, and circulated minutes. The outcasts convene in conventional academic conferences, with parallel sessions, panels of papers, lunch breaks, wine and nibbles (e.g., Edu-Factory 2012). These spaces offer time out, welcome respite, a breathing space, a trip abroad, and then one returns to work. If hapticality, the touch of the undercommons, is “a visceral register of experience … the feel that what is to come is here” (Bradley 2014, 129–130), then this seems elusive. It is hard to detect a sense of the utopic undercommons rising to the surface of the corporate-imperial university. Moten describes the call to disorder and to study as a way to “excavate new aesthetic, political, and economic dispositions” (Moten 2008, 1745). But this notion of excavating is highly problematic. It is common within the discourse of “everyday utopianism”—finding utopia in the everyday, recovering lost or repressed transcendence in “everydayness” (Gardiner 2006)—to describe the process of utopian recovery in terms of excavating: excavating repressed desires, submerged longings, suppressed histories, untapped possibilities. But the fundamental questions of where to dig and how to identify a utopian “find” are never adequately addressed (see Webb 2017). Gardiner defines utopia as “a series of forces, tendencies and possibilities that are immanent in the here and now, in the pragmatic activities of everyday life” (2006, 2). But how are these forces, tendencies and possibilities to be identified and recovered? For Harney and Moten, **it is through study, hapticality and militant arrhythmia**. These are slippy concepts, however, evading concrete material referents. What is it to inhabit the undercommons? Those who have written of their experiences refer to “small acts of marronage” such as poaching resources and redeploying them in ways at odds with the university’s designs and demands (Reddy 2016, 7), or exploiting funding streams “to form cracks in the institution that enable the Others to invade the university” (Smith, Dyke, and Hermes 2013, 150). For Adusei-Poku (2015), the undercommons is a space of refuge which is all about survival (2015, 4–5). We who feel homeless in the university are forced into refuge. We gather together to survive. We may gain satisfaction from small acts of marronage, but this is less about bringing the utopic common underground to the surface as it is a form of “radical escapism” (Adusei-Poku 2015, 4). Benveniste (2015, v) tells us that: “The undercommons has no set location and no return address. There is no map for entering and no guide for staying. The only condition is a living appetite. Listen to its hunger for difference.” We need more than poetry, however. And **we need more than a series of minor acts of resistance**. As Srnicek and Williams rightly emphasize, resistance is a defensive, reactive gesture, resisting against. Resistance is not a utopian endeavour: “We do not resist a new world into being” (Srnicek and Williams 2016, 47). The undercommons, when one can find it, is a bolt hole, a place of refuge, a breathing space in the system. We need something more. The occupation Can the occupied building operate as a site of utopian possibility within the corporate-imperial university? Reflections on, and theorizations of, two recent waves of occupation—“Occupied California” 2009–2010 and the UK Occupations 2010–2011—have answered this question affirmatively. The “occupation” should not be understood here as solely or necessarily “student occupation.” It goes without saying—though sadly so often does need saying —that “faculty also have a responsibility to fight with and for students” (Smeltzer and Hearn 2015, 356). Though led by a new historical subject, “the graduate without a future” (Schwarz-WeinStein 2015, 11), the importance of faculty support for the occupations was emphasized on both sides of the Atlantic (Research and Destroy 2010, 11; Dawson 2011, 112; Holmes and R&D and Dead Labour 2011, 14; Ismail 2011, 128; Newfield and EduFactory 2011, 26). Long before Occupy took shape in Zuccotti Park, “occupation” was being heralded as the harbinger of a new society and a new way of being. If we return to the notion of creating utopian spaces, the key aim for some of the occupiers was to create communes within the university walls—to communize space (Inoperative Committee 2011, 6).8 Communization here is understood as a form of insurrectionary anarchism that refuses to talk of a transition to communism, insisting instead upon the immediate formation of zones of activity removed from exchange, money, compulsory labor, and the impersonal domination of the commodity form (Anon 2010a, 5). As one pamphlet declared: We will take whatever measures are necessary both to destroy this world as quickly as possible and to create, here and now, the world we want: a world without wages, without bosses, without borders, without states. (Anon 2010d, 34) This is a revolutionary anarchism that takes the university campus as the site for a practice—communization—that not only prefigures but also realizes the vision of a free society. Heavily influenced by The Coming Insurrection (Invisible Committee 2009), but tapping into a long tradition of anarchist theory and practice from Hakim Bey’s Temporary Autonomous Zones (Bey 1985) to David Graeber’s Direct Action (Graeber 2009), occupation becomes “the creation of a momentary opening in capitalist time and space, a rearrangement that sketches the contours of a new society” (Research and Destroy 2010, 11). It is “an attempt to imagine a new kind of everyday life” (Hatherley 2011, 123). Firth (2012) refers to these momentary openings as critical, experimental utopias: Such utopias are … simultaneously immanent and prefigurative. They are immanent insofar as they allow space for the immediate expression of desires, satisfaction of needs and also the articulation of difference or dissent. They are prefigurative to the extent that they allow one to practice and exemplify what one would like to see at a more proliferative range in the future (26) The ultimate aim is for the practice to spread beyond the campus through a dual process of provocative rupture—the idea that insurrectionary moments can unleash the collective imagination and stimulate an outpouring of creativity that blows apart common sense and offers glimpses of a future world (Gibson-Graham 2006, 51; Shukaitis and Graeber 2007, 37)—and “contaminationism,” that is, spreading by means of example (Graeber 2009, 211). It may well have been the case that communism was realized on the campuses of Berkeley and UCL, that a momentary opening in capitalist space/time appeared through which another world could be glimpsed. The occupation, however—whether California, London, or anywhere else—is likely always to remain a localized temporary disruptive practice. A practice with utopian potency, for sure, in terms of suspending normalized forms of discipline and opening new egalitarian discursive spaces (Rheingans and Hollands 2013; Nişancioğlu and Pal 2016). In terms of wider systemic change, however, “small interventions consisting of relatively non-scalable actions are highly unlikely to ever be able to reorganise our socioeconomic system” (Srnicek and Williams 2016, 29). What “the occupation” demonstrates more than anything is the reality of the corporate-imperial university, as the institutional hierarchy, backed by the carceral power of the police and criminal justice system, inevitably disperses the occupiers—often using militarized force—and repossesses the occupied space in a strong assertion of its ownership rights not only to university buildings but also to what constitutes legitimate thought and behavior within them (on this see Docherty 2015, 90). The significance, and utopian potential, one attaches to campus occupations depends in part upon the significance one attaches to the university as a site of struggle. For the Edu-Factory Collective: As was the factory, so now is the university. Where once the factory was a paradigmatic site of struggle between workers and capitalists, so now the university is a key space of conflict, where the ownership of knowledge, the reproduction of the labour force, and the creation of social and cultural stratifications are all at stake. This is to say the university is not just another institution subject to sovereign and governmental controls, but a crucial site in which wider social struggles are won and lost. (Caffentzis and Federici 2011, 26) Clearly, if this is true, then the form the struggle takes, and the example it sets, is of immense significance. Srnicek and Williams describe as “wishful thinking” the idea that the occupation might spread beyond the campus by means of rupture or contamination (2016, 35). However, if the university really is a key site of class struggle (Seybold 2008, 120; Haiven and Khasnabish 2014, 38), a site through which wider struggles are refracted and won or lost, then the transformative potential of the occupation needs to be attended to seriously. The analysis of the university offered by the Edu-Factory Collective is, however, outdated. Sounding like Daniel Bell writing in 1973 about how universities had become the “axial structures” of post-industrial society (Bell 1973, 12), the analysis does not hold water today. Moten overdoes it when he tells us that “the university is a kind of corpse. It is dead. It’s a dead institutional body” (Moten 2015, 78). What is clear, however, is that “focusing on the university as a site of radical transformation is a mistake” (Holmes and R&D and Dead Labour 2011, 13). As has been widely noted, there is very little distinguishing universities from other for-profit corporations (Readings 1996; Lustig 2005; Washburn 2005; Shear 2008, Tuchman 2009). What does separate them is their inefficiency, due in large part to the fact that universities operate also as medieval guilds, with faculties “ruled by masters who lord over journeymen and apprentices in an artisanal system of production” (Jemielniak and Greenwood 2015, 77). If the university is a sinister hybrid monstrosity—part medieval guild, part criminal corporation—which has no role other than reproducing its own privilege, then no special status can be attributed to campus protests. In this case, “A free university in the midst of a capitalist society is like a reading room in a prison” (Research and Destroy 2010, 10). A reading room in a prison. Another apposite metaphor. The occupation is a safe space, offering temporary respite, a place to hide, a refuge, a bolt-hole, a breathing space. As with the utopian classroom and the undercommons, what the occupation suggests is that “defending small bunkers of autonomy against the onslaught of capitalism is the best that can be hoped for” (Srnicek and Williams 2016, 48). Conclusion Zaslove was right to characterize utopian pedagogy within the corporateimperial university as the search for bolt-holes and breathing spaces in the system. He himself suggests that, “All university classes should become dialogic-experiential models that educate by expanding the zones of contact with wider communities” (2007, 102). Like so many others, Zaslove sees dialogic-experiential models of education beginning in the classroom then expanding outward. The literature is full of references to “exceeding the limits of the university classroom” (Coté, Day, and de Peuter 2007a, 325), “extend [ing] beyond the boundaries of the campus” (Ruben 2000, 211), and “breeching the walls of the university compounds and spilling into the streets” (Research and Destroy 2010, 10). This all brings to mind Giroux’s notion of academics as border crossers (Giroux 1992), but it also paints a picture of academics taking as their starting point the university and from there crossing the border into the community and the street. The University can be the site for fleeting, transitory, small-scale experiences of utopian possibility—in the classroom, the undercommons, the occupation. It cannot be the site for transformative utopian politics. It cannot even be the starting point for this. Given the corporatization and militarization of the university, academics are increasingly becoming “functionaries of elite interests” inhabiting a culture which serves to reproduce these interests (Shear 2008, 56). Within the university, “radical” initiatives or movements will soon be co-opted, recuperated, commodified, and neutralized (Gibson-Graham 2006, xxvi; Seybold 2008, 123; Neary 2012b, 249; Rolfe 2013, 21). Institutional habitus weights so heavily that projects born in the university will be scarred from the outset by a certain colonizing “imaginary of education” (Burdick and Sandlin 2010, 117). And we have long known that the university is but one space of learning, and perhaps not a very important one at that.

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

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

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

**Property is the basis of violent colonial logistics. That means in order to fight anti-blackness, colonialism, and class violence, private property must be abolished. The ability to create this communist future must be the main framing issue in this round.**

#### The alternative is to join the Party – it’s 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.