

through its coercive unification and/or cruel segmentation. This is why Empire necessarily declines in the very moment of its rise.

This negative figure of command over productive biopower is even more paradoxical when viewed from the perspective of corporeality. Biopolitical generation directly transforms the bodies of the multitude. These are, as we have seen, bodies enriched with intellectual and cooperative power, and bodies that are already hybrid. What generation offers us in postmodernity are thus bodies "beyond measure." In this context corruption appears simply as disease, frustration, and mutilation. This is how power has always acted against enriched bodies. Corruption also appears as psychosis, opiates, anguish, and boredom, but this too has always happened throughout modernity and disciplinary societies. The specificity of corruption today is instead the rupture of the community of singular bodies and the impediment to its action—a rupture of the productive biopolitical community and an impediment to its life. Here we are thus faced with a paradox. Empire recognizes and profits from the fact that in cooperation bodies produce, more and in community bodies enjoy more, but it has to obstruct and control this cooperative autonomy so as not to be destroyed by it. Corruption operates to impede this going "beyond measure" of the bodies through community, this singular universalization of the new power of bodies, which threaten the very existence of Empire. The paradox is irresolvable: the more the world becomes rich, the more Empire, which is based on this wealth, must negate the conditions of the production of wealth. Our task is to investigate how ultimately corruption can be forced to cede its control to generation.

4.3

THE MULTITUDE AGAINST EMPIRE

The great masses need a *material religion of the senses* [eine sinnliche Religion]. Not only the great masses but also the philosopher needs it. Monotheism of reason and the heart, polytheism of the imagination and art, this is what we need . . . [W]e must have a new mythology, but this mythology must be at the service of ideas. It must be a mythology of reason.

Das älteste Systemprogramm des deutschen Idealismus,
by Hegel, Holderlin, or Schelling

We do not lack communication, on the contrary we have too much of it. We lack creation. *We lack resistance to the present.*

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari

Imperial power can no longer resolve the conflict of social forces through mediatory schemata that displace the terms of conflict. The social conflicts that constitute the political confront one another directly, without mediations of any sort. This is the essential novelty of the imperial situation. Empire creates a greater potential for revolution than did the modern regimes of power because it presents us, alongside the machine of command, with an alternative: the set of all the exploited and the subjugated, a multitude that is directly opposed to Empire, with no mediation between them. At this point, then, as Augustine says, our task is to discuss, to the best of our powers, "the rise, the development and the destined ends of the two cities . . . which we find . . . interwoven . . . and mingled with one another."¹ Now that we have dealt extensively with Empire, we should focus directly on the multitude and its potential political power.

The Two Cities

We need to investigate specifically how the multitude can become a *political subject* in the context of Empire. We can certainly recognize the existence of the multitude from the standpoint of the constitution of Empire, but from that perspective the multitude might appear to be generated and sustained by imperial command. In the new postmodern Empire there is no Emperor Caracalla who grants citizenship to all his subjects and thereby forms the multitude as a political subject. The formation of the multitude of exploited and subjugated producers can be read more clearly in the history of twentieth-century revolutions. Between the communist revolutions of 1917 and 1949, the great anti-fascist struggles of the 1930s and 1940s, and the numerous liberation struggles of the 1960s up to those of 1989, the conditions of the citizenship of the multitude were born, spread, and consolidated. Far from being defeated, the revolutions of the twentieth century have each pushed forward and transformed the terms of class conflict, posing the conditions of a new political subjectivity, an insurgent multitude against imperial power. The rhythm that the revolutionary movements have established is the beat of a new *aetia*, a new maturity and metamorphosis of the times.

The constitution of Empire is not the cause but the consequence of the rise of these new powers. It should be no surprise, then, that Empire, despite its efforts, finds it impossible to construct a system of right adequate to the new reality of the globalization of social and economic relations. This impossibility (which served as the point of departure for our argument in Section 1.1) is not due to the wide extension of the field of regulation; nor is it simply the result of the difficult passage from the old system of international public law to the new imperial system. This impossibility is explained instead by the revolutionary nature of the multitude, whose struggles have produced Empire as an inversion of its own image and who now represents on this new scene an uncontrollable force and an excess of value with respect to every form of right and law.

To confirm this hypothesis, it is sufficient to look at the contemporary development of the multitude and dwell on the

vitality of its present expressions. When the multitude works, it produces autonomously and reproduces the entire world of life. Producing and reproducing autonomously mean constructing a new ontological reality. In effect, by working, the multitude produces itself as singularity. It is a singularity that establishes a new place in the non-place of Empire, a singularity that is a reality produced by cooperation, represented by the linguistic community, and developed by the movements of hybridization. The multitude affirms its singularity by inverting the ideological illusion that all humans on the global surfaces of the world market are interchangeable. Standing the ideology of the market on its feet, the multitude promotes through its labor the biopolitical singularizations of groups and sets of humanity, across each and every node of global inter-change.

Class struggles and revolutionary processes of the past undermined the political powers of nations and peoples. The revolutionary preamble that has been written from the nineteenth to the twentieth centuries has prepared the new subjective configuration of labor that comes to be realized today. Cooperation and communion throughout the spheres of biopolitical production define a new productive singularity. The multitude is not formed simply by throwing together and mixing nations and peoples indifferently; it is the singular power of a *new city*.

One might object at this point, with good reason, that all this is still not enough to establish the multitude as a properly political subject, nor even less as a subject with the potential to control its own destiny. This objection, however, does not present an insuperable obstacle, because the revolutionary past, and the contemporary cooperative productive capacities through which the anthropological characteristics of the multitude are continually transcribed and reformulated, cannot help revealing a telos, a material affirmation of liberation. In the ancient world Plotinus faced something like this situation:

"Let us flee then to the beloved Fatherland": this is the soundest counsel . . . The Fatherland to us is There whence we have

come, and There is the Father. What then is our course, what the manner of our flight? This is not a journey for the feet; the feet bring us only from land to land; nor need you think of a coach or ship to carry you away; all this order of things you must set aside and refuse to see: you must close the eyes and call instead upon another vision which is to be waked within you, a vision, the birth-right of all, which few turn to use.²

This is how ancient mysticism expressed the new telos. The multitude today, however, resides on the imperial surfaces where there is no God the Father and no transcendence. Instead there is our immanent labor. The teleology of the multitude is theurgical; it consists in the possibility of directing technologies and production toward its own joy and its own increase of power. The multitude has no reason to look outside its own history and its own present productive power for the means necessary to lead toward its constitution as a political subject.

A material mythology of reason thus begins to be forged, and it is constructed in the languages, technologies, and all the means that constitute the world of life. It is a material religion of the senses that separates the multitude from every residue of sovereign power and from every "long arm" of Empire. The mythology of reason is the symbolic and imaginative articulation that allows the ontology of the multitude to express itself as activity and consciousness. The mythology of languages of the multitude interprets the telos of an *earthly city*, torn away by the power of its own destiny from any belonging or subjection to a *city of God*, which has lost all honor and legitimacy. To the metaphysical and transcendent mediations, to the violence and corruption are thus opposed the absolute constitution of labor and cooperation, the earthly city of the multitude.

Endless Paths (The Right to Global Citizenship)

The constitution of the multitude appears first as a spatial movement that constitutes the multitude in limitless place. The mobility of

commodities, and thus of that special commodity that is labor-power, has been presented by capitalism ever since its birth as the fundamental condition of accumulation. The kinds of movement of individuals, groups, and populations that we find today in Empire, however, cannot be completely subjugated to the laws of capitalist accumulation—at every moment they overflow and shatter the bounds of measure. The movements of the multitude designate new spaces, and its journeys establish new residences. Autonomous movement is what defines the place proper to the multitude. Increasingly less will passports or legal documents be able to regulate our movements across borders. A new geography is established by the multitude as the productive flows of bodies define new rivers and ports. The cities of the earth will become at once great deposits of cooperating humanity and locomotives for circulation, temporary residences and networks of the mass distribution of living humanity.

Through circulation the multitude reappropriates space and constitutes itself as an active subject. When we look closer at how this constitutive process of subjectivity operates, we can see that the new spaces are described by unusual topologies, by subterranean and uncontrollable rhizomes—by geographical mythologies that mark the new paths of destiny. These movements often cost terrible suffering, but there is also in them a desire of liberation that is not satiated except by reappropriating new spaces, around which are constructed new freedoms. Everywhere these movements arrive, and all along their paths they determine new forms of life and cooperation—everywhere they create that wealth that parasitic postmodern capitalism would otherwise not know how to suck out of the blood of the proletariat, because increasingly today production takes place in movement and cooperation, in exodus and community. Is it possible to imagine U.S. agriculture and service industries without Mexican migrant labor, or Arab oil without Palestinians and Pakistanis? Moreover, where would the great innovative sectors of immaterial production, from design to fashion, and from electronics to science in Europe, the United States, and Asia, be without the "illegal labor" of the great masses, mobilized toward the radiant

horizons of capitalist wealth and freedom? Mass migrations have become necessary for production. Every path is forged, mapped, and traveled. It seems that the more intensely each is traveled and the more suffering is deposited there, the more each path becomes productive. These paths are what brings the "earthly city" out of the cloud and confusion that Empire casts over it. This is how the multitude gains the power to affirm its autonomy, traveling and expressing itself through an apparatus of widespread, transversal territorial reappropriation.

Recognizing the potential autonomy of the mobile multitude, however, only points toward the real question. What we need to grasp is how the multitude is organized and redefined as a positive, political power. Up to this point we have been able to describe the potential existence of this political power in merely formal terms. It would be a mistake to stop here, without going on to investigate the mature forms of the consciousness and political organization of the multitude, without recognizing how much is already powerful in these territorial movements of the labor power of Empire. How can we recognize (and reveal) a constituent political tendency within and beyond the spontaneity of the multitude's movements?

This question can be approached initially from the other side by considering the policies of Empire that repress these movements. Empire does not really know how to control these paths and can only try to criminalize those who travel them, even when the movements are required for capitalist production itself. The migration lines of biblical proportions that go from South to North America are obstinately called by the new drug czars "the cocaine trail"; or rather, the articulations of exodus from North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa are treated by European leaders as "paths of terrorism"; or rather still, the populations forced to flee across the Indian Ocean are reduced to slavery in "Arabia felix"; and the list goes on. And yet the flows of population continue. Empire must restrict and isolate the spatial movements of the multitude to stop them from gaining political legitimacy. It is extremely important

from this point of view that Empire use its powers to manage and orchestrate the various forces of nationalism and fundamentalism (see Sections 2.2 and 2.4). It is no less important, too, that Empire deploy its military and police powers to bring the unruly and rebellious to order.³ These imperial practices in themselves, however, still do not touch on the political tension that runs throughout the spontaneous movements of the multitude. *All these repressive actions remain essentially external to the multitude and its movements.* Empire can only isolate, divide, and segregate. Imperial capital does indeed attack the movements of the multitude with a tireless determination: it patrols the seas and the borders; within each country it divides and segregates; and in the world of labor it reinforces the cleavages and borderlines of race, gender, language, culture, and so forth. Even then, however, it must be careful not to restrict the productivity of the multitude too much because Empire too depends on this power.

The movements of the multitude have to be allowed to extend always wider across the world scene, and the attempts at repressing the multitude are really paradoxical, inverted manifestations of its strength.

This leads us back to our fundamental questions: How can the actions of the multitude become political? How can the multitude organize and concentrate its energies against the repression and incessant territorial segmentations of Empire? The only response that we can give to these questions is that the action of the multitude becomes political primarily when it begins to confront directly and with an adequate consciousness the central repressive operations of Empire. It is a matter of recognizing and engaging the imperial initiatives and not allowing them continually to reestablish order; it is a matter of crossing and breaking down the limits and segmentations that are imposed on the new collective labor power; it is a matter of gathering together these experiences of resistance and wielding them in concert against the nerve centers of imperial command.

This task for the multitude, however, although it is clear at a conceptual level, remains rather abstract. What specific and concrete

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practices will animate this political project? We cannot say at this point. What we can see nonetheless is a first element of a political program for the global multitude, a first political demand: global citizenship. During the 1996 demonstrations for the *sans papiers*, the undocumented aliens residing in France, the banners demanded "Papiers pour tous!" Residency papers for everyone means in the first place that all should have the full rights of citizenship in the country where they live and work. This is not a utopian or unrealistic political demand. The demand is simply that the juridical status of the population be reformed in step with the real economic transformations of recent years. Capital itself has demanded the increased mobility of labor power and continuous migrations across national boundaries. Capitalist production in the more dominant regions (in Europe, the United States, and Japan, but also in Singapore, Saudi Arabia, and elsewhere) is utterly dependent on the influx of workers from the subordinate regions of the world. Hence the political demand is that the existent fact of capitalist production be recognized juridically and that all workers be given the full rights of citizenship. In effect this political demand insists in postmodernity on the fundamental modern constitutional principle that links right and labor, and thus rewards with citizenship the worker who creates capital.

This demand can also be configured in a more general and more radical way with respect to the postmodern conditions of Empire. If in a first moment the multitude demands that each state recognize juridically the migrations that are necessary to capital, in a second moment it must demand control over the movements themselves. The multitude must be able to decide if, when, and where it moves. It must have the right also to stay still and enjoy one place rather than being forced constantly to be on the move. *The general right to control its own movement is the multitude's ultimate demand for global citizenship*. This demand is radical insofar as it challenges the fundamental apparatus of imperial control over the production and life of the multitude. Global citizenship is the multitude's power to reappropriate control over space and thus to design the new cartography.

Time and Body (The Right to a Social Wage)

Many elements arise on the endless paths of the mobile multitude in addition to the spatial dimensions we have considered thus far. In particular, the multitude takes hold of time and constructs new temporalities, which we can recognize by focusing on the transformations of labor. Understanding this construction of new temporalities will help us see how the multitude has the potential to make its action coherent as a real political tendency.

The new temporalities of biopolitical production cannot be understood in the frameworks of the traditional conceptions of time. In the *Physics*, Aristotle defines time by the measure of the movement between a before and an after. Aristotle's definition has the enormous merit of separating the definition of time from individual experience and spiritualism. Time is a collective experience that embodies and lives in the movements of the multitude. Aristotle, however, proceeds to reduce this collective time determined by the experience of the multitude to a transcendent standard of measure. Throughout Western metaphysics, from Aristotle to Kant and Heidegger, time has continuously been located in this transcendent dwelling place. In modernity, reality was not conceivable except as measure, and measure in turn was not conceivable except as a (real or formal) a priori that corralled being within a transcendent order. Only in postmodernity has there been a real break with this tradition—a break not with the first element of Aristotle's definition of time as a collective constitution but with the second transcendent configuration. In postmodernity, instead, time is no longer determined by any transcendent measure, any a priori: time pertains directly to existence. Here is where the Aristotelian tradition of measure is broken. In fact, from our perspective the transcendentalism of temporality is destroyed most decisively by the fact that it is now impossible to measure labor, either by convention or by calculation. Time comes back entirely under collective existence and thus resides within the cooperation of the multitude.

Through the cooperation, the collective existence, and the communicative networks that are formed and reformed within the

multitude, time is reappropriated on the plane of immanence. It is not given a priori, but rather bears the stamp of collective action. The new phenomenology of the labor of the multitude reveals labor as the fundamental creative activity that through cooperation goes beyond any obstacle imposed on it and constantly re-creates the world. The activity of the multitude constitutes time beyond measure. Time might thus be defined as the immeasurability of the movement between a before and an after, an immanent process of constitution.⁴ The processes of ontological constitution unfold through the collective movements of cooperation, across the new fabrics woven by the production of subjectivity. This site of ontological constitution is where the new proletariat appears as a constituent power.

⤴ This is a *new proletariat* and not a *new industrial working class*. The distinction is fundamental. As we explained earlier, "proletariat" is the general concept that defines all those whose labor is exploited by capital, the entire cooperating multitude (Section 1.3). ⤴ The industrial working class represented only a *partial* moment in the history of the proletariat and its revolutions, in the period when capital was able to reduce value to measure. In that period it seemed as if only the labor of waged workers was productive, and therefore all the other segments of labor appeared as merely reproductive or even unproductive. ⤴ In the biopolitical context of Empire, however, the production of capital converges ever more with the production and reproduction of social life itself; it thus becomes ever more difficult to maintain distinctions among productive, reproductive, and unproductive labor. ⤴ Labor—material or immaterial, intellectual or corporeal—produces and reproduces social life, and in the process is exploited by capital. ⤴ This wide landscape of biopolitical production allows us finally to recognize the full generality of the concept of proletariat. The progressive indistinction between production and reproduction in the biopolitical context also highlights once again the immeasurability of time and value. As labor moves outside the factory walls, it is increasingly difficult to maintain the fiction of any measure of the working day and thus separate the time of

production from the time of reproduction, or work time from leisure time. There are no time clocks to punch on the terrain of biopolitical production; the proletariat produces in all its generality everywhere all day long.

This generality of biopolitical production makes clear a second programmatic political demand of the multitude: a social wage and a guaranteed income for all. The social wage stands opposed first of all to the family wage, that fundamental weapon of the sexual division of labor by which the wage paid for the productive labor of the male worker is conceived also to pay for the unwaged reproductive labor of the worker's wife and dependents at home. The family wage keeps family control firmly in the hands of the male wage earner and perpetuates a false conception of what labor is productive and what is not. As the distinction between production and reproductive labor fades, so too fades the legitimization of the family wage. The social wage extends well beyond the family to the entire multitude, even those who are unemployed, because the entire multitude produces, and its production is necessary from the standpoint of total social capital. In the passage to postmodernity and biopolitical production, labor power has become increasingly collective and social. It is not even possible to support the old slogan "equal pay for equal work" when labor cannot be individualized and measured. The demand for a social wage extends to the entire population the demand that all activity necessary for the production of capital be recognized with an equal compensation such that a social wage is really a guaranteed income. Once citizenship is extended to all, we could call this guaranteed income a citizenship income, due each as a member of society.

Telos (The Right to Reappropriation)

Since in the imperial realm of biopower production and life tend to coincide, class struggle has the potential to erupt across all the fields of life. The problem we have to confront now is how concrete instances of class struggle can actually arise, and moreover how they can form a coherent program of struggle, a constituent power

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adequate to the destruction of the enemy and the construction of a new society. The question is really how the body of the multitude can configure itself as a telos.

The first aspect of the telos of the multitude has to do with the senses of language and communication. If communication has increasingly become the fabric of production, and if linguistic cooperation has increasingly become the structure of productive corporality, then the control over linguistic sense and meaning and the networks of communication becomes an ever more central issue for political struggle. Jürgen Habermas seems to have understood this fact, but he grants the liberated functions of language and communication only to individual and isolated segments of society.⁵ The passage to postmodernity and Empire prohibits any such compartmentalization of the life world and immediately presents communication, production, and life as one complex whole, an open site of conflict. The theorists and practitioners of science have long engaged these sites of controversy, but today all of labor power (be it material or immaterial, intellectual or manual) is engaged in struggles over the senses of language and against capital's colonization of communicative sociality. All the elements of corruption and exploitation are imposed on us by the linguistic and communicative regimes of production: destroying them in words is as urgent as doing so in deeds. This is not really a matter of ideology critique if by ideology we still understand a realm of ideas and language that is superstructural, external to production. Or rather, in the imperial regime ideology, critique becomes directly the critique of both political economy and lived experience. How can sense and meaning be oriented differently or organized in alternative, coherent communicative apparatuses? How can we discover and direct the performative lines of linguistic sets and communicative networks that create the fabric of life and production? Knowledge has to become linguistic action and philosophy has to become a real *reappropriation of knowledge*.⁶ In other words, knowledge and communication have to constitute life through struggle. A first aspect of the telos is posed when the apparatuses that link communication to modes of life are developed through the struggle of the multitude.

To every language and communicative network corresponds a system of machines, and the question of machines and their use allows us to recognize a second aspect of the telos of the multitude, which integrates the first and carries it further. We know well that machines and technologies are not neutral and independent entities. They are biopolitical tools deployed in specific regimes of production, which facilitate certain practices and prohibit others. The processes of construction of the new proletariat that we have been following go beyond a fundamental threshold here when the multitude recognizes itself as machinic, when it conceives of the possibility of a new use of machines and technology in which the proletariat is not subsumed as "variable capital," as an internal part of the production of capital, but is rather an autonomous agent of production. In the passage from the struggle over the sense of language to the construction of a new system of machines, the telos gains a greater consistency. This second aspect of the telos serves to make what has been constructed in language become a lasting, corporeal progression of desire in freedom. The hybridization of human and machine is no longer a process that takes place only on the margins of society; rather, it is a fundamental episode at the center of the constitution of the multitude and its power.

Since great collective means must be mobilized for this mutation, the telos must be configured as a collective telos. It has to become real as a site of encounter among subjects and a mechanism of the constitution of the multitude.⁷ This is the third aspect of the series of passages through which the material teleology of the new proletariat is formed. Here consciousness and will, language and machine are called on to sustain the collective making of history. The demonstration of this becoming cannot consist in anything but the experience and experimentation of the multitude. Therefore the power of the dialectic, which imagines the collective formed through mediation rather than through constitution, has been definitively dissolved. The making of history is in this sense the construction of the life of the multitude.

The fourth aspect deals with biopolitics. The subjectivity of living labor reveals, simply and directly in the struggle over the

senses of language and technology, that when one speaks of a collective means of the constitution of a new world, one is speaking of the connection between the power of life and its political organization. The political, the social, the economic, and the vital here all dwell together. They are entirely interrelated and completely interchangeable. The practices of the multitude invest this complex and unitary horizon—a horizon that is at once ontological and historical. Here is where the biopolitical fabric opens to the constitutive, constituent power.

The fifth and final aspect thus deals directly with the constituent power of the multitude—or really with the product of the creative imagination of the multitude that configures its own constitution. This constituent power makes possible the continuous opening to a process of radical and progressive transformation. It makes conceivable equality and solidarity, those fragile demands that were fundamental but remained abstract throughout the history of modern constitutions. It should come as no surprise that the postmodern multitude takes away from the U.S. Constitution what allowed it to become, above and against all other constitutions, an imperial constitution: its notion of a boundless frontier of freedom and its definition of an open spatiality and temporality celebrated in a constituent power. This new range of possibilities in no way guarantees what is to come. And yet, despite such reservations, there is something real that foreshadows a coming future: the telos that we can feel pulsing, the multitude that we construct within desire.

Now we can formulate a third political demand of the multitude: the right to reappropriation. The right to reappropriation is first of all the right to the reappropriation of the means of production. Socialists and communists have long demanded that the proletariat have free access to and control over the machines and materials it uses to produce. In the context of immaterial and biopolitical production, however, this traditional demand takes on a new guise. The multitude not only uses machines to produce, but also becomes increasingly machinic itself, as the means of production are increasingly integrated into the minds and bodies of the multitude. In this

context reappropriation means having free access to and control over knowledge, information, communication, and affects—because these are some of the primary means of biopolitical production. Just because these productive machines have been integrated into the multitude does not mean that the multitude has control over them. Rather, it makes more vicious and injurious their alienation. The right to reappropriation is really the multitude's right to self-control and autonomous self-production.

Posse

The telos of the multitude must live and organize its political space against Empire and yet within the "maturity of the times" and the ontological conditions that Empire presents. We have seen how the multitude moves on endless paths and takes corporeal form by reappropriating time and hybridizing new machinic systems. We have also seen how the power of the multitude materializes within the vacuum that remains necessarily at the heart of Empire. Now it is a matter of posing within these dimensions the problem of the becoming-subject of the multitude. In other words, the virtual conditions must now become real in a concrete figure. Against the divine city, the earthly city must demonstrate its power as an apparatus of the mythology of reason that organizes the biopolitical reality of the multitude.

The name that we want to use to refer to the multitude in its political autonomy and its productive activity is the Latin term *posse*—power as a verb, as activity. In Renaissance humanism the triad *esse-nosse-posse* (being-knowing-having power) represented the metaphysical heart of that constitutive philosophical paradigm that was to go into crisis as modernity progressively took form. Modern European philosophy, in its origins and in its creative components that were not subjugated to transcendentalism, continually tended to *posse* at the center of the ontological dynamic: *posse* is the machine that weaves together knowledge and being in an expansive, constitutive process. When the Renaissance matured and reached the point of conflict with the forces of counterrevolu-

tion, the humanistic posse became a force and symbol of resistance, in Bacon's notion of *inventio* or experimentation, Campanella's conception of love, and Spinoza's usage of *potentia*. Posse is what a body and what a mind can do. Precisely because it continued to live in resistance, the metaphysical term became a political term. Posse refers to the power of the multitude and its telos, an embodied power of knowledge and being, always open to the possible.

Contemporary U.S. rap groups have rediscovered the term "posse" as a noun to mark the force that musically and literarily defines the group, the singular difference of the postmodern multitude. Of course, the proximate reference for the rappers is probably the *posse comitatus* of Wild West lore, the rough group of armed men who were constantly prepared to be authorized by the sheriff to hunt down outlaws. This American fantasy of vigilantes and outlaws, however, does not interest us very much. It is more interesting to trace back a deeper, hidden etymology of the term. It seems to us that perhaps a strange destiny has renewed the Renaissance notion and has, with a grain of madness, made the term once again deserving of its high political tradition.

From this perspective we want to speak of posse and not of "res-publica," because the public and the activity of singularities that compose it go beyond any object (*res*) and are constitutionally incapable of being corralled there. On the contrary, the singularities are producers. Like the Renaissance "posse," which was traversed by knowledge and resided at the metaphysical root of being, they too will be at the origin of the new reality of the political that the multitude is defining in the vacuum of imperial ontology. Posse is the standpoint that best allows us to grasp the multitude as singular subjectivity: posse constitutes its mode of production and its being.

As in all innovative processes, the mode of production that arises is posed against the conditions from which it has to be liberated. The mode of production of the multitude is posed against exploitation in the name of labor, against property in the name of cooperation, and against corruption in the name of freedom. It self-valorizes bodies in labor, reappropriates productive intelligence

through cooperation, and transforms existence in freedom. The history of class composition and the history of labor militancy demonstrate the matrix of these ever new and yet determinate reconfigurations of self-valorization, cooperation, and political self-organization as an effective social project.

The first phase of properly capitalist worker militancy, that is, the phase of industrial production that preceded the full deployment of Fordist and Taylorist regimes, was defined by the figure of the *professional worker*, the highly skilled worker organized hierarchically in industrial production. This militancy involved primarily transforming the specific power of the valorization of the worker's own labor and productive cooperation into a weapon to be used in a project of *reappropriation*, a project in which the singular figure of the worker's own productive power would be exalted. A republic of worker councils was its slogan; a soviet of producers was its telos; and autonomy in the articulation of modernization was its program. The birth of the modern trade union and the construction of the party as vanguard both date from this period of worker struggles and effectively overdetermine it.

The second phase of capitalist worker militancy, which corresponded to the deployment of Fordist and Taylorist regimes, was defined by the figure of the *mass worker*. The militancy of the mass worker combined its own self-valorization as a refusal of factory work and the extension of its power over all mechanisms of social reproduction. Its program was to create a real *alternative* to the system of capitalist power. The organization of mass trade unions, the construction of the welfare state, and social-democratic reformism were all results of the relations of force that the mass worker defined and the overdetermination it imposed on capitalist development. The communist alternative acted in this phase as a counter-power within the processes of capitalist development.

Today, in the phase of worker militancy that corresponds to the post-Fordist, informational regimes of production, there arises the figure of the *social worker*. In the figure of the social worker the various threads of immaterial labor-power are being woven to-

gether. A constituent power that connects mass intellectuality and self-valorization in all the arenas of the flexible and nomadic productive social cooperation is the order of the day. In other words, the program of the social worker is a project of constitution. In today's productive matrix, the constituent power of labor can be expressed as self-valorization of the human (the equal right of citizenship for all over the entire sphere of the world market); as cooperation (the right to communicate, construct languages, and control communications networks); and as political power, or really as the constitution of a society in which the basis of power is defined by the expression of the needs of all. This is the organization of the social worker and immaterial labor, an organization of productive and political power as a biopolitical unity managed by the multitude, organized by the multitude, directed by the multitude—absolute democracy in action.

The posse produces the chromosomes of its future organization. Bodies are on the front lines in this battle, bodies that consolidate in an irreversible way the results of past struggles and incorporate a power that has been gained ontologically. Exploitation must be not only negated from the perspective of practice but also annulled in its premises, at its basis, stripped from the genesis of reality. Exploitation must be excluded from the bodies of immaterial labor-power just as it must be from the social knowledges and affects of reproduction (generation, love, the continuity of kinship and community relationships, and so forth) that bring value and affect together in the same power. The constitution of new bodies, outside of exploitation, is a fundamental basis of the new mode of production.

The mode of production of the multitude reappropriates wealth from capital and also constructs a new wealth, articulated with the powers of science and social knowledge through cooperation. Cooperation annuls the title of property. In modernity, private property was often legitimated by labor, but this equation, if it ever really made sense, today tends to be completely destroyed. Private property of the means of production today, in the era of the hegemony of cooperative and immaterial labor, is only a putrid and tyranni-

cal obsolescence. The tools of production tend to be recomposed in collective subjectivity and in the collective intelligence and affect of the workers; entrepreneurship tends to be organized by the cooperation of subjects in general intellect. The organization of the multitude as political subject, as posse, thus begins to appear on the world scene. The multitude is biopolitical self-organization.

Certainly, there must be a moment when reappropriation and self-organization reach a threshold and configure a real event. This is when the political is really affirmed—when the genesis is complete and self-valorization, the cooperative convergence of subjects, and the proletarian management of production become a constituent power. This is the point when the modern republic ceases to exist and the postmodern posse arises. This is the founding moment of an earthly city that is strong and distinct from any divine city. The capacity to construct places, temporalities, migrations, and new bodies already affirms its hegemony through the actions of the multitude against Empire. Imperial corruption is already undermined by the productivity of bodies, by cooperation, and by the multitude's designs of productivity. The only event that we are still awaiting is the construction, or rather the insurgence, of a powerful organization. The genetic chain is formed and established in ontology, the scaffolding is continuously constructed and renewed by the new cooperative productivity, and thus we await only the maturation of the political development of the posse. We do not have any models to offer for this event. Only the multitude through its practical experimentation will offer the models and determine when and how the possible becomes real.

MILITANT

In the postmodern era, as the figure of the people dissolves, the militant is the one who best expresses the life of the multitude: the agent of biopolitical production and resistance against Empire. When we speak of the militant, we are not thinking of anything like the sad, ascetic agent of the Third International whose soul was deeply permeated by Soviet state reason, the same way the will of the pope was embedded in the hearts of the knights

of the Society of Jesus. *We are thinking of nothing like that and of no one who acts on the basis of duty and discipline, who pretends his or her actions are deduced from an ideal plan. We are referring, on the contrary, to something more like the communist and liberatory combatants of the twentieth-century revolutions, the intellectuals who were persecuted and exiled in the course of anti-fascist struggles, the republicans of the Spanish civil war and the European resistance movements, and the freedom fighters of all the anticolonial and anti-imperialist wars. A prototypical example of this revolutionary figure is the militant agitator of the Industrial Workers of the World. The Wobblly constructed associations among working people from below, through continuous agitation, and while organizing them gave rise to utopian thought and revolutionary knowledge. The militant was the fundamental actor of the "long march" of the emancipation of labor from the nineteenth to the twentieth centuries, the creative singularity of that gigantic collective movement that was working-class struggle.*

Across this long period, the activity of the militant consisted, first of all, in practices of resistance in the factory and in society against capitalist exploitation. It consisted also, through and beyond resistance, in the collective construction and exercise of a counterpower capable of restructuring the power of capitalism and opposing it with an alternative program of government. In opposition to the cynicism of the bourgeoisie, to monetary alienation, to the expropriation of life, to the exploitation of labor, to the colonization of the affects, and so on, the militant organized the struggle. Insurrection was the proud emblem of the militant. This militant was repeatedly martyred in the tragic history of communist struggles. Sometimes, but not often, the normal structures of the rights state were sufficient for the repressive tasks required to destroy the counterpower. When they were not sufficient, however, the fascists and the white guards of state terror, or rather the black magias in the service of "democratic" capitalisms, were invited to lend a hand to reinforce the legal repressive structures.

Today, after so many capitalist victories, after socialist hopes have withered in disillusionment, and after capitalist violence against labor has been solidified under the name of ultra-liberalism, why is it that instances of militancy still arise, why have resistances deepened, and why does struggle continually reemerge with new vigor? *We should say right away that this*

new militancy does not simply repeat the organizational formulas of the old revolutionary working class. Today the militant cannot even pretend to be a representative, even of the fundamental human needs of the exploited. Revolutionary political militancy today, on the contrary, must rediscover what has always been its proper form: not representational but constituent activity. Militancy today is a positive, constructive, and innovative activity. This is the form in which we and all those who revolt against the rule of capital recognize ourselves as militants today. Militants resist imperial command in a creative way. In other words, resistance is linked immediately with a constitutive investment in the biopolitical realm and to the formation of cooperative apparatuses of production and community. [Here is the strong novelty of militancy today: it repeats the virtues of insurrectional action of two hundred years of subversive experience, but at the same time it is linked to a new world, a world that knows no outside.] It knows only an inside, a vital and ineluctable participation in the set of social structures, with no possibility of transcending them. This inside is the productive cooperation of mass intellectuality and affective networks, the productivity of postmodern biopolitics. This militancy makes resistance into counterpower and makes rebellion into a project of love.

There is an ancient legend that might serve to illuminate the future life of communist militancy: that of Saint Francis of Assisi. Consider his work. To denounce the poverty of the multitude he adopted that common condition and discovered there the ontological power of a new society. The communist militant does the same, identifying in the common condition of the multitude its enormous wealth. Francis in opposition to nascent capitalism refused every instrumental discipline, and in opposition to the mortification of the flesh (in poverty and in the constituted order) he posed a joyous life, including all of being and nature, the animals, sister moon, brother sun, the birds of the field, the poor and exploited humans, together against the will of power and corruption. Once again in postmodernity we find ourselves in Francis's situation, posing against the misery of power the joy of being. This is a revolution that no power will control—because biopower and communism, cooperation and revolution remain together, in love, simplicity, and also innocence. This is the irrepressible lightness and joy of being communist.

