

**DOMINATION
AND
SABOTAGE**

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PUBLISHER'S PREFACE

Two years after the writing of "Proletarians and the State," whose theses were taken by many as the theoretical manifesto of the area of Autonomy, Negri takes up again a number of the key problems of his theoretical/political interpretation – in particular that of the "*refusal of work.*" Negri considers that the struggles of 1977 have confirmed his position: it represents a broadening and massification of the phenomenon he calls "*self-valorization,*" and which represents the positive aspect of the refusal of work.

Now, rather than stressing class composition and theses relating to the "social worker," Negri stresses the processes of *separation* which counterpose the revolutionary subject to the apparatus of bourgeois society. Sabotage is the real action of *destruction* of capitalist domination; the restructuration promised by the Historic Compromise, on the other hand, is an illusory process, which would not contribute anything in the sense of self-valorization of the class.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

This booklet should be seen as a fifth chapter. The preceding chapters are the following: *Crisis of the State-as-Planner: Communism and Working Class Organization*, *The Working Class Party Against Work*, and *Self-Valorization of the Working Class and the Role of the Party* (in *The State-Form*). As I say, a fifth chapter. And thus one which requires a reading of the preceding chapters. While proof-reading this manuscript, I am thinking about how many things stand between each of these chapters. However, if nostalgia is possible within the revolution, then mine is not all melancholic.

A. Negri

Carona, 3rd Sept.1977

"Crime, through its constantly new methods of attack on property, constantly calls into being new methods of defense, and thus is as productive as strikes are in relation to the invention of machinery."

– Karl Marx: *Theories of Surplus Value*

"What strikes me in your reasoning is that it remains within a schema of 'up until today.' Now, a revolutionary undertaking is directed not only against the 'today,' but also against the law of 'up until today.'"

– Michel Foucault: *A Microphysics of Power*

PART ONE: CAPITALIST DOMINATION

1. LENIN IS SUPPOSED TO HAVE SAID...

Lenin is supposed to have said (a claim made by Keynes) that inflation is the weapon best guaranteed to bring about a crisis of the capitalist economies. The attribution of this statement to Lenin – a statement so much beloved by bourgeois economics and not just by Keynes, as evidenced by their continual repetition of it – is demonstrably apocryphal.¹ The offending phrase is nowhere to be found in Lenin's works. In fact, insofar as Lenin explicitly deals with the problems of inflation, his emphasis is along the lines of a moralistic denunciation of its effects on the poor classes – a denunciation well within the Socialist tradition.

This does not mean, however, that other Bolsheviks did not at various points stress the destabilizing effect of inflation in relation to capitalist power. Preobrazhensky speaks for them all with his description of “paper money as a machine gun for the Finance Commissariat to fire at the bourgeoisie, enabling the monetary laws of that regime to be used in order to destroy it.” And I am not implying that such a sentiment would have been uncharacteristic of Lenin: he was, after all, intent on grasping

¹ This was recently shown by F.W. Fetter in *Economica* 44, Feb.1977, No.173, pp 77-80.

the interconnections between the revolutionary insurgence of the proletariat and the crisis of imperialism.

However, I am convinced that the sense of any such statement by Lenin would have been a complex thing. In fact, in Lenin's teaching, any action that *destabilizes the capitalist regime* is immediately accompanied by action that *destructures capitalist's system*.

Insurrectional action against the State is articulated in relation to the task of destroying the State. I am not giving an anarchist interpretation of Lenin's thought. I am simply highlighting the "destabilization-destructuration" nexus which is present in a precise and continuing manner in Lenin's thinking, as in all revolutionary Marxist thinking (with the exception, realistically speaking, of anarchist immediatism). Thus, in this sense, F.W. Fetter is right when he says that the statement regarding the positive effect of inflation for the revolutionary process cannot be unreservedly attributed to Lenin: one cannot allow the destabilization effect alone to predominate. The crisis of capitalism has to have a direction, which is imposed and controlled by the power of the proletariat. Destabilization of the regime cannot be seen as distinct from the project of destructuring the system. The insurrection cannot be separated from the project of abolishing the State.

With this we arrive at the heart of today's political debate. Two different positions are present within working class and proletarian autonomy. Destabilization of the regime and

destruction of the system sometimes appear as divergent objectives, and as such they are built into differing tactical and strategic projects. Is it right that this divergence should exist?

Let us start by looking at the problem from capital's viewpoint. For capital there is no problem: *restructuring of the system is a precondition – the stabilization of the regime*, and vice-versa. The tactical problems arise *within* the relative rigidity of this relationship, and not outside it – at least, ever since capitalist development has rendered undesirable the option of operating force and duress (in the sense of mere physical force) against the working class and the proletariat. For capital the solution of the crisis consists in a restructuring of the system that will defeat and reintegrate the antagonistic components of the proletariat within the project of political stabilization. In this sense capital is well aware of the importance of having the proletariat as antagonist and is also – often, in fact – aware of the *quality* of that antagonism. Capital has often accepted that the working class struggle is the motor of development – and has even accepted that proletarian self-valorization should dictate the pace and nature of development: what it needs to eliminate is not the existence, but the antagonistic element of the working class movement. Taken this to (paradoxical) extremes, we could say that for capital there is no possibility of effective political stabilization (no possibility of command and exploitation within a dimension of an enlarged reproduction of profit) except to the extent that it proves possible to take the proletarian movement as the base, the starting point for restructuring. The interests of the proletariat, however, are quite the opposite. The

proletariat aims at a critical grasp of the nexus between stabilization and restructuration, in order then to attack it. To overthrow this relationship and to transform it into a project of destabilization – and also destructuration – this is the interest of the working class. In general.

Now, to be particular: today we have two opposed fronts – that of capital and that of the proletariat. The divergent antagonism in the direction of the movement of the two fronts is absolutely clear. This is due to the singularity of the balance of power between the two classes in struggle. Both the classes have the ability to take action both on the system and on the regime; the actions of both are capable of directly affecting the nexus of the overall relationship. Thus, if we do not focus our discussion on this nexus, on the way in which it is affected in an antagonistic manner by the two classes in struggle, we risk dangerously oversimplifying the debate.

For capital, as we have pointed out, the problem exists only in relative form. We could cite one or two examples. During the past 10 years we have seen such a continuous and active interpenetration of these two moments as to eliminate all “catastrophist” interpretations and theories of the crisis. The “crisis-State” has not for one moment ceased to be also a “planned-State.” All the elements of destabilization that working class and proletarian struggle has brought into action against the State have one by one been taken on board by capital and transformed into instruments of restructuration. Inflation in particular, far from being a moment of destabilization, has been

transformed into its opposite – into a decisive instrument of restructuration. At a very high cost, admittedly: albeit within a deepening tendency of the rate of profit to fall, capital has been forced to take planned action which permitted the maintenance of (high) levels of working class valorization and thus the non-devaluation of (overall) labor power. This notwithstanding, the "catastrophe" appears not to have materialized! Obviously this process has not been free of situations of subjective crisis for the capitalist class. But the constant, continuing operation of *reinforcing the State-form* – of the *imposition of the law of value*, albeit in continuously modifying form, as a measure and a synthesis of stabilization and restructuration – has never faltered. When we speak of a crisis of the law of value, we must beware *the fact that this law is in a crisis does not at all mean that it does not operate*; rather it modifies its form, transforming it from a law of political economy into a form of State-command. But for capital there is no such thing as command without a content, and a quite specific content at that – a content of exploitation. Thus the rhythms of exploitation within which the social mechanism of the reproduction of exploitation is to be stabilized, must be dictated by the law of value. Then the proletariat respectfully declines this invitation to dinner, when all the economic parameters of the relationship explode, then it is factory command [*commando d'impresa*], it is the political transformation of factory-command into the State-form which takes the upper hand in order to redetermine the functional relationship of value, the law of exploitation.

Recent studies² have broadly confirmed and documented this process, with particular regard to monetary questions – questions which today are undeniably fundamental to any consideration of the transformation of the law of value. This has led to a correct insistence upon the theorization of the capitalist State (and of its development) as the authoritative form of the capital relation.³ Thus, within the critique of political economy an understanding of the structural relation of capitalist development (and of the capitalist crisis) has been developing, in opposition to existing purely objectivist notions.

But all this is not enough. The working class consciousness within the critique of political economy must transform itself into awareness of the revolutionary project. The proletarian opposition has no choice but to consolidate itself into practical overthrow, into subversion. But it is the whole relationship which, both in its political aspects and in its structural foundations, is to be subverted. It is not possible to simply eliminate the complexity of the relation imposed by the State form of the organization of exploitation; we cannot escape – either via subjective voluntarism or via collective spontaneism – the difficulties, the problems, the determinations which arise from this form. We have come perilously close to this during the last phase of the struggle. The divergence has, as I stated earlier,

² Lapo Berti in *Primo Maggio*, or Christian Marazzi and John Merrington's presentation to the *British Conference of Socialist economists* in 1977

³ See John Holloway, Sol Picciotto, in *Capital and Class* No.2, Summer 1977, pp 76-101

involved a tendency for strategic and tactical projects to diverge. Is it right that this divergence should exist?

In my opinion it risks proving fatal for the entire movement. And in this situation I am really not sure which is preferable – a rapid decease brought about by the plague of subjectivity, or the long, slow agony and delirium of the syphilis of spontaneism. However, counter-indications do exist; a constructive project is possible. It is to be found and is being developed through the articulations of the *mass line*, in the dialectic that the proletariat continually puts in motion, the dialectic between its ability to consolidate itself structurally – the strengthening of that mass counter-power, which, in itself, tends to disorientate and throw out of balance capital's plans for restructuration – and its capacity for political attack, a destabilizing capacity which shatters the nodes of the enemy's power, which emphasizes and shows the emptiness of the spectacular nature of that power, and destroys its force. This dialectic is internal to the mass movement, and we need to deepen it further. As I have stated, the project of destructuring the capitalist system cannot be separated from the project of destabilizing capital's regime. The necessity of this inter-relationship is revealed at the level of the power-relationship between the two classes, today, inasmuch as the mass line has been completely developed into a *project of proletarian self-valorization*.

I should explain: *the concept of proletarian self-valorization is the opposite of the concept State-form* – it is the form that power assumes within a further-developed workerist standpoint.

Proletarian self-valorization is immediately the deconstruction of the enemy power; it is the process through which working class struggle today attacks directly the system of exploitation and its political regime. The socialization of capitalist development has permitted the working class to transform the diverse moments of communist strategy, the insurrection and the abolition of the State, into a process and to unify them into a project. Proletarian self-valorization is the global, mass, productive figuration of this project. Its dialectic is powerful inasmuch as it is global, and global inasmuch as it is powerful. Elsewhere⁴ I have tried to demonstrate the *formal conditions* whereby the Marxist critique of political economy reveals the independence of the working class as a project of self-valorization. Now we are forced by the constructive polemic that is going on in the Movement to think out the real and immediate political conditions for this independence of the proletariat. And within the Movement we shall have a battle on two fronts: against the diseases of insurrectionism and subjectivism on the one hand; and on the other – most importantly – against the opportunism, streaked with pacifist Utopianism, which mythologizes the gentle growth of an impotent "movement" of desires and nothing else.

It is clear that the polemic within the Movement can only develop if it takes as its practical and theoretical starting point *the deepening of both the concept and the experiences of proletarian*

⁴ In *La Forma-Stato* – "The State Form" – Feltrinelli, Milan 1977, pp 297-342

self-valorization. This is something I shall attempt in the course of this book. But it may be useful to anticipate one particular polemical point of departure, in relation to two recent propositions: that of Lea Melandri⁵ and that of Furio di Paola.⁶ In both these cases the discussion is built around a radical initial mystification, from which we must free ourselves right from the start. It is a mystification that arises from a radicalization of the polemic against "power," in which the specific and determined nature of power is denied. In fact, for these comrades power can be, in the words of the old philosophers, predicated only univocally, defined and qualified solely as an attribute of capital or as its reflection. This position is false, even if it does correctly pose the problem of the non-homologability⁷ of the concept of power as between its capitalist usage and its proletarian usage. But, precisely, this is a problem of method which cannot be answered with a reply that is radically negative in its content. From this point of view you end up playing into the enemy's hands –you maintain that the only meaningful linguistic horizon is that pertaining to the structure of capitalist power (a position which, apart from anything else, is contradictory with the spirit and the method of approach to the analysis of self-valorization within women's autonomy and youth autonomy which forms the substance of both these essays).

And it is this which is false. Power, party: Panzieri used to say "that in such conditions the party will become something wholly

⁵ *L'Infamia Originale*, Milan 1977

⁶ *Quaderni di Ombre Rosse* No.1, Rome 1977

⁷ The untranslatability of the term.

new, and it even becomes difficult to use that term". Very true. But elsewhere, and in the same sense, he adds: "no revolution without a party." And we might further add: "without power, no proletarian self-valorization." And then we could even change the terminology, if you like! But first let us reconquer the dialectical unity of the process of proletarian self-valorization, its tendency towards the deconstruction of the enemy power as a project for its own liberation, as a powerful and effective struggle for its own proletarian independence.

One final note, as a prelude. It is not hard to understand how important it is *at the level of militancy* to stress the necessary relationship between action that is materially destructuring and action that politically restabilizes the enemy power. Here in fact, that slender but strong thread that feeds subjectivity with a *mass-content*, which transforms proletarian love into struggle against the enemy, which gives a joint basis and a bonding of class hatred and the passion for freedom, finds again its unifying wellspring. The personal is political, through this collective mediation. It is the collective praxis of proletarian self-valorization that determines the unity of the subjective awareness. It is this dynamic and productive being that constitutes our dignity as revolutionaries. Thus, both objectively and subjectively, we have no choice but to fight to re-establish the complexity of the revolutionary proposition, in relation to the independence of proletarian self-valorization.

2. A PARENTHESIS: ON METHOD

When I theorize an independence of the process of proletarian self-valorization, and when I examine the possibility of its having an internal dialectic of continuous recomposition between structural functions and attacking functions, I am bound to draw certain methodological conclusions. First, it seems to me fundamental to consider the totality of the process of proletarian self-valorization as *alternative* to, and radically *different* from, the totality of the process of capitalist production and reproduction. I realize that I am exaggerating the position, and oversimplifying its complexity. But I also know that this "intensive road," this radical break with the totality of capitalist development, is a fundamental experience of the movement as it stands today.

Today the process of constituting class independence is first and foremost a process of separation.

I am emphasizing this forced separation in order to clarify the overall meaninglessness of a capitalist world within which I find myself constituted in non-independent form, in the form of exploitation. I thus refuse to accept the recompositional dialectic of capital; I affirm in sectarian manner my own separateness, my own independence, the differentness of my constitution. As H.J. Krahl understood in his book *Constitution and Class*

Consciousness – a book which, with the passing of the years, becomes increasingly important – the totality of class consciousness is first and foremost an intensive condition, a process of intensification of class self-identity as a productive being, which destroys the relationship with the totality of the capitalist system.

Working class self-valorization is first and foremost deconstruction of the enemy totality, taken to a point of exclusivity in the self-recognition of the class's collective independence. For my own part I do not see the history of class consciousness in a Lukacsian sense, as some future all-embracing recomposition; on the contrary, I see it as a moment of intensive rooting within my own separateness. I am *other* – as also is the movement of that collective praxis within which I move. I belong to the *other movement* of the working class. Of course, I am aware of all the criticisms that could be levelled at this position from a traditional Marxist viewpoint. For my own part, I have the sense of having placed myself at the extreme limits of meaning in a political class debate. But anyone who comes with accusations, pressing me with criticism and telling me that I am wrong, must, in turn, accept the responsibility of being a participant in the monstrosities we have seen in the development of "socialism" – with its illicit dealings with the most disgusting results of the capitalist mode of production. It is only by recognizing myself as other, only by insisting on the fact of my differentness as a radical totality that I have the possibility and the hope of a renewal.

Furthermore, in my insistence on this radical methodological rupture I am in good company. The *continuity of the history of the working class revolutionary movement* is the *history of the discontinuity of that movement*, the history of the radical ruptures that have characterized it. The revolutionary working class movement is continually being reborn from a virgin mother. The hacks of continuity are still alive and well in the History Institutes of the labor movement. But luckily militant historiography is undergoing a renaissance too, spurred by the experience of the ruptures in our present movement – and in our history-writing we are now confident enough to present the notion of the "other workers' movement." Thus the methodological precondition of an initial radical rupture (which we consider fundamental for any renewal of the social practice of the proletariat) is empirically corroborated by an extensive documentation (limited, perhaps, in scale, but remarkable in its intensity). When Karl-Heinz Roth⁸ or Gisela Bock⁹ tell the formidable story of how the working class in struggle has continually destroyed its own traditional organizations they are certainly not animated by a spirit of iconoclasm: rather, they are highlighting the radical, irreducible differentness of the revolutionary movement. This is a perspective which could also provide us with a feel for other historical revolutionary

⁸ *Die Andere Arbeiterbewegung* – "The Other Workers' Movement", shortly to be published by CSE Books

⁹ *La Formazione dell'Operaio Massa ne li USA* – "The Formation of the Mass Worker in the USA" – Feltrinelli, Milano, 1976

experiences of the proletariat – experiences that have proved victorious and have therefore been betrayed and destroyed.

So, I must assume this radical "otherness" as a methodological precondition of the subversive case we are arguing – namely the project of proletarian self-valorization. But what about the relationship with the totality of history, the relationship with the totality of the system? Here I must now face up to the second methodological consequence of my assumption: *my relationship with the totality of capitalist development, with the totality of historical development, is guaranteed solely by the force of deconstruction that the movement determines, by the global sabotage of the history of capital that the movement enacts.* There is only one way that I can read the history of capital – as the history of a continuity of operations of self-re-establishment that capital and its State have to set in motion in order to counter the continuous breakdown process, the permanent provocation-towards-separation that the real movement brings about. *The present state of things is built upon a continuity of destruction, of abolition of transcendence that the real movement effectuates.* I define myself by separating myself from the totality; I define the totality as other than me – as a net which is cast over the continuity of the historical sabotage that the class operates. And thus – here is the third methodological implication – there is *no homology*, no possible immediate translatability of languages, of logics, signs, between the reality of the movement as I experience it and the overall framework of capitalist development, with its contents and its objectives.

Let us now pause and consider the question from another angle. The fundamental point, however you look at the question, is obviously still the nexus between the process of self-valorization and its effects in destructuration. I have taken this nexus to extremes, and I have defined it as separation. Basing myself on the experience of the movement, I have stressed first and foremost the subjective element. If I now approach the question from the objective point of view – the viewpoint of the Crisis-State [*Stato-crisi*], the position is no different. When the State, faced with the crisis in the functioning of the law of value, attempts to reimpose that law by force, mediating its own relation to capital in relation to the commodity form, it registers upon itself, in effect, the crisis of all homologous functions. Force does not substitute for value, but provides a surrogate for its form.

The law of value may be forcibly reintroduced, in spite of the crisis of That law, and its operations may be imposed in modified form – but this does not remove the void of significations that power is forced to register. The Crisis-State is a power which lives in a vacuum of significations, a void, a logic of force/logic which is itself destructured. This logic, this critical form, is a “dark night in which all cows are white:” in other words, the meaning of the whole is not in any way provided by the perfect connection of the parts. The State’s investment in the totality is purely negative, in terms of meaning. The rule of total alienation is the only possible content of this project. The totality is a void, is structured as destructuration, as a radical lack of value. Thus it becomes clear what we mean in this case by a lack

of homology. All the elements of the whole are unified in a *technical* sense; they only hang together in their mutual untranslatability; only in the form of a forced relationship. So, from an *objective* viewpoint too, the system can be seen – *must* be seen – as deconstructed.

However, while our consideration of the objective aspect of the situation confirms our analysis of the subjective aspect, the objective aspect has neither the same logical extension nor the capacity to substitute for the subjective. One cannot move from the understanding of deconstruction as an effect, to the identification of the process of self-valorization as the cause. This is particularly clear in the analytic principles of Michel Foucault – and in particular his methodological treatment in *La Volonte de Savoir* – which have caught my attention because of the way they strain after a notion of a productivity, a creativity of an unknown quantity located beyond the cognitive horizon.

This is also clear – and, furthermore, scandalous – in the various surreptitious attempts that are being made to reimpose a sense of conclusiveness on this deconstructed horizon.¹⁰ But this surreptitiously-restated homology this "revolution from above"

¹⁰ These attempts, be they humanistic in inspiration, or conceived in terms of *Wille zur Macht*, do nonetheless start from a correct perception of the blind objectivity of the development of capital's system. Regarding Cacciari's *Krisis* – Feltrinelli, Milan 1977 – see my review in Nos.155-156 of *Aut-Aut*

in the absence of radical significance – can be seen clearly, in the light of what we have said, for what it is – a fraud.

The above considerations lead me now to confirm my original hypothesis of *the prevalence of the subjective* in the explanation of the present-day dialectic of capital. Taking the subjective viewpoint to extremes does not negate its methodological validity. Rather, it confirms and extends it. It permits me, in the articulation between self-valorization and destructuration, to avoid both premature reductivist foreclosures of the problem (because in fact it is the productivity of the proletarian subject that structures the destructuration, negatively determines its own opposite); and, on the other hand, totalizing dialectical extensions of the discourse, because, in this case, there are no longer any homologous functions.

We are not suggesting that methodology in any sense resolves the problems that face us, although a correct framing of the solution is greatly facilitated. We know that the methodological hypothesis requires confirmation from class analysis. It is only the theoretical-political determination of the composition of the working class that can offer a sound basis for a methodological hypothesis such as ours. And in fact the following methodological approximations, without pretending to be exhaustive, confirm our initial methodological assumption that, today, the establishment of working class independence takes place first and foremost in its separation. But *separation* in this instance means *breaking the capital relation*. Separation also means that, having reached the highest point of socialization,

the working class breaks the *laws of the social mediation* of capital. Marx in *Capital*, calls for "another mode of inquiry" in the analysis of the metamorphoses of overall social capital. Is this to be a logic of separation? Is it to be a *Darstellung* built on carrying to extremity this independent proletarian subjectivity, built on the movements of proletarian self-valorization as such?

I think that these questions are important for the further development of this essay. However, before going further, they can be further articulated at a formal and methodological level, in order to constitute a framework for the ensuing debate. Let us look more closely. As I have said, the separateness of the proletarian subject is organized in the dialectic between self-valorizing productivity and functions of deconstruction. I know, however, that this dialectic does not produce effects of homology and of totalization, because it is a dialectic of separation. But, equally necessarily it is inherent in The complexity of The events that are being determined. How? In particular, how does this articulation of a separate subject relate to the constitution of capitalist domination? Secondly and conversely, how precisely does the constitutive process of the collective subjectivity proceed, in all its radicality and intensity?

In short, *what are the laws that govern, albeit in a situation of separateness, of lack of any homology, the parallel and opposed processes of the State-form and of proletarian self-valorization?*

The further development of this book will be dedicated to answering these questions. But in defining the problems we can

now add a couple of further notes – first in relation to the *self-valorization/destructuration nexus*. In the history of socialist thought and practice. The sense of proletarian self-valorization has often been expressed with original intensity. If Gramsci's teachings can be retained in any useful sense today, it is certainly in this regard. But it is never expressed in terms of separateness – rather it is always expressed in a dialectical sense in relation to the totality. Reciprocation takes the place of opposition. In the social-anarchist tradition this reciprocity, this correspondence, has been played out in terms of the dialectic between centralization and decentralization. Thus it is not difficult, in a critique that starts with Marx and stretches through to Foucault's edition of the *Panopticon*, to demonstrate the perfect compatibility of Proudhon and Bentham. But this compatibility also exists in the tradition of "scientific socialism" – this time not extensive, between centralization and decentralization, but intensive, between the general working class interest and the general interests of society, between socialism and democracy. This compatibility, of the process of self-valorization with the productive structuration of society, is a myth. It is not Proudhon and Bentham, but Rousseau and Stalin who are the fathers of this much-loved synthesis. personally, I have no time for the so-called "nouveaux philosophes," but I must say I am rather disconcerted when I see representatives of the historical parties of the working class, who have always been enamored of the link between rationalism and productive Stalinism, insulting these young philosophers for having drawn attention to this mystifying connection.

In short, they are addressing themselves to a problem which no longer has any real basis. Working class self-valorization has nothing to do with the structuration of capital. But it has much to do with its destructuration. The whole of capitalist development, ever since the working class reached its present high level of composition, has been nothing other than the obverse, a reaction to, a following-in-the-footsteps-of proletarian self-valorization – a repeated operation of self-protection, of recuperation, of adjustment in relation to the effects of self-valorization, which are effects of sabotage of the capitalist machine. Tronti is correct in his latest utterance that the modern State is the political form of the autonomy of the working class. But correct in what sense? In the sense – for him too, with his revamped socialism – of compatibility and convergence? Not at all, comrade: here the methodology of the *critique of political economy* has to be modified, taking as its starting point proletarian self-valorization, its separateness, and the effects of sabotage that it determines. In particular it is within this perspective that we must frame our analysis of the State-form.

If our analysis of the nexus between self-valorization and State structure leads us along a path of causality that is negative and destructuring, the situation is different when we come to consider our methodological approach to the *nexus of self-valorization with itself* in its separateness. Here we shall have to stress and adequately analyze the synchronous dimensions of the process. But here, too, there can be no recourse to models of "continuity," to functional determinations! What can be said

straightaway – because it constitutes the heart and substance of the methodological proposition itself – is that the separateness of proletarian *self-valorization* itself appears as a *discontinuity*, as a conjoining of leaps and innovations. The method of social transformation that derives from the self-valorizing separateness of the proletariat has nothing in common with the homologies of rationalist or historicist progressivism. Proletarian self-valorization is the power to withdraw from exchange value and the ability to reappropriate the world of use values. The homologies of progressivism relate to exchange value. The rupture and recognition of the class's own independent productive force, removes any possibility of a resolute dialectic. The dialectical positivity of method in the separateness of proletarian self-valorization is wholly and solely innovative.

3. THE FORM OF DOMINATION

Having outlined our polemical methodological premises, we can now start on the substance of the matter. Facing us stands the State; among us – and sometimes within us – stands the form of the domination. To struggle means that we must recognize the monstrous nature of the power that stands facing us, recognize it with the same immediate clarity and on the same level as we have seen the relationship between self-valorization and deconstruction. Now, *this monstrous nature of power is the effect of our sabotage*; it is the negative result of our actions:

"Crime," says Marx, "through its constantly new methods of attack on property, constantly calls into being new methods of defense, and thus is as productive as strikes are in relation to the invention of machinery." (K.Marx, *Theories of Surplus Value*)

This is no paradox – Marx does not like the label "paradox," not even in the case of Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees*; this pleasure he leaves to the "philistine apologists of the bourgeois school." It is, rather, a key to understanding. In point of fact, the more we sabotage the State and the more we give expression to the self-valorization/deconstruction nexus, the more the rules governing the development of capital's State-system become ferocious, monstrous and irrational'. So now let us look at how the State and the system of social domination respond to the

social sabotage which results from self-valorization, and let us look at the logic that they express – a logic which is internally coherent, but which is nonetheless negative; a logic of deconstruction which can never be sublimated, but only precipitated further.

Capital's continual restructuration is its response to working class sabotage. *Restructuration is the empty but efficacious content of the State-form*. Empty, because it lacks any rationality save that accredited by working class sabotage; efficacious, because the form of the restructuration is command. But bourgeois economy's critical consciousness is obliged to fill the vacuum of its own process by spreading a wafer-thin, recuperated and mystified formal rationality, over the timings set by working class and proletarian struggles. Let us look at how it proceeds.

Within the critical consciousness of bourgeois political economy, the evolution of the logic of command has taken place in at least three distinct phases, following on the great Crisis of the 1930s. Each one of these phases is matched by a particular quality and intensity of working class and proletarian struggles. Elsewhere¹¹ I have indicated the fundamental characteristics of the *Keynesian epoch*. In that epoch, control of working class struggle was to be achieved in global terms. Keynes replied to the formation and the struggles of the mass worker with an overall balancing – in progressive terms – of supply and

¹¹ In the articles published in *Operai e Stato* ("Workers and the State"), Feltrinelli, Milan 1972

demand. But Keynes based himself on a political proposition that was pure and general – he had stressed the overall *trend*. But when the trend comes into contradiction with the actual progress of the cycle (because working class conflictuality does not respect finalized equilibria), the Keynesian state goes into crisis. Who commands in the crisis? The Keynesian-bred politicians try to invent a "political trade cycle," try to form "intermediate regimes" etc. – in practice, control is little by little slipping out of their hands – the control-dimension no longer matches the dimensions of proletarian and working class conflictuality. A *second phase* opens. Alongside the theoretical progresses that lead Sraffa and his ilk to a dissolution of the aggregate categories of Capital, more concretely we can observe that the working class struggle has a continuity that is discontinuous, and that the apparent continuity of the struggle is the outcome of an infinite series of individual crisis-points. The economic and political sciences of restructuration must take account of this. It is no longer possible to invent indeterminate macro-economic equilibria which are independent of short-run variations and independent of the micro-economic components which are variable within the unforeseeable timing determined by the struggles of the collective worker. Based on this necessity, we now see the formation of the State-as-Crisis, the Crisis-State [*Stato-crisi*], on the following lines: to divide up the overall thrust of the working class; to control it from within the mechanisms of its own accumulation; and to forestall it, by attacking it in its class composition. Keynes' broad equilibria are replaced by an internal operation of decomposition, within the class, in an attack that is precisely orientated towards dealing

with single and particular class crisis points – a microphysics of political economy. “The long-term trend is nothing other than a component – which alters slowly – of a chain of short-term situations... it is not an independent entity.”¹² Thus it becomes impossible to produce a model of development unless it takes explicit account of the interruptions that occur in the process of production and reproduction, and thus a fresh foundation is laid for a theory of development based on the theory of cyclical fluctuations, incorporating the dynamics that occur at the microeconomic level. A long phase of bourgeois economic theory now develops around these premises. Michael Kalecki is the leading light in this movement.¹³ But this theory also falls short. Crisis-State theory is, after all, a reformist theory. It faces up to the emerging productivity of the mass worker, and tries to construct an "economy of oligopolies" – on two fronts: on the one hand the capitalist entrepreneurial oligopoly, and on the other hand the working class-trade union oligopoly in the factory.¹⁴ But in the meantime, the struggle has advanced; the action of the mass worker has gradually laid siege to the whole of society. We now see the worker developing as a "social" worker – even (and particularly) if still remaining a "workplace worker." The worker responds to the Crisis-State even more violently than previously to the State-as-Planner [*Stato-piano*]. If

¹² Michael Kalecki, in *Trend and Business Cycles Reconsidered*, in *Economic Journal*, July 1968, pp 263 seq.

¹³ See Joan Robinson in *New York Review of Books*, 4th March 1976 – and in particular George R. Feiweel, *The Intellectual Capital* of M.Kalecki, Knoxville, Tennessee, 1975

¹⁴ M. Kalecki, "Class Struggle and the Distribution of National Income," in *Kylos* XXIV, 1971, pp 1 seq.

this latter went into crisis because of its inability to control the quantities of working class demand, the Crisis-State is forced into an internal self-criticism of what is now a socially inescapable (and immediately efficacious) extension of working class action. The *Crisis-State* is not only a State-form that is reformist to its roots – it is also, and above all, a State-form that is still linked in to the dimensions of direct production, to factory command over living labor. But when working class sabotage extends to invest the whole of society, the entire mechanism of circulation, forcing aggregate social capital into a confrontation over the rifles governing the reproduction of the system, at that same moment the consciousness of bourgeois political economy – which had actually been consolidating itself up to that point – goes into a further stage or crisis and disintegration.

It is interesting to note the formation of a *third phase* of theoretical development in the political economy of the Keynesian epoch. It is in the process of formation today, and draws on the elements of crisis in the previous schemas. In particular it tries to operate in a more generalized way on the social movements of the working class. Its central arena of interest is the question of *circulation*. The simple transition from global control of production (Keynes) to dynamic control of production (Kalecki) is insufficient. The problem is that of the functional control of circulation, of the dynamic nexus linking production and reproduction. And here the problem of *time* becomes fundamental. Keynes never concerned himself with the temporal determination of equilibria and secondary

equilibria. Kalecki, on the other hand, stressed the necessity of determining Keynesianism via the redefinition of phenomena within individual "time units." And now, today, the temporal dimension is being extended to the whole of the process. In analytic terms, the new approach is a sort of Einsteinian theory of relativity: it involves the insertion of another dimension of analysis, in order to relativize the contents of that analysis. But this is indeed a strange kind of relativity: it is above all a relativity of time, the reduction of time to an *indifference of command*. In practical political terms we have an analytic mechanism which assumes circulation-time as a terrain of both theory and control. The totality of circulation-time is drawn into the economic analysis; the totality of circulation-time is to be controlled by economic policy: the hypothesis of the simultaneity of functions and operations within the cycle is not assumed in advance and abstract (a la neo-classical economics), but operational and political (a la Milton Friedman and his monetarist bedfellows). The Kaleckian interruptions of the short cycle are still mediations between the trend and the overall cycle: here science does not become separated in its application, does not waste its efforts in forecasting, but intensifies its analysis on every moment, every transition. It is a physics of elementary particles – and science stands watchful, like a policeman, over everything. It is not the Marxist's job to observe that the temporal dimension is decisive in the relation between circulation and reproduction, and in general within the relation as it impinges on the class struggle in the sphere of

reproduction.¹⁵ It is not surprising that the problem is arising again. Rather, what is surprising is the fact that the proposition arouses so much passion. The philosophers are well aware of the problems associated with the dimension of time: infinitely sub-divisible and infinitely extendable. So how should we grasp the analytic proposition in operational terms; how are we to concretize the political project? It is not our job to answer this: suffice it to draw attention to the indeterminateness of the project. Rather, our task is to note how *the process of destructureation within the logic of political economy* is taking a further step forward.¹⁶ In its anxiety to keep up with the process of working class attack against the general dimensions of exploitation, bourgeois political economy strips even the appearance of coherence from its logic, and forces itself into the role of a technical instrument against the emergence of the destructuring power of the working class; it extends itself over the indefinite discontinuity of the movement of self-valorization state restructureation becomes increasingly an indiscriminate succession of actions of control, a technical apparatus that is effective, but which has lost all measure, all internal reference-points, all internal coherent logic.

¹⁵ Although Geoff Kay draws attention to the problem in his very useful *Development and Underdevelopment*, Macmillan, London, 1975

¹⁶ See, apropos, the fine essay by A. Graziani, introducing R. Convevole's book *La Dinamica del Salarid Relativo* ("The Dynamic of the Relative Wage"), republished in *Quaderni Piacentini*, No.64, pp 113 seq.

Good working class theory rejoices at this. But, being responsible people, we must recognize the enormous weight of suffering, of inhumanity, of barbarities that all this brings with it. This revelation of the internal void of capitalist restructuration, this successive self-destruction of the moments of capitalist control, and this *dissolution of theory into a technique of power*, bring closer the final outcome of the revolutionary struggle. But at the same time it makes it hard to endure the harshness of the daily struggle and the cruelty of capital's continued existence.¹⁷ And yet it is still the action of the working class that brings about these effects, to the extent that *the destructuring tendency of these struggles has a direct effect on the very rationality* of capitalist restructuring, and removes this rationality, even in its formal aspect, and leaves us with a whole that is destructured, technical and repressive. The varied and combined modality of working class action is respected in every moment of the restructuration of capital: from the actions of the mass worker, and from those of the social" worker, arise effects that are then matched, in the sense of a subsequent radical destructuring of the enemy power. Thus it is no accident that today the big forces of capitalist reformism have adopted – at a world-wide level – *a terroristic strategy of savage deflation* (or "disinflation," if you prefer). On the basis of the experience of the fiscal crisis of the American cities this political line has been

¹⁷ Note that certain theoretical positions that exist within the official labor movement, and which have nothing to do with Marxism – such as the famous theory of the "autonomy of the political" – ape these bourgeois affirmations.

correctly described as a "regressive distribution of income, of wealth, and of power."¹⁸

The destructured logic of the economic compatibilities must in fact be extended downwards, to reach single individual social groups, in such a way as to destroy any consolidation of proletarian self-valorization. At every level. Generalized control must be deepened and intensified, to act on every point of linkage in the process of reproduction; it must allow the destruction of every rigidity; it must fluidify, in a new manner, the cycle of capitalist reproduction. But – you say – this has always happened! This is one of the laws of capital! Certainly. But what makes the present situation specific is the depth, the intensity, the extensiveness of the control. Capital has been subjected to a class pressure at the social level, which has definitively destructured its terms of reference. Right down to the level of factory-command [*commando-impresa*], command is in crisis. Restructuration, at this point, is pure form-of-domination. It aims to be effective even at the level of the individual unit of production, the single social group, the single individual. Thus it is no accident that, acting at such a depth and within such micro-economic dimensions, State power is once again, for the first time in several decades, resurrecting the ideology of Freedom!

¹⁸ See the articles by Robert Zevin, and Roger A. Alcaly and Elen Bodian in *The Fiscal Crisis of American Cities*, New York, 1977.

At this stage, the capitalist determination (whose articulations attempt to follow the social emergence of the processes of proletarian self-valorization, and which has to face up to the destructure effects that these engender), reaches a high point of its logical vacuity: *here the reimposition of the law of value within restructuration is violence and is logically founded on criteria of indifference*. However, this in no sense diminishes the efficacy of the project of restructuration. The specification of the indifference starts from command. If the social struggle of the working class has driven the capitalist brain into a position of formal indifference, then capitalist command tries to specify itself materially on this possibility. It is important to emphasize this transition. It is important because with it comes a fundamental shift in the development of the contemporary form of the State. That very *social-democratic* project, which since the time of Keynes has been at the center of capital's interests within the restructuring process, is now *subsumed to the indifference* of the possibilities of capital. This is perhaps a splendid example of how working class and proletarian self-valorization has destroyed an instance of the enemy. The social-democratic project is beginning to disintegrate, and from this point of view, the euphoria that is accompanying the present development of the various Euro-communisms is slightly macabre.

So, concretely speaking, what is the center of the capitalist restructuration project today? How is the form of domination being realized? The fact of command over living labor taking the upper hand over the law of value is not something new, but *what is specific to today's restructuration is the conjuncture of*

command together with the indifference of the contents of command and of its articulations. This capitalist conclusion derives from the powerful socialization of the revolutionary movement of the proletarian class; it is the obverse of this. In this situation, capital's initiative becomes regressive – in other words, it has to base itself on a logic that is as empty as it is separate. Once again a premise which, to us, is fundamental – the separateness of the cycles of capital and its State-form from the cycle of working class self-valorization – is verified. But at this point a whole series of problems re-emerge. In particular, if we want to identify not so much the center, as the specific content of capitalist restructuring. This terrible void and indifference, this terribly weak and at the same time ferocious freedom of capital – how is it determined today?

For the moment I know only one thing. That from the working class point of view – having arrived at this level of awareness – the effects of the destructuring action that I have set in motion force me to confront, in a destructive manner, capital's powers of stabilization. And this means, above all, confronting that power which provides the breeding ground for the multiple indifferent possibilities of domination. Destructuration of the enemy system involves the immediate necessity of attacking and destabilizing its political regime.

4. A SECOND PARENTHESIS: ON THE WAGE

I find myself in a complex theoretical position. I must, at one and the same time, show how the form of capitalist domination is subordinated to the process of workings' and proletarian self-valorization – and also show the resulting determinations in the destructured separateness of command. This, in fact, is the sense of the question that I posed earlier: how does one specify and determine the *indifference of command*?

As regards the first point, I think I have already gone some way towards proving it. In short, at the very moment when capital is living through the complete socialization of the productive force of the working class, the (Keynesian and/or Kaleckian) instruments that it had at its disposal for controlling the interrelationship between production and reproduction – based on a balancing of supply and demand, on the twin basis of an expanding employment base and an expanding production base – fail. Why do they fail? Because *the mechanisms of capital's reproduction and the mechanisms of reproduction of the working class are no longer operating synchronously*. The social self-valorization of the working class accentuates, in an antagonistic sense, both the quality and the quantity of the workers' needs. It radicalizes the aspect of simple circulation, over against the overall reproduction of all the dimensions of capital. At this point, as we have seen, "the needs of social expenditure have to be met,

inasmuch as they *must* guarantee a continuity of production and reproduction of overall labor-power. This therefore sets in motion a state monetary phenomenon which, unlike Keynesian *deficit spending*, must make possible a *simultaneity* of both capitalist and working class reproduction." ¹⁹

Thus all the channels of administration – and not merely the monetary aspect – must provide possibilities of reducing to zero the relation between supply and demand. Given the actual strength of the working class, the problem is thus to reduce its autonomous reproduction time and strength. Thus the separateness of capitalist command could not be clearer. Its destructurement springs from capital's realization that every attempt to adapt to the given articulation of the working class and the proletariat fails, for this very reason. Only command, conceived as indifference, conceived as a separate capacity for self-reproduction, can be enforced at this point. Capital is driven to daydreams of self-sufficiency. It is not by chance that, at this limit, we see the re-emergence of economic theories that we thought long dead and buried – theories of the self-sufficiency of capital and its money, mementos of neo-classicism, and quantitative monetarist practices.

But despite all that, dreams are only dreams: that noisy alarm clock of the class struggle is still there to wake you up. So the capitalist State now has to rearticulate in positive terms the

¹⁹ Christian Marazzi in his *Intervention on Public Expenditure*, Ecole Normale Supérieure, Paris, April 1977, mimeo.

separate essence of its command. From a practical and theoretical point of view, there has certainly been a profound and significant advance: *here the destruction of the value-terms of the capitalist social relation is no longer a result, but a starting point*; it is no longer a painful injury suffered, but a proud and arrogant act of will. Indeed, never before has the capitalist State been so politically autonomous! It still remains necessary for capitalist command to be articulated, but henceforth its parameters will be based on this separateness. The source and the legitimation of power are no longer the law of value and its dialectic, but the law of command and its hierarchy. Having been forced into the most radical *material* destructuring, capital's State must now restructure itself *ideally*. The free productive State of the capitalist revolution is now reduced to a *corporative, hierarchical* form – to the organization of appearances. This is the only logic of the "autonomy of the political." Henceforth neither political economy and the critique of political economy, nor the analysis of class and class composition, can adequately explain this destructured reality: only descriptive sociology can follow this phenomenon!

This is the State based on income as revenue, the Income-State [*Stato-rendita*] – a state of political income. The one absolute value against which all other hierarchical values must measure themselves is political power. And this one absolute value is the foundation for the construction of a scale of *differential incomes*, whose value is calculated on the basis of one's greater or lesser

distance from the center, from the site of production of power.²⁰ Power is the simultaneity, the point of perfect compatibility of the mechanisms of production and reproduction, and it is from this that circulation must proceed, accepting its authority. One's location in the hierarchy, the corporative structure, and the respective positions of the various separate bodies [*corpi separate*] – all these are articulated according to this logic. These differential incomes are signs of the variability of one's insertion into the hierarchy, into the articulation of command. This, then, is the only form within which the indifference can be determined. The party-State [*Stato dei Partiti*] and the system of public administration tend to guarantee this specification of differential income as the form and the content of political power.²¹

Now, all of this touches directly on *productive labor*. What, in short, is the nature of productive labor within the Income-State? From capital's point of view, it is that *part* of social labor which has been unionized, corporatized, situated within the separation of the state hierarchy. From this point of view, the indifference to the value you produce is equaled by the attention paid to extent of your faithfulness to the system. The *labor market* – that is, overall labor-power in its relative independence – is sectioned off according to the hierarchical values advanced by

²⁰ In addition to The work of Romano Alquati, see the article by G.Bossi in Aut-Aut No.159-160, pp 73 seq.

²¹ See Sergio Bologna "The Tribe of Moles," in Primo Maggio No.8, Spring 1977

the system.²² Of course, every time the State mechanism intervenes in the reality of the class struggle in a direct manner, the game becomes harder, particularly when the intensity of the approach cannot be mystified, when the intervention takes place at the point of greatest contradiction. To impose upon the labor market in order to divide it, to section it up, to hierarchize it, *when it is precisely at this level that productive labor has made itself general, where "small-scale circulation" has made itself independent, and where reproduction seeks to be self-valorization.*²³ To impose upon this reality guarantees a maximum of violence and mystification. Because here the two extremes of the process that we are describing, meet: on the one hand, the unified material base of the processes of proletarian self-valorization, and on the other, the active, repressive figure of power that has been destructured by the struggles.

It is worth pausing briefly to consider this central moment, and to emphasize some of the consequences of what we have been saying, from a theoretical point of view, about proletarian self-valorization. Now, two elements are immediately clear. The first is that, at this point, the wage is no longer, in its economic identity, *an independent variable*. It is completely subordinated to the entire dynamic of power, to the entire framework of the political autonomy of the state. The wage is reduced to the

²² See Glen a Cain "The Challenge of Segmented Labour Market Theories to Orthodox Theory: A Survey," in Journal of Economic Literature, December 1976

²³ See, apropos, the useful notes by M.Aglietta: "Panorama et nouveaux developpements sur les theories de l'emploi". mimeo, INSEE 14/1/1977 MA/SP 320/ 3564

hierarchy of command, in a process which is the counterpart, the obverse of, the repression of proletariat unity at the social level. This leads us to the second consequence: the center of the worker's and proletarian struggle consists in *the recognition of the general aspect of the wage as a cost of reproduction of the unity of the proletariat*, of its self-valorization. *The problem is political, on both sides* – even if, as in this case, it is obvious that the meanings of the term "political" are not homologous – because we are dealing with meanings that are mutually opposed, completely and precisely antagonistic. For capital, politics is division and hierarchy, for the proletariat it is unity and equality; for capital it means the subsumption of labor, for the proletariat it is the process of self-valorization; for the state it is the simultaneity of the processes of production and reproduction, for the proletariat it is the development of the independence of its own processes of reproduction, dissymmetry, and discontinuity.

At this point, therefore, the problem of the wage (as the pivot-point of the antagonistic capital relation) takes on a new figure. The logic of separation – which flows from the process of self-valorization, and which capital undergoes in a destructured and idealized form – leaves no margins of compromise in this respect. So it is not by chance that the capitalist reaction to the development of the class struggle has been unleashed above all around the problem of *public spending* – understood as the terrain on which the thrust of the worker's struggle was effectively and offensively reshaping the thematic of the wage, adapting it to the fundamental instances of the project of self-valorization. In the struggle over public spending, capitalist

hierarchization, the differential incomes of power, the corporative mystifications of the unions, were coming under heavy attack, while the unity of social productive labor as the basis of the process of self-valorization was increasing. This was, indeed, a "battle for production!" It gave the working class the possibility of regaining its own productive dignity, its unity, outside and against the mechanisms of political income, of state parasitism, which the unions and power sought to impose on it. It gave the working class the possibility of materially grounding its own productive unity – of opposing exploitation by means of self-valorization.

Public spending and the wage constitute issues to which the analysis, the theory and the practice of revolutionaries will continually have to return, because in a situation of discontinuity in the cycle of the class struggle, the problem of public spending will, in the coming years, assume the same importance that the wage, narrowly defined, has had in years past. But we must be clear here: in the discontinuity of the movement, once again, no homology is permissible. In other words, the theme of fighting public spending cuts is not simply an extension, a completion of the wage issue. The problem of public spending is not that of the social wage. It is rather the recognition, the imposition of the recognition that the unity of social labor, of the whole of social labor, today constitutes the only possible definition of the productivity of labor: this is the base for which capital must pay. It must pay for it with respect to its quality, its articulations, its determination. It must recognize the independence of worker's self-valorization.

But, as we have seen, this does not happen. Instead, the contrary happen – the whole of capital's attention turns to the functioning of differential income (restructuring) and to the consolidation, in absolute terms, of its political resources (stabilization). Now, *the mechanism of political income must be destroyed*: the struggle over public spending cuts is a struggle that directly attacks the mechanisms of command and the determination of political income and destroys them. It destroys them by *quantitatively raising public spending* to the point of making it incompatible with the proportions of command over reproduction, and by *qualitatively blocking* the relative choice of options. But this is not enough. There is also direct action to be taken. Some groups of workers, some strata of the working class, remain tied to the dimension of the wage, to its mystified terms. In other words, they live off this political income. Inasmuch as they are living off this political income (even some who work in the large factories), they are stealing and expropriating proletarian surplus value – they are participating in the social-labour racket on the same terms as their bosses. These positions – and particularly the union practice that fosters them – are to be fought, with violence if necessary. It will not be the first time that a march of the unemployed has entered a large factory so that they can destroy the corruption of the labor aristocracy along with the arrogance of political income!²⁴ This was what the unemployed were doing in Britain in the 1920s for example – and quite rightly so. Here, however, it is no longer simply a matter of the unemployed. Here we are dealing with all the

²⁴ See the accounts in Wal Hannington's *Unemployed Struggles*

protagonists in the social production of value who are rejecting the operation that capital has set in motion in order to destroy their unity: *the workers of the large factories need to be brought back again to this front of the struggle*. This is fundamental. The *social majority of the proletariat*, of socially-productive labour power, must impose the issue and practice of unity, bringing it once again to the attention of the workers in the large factories. The *mass vanguards* of the large factories must struggle, in conjunction with the proletarian movement, to destroy the parasitic filth celebrated and guaranteed by the unions in the large factories. This is fundamental. Here, in fact, we are dealing with the project – the living, effective project – of working class self-valorization, which refuses, and must destroy, the vacuity of the *rentier* logic of capital, and all of its apparatuses. Now, at this point I should answer those jackals that I already hear howling: I am not saying that the Mirafiori worker is not an exploited worker (this is how far you have to go in order to polemicize with jackals!). I am saying that the "Party of Mirafiori" must today live the politics of the proletarian majority, and that any position which is restricted purely to the necessary struggle in the factory, and which is not connected to the proletarian majority, is a position that is bound to lose. *The factory struggle must live within the proletarian majority*.

The privileged place of the wage in the continuity of proletarian struggles must today be extended to the struggle over public spending. Only this struggle can enable the full self-recognition of the proletariat; can establish the bases of self-valorization; can attack directly the theory and practice of political income. On

the other hand, the capitalist practice of political income is utterly fragile – fragile because it is completely ideal. Here the problem is no longer that of differential income, but that of its political foundation. Now, this "absolute" foundation is itself ideal – it is an indictment of the whole machinery of capitalist development, to the extent that it has registered the crisis of the law of value. It is, therefore, a limit. And thus it is a will to the overall mystification of the system of exploitation. When Marx criticizes Ricardo's "underestimation" of absolute rent [*rendita*], he admits nonetheless that its tendency must be to disappear: Ricardo's "overestimation" of differential rent would, in these conditions, become plausible. But here, we are already in the situation where the survival of moments of absolute rent has already given way to the development of capitalist socialization and the global predominance of the capitalist mode of production. Here the reappearance of political income no longer has any criterion of verisimilitude or any material foundation. It is a phantasma. And then? The Income-State develops *two mystifications*. The first is the one which joins differential political income and its mechanisms to a generic emergence of the law of value (which, as we already know, has been transformed into the form of command); the second is that which seeks to consider the absolute nature of political income at the level of the origination of power, as its fundamental condition. But this too is pure and simple mystification: here we are not seeing the expression of an historical necessity tied to the period of development of the law of value – we are merely seeing the expression of the extreme limit of mystification, of the forcible reimposition of a law on a proletarian world which

otherwise would be impossible to dominate. Nevertheless, this proletarian movement brings about the *extreme dissolution of the very concept of power*. And now enough bluster on the nexus between Lenin and Max Weber! Here, as in the thought of Lenin, thought and practice go in two opposite directions: worker freedom and bureaucratic indifference are polar opposites – with the first being rationality, the second irrationality; the first being struggle, the second mere formalization of political income, unless the "autonomists of the political" do not have the same one-dimensional conception of power, so to speak, that the New Philosophers have!.

The indifference of command, therefore, is specified in a sort of political practice of income, whose absolute foundations lie in political authority, and whose differential lies within the hierarchical system. This situation brings about a conception and a reality of the wage system that differs radically from the experience of wage struggles conducted by the "other" workers' movement in other historical eras. Today, in fact, the *wage struggle* cannot be other than immediately *political, general and egalitarian*. The privileged terrain on which it moves is that of *public spending*, of the self-valorizing overall reproduction of the proletariat. This terrain has to be rebuilt, together with the workers in the factories; this struggle must reunify the proletarian terrain. And it can be done. And anyway, there is no alternative: or rather the only alternative is to accept subordination, to plunge into the maelstrom of destructuring, to abandon ourselves to destruction.

5. ...AND NIETZSCHE WENT TO PARLIAMENT

Once upon a time there was the "salami theory": the reformists intended to take power just like slicing a salami.²⁵ When this culinary witticism fell into disrepute and the conception of power as totality was restored, some thought that power could be conquered by putting salt on its tail.²⁶ They had good structural motives for thinking that way: a peaceful strategy that would have taken into account the class's socialization, however cautiously managed, could only have brought about a relation of force that would have tended to be more and more favorable to the class. In this fable, there seems to be no recollection that the power of the bourgeoisie was quite a nasty hawk, far from willing to do business with the industrious little sparrows. There was also no recollection that peace could not, therefore, be considered a precondition but would have to be imposed, and that, in the dialectic of its determination, the worst could continually blackmail the best. The fable doesn't record any of this, even though the concept is one of the Aesopian archetypes of fabulation. Finally, there was no recollection that workers' self-valorization in itself was destructuring and destabilizing to

²⁵ In addition to its literal meaning, the word "salami" bears the idiomatic connotation of "idiot" in colloquial Italian –tr.

²⁶ The phrase "putting salt on its tail" [*mettendogli il sale sulla coda*] alludes to an Italian proverb that jokingly offers this as a method for capturing something that cannot be captured. –tr.

capitalist power. There is really no more to be said about this, because in this case we cannot play at fables.

Now, once again, the only point that we are interested in pursuing is *the relationship between self-valorization and destructuration*. Reformism fundamentally denies this sense of the relationship; instead it asserts that self-valorization is consistent with *structuring*, not destructuring. Valorization, for reformism, is univocal: there is only capitalist valorization. The problem is how to gain command over it. Everything else is utopianism. Eurocommunism sets itself up as a candidate to represent the developed working class, as a party that mediates between the process of proletarian self-valorization and the restructuring of capital. Eurocommunism is the party of restructuring – it is the party of the synthesis between proletarian self-valorization and capitalist valorization. Having picked up out of the mud the banners of democracy that the bourgeoisie had let drop, Eurocommunism now sets about gathering up the banners of the economic development which capital had destructured. Thus there is no discourse on power that is not organized exclusively within the virtuous circle of restructuring. As for Eurocommunism's goals, they are more than clear: the conscious extension of the capitalist mode of production to the whole of society, and its ("socialist") state management.

Our intention here is not to demonstrate that this project is bad and ugly. Rather, we believe we can show it to be impossible – undesirable, in fact, because it is not realistic but mystified. We believe it can be shown that the working class is proceeding –

increasingly so, as it becomes more socialized – in terms that are antagonistic to this project. The battle is between the true and the false, and initially it can take place on no other horizon. And to conclude, we believe it can be shown that Eurocommunism, inasmuch as it proceeds along these lines, presents no alternative whatsoever to capitalist development, but rather is the representation of a catastrophic subordination of the class to capital, a fragile and transitory element of capital's state-form.

Thus self-valorization and restructuring. In reality, the decision as to whether or not these two terms are compatible is not merely a question of fact. Eurocommunism is innovative in relation to Marxism, not because it denies the empirical conditions of the process of *self-valorization*, but because it denies the *worker and proletarian character*, the *radically antagonistic potential*, and the *political relevance* of that self-valorization.

First, the worker and proletarian character. Eurocommunism does not use the term "self-valorization", but rather the term "hegemony". This term allows the processes of working-class socialization to be interpreted as tending towards the dissolution of class into society. It substitutes a Hegelian and populist terminology for a Marxist one. Operating in this framework, Eurocommunism displaces the debate from the terrain of class struggle over reproduction, over productive labor, that is to say, the terrain of class composition, to "society" understood generically, and politics as the complex of institutions. By this means the term "self-valorization" is robbed of its meaning as part of a class vocabulary. For

Eurocommunism, the terrain of proletarian self-valorization becomes a liminal zone, meaningful only in the terms of the reconstruction of a social totality.

Second: the negation of the radically antagonistic potential of the processes of workers' self-valorization is the dynamic consequence of the first negation. Once workers' and proletarian self-valorization is seen at the limit of a merely phenomenal manifestation, it can only be expressed dynamically through the social synthesis. This synthesis is determined by the society of capital. So we are not dealing with an antagonism, according to Eurocommunism, but with an organic and functional dialectic between the classes, the terms of whose solution are provided by the relation of force and by its compatibility with the general interest. And the general interest is the development of capital.

Finally, the political relevance of workers' self-valorization can only be restored by a general, external function, one that can differentiate the functions within the global project of development. No unmediated political relevance can be given to workers' and proletarian self-valorization, all the more so since it is interpreted as being at the furthest limits of the phenomenology of production. Its movements do not contain a generality; its separateness is to be politically mediated through society, with society, in society; and the particularity of its interest is to be articulated with the generality of capital's development.

Now, from negation to affirmation. Only restructuring – say the Eurocommunists in addition and in conclusion – will provide the possibility of restoring the formal conditions for proletarian self-valorization within the capitalist mechanism of development. Restructuring reorganises the rationale of capitalist development and structures it in relation to the needs of the proletariat: it goes therefore, from the general to the particular, and only by proceeding in this direction can it give meaning to the liminal manifestations of the proletariat. The only way that the particular interests of the proletariat can be repaid in economic terms (but in a different manner, a manner which is organic and compatible with development), is by destroying the antagonistic harshness of particular interests that arise along the road that leads to the centrality of the function of restructuring. The socialized workers' brain – the reformists continue – is the center of the process of restructuring: it negates the economism of its stimuli by transforming them into political starting points by molding them into a force to manage capital. In the more refined versions,²⁷ Eurocommunism's insistence on the centrality of the political functions of restructuring vis-a-vis the class mechanism of self-valorization reaches the point of extreme essentialism: the Weberian/Nietzschean functional formalism of the bourgeois tradition is recuperated and inverted into an instance of proletarian command, a pure autonomy of workers' politics.

²⁷ This refers to Negri's former student and comrade Massimo Cacciari and others who, like Cacciari, had abandoned the extraparliamentary left in order to join the PCI at the end of the sixties. –tr.

I think I have done justice to Eurocommunism in expounding its theory in these terms. In reality the operation is so clear-cut that there is little point in descending to polemic. In fact, as has quite often been emphasized, beyond the debasement of Marxism that this conception entails, it is shown to be false by the reality of the movement. *When we say self-valorization, we mean the alternative that the working class sets in motion on the terrain of production and reproduction, by appropriating power and by re-appropriating wealth, in opposition to the capitalist mechanisms of accumulation and development.* We have reached a point where the process of proletarian self-valorization has begun to invest the entire terrain of the socialization of production and the circulation of commodities (increasingly subsumed within the mechanism of capitalist reproduction). Therefore, when this extension of the processes of valorization (including essential modifications that are inherent in the concept of productive labor) is accomplished, every possibility of considering an antagonistic or generalizing valence (the party, the worker's brain, the "autonomy of the political") outside the process of self-valorization itself, becomes less and less viable. Certainly, it is true that, *according to the rhythm of the workers' socialization, capitalist society has been permanently restructured: infrastructures, services, education, housing policies, welfare policies, etc. multiply and determine an ever-wider context for the processes of self-valorization.* But *precisely this process reveals the characteristics of self-valorization: in fact it reproduces within itself – the more so the further it extends – the antagonistic characteristics of workers' power.* The workers' struggle imposes a reorganization of society, a capitalist restructuring.

This restructuring must be adapted to a series of needs that are imposed by the struggles themselves. The quantity and the quality of the struggles determine the reforms. But nevertheless, these still remain capitalist reforms, and the effect of the workers' struggle on them is immediately double: it reopens the struggle within this restructured fabric; and through the subsequent extension and generalization of the struggle, it destructures capitalist command at this level too, at this degree of extension. Workers' self-valorization does not find its continuity within restructuring: in restructuration it sees only an effect of its min strength, an increase of its own offensive possibilities, an extension of its own power to comprehensively destructure capital. Thus *there is no political mediation possible at this level, either in institutional terms or in terms of economic restructuring*. Eurocommunism, seen from this perspective, is living a lie: it claims a continuity with the processes of self-valorization which is not given, and consequently it is constrained to mystify and fight the effective movement of self-valorization on that movement's own terms, the terms in which that movement actually expresses itself – as power [*potenza*] of destructuring.

So it is not by chance that the positions within Eurocommunism which have laid claim to a correct institutional mediation of the processes of self-valorization have also ended up overwhelmed by the illusion of mediation. From the factory struggles to the struggles for reforms, they said; then, from the struggle for reforms to a campaign to restructure capitalist undertaking, to restructure the state. Was this a necessary continuity? Only as a

step along the road of mystification! In fact, after a short while, we then saw this naive spirit coming back into the factory: of necessity, the continuity that had led "from the struggles to the state" had now been thrown into reverse. Now they were speaking from the point of view of the state, and the antagonistic content of the workers' factory struggles and the struggles for reforms was totally subordinated to the state. The processes of self-valorization were now to be seen as "functions" of the capitalist state.

Let us now look at the workers' viewpoint [*il punto di vista operaio*]. It extends and spreads from the factory to the society; it imposes upon capital the organization of social productive labor; it reopens on this terrain a struggle that is continuous and increasingly efficacious. In valorizing itself socially, the working class increasingly destructures capital as capital is increasingly constrained to extend its direct command over society. Within this framework, the activity of reformism and of *Eurocommunism* is an *element of the state-form* of capitalism – but, we should note, in a *subordinate and threadbare form*. It does not succeed – indeed, it cannot succeed – in ensuring that the rationale of self-valorization prevails within capitalist restructuring. It remains prisoner of a destructured rationality that cannot be translated; it is overwhelmed by the indifference of power, the transcendence of its unity. The rhythm of collective bargaining which is proper to reformism has dissolved into the trajectory of political income. Only in the form of corporativism does reformism win back some credibility. To make up for this subordination, reformism

refuses to accept the fact that it has been transformed into mystification, the mystification into bad conscience and mystified will, and the mystified will into repression of the struggle, into terrorism against the processes of workers' and proletarian valorization. At this point, reformism and Eurocommunism have earned the right to call themselves, and to feel themselves, participants in the state-form of capitalism. But at what a price! *Germanis docet.*²⁸

So this Nietzschean presence in Parliament is cause for rejoicing. The situation is such that every failure of mystification is a victory for the workers. Faced with the impetuosity and the force of the processes of workers' self-valorization, *the coalitions that have determined the state-form of late capitalism are necessarily surrendering to the workers' antagonism.* Oligopolies, unions, the "middle classes" have for half a century – and certainly since the Roosevelt revolution – dominated the framework of the state-form and have determined its constitutional foundations throughout the whole of the Western world. The working class is now emancipating itself from the institutions, imposing a continuous investment in public spending that is now purely and simply appropriation, a fact of power, destructuring of the enemy. The capitalist response is disinvestment, the flight from confrontation with the class. There is no alternative to the fall of the rate of profit in this situation: whatever road is followed – that of the defense and maintenance of employment, or that of

²⁸ Roughly, "The historical lesson of Germany is once again demonstrated." –tr.

public spending – come what may, the rate of profit is decreasing.²⁹ But if there is no alternative to the fall of the rate of profit, then this space will be occupied by workers' initiatives that constantly destructure, and in this case also destabilize, the political balances of power. The proletarians do not lack destructive cynicism, even if they only know a little Nietzsche.

The relation of self-valorization to restructuring – which is the basis for any remaining dignity of reformism and Eurocommunism – thus has no standing whatsoever, from any point of view, neither that of the working class, nor that of capitalism. From both standpoints, the relation appears antagonistic. And yet, in the name of that efficacy that power concedes to mystification, it can *still* be part of the state-form. Up to what point? From the moment when its function has been totally subordinated, the point will be established by the struggle between the two classes over the question of power. For the moment, reformism and Eurocommunism are living an opaque, subordinate life within the framework of capital's state-form. Corporativism and parasitism are the qualities of their existence.

²⁹ See W. Nordhaus, "The Falling Share of Profits," in *Brooking Papers on Economic Activity*, No. 1, 1974 –tr.

PART TWO: WORKERS' SABOTAGE

6. WE NO LONGER HAVE ANY CHOICE...³⁰

Self-valorization is sabotage. That sentence is probably prosecutable by some state prosecutor in this Republic of Italy, with its Constitution "founded on labor." But the more interesting problem is the sentence's reversibility, the complete inter-translatability of self-valorization and destructuring. Sabotage is the *negative power* [*potenza*] of the positive, its inverse, which is now at stake.³¹

³⁰ The Italian title of this chapter is "Non abbiamo più nulla a che fare...". The concluding phrase, "che fare," is the Italian title of Lenin's "What Is To Be Done?" but we have not found a way to reproduce this allusion in English. –tr.

³¹ The following three paragraphs, which have often been cited to "prove" Negri's complicity with and/or participation in terrorism, were omitted from Ed Emery's original translation and replaced by this note: "In translating, we found the first two pages of this section almost incomprehensible. Consultation with comrades in Italy produced a suggestion that, since they add little to the argument, we should omit them. Furthermore, Toni Negri himself, in a clandestine 'Interview from Prison' ... has stated that in this section, in emerging from the confines of political concepts, he hit on difficulties of self-expression and 'dubious literary quality'. Therefore we have omitted most of pages 42-43 of the original..." (*Working Class Autonomy and the Crisis*, p. 116). However, Negri chose to include this passage in the Italian re-issue edition that forms the basis of this translation, so we include it here as well. –tr.

Nevertheless, before elaborating on this stake, a stake that is completely subjective, I am pleased to conclude the objective part of the discussion on the form of domination by simply adding an adjective to what has already been said about Eurocommunism: *reformism is disgraceful [infame]*. Its disgrace [*infamia*] resides in the structural position that the state-form assigns to it as the center of mystification, the center and motive force for the organization of consensus and thus of *repression* against both real and merely possible opposition. This disgrace is a superfluity, a mathematical point, a mannerism of structural function, though it is no less serious for all that because its effective projection takes on, within the spectacular character that the regime grants it, an original and general significance. It is brutality that is open to the temptation to be arrogant; it is arrogance that is open to the temptation of terror; it is terror that is open to the possibility of being comical. A paradox arises here: the *negative power [potenza] of the negative* does not manage to be credible. Repression is not credible. Its spectacular form is paradoxical and ridiculous. Indeed, why not "swap Brezhnev for Pinochet?"³² To laugh at repression is not to defend oneself but to define it, facing it as it presents itself. "At the same time,

³² Negri is referring ironically to an exchange of political prisoners that took place in 1976: Soviet premier Leonid Brezhnev freed Russian dissident Vladimir Bukofsky in exchange for Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet's freeing of communist leader Luis Corvalan. The exchange, a public-relations coup for the Pinochet dictatorship, proved to be a serious embarrassment to the Soviets because of the overt equation it established between their regime and Pinochet's right-wing dictatorship. -tr.

we must laugh and philosophize."³³ But when you begin to philosophize, you notice that this detachment is actually contempt. The negation of self-valorization is disgraceful. An incommensurable, irresolvable, unsurveyable space separates you from this disgrace. The disgrace of reformism is the measure of this detachment, and thus the proletarian refusal of repression, its organs and institutions can only be total and radical.

Yet we must laugh at this disgrace and philosophize, not over this disgrace that is detachment, but rather by amicably deepening the discussion of central issues such as this sensation that is knowledge, that is the negative power [*potenza*] of the positive, and sabotage as a function of self-valorization. I am therefore within this separation that connects me to the world as a force of destruction. I am within it and I feel the intensity of the leap of change that is presupposed every time that I free myself through destruction. Leap, change, discontinuity – but doesn't that mean Sorel and anarcho-syndicalism?³⁴ Only fools could think so. At this point there is neither organicism nor myth, neither generality nor improvisation, but rather the intensity of a relationship between wealth and poverty that

³³ Epicurus, "Vatican Sayings," in *The Essential Epicurus*, Buffalo, Prometheus Books, 1993, no. 41, p. 81, trans, Eugene O'Connor, slightly revised.

³⁴ Georges Sorel (1847-1922) was a syndicalist theorist; in his major work *Reflections on Violence* (1906) he interpreted fundamental tenets of Marxism as 'myths,' images that would inspire the working class to violently overthrow the capitalist system. Chief among these 'myths' was that of the General Strike. –tr.

refuses to be resolved, and that is felt to be scandalous by virtue of the fact that all its terms are reversed from this point on: wealth before poverty, desire before need. Separation is what is sought, but it is expressed in a powerful will to conflict: rupture is what continually launches relays of destructive will against reality, and desire is what exerts itself to be desperation. In short, it is a positivity that commands the negative and imposes it. Yet you don't know how to transform this uncontrollable tension into hope except by living it. Hope is a projection, a continuum, an analogy to be postulated. At this point there is no homology of any kind, neither Ernst Bloch's utopia, nor George Sorel's myth.³⁵ Here, wealth is tested and desperation wins. I look around myself in amazement. Is this really the spirit of the century? Is this really the creative Marxism in which we live? Nothing reveals the immense historical positivity of workers' self-valorization more completely than sabotage, this continual activity of the sniper, the saboteur, the absentee, the deviant, the criminal that I find myself living. I immediately feel the warmth of the workers' and proletarian community again every time I don the ski mask. This solitude of mine is creative and this separateness of mine is the only real collectivity I know. Nor does the happiness of the result escape me: every act of destruction and sabotage rebounds upon me as a sign of class fellowship. Nor does the probable risk disturb me: on the

³⁵ Ernst Bloch (1885-1977) was a messianic German Marxist who sought to recuperate the practice of utopian thinking by identifying the elements of revolutionary potentiality in everyday life: his major works are *The Spirit of Utopia* (1918) and *The Principle of Hope* (1959) –tr.

contrary, it fills me with feverish emotion, like waiting for a lover. Nor does the suffering of the adversary affect me: proletarian justice has the very same productive force of self-valorization and the very same faculty of logical conviction. All this happens because *we are in the majority* – not the sad one that is measured at some time in every decade among adults who put on the regulation student uniform and return to school, but a qualitative and quantitative majority of social productive labor.

Yet all this is not enough. The dawning violence, the emotional intensity that the consciousness of class composition immediately reveals, must rearticulate itself, it must bring to life its system of rearticulations. It is real, but insufficient in the face of the desire that suffuses it. The passage, the leap forward, and the rupture are the fruits not of external activity, but rather of the tension that my separateness inspires and unleashes.

No, I am not looking for a program or a menu – a fancy menu with easy recipes that make it simple for the cook to govern. A menu is still a menu, and until proofs to the contrary appear, the ones who end up eating best are still the bosses. What is required by the tension of class separation is an indication, a path, a *method*. I do not want the other [*l'altro*], I want instead to destroy it. The fact of my existence implies the destructuring of the other. Above all else, I want to acquire a method by which to increase my separation, to conquer the world by appropriating the network of class self-valorization. Every time I leap forward, I enlarge my existence as part of the collectivity.

Every time I break capital's margins of valorization, I appropriate yet another space for workers' valorization. For the proletariat there are no vacuums. Every space left empty by the enemy is filled, occupied, appropriated, attacked by an expansive force that has no limits. The relation with capital has no points of homology: capital is defeated in order to replace it. Nothing that I am saying means anything other than what I am saying, in terms of capitalist valorization overturned, of violence, of mass action. The pins and needles of the humanist dispersal of desires and needs are not really it. My way of moving, on the other hand, is constructive, material. Imagination now wears a good pair of boots; desire carries violence; innovation is accompanied by organization. Our *method of social transformation* can only be the method of *proletarian dictatorship*. Understood in its own terms: as a struggle for the extinction of the state, and for the total replacement of the capitalist mode of production by proletarian self-valorization and its collective process. How should we answer those history professors who will – and do – accuse our (future) will of being (past) unreality? It is obvious that we are talking about different things – it is as if we were both speaking of a great bear, but for them it means some distant constellation of stars, while for us it means the present reality of a ferocious animal. We are this developing, animal reality; we have the same strength, the same necessity and the same fierce irreducibility. Our existence is collective. Our method of social transformation is the method of democracy and freedom within the collective growth of proletarian self-valorization. This method of social transformation is based on the method of

dictatorship, in the sense of exclusion of the enemy. But our wretched star-gazers ask how we are going to use this method of dictatorship amongst ourselves, and whether it is possible that we may commit errors. It certainly is possible, but it is sickening to hear such counsel from the accomplices of capital. We can only reply that the class dictatorship does – and must – exist, and we shall do everything – including staking our lives on this dictatorship as we are now staking them in the revolution – in order to make it a collective process, informed through and through by freedom and by workers' self-valorization. And there will be no pity for the enemy!³⁶ In any event, *sabotage* as self-valorization is certainly not a law that would cease with the communist dictatorship that we are going to set up. No. It is instead *a law of freedom that, now and in the future, we conjugate with that of communism.*

Let us return to the fundamental problem. Proletarian self-valorization is sabotage. How does this project become concrete? The leap from the phenomenological revelation of our separate existence to the expansion of the force of the process of self-valorization is organized around a method of new knowledge [*conoscenza*]. The determinate objective of the process is to increase the use value of labor, against its capitalist subsumption, against its commodification, against its reduction to a use value of capital. But how does this capitalist subsumption of labor come about today? It comes about

³⁶ Sergio Leone, *Spartito di un nuovo film*. [This work has not been identified –tr.]

through command, through hierarchy, and through income-as-revenue. Capital tries to dominate and control, via divisions, that unity of social labor that the working class, with its struggles, has tended to bring about. The fundamental issue of the communist project has always been that of the unity, the recomposition, of the working class. *Today the issue of unity must be tested entirely in relation to the problem of the recomposition of social productive labor.* From this point of view, it is a fundamental necessity to destroy the mechanisms of political income. In the coming years and months, we must not be afraid to go out into the factories, as commandos [*reparti*] of social productive labor, in order to impose on those factory workers who have been bought off and mystified by the practice of the reformists – to impose on them the recognition of the centrality of social productive labor. They are part of it. They are neither above nor below no to the side of it. They are themselves inside it, and they must recognize it. They must rejoin that vanguard of the proletariat from which reformism and Eurocommunism have excluded them!

In this instance, workers' self-valorization becomes specific sabotage of the mechanisms of workers' separation that the state-form has assumed in its material constitution. On the other hand, as we have seen, capitalist development itself, trapped in the vice of destructuring, is now removing the structural reasons for the separation between workers, in order to replace them with a justification that is purely political – take, for example, the destruction of Roosevelt's coalition in the USA. In this case too, however, the problem of the use value of the

working class's antagonistic independence must be addressed. Perhaps the key to the *assault on the corporative organization* of factory workers is the imposition of a *drastic reduction of the working week*, as a possible means of bringing the moments of innovation and revolutionary force back into the unity of the process of self-valorization. But more of this later on. What we are discussing now is the general objective and not its concrete determination.

However, once again this is not enough. I have proceeded along the road of self-valorization; I have recognized both the strength and the limits inherent in the immediacy of its process; I have made an initial determination of a method which sees in its separateness an adequate synthesis of freedom and dictatorship; I have recognized the way that the process currently takes place at the level of sabotage of the mechanisms of decision that leads me to a higher level of social recomposition of productive labor. This is still not enough. This method must be substantiated in more specific and at the same time more general terms, but also in more determinate as well as more focused terms.

Now, what does it mean to destructure capital? It means reducing it to the indifference of command, and thus to a lack of "measure," a lack of any relation with itself, however fragile, other than an indeterminate will to exploitation.

And what does the process of valorization start to mean, once we have rigorously understood it as the class's capacity to bring

about a development that is completely alternative to capitalist valorization? It means *a tension toward the rational organization of this process*. The profound rationality of this process is undoubtedly inherent in its freedom, but this freedom is material, the organization of a collective process. *What is the law governing this collective process? What is the "measure" of its materiality?* There is no method that does not include some form of measure, whatever the nature of that measure may be. The problem of "measure" in the process of self-valorization is part and parcel of the problem of the method of social transformation. On the other hand, a measure has already in part emerged. As regards destructuring, we already possess a (negative) measure: namely, the fall in the rate of value, and capital's failure to control development. On the other hand, when we concretely analyze the processes of proletarian self-valorization, we also have a measure – this time a positive one: it is the measure corresponding to the spaces which have been conquered and taken back from exchange value in the processes of proletarian reproduction. But we are very much behind when we start to pose the problem of measure within the method of social transformation. It is not a new problem in a formal sense: it is the problem of *specifying the issue of the transition* – so that it does not remain a jumble of worn-out phrases. It becomes a completely new problem if it is resituated in the communist potentiality of the movement today.³⁷ We must be careful: here again, capital completely manifests its crisis since it is no longer

³⁷ This is stressed – and is one of the most important and misunderstood points – in Alfred Sohn-Renthal's work in *Intellectual and Manual Labour*, Atlantic Highlands, Humanities Press, 1978.

able to structure the relation between quantity of profit and quantity of socially useful value (nor should it, unless the workers' struggle forces it to do so). For this reason, we must make a leap forward: it is up to us and us alone to determine the *measure of collective value within the processes of self-valorization*. We shall return to this problem shortly.

For the moment, it is worthwhile to conclude this section by stressing the main point that runs through the whole of it, namely that the link between self-valorization and sabotage, and it inverse, does not allow us to have any truck whatsoever with "socialism" and its tradition, and even less to do with reformism and Eurocommunism. In jest, one might say that we are a race apart. We are no longer moved by anything belonging to the cardboard-cutout project of reformism, to its traditions and its vile illusions that have so much to answer for. We exist within a materiality that has its own laws – either revealed or yet to be discovered within the struggle, but in any event "other." Marx's *new mode of exposition has become the new mode of existence of the class*. We are here, implacably, in the majority. We possess a method for destroying work. We are in search of a *positive measure of non-work*, a positive measure of liberation from this shitty servitude which the bosses appreciate so much, and which the official socialist movement has always imposed on us like a badge of honor. No, we really cannot call ourselves "socialists," we can no longer accept your disgrace.

At long last,

We are all bastards.

And that most venerable man which I
Did call my father, was I know not where
When I was stamp'd³⁸

³⁸ Shakespeare, *Cymbelline*, Act II, Scene 5

7. A THIRD PARENTHESIS: ON THE PRODUCTIVE FORCES

Ten years ago, we foresaw very clearly that the capitalist counteroffensive against the workers' struggles was to concentrate on the problems of *automation* and *energy*. But few realized what this passage of restructuring was to mean. *It was to mean – as we are beginning to see today – a fundamental leap in the relation between state-form and class composition.* Through advanced automation and the control systems that it made available, capital put itself in a position where it was able to organize social labor-power, to put into effect its project of command via its capacity to articulate, hierarchize, and eliminate or obstruct by whatever means the possibility of a recomposition of the class as a basis for revolutionary organization. *With automation, the capitalist state puts itself into a position to operate the mechanisms of what we have called differential political income as a means of command over the whole social field of labor.* But it is energy policy above all which enables capital to play its trump card – the monstrous attempt to make its power absolute, to consolidate capital's command and the regime of profit irreversibly and in the long term. It is through energy policy that the state tries to re-establish the absolute income of command.

This is not the place to take up the various current analyses relating to the effects arising from the generalized use of nuclear

energy in industry and elsewhere. These range from the ever-pressing threat of nuclear deaths to the effects related to the state-form: the "Nuclear-State" [*Stato nucleare*] uses nuclear energy as a fundamental source of blackmail, as the basis on which it can legitimate the power of a more destructured command. Anyway, here we are not interested in examining this phenomenology. Rather, we are interested in the theoretical problem that this monstrous development raises for revolutionary Marxists.³⁹ For socialism, the fundamental goal has always been the *development of the productive forces*. The liberation of the productive forces from the relations of production and exploitation within which they are organized is a process that is internal to the development of the productive forces. But socialism has always interpreted this as a closed connection, a necessary and unbreakable nexus. But now that we are faced with the Nuclear-State and the irreversibility of the effects arising from the nuclearization of economic development, how is it possible to make inherent – or even merely compatible – the nexus between this potential of anti-worker destruction and our yearning for liberation? Oh, for those fine old days when Lenin could unite in a single conception "soviets plus locomotives," "soviets plus electrification!" But now this convergence, this compatibility is no longer possible. Today, capital drives the locomotive against us. *And here, the unitary concept of capitalist development breaks down*. On the one hand, the development of constant capital becomes a destructive development; on the other, the

³⁹ However, for an internal analysis of the general mechanisms of "big-business criminality" and the "mass illegality of capital," see Antion Bevere's article in *Critica del Diritto*, no. 9

productive forces must liberate themselves radically from the capitalist relation. Capital's subsumption of living labor thus reveals an impassable inner limit. Subsumption becomes a terroristic function: the synthesis of dead labor and living labor, instead of determining new value, produces a possibility of destruction that is inevitable, general, and close at hand. We are now once and for all *on the terrain* indicated by Marx: in fact, Marx's whole analysis is designed to indicate the points where, in the course of development, capital's elements of synthesis must necessarily split and separate. On the one hand we have the capitalist system, prey to its own destructuring: this means an indifferent power, absolutely separated from value, and thus the possibility (or rather necessity) of destruction. And on the other, we have the conditions whereby living labor can liberate itself in a collective form. Thus we are on Marx's terrain: but as this tendency becomes actual, it inspires strong emotions in us.

Now, we have seen that both our analysis of the state-form and the phenomenology of collective practice, proletarian subjectivity and the process of self-valorization, leads us to a logic of *separation*. But here, the interweaving of present-day history with the realization of Marx's tendency gives a completely new basis to the problem. The inner limit of the capitalist system is not just a prospective dimension – it is transparently immediate. The separation that I outlined as a methodological break [*cesura*] is here corroborated by the full intensity of history and by a definitive theoretical limit. *This is no longer tendency but actuality: we are no longer able to attribute any notion whatsoever of productive force to capitalist development; it*

is only the composition of the proletariat that reveals, represents, and can be the development of the forces of production, and of *productive force* in general. The limit is historically substantial, and is bound to consolidate further. At this point of development, therefore, there is a material break in the dialectic between capital and the productive forces, the dialectic of variable and constant capital. *Productive force becomes divorced from capital.* Marxism itself, as a theory of the development of the productive forces, now applies only to class composition and to the process of proletarian self-valorization. *Marxism now becomes a logic of separation.*

But let us return to the matter at hand – to the emergence of the Nuclear-State. From this viewpoint, as I have said, our analysis of the processes of destructuring proper to the capitalist state (in the context of the law of value and its crisis) is confirmed. In what sense? In the sense that capital's "autonomy of the political" organizes itself in an *irreversible* manner. From constant capital it obtains a foundation from which it utters forth a blackmail threat of destruction. Atomic terror passes from the level of international relations to that of the internal organization of individual states; it insinuates itself into the mechanisms of administration and the management of consent. *The crisis of the law of value, its vigor as a form of command, now finds a material foundation* – a good, solid material foundation, both in substantial and in formal terms. In formal terms, indeed, the rule of terror has a positive efficacy as command that a simple appeal to the general interests of economic development – even when backed by physical force – can no longer have.

Furthermore, terror has another positive aspect for command: it is indifferent; it reveals the necessity of order without specifying its articulations, its motivations, its directions. In substantial terms, commands based on the possession of the nuclear threat also has specific characteristics. That is, it introduces a rigidity, both of centralization of command and of society's hierarchical and repressive articulations, which is, so to speak, "in the nature of things." *Constant capital directly becomes command* – it becomes a central, command-absorbing function, as much as it is a function of the expansion and reproduction of command. Unlike what we hear from the accredited theoreticians of Eurocommunism, the highest level of the "autonomy of the political" is wholly structured by the terroristic movements of dead labor. As for the superstructural effects of this development, they can easily be deduced: it will not be long before the *ideological state apparatuses* serve them up in all their different flavors. We can well imagine how the horizon of consensus is going to be rolled back to the point of identifying law and order as the only alternative to terror. Only in such a situation can the destructured figure of power manage to reveal itself with such violence in the realm of ideology as well!

If some people allow themselves to slip into pessimism, at first glance one might sympathize with them! But doesn't this pessimism simply correspond to the destructured will of the capitalist state today? It would seem to be difficult to claim this when the "New Philosophers," for example, attack the gospel of "progress and enlightenment" preached by the socialist vulgate in its praise for the magnificent outcome of the development of

the productive forces subsumed under capital. In their iconoclasm, in their refusal to accept pacification under the grand regimes of production, and in their destructive insights into the values of capitalist technology – in all this can be read a fundamental *pars destruens*.⁴⁰ The hatred for the despotic power that dead labor tries increasingly to exercise over living labor – this hatred, even if it is shot through with pessimism, exercises a function which, if not creative, plays a certain maieutic role. It is a basis, a fundamental "rip" in the "lining of History," in the "sediment of the Institution", or in the "artifice of the Law."⁴¹ There is no doubt that this angelic pessimism is important. However, it is not the most important aspect of this polemic. This pessimism aborts into a philosophy that simply reflects the destructured power of capital, inasmuch as it uses the categories within an absoluteness that is neither dialectical nor revolutionary. It is not dialectical because it considers power in unqualified terms, "without adjectives;" it is not revolutionary because, consequently, it cannot develop a logic of separation. For these beautiful souls, constant capital can represent only suffering. For uglier souls too, constant capital is also suffering. Outside of collective practice, as Foucault stresses, our individual resistance – not "'the' plebs, rather... a certain plebian

⁴⁰ A term drawn from medieval Scholastic philosophy meaning a destructive step that should then lead to a constructive step or *pars construens*. See Michael Hardt, *Gilles Deleuze: An Apprenticeship in Philosophy*, Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1993, pp. xii-xiv, 28-30, 115-17 –tr.

⁴¹ See Glucksmann, Lévy, Legendre, Holder or many others.

quality or aspect ('de la' plèbe)" inside all of us⁴² – can only be liminally dialectical – a residual product of the dialectic of capital, which acts as an effective mystification of its power. But now collective practice rises up, in its theoretical and practical aspects. Both lead to the logic of separation, of which self-valorization and sabotage represent the moment of innovation. In other words, they lead to that moment in which the monstrous autonomy of capitalist power clashes with – but is also explained by and originates from – the autonomous power of the proletariat.

Productive force, the whole of productive force, is henceforth in the hands, in the brains of living labor. If the separation and the destructuring of capital's state are given, if they have reached this high point of their ignoble perfection, then this cannot be explained except as an explosive result of the dialectic of development. The endpoint of development establishes the limits from whose realisation the two opposed paths unfold in their mutual independence. At this point the mutual independence, the lack of continuity, analogy, homology, and specificity of the mechanisms and modality do not alter the fact that these divergent developments determine effects on the whole structure within which they are inscribed.⁴³ But this interweaving is not indeterminate: its determination resides in

⁴² Interview in *Led Revoltes Logiques*. no. 4; English translation: "Power and Strategies," in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, New York, Pantheon, 1980, p. 138

⁴³ I am paraphrasing Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*, New York: Vintage, 1979, pp. 3-31

the resolution of the struggle between the subjects who regulate separateness. It is here that we can read the full power [*potenza*] of living labor, its present active emancipation, its creative quality. And then, certainly, it is not permissible to be a pessimist!

Because, from these interweavings and separations, as proletarian productive force becomes solidified in the face of the terrible but destructured rigidification of the enemy power [*potenza*], it registers a series of quite determinative subversive effects. Constant capital, in the terroristic and irreversible aspect attributed to it by the Nuclear-State, tends toward totalitarianism; to that same extent, the separate existence of the proletariat is socially compacted and tends to resolve within itself, within its own mechanisms of self-valorization, the whole of social labor. The more the Nuclear-State is destructured, condemned to an obstinate indifference of its own will, the more labor-power, socially unified within the process of its own self-valorization, is endowed with an extraordinary innovative vigor. It is neither a contradiction nor a balanced opposition: it is the antagonism of the century, and its resolution will be the fruit of the present struggle.

To examine the *socialization of the process of proletarian self-valorization* is to grasp a *qualitative leap*. All the categories that, subjectively or objectively, are linked to that of *productive labor* are becoming socialized. This is a change that is part of the transformation of productive force into an exclusive attribute of the proletariat. Henceforth productive force is always, and only,

social. Marx's new mode of exposition relates to this new mode of existence of the proletariat, unified in its independence and socialized in its productive force. A qualitative leap. Therefore, if this change of categories has taken place, then we find ourselves facing a reality that is quite new, new from the point of view of its social substance, and, what is more, new in its dynamic too. It is a social productive force, a force that emerges qualitatively from the field within which it was dynamically formed and recomposed. The result is an original, new tendency, a common and collective force. *The result of the synthesis that has been taking place is the trigger of a more advanced passage of social transformation.* Up to this moment, we have viewed the concept of the political composition of the class in a rather static manner. But the conditions of the movement that we have been defining now offer instead a perspective that is dynamic, allowing us to take a further step forward. *The reappropriation of productive force transforms class composition from a passive result into a motive force, from an effect into a cause.*

This passage is qualified in material terms: *from labor-power to intervention-power [forza-intenzione]*. This is a second specification of the process that brings the working class and the proletariat to the conquest of their own independence. On the one hand, a dynamic essence, an internal tension, an active projection; on the other hand, the materiality of this expression, the capacity to respond to proletarian needs in an adequate manner, to insert them into the productive network of self-valorization. This moment is fundamental. *We define invention-power as a capacity of the class to nourish the process of proletarian*

self-valorization in the most complete antagonistic independence; the capacity to found this innovative independence on the basis of abstract intellectual energy as a specific productive force, in an increasingly exclusive manner. Proletarians are fed up with the situation in which their struggles lead to the reinforcement of the bosses' machinery: in this new phase they produce for themselves, according to the measure of non-work, and via the method of social transformation. The materiality of proletarian invention-power refers to the needs that they satisfy, to the desires that they articulate, to the determinateness of the process of reproduction; their innovative specificity refers to the solution of the multiplicity of projects – to the socially relevant overall project of innovation (which is central for the proletariat) that is set in motion. The bosses tremble. Their social scientists are hard at work trying to capture and imprison what they call the "quality of life," the "allocation of non-work time," and innovation in the strict sense.⁴⁴ Fine work! In fact, even when we hurl it in their teeth, they will never understand sabotage, the antagonistic, subversive force of the project of workers' self-valorization.

Nor should we forget the "superstructural" effects – if it is still permitted to use this most abused and erroneous term! – of this

⁴⁴ See the splendid examples of academic imbecility in *Towards Balanced Growth*, edited by the National Goals Research Staff, Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1970; G. Becker, "A Theory of the Allocation of Time," in *The Economic Journal*, no. 75, September 1965; J. Schmooker, *Invention and Economic Growth*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966.

proletarian reappropriation of social productive force and its transmutation into independent invention-power. It is the sense of being a majority, of proud confidence, which runs through every action of the proletariat. It is above all the irreducible determination that accompanies the political life of the proletariat. Only in the reappropriation of invention-power do the personal and the political become effectively one single whole – positive, open and victorious. But with this, let us not forget the weightiness of our task. The very fact that this separateness is the precondition for the liberation of the productive forces opens up a whole range of difficulties. But then, was any other way possible? And in fact, when all is said and done, is this not the most desirable of situations – the victorious increase in our own separateness; the intensification of our own independence; this (Promethean?) self-reliance. Indeed, we repeat after the poet:

Poor dead flower? when did you forget you were a flower?
when did you look at your skin and decide you were an
impotent dirty old locomotive? the ghost of a locomotive?
the specter and shade of an once powerful mad American
locomotive?

You were never no locomotive, Sunflower, you were a
sunflower!⁴⁵

8. THE REFUSAL OF WORK

More than any other single watchword of the communist movement, the refusal of work has been continually and violently outlawed, suppressed and mystified by the traditions and ideology of socialism. If you want to provoke a socialist to rage, or deflate his flights of demagogy, provoke him on the question of the refusal of work! In the hundred years since Marx first spoke of work as "unhuman nature," no single point of the communist program has been so fiercely fought against – to the point where, nowadays, the excommunication of the refusal of work has become tacit, surreptitious and implicit, but no less powerful. The argument has been shunted out of sight. But now the shrewdness of proletarian reasoning has begun, on this indirect terrain, to reinstate the *centrality of the refusal of work in the communist program*. From ethnology to psychology, from aesthetics to sociology, from ecology to medicine, this centrality repeatedly reappears, sometimes disguised in strange ways, and sometimes almost invisible. Nonetheless, it is springing up everywhere, and soon they will be constrained to pursue it, just

⁴⁵ Allen Ginsburg, "Sunflower Sutra" in *Howl and Other Poems*, San Francisco: City Lights, 1956, 1959, p.37-38.

as in earlier times similar high priests had to deal with the omnipresent sorcerous truth of the Devil.

Our task is *the theoretical reinstatement of the refusal of work in the program, in the tactics, in the strategy of communists*. Today, as never before, at our given level of class composition, the refusal of work reveals its centrality as a point of synthesis of the communist program, in both its objective and its subjective aspects. The refusal of work is, in fact, the most specific, materially determinate foundation of the productive force reappropriated to serve the process of workers' self-valorization.

The refusal of work is first and foremost sabotage, strikes, direct action. Already, in this radical subjectivity, we can see the global nature of its antagonistic comprehension of the capitalist mode of production. The exploitation of labor is the foundation of the whole of capitalist society. Thus the refusal of work does not negate *one* nexus of capitalist society, *one* aspect of capital's process of production or reproduction. Rather, in all its radicality, it *negates the whole of capitalist society*. So it is not by chance then, that the capitalist response does not try to deal with the refusal of work by partial means: it has to be a global response at the level of the mode of production, in terms of restructuring. Seen from this point of view, *the effects of the refusal of work exercise a direct productive action on the capitalist mode of production*. But the more fully the refusal of work is socialized and radicalized, according to the very rhythm of capitalist restructuring, the more its "productive action" intensifies the

aspects of destructuring of the capitalist mode of production. The falling rate of profit, the crisis of the law of value, and the rearticulation of the law of value within the indifference of command are direct – albeit neither continuous nor homologous – effects of the refusal of work. The continuous effect, on the other hand, is to be found on the obverse side of capital's dialectic – where sabotage is revealed as class valorization. and the *refusal of work becomes the key to reading self-valorization*. It becomes the key to reading in two fundamental senses, from which other radical consequences then follow: in the sense that it is one of the contents, if not *the fundamental* content of the process of proletarian valorization; and in the sense that it provides a criterion of *measure* for the method of social transformation. We should look first at these two fundamental senses, and then at the consequences that derive from them.

(a) *The refusal of work as the content of the process of self-valorization*. Please note: "content" here does not mean "objective." The objective, the aim of the process of self-valorization, is the complete liberation of living labor within production and reproduction: it is the total utilization of wealth in the service of collective freedom. It is therefore more than the refusal of work – although this covers the fundamental space of the transition, and characterizes its dialectic as well as establishing its norms. So, the refusal of work is again a moment of the process of self-valorization as it relates, in a destructive manner, to the law of value, to the crisis of the law of value, and to *the obligation to productive labor of the whole society*. The fact that in the society based on self-valorization, in the transitional phase, everyone

must work, is a norm that is pertinent to the refusal of work, exactly as is the campaign to reduce working hours and to reduce the labor involved in reproduction and transformation. To recognize this normativity of the refusal of work is to grasp it as a content of the process of transition, and not as a final objective of the process of self-valorization; not to mystify it, but to determine it within the class struggle, in the specificity of its constructive function. Thus, as well as being a *fundamental tactical function in the destructuring of the enemy*, we see the refusal of work as the content of communist strategy. The two aspects are deeply related. The struggle for the destructuring of capital, and particularly for the destructuring-destruction of constant capital in the form that it assumes in its most recent phase of the maturity of the capitalist mode of production and its state. establishes particular relationships with the continuing existence of wealth in its capitalist form. The process of class separation runs up against the hard constancy of capital – against *constant capital*. In the short term, this relationship cannot be eliminated, but only dominated. Invention-power, as the transfiguration of labor-power in this first phase of transition, must apply itself to the destructuring of constant capital. The refusal of work is its first, fundamental weapon, and to this is added *invention* in its proper sense, the qualitative determination of a mode of production no longer dominated by the categories of capital. But the refusal of work is precisely fundamental because it continuously reposes class struggle *within the problem of transition*, because within its experience it carries the complexity of the destructuring-liberation dialectic. This can also be seen from a further point of view. When the

critical consciousness of political economy realizes the actuality of the proletarian process of the refusal of work, it reacts either in utopian terms, or in purely ideological terms. The *technological utopia* is the negation of the concreteness of the refusal of work and the attempt to attribute the exigencies that arise from this concreteness to technological development, to the expansion of fixed capital, and to an increasing intensity of the organic composition of capital. The *ideology of quietism* is the attempt to reverse the collective terms of the experience of the refusal of work into a perspective of artisanal liberation – isolating the big collective event and confining it in the recesses of individual consciousness, or in communitarian intercourse between individuals. So all this can be ignored. The refusal of work is at one and the same time destructuring of capital and self-valorization of the class; the refusal of work is not an invention that puts its faith in the development of capital, nor is it an invention which feigns the nonexistence of the domination of capital. It is neither a utopian flight of fancy, nor a quietist retreat into isolated consciousness: it faces foursquare that collective relationship which alone permits us to introduce a logic of collective class separation. Liberation is unthinkable without a process that constructs the positivity of a new collective mode of production upon the negativity of the destruction of the capitalist mode of production. The exultant and demonstrative force of the concept of the refusal of work consists, in Marxian terms, in the twofold nature of the functions in question, in their complementarity. It is clear that in the process of transition the weight that each function gradually assumes will be different. But beware of dividing the

fundamental core that produces them, and beware of making homologies between them in their alternating development: the history of the socialist perversions of the revolutionary process has always been based on the extolling of one of these moments to the detriment of the other – and in the end, both were destroyed and utopianism and individualism reappeared because the collective practice, the unitary content of the revolutionary process, the synthesis of love and hate, the refusal of work in its materiality, were destroyed with them.

(b) *The refusal of work as a measure of the process of self-valorization.* So, the refusal of work is indeed a strange concept. It is the measure of itself it is the measure of the process of self-valorization of which it is also the content! Yes indeed. This is possible because of its dialectical nature, because of the intensity of the synthesis of destructuring and innovation that invests it. In the first place, then, the progress of the process of self-valorization is measured, negatively, by the progressive reduction of individual and overall labor-time, that is, the quantity of proletarian life that is sold to capital. In the second place, the progress of the process of self-valorization is measured positively by the multiplication of socially useful labor dedicated to the free reproduction of proletarian society. *Hatred of work and hatred of exploitation are the productive content of invention-power, which is the prolongation of the refusal work.* To grasp the refusal of work as a measure of the method of social transformation for us means a tremendous step forward. It means focusing on the *generalized reduction of working hours* and linking it simultaneously with a *process of revolutionary*

innovation, theoretical and practical, scientific and empirical, political and administrative, subordinated to the continuity of the class struggle over this content. It means being able to start to *put forward material parameters for measuring the workers' progress in terms of communism*. The problem of how to measure productive force, in fact, is not only a problem for the capitalists; on the other hand, in any case, it does not appear that, given the continuing crisis of the law of value, capital is really very capable of self-measurement. Command is not a measure, but is simply efficacy, an act of force. Neither the criterion of the wage hierarchy nor the monetary system any longer has any logic other than that of command. The productive force of social labor is not so much organized by capital as undergone by it, turned back against it as destructuring. Measuring the productivity of labor in terms of the refusal of work allows a complete demystification of capital's command over productivity; it negates the possibility of a productivity of labor which is still exploitation and introduces a measure which at the same time unbalances the system – *a measure of the increasing revolutionary intensity of the process of self-valorization*. At this point, finally, we should come to consider the measure not as a function of exploitation – as it has always been so far, and as the economists, even those of the school of value, continue to think, true to themselves! – but rather as a measure of freedom. A measure adapted to living labor, and not to the results of exploitation and the death of labor consolidated into capital. A measure of the quantity of revolution produced, of the quality of our life and our liberation. And this measure will provide the basis for our

continuous formation and transformation of the method of social transformation.

To see the refusal of work both as a content and as a measure of the processes of self-valorization implies, as we have said, a number of relevant consequences. Here we need only highlight one fundamental one, since it has an immediate impact on class composition. It is the dynamic *nexus* that, on the basis of the practice of the refusal of work and its theoretical/practical extensions, is posited *between the workers' vanguard in direct production and the proletarian vanguard in indirect production*. Now, even in the most revolutionary variants of theoretical Marxism, the nexus between direct and indirect productive labor has never been correctly posited; it has only been posited within a tendency of a merely objective character. Capital enlarges, integrates, develops, and socially recomposes productive labor in general: fine – and some have ventured to identify in this framework a movement of unification between directly and indirectly productive labor. But if we start from the standpoint of the refusal of work, then we can reinterpret these tensions deriving from the logic of capital: we can identify, in a complementary and/or antagonistic manner, a far deeper dialectical process running through the fabric of productive labor, and one which is desirable from the class point of view. The refusal of work is, first and foremost, the refusal of the most alienated – and therefore the most productive – labor. Secondly, it is the refusal of capitalist work as such – that is, of exploitation in general. And thirdly, it is a tension toward a renewal of the mode of production, toward an unleashing of the proletariat's

invention-power. *In the interweaving of these three motifs, the dynamic intensity of the refusal of work invests the entirety of the capitalist mode of production.* If all this is true, the social interchange which capital imposes and the division that slowly disappears between directly and indirectly productive labor ought to be assumed as a fundamental issue for the refusal of work. In the refusal of work, there is a recognition of the interchange between directly and indirectly productive labor, because there is a destructive tension on the part of the most exploited labor and the entirety of its social reproduction which is quite unifying. It is in the interest of the workers to tear aside the veils which capital draws over the unity of social labor, and instead to strengthen and articulate this unity. The refusal of work, once it presents itself as invention-power, must move within the unity of all the aspects of social labor, of both directly and indirectly productive social labor. The radical method of social transformation can only be applied to this unity; it can only reassume and rearticulate it from the inside. The refusal of work, whether in terms of definition or in terms of prospects, thus invests the given composition of the class, bringing out its unitary characteristics, and insisting on the workers' rearticulation of productive labor in all its aspects.

As regards the consequences that derive from the dynamics of the refusal of work, we shall take these up in the following two sections. Here, it has been important to insist upon the *unity of social productive labor in terms of the refusal of work*. Now, in this case our operation has been not only scientific, but also – and above all – political, because in fact it is within this complex

unity of the refusal of work, based on the breadth and density of this definition of the class, that the threads of the revolutionary workers program thus far outlined all tie up. This class composition, then, seeks a communist program that will be adequate to its own social figure, which will strike effectively at the level of production and equally so at the level of reproduction. On the terrain of reproduction, the most immediate form taken by the refusal of work is that of the *direct appropriation of wealth*, either on the commercial level or on the institutional level, on the basis of this composition, the refusal of work launches an attack on the working week and proposes itself ultimately as the primary norm in relation to the development of proletarian invention-power. In short, this class composition which we see invested by the refusal of work and by invention-power begins to represent globally the process of self-valorization. In its independence and separateness. Allow me to add once again that this separateness is not technological utopianism, nor is it individual solitude, nor is it a communitarian illusion. On the other hand, after the experiences of the past ten years, is there anyone who can still doubt the efficacy and the complementarity of the double action that has been set in motion by the refusal of work – the destructuring of capital's system and the destabilization of capital's regime?

9. A FOURTH PARENTHESIS: ON THE PARTY

The party, its concept, the proposition of the party: *does it still make sense for us to pose this problem?* I am forced to put the question in such a radical way because the polemic itself is a radical one. Many people understand the process of self-valorization as excluding the party, and maintain that the issue of destructuring applies very precisely in regard to the concept of the party. All this is institutional, it is an attribute of the enemy's power. The proletariat can exist only as a movement, as an antagonistic project. The history of the socialist parties looms over us like a nightmare. There seems to exist a necessary relationship between institutionalization/reformism and the destruction of the independence of the proletariat, its betrayal. The party is dead labor, it is necessarily the negation of the refusal of work, the attempt to establish a laborist metric of the workers' action. In the classical party, the needs and desires of the proletariat are subordinated in a sadistic manner to the supposed, but always mystified, unity and generality of the program. The internalization of this necessity within the class becomes pure masochism. The delegation of needs to generality is personified in the cult of leadership: through the formalism of its structure, the party expropriates the class of its invention-power. The party, through the necessity imposed by the generality of its own project, appears either as a powerless agent of mediation, or as a vanguard, admittedly powerful but

arrogant and tending to prevaricate when faced with the mass movement. The present structure of the state-form is such that the institutional emergence of the party allows the state to pose an effective alternative (blackmail) between the destruction of the insubordinate aspects and the ordering effects of the party's emergence.

Now, we do not have to be anarchists to admit that there is a lot of truth in this string of accusations – particularly in light of an almost uninterrupted history of socialist betrayal. But this does not alter the fact that in my consciousness and in my practice as a revolutionary, *I do not know how to jettison the problem of the party*. It may be that the problem actually poses itself under another name – for example, the problem of organization; the collective problem of matching means to ends, the matching of strategy and objectives, of mass participation and vanguard action, of organization and the circulation of information. However, the whole of my political existence is interwoven with these problems. These problems are the necessary and inevitable form in which the emerging subversive will find meaning. In other words, I do not deny any of the contradictions that I have just listed – but I cannot accept that those contradictions cancel out the problem. The substance of the problem is revealed to me, therefore, as contradictory, but nevertheless it exists. *The problem of the party today is the present reality of a real contradiction*.

However, having said this, I have not said much. I could in fact demonstrate that similar contradictions also exist in other fields

of experience. It is the same contradiction that you find between the personal and the political, between self-valorization and destructuring, between destructuring and destabilization. In all these cases, relative but determinate degrees of activity are opposed to relative but determinate degrees of exteriorization, of institutionalization, of alienation. Of course, in these fields I can also identify specific solutions to the contradictions. *So does there exist a "specific" terrain for the contradiction inherent in the "party experience?"*

I should say at once that I do not believe so. I think that the specificity of the "party" contradiction lies in its *non-resolvability*, and that the party consists precisely of the persistence of the contradiction. But why?

In order to consider the problem in overall terms, we need to distinguish a number of planes. In the first plane I have to consider the "party" concept in relation to a series of other fields of experience that the revolutionary struggle offers me. If I succeed in demonstrating a specific function for the party in these fields, I should then be able to go on to consider in more determinate terms the degree of historical contradictoriness that this specific function presents.

Now, the fundamental characteristic of the revolutionary development of the proletariat is the process of proletarian self-valorization. This is a material process, built on the direct appropriation of wealth and power, the development of radical needs and desires, and the accompanying – but ever more

independent and autonomous – transformation of the class composition. Certainly, within this framework *the party* is not resolvable; *it is not an immediate element of the process of self-valorization*. But having said this, another order of problems enters the picture: the process of self-valorization is the opposite of the state-form: it is, albeit outside of any homologous criterion, a faculty of destructuring and continuous destabilization of the enemy power. This, however, describes only an extremely general form of the relationship. We have seen how this very general form is determined from the capitalist point of view: the indifference of capitalist command articulates itself in restructuring, in the hierarchical mechanisms of political income, in the increasingly terroristic function of command. How is this very general form of the relationship determined from the angle of workers' self-valorization? This can only be answered from within the logic of separation: *the party is a function of proletarian force, conceived as a guarantor of the process of self-valorization*. The party is the army that defends the frontiers of proletarian independence. And naturally it must not, cannot get mixed up in the internal management of self-valorization. The party is not a direct, radical counterpower anchored in the full materiality of self-valorization. It is a function of power, but separate, sometimes contradictory with the process of self-valorization. If jesting were allowed, I might say that the party is a militant religious order, not the ecclesiastical totality of the process. The party is a function of the command that the proletariat exercises against its enemies. I see no contradiction in the fact that, within the dictatorship of the proletariat, there might be more functions for the party: in

fact, I believe that these multiple functions may exist – but only from the starting point of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and also from the starting point, obviously, of that proletarian command that is unified in the course of the revolutionary process. Command resides in the mass counterpower of the proletariat, in the organization of the processes of self-valorization: the party is a function of this. *The politics of self-valorization hold command over the party.* The guiding force consists in the masses organized in the process of self-valorization, in the constitutive and constitutional process of proletarian self-valorization.

Having said this, however, *it appears that the contradiction as a specific element of the definition of the party has been eliminated.* We now have a clear-cut situation: on one side, the force of the proletariat organized within the process of self-valorization, and on the other, its subordinate function. This is an abstract situation, though.

Concrete reality reinstates the element of contradiction in the party. Today, the party exists as an ensemble of inextricable functions – defense and attack, counterpower. In the term "counterpower" we have the most precise representation of the contradictory situation that we are experiencing. For this term, while it extols the process of self-valorization in terms of victorious efficacy, at the same time confuses all its functions in the transitoriness and precariousness of the process. for this reason, today's militant is a double figure – rooted on the one hand in the practice of self-valorization, and tied, on the other, to the functions of offence.

From this situation arises a sometimes-tragic superimposition of planes, the explosion of violent contradictions. And yet this contradiction is vital, and it is only by carefully following it through, with all the clarity of which we are capable, that we can think of resolving it. Following this contradiction through with clarity, we can impose, through criticism and self-criticism, the distinct determinations that mark on the one hand the emergence of the self-valorizing power of the proletariat, and on the other hand its "party-type" functions.

All this is inscribed in the materiality of the revolutionary process. There is not one of its aspects that does not reveal the double nature of the functions in question. But take note: from everything that has been said so far, it should be clear that when we refer to the "double nature" of the necessary functions, we mean, in absolute and inalienable terms, that in self-valorization, the *self-governance of the masses must prevail* over any other subordinate functions, however important these may be. In relation to the determinacy of the class composition, we find ourselves, in fact, within the division between directly productive labor and indirectly productive labor: were it not for the fact that capitalist power insists on this division, would there in fact be the need for a special party function in order to assist the processes of recomposition? But on the other hand, is it possible to negate the relative contradictoriness of this function, in relation to the processes of self-valorization in their immediacy? Those who fill their mouths and hearts with myths of the past call this function "central." We know that it is transitory, and we accept with materialist determination its

contradictoriness, just as we agree to live this contradictoriness within the revolutionary process. We know that this contradictoriness is complex. We shall conquer it, certainly. We shall overcome it, and it will not be long. Henceforth, indeed, this becomes a central problem for revolutionaries, and its material solution is to be found within class composition. To conceive of the revolutionary process as being dense with these contradictions allows us to envision a solution that, even in extremely determinate terms, is imminent – *a proposal for the constitution of the dictatorship of the proletariat*. But we shall return to this in the next few pages.

For the moment, let us deepen our perceptions of this necessary contradiction. It appears when we analyze the processes of proletarian recomposition. It appears with even greater force when we go further into the issue of the program. Consider the nexus between proletarian recomposition and attack on the terrain of public spending, the smashing of the practice of the wage as differential political income which capital seeks to impose on the social terrain – how is this passage thinkable, how is it possible, except through a *practice of offensive anticipation of capital, of a general timetable [scadenza]*, and therefore of defense of the levels of *counterpower* that have been achieved? Even here we notice a gap between the political functions of the proletariat, which often becomes a contradiction. But it is a necessary contradiction – like that posed between the need for a drastic reduction of the length of the working day and the obligation of all to work; like that which arises between the measurement of social transformation and the unleashing of the

proletariat's invention-power; like that which is posed between a long and steady process of destructuring of the enemy, and action that destabilizes his initiative. *A contradiction which we must live and control within the overall development of the process of proletarian self-valorization.*

Furthermore, we cannot imagine that the conquest of power, the installation of proletarian power, will resolve these contradictions in one fell swoop. All the first decrees must be aimed at making the conquest of power irreversible, but at the same time, in unison, they must aim to destroy the reality of power as the obverse of the capitalist state-form. In other words, overthrow it truly – not nominally, but substantially. In other words, *power is to be dissolved into a network of powers, and the independence of the class is to be constructed via the autonomy of individual revolutionary movements.* Only a diffuse network of powers can organize revolutionary democracy; only a diffuse network of powers can enable the opening of a dialectic of recomposition which reduces the party to a revolutionary army, to an unwavering executor of the proletarian will.

The revolutionary process of self-valorization has one main quality that it methodically asserts: it does not simply expand abstractly, but concretely draws into itself all the diversity of contents and functions of the proletariat. We cannot think of communist society as anything other than a society which will destroy every separation of functions and contents, every transcendental projection of the process of its own unity, and which therefore lives wholly compact within this process. This

unity is a production of moments of power that are pluralistic, if social-democratic usage has not sullied this word beyond repair; it is proletarian command over the synthesis of the autonomous contents and the different functions of the movement. It is a living animal body in which the various different functions and contents are unified. Let us reappropriate this image, so worthy of the working class; let us seize it back from the iconography of the bourgeois state – for these are the terms in which the theorists of the bourgeois state have always expressed themselves in destructuring the proletariat.

A living animal which is fierce with its enemies, and savage in the protection of itself and its passions – this is how I foresee the constitution of the communist dictatorship. The ordering of functions and contents can only be established on the basis of the vitality of the proletarian beast, on the unity of its diversity. But today we are still within an open contradiction, and this we must never forget, especially when the question reposes itself at the personal level, on the terrain of genuine subjectivity. Here the contradictions reveal themselves with a tension that only immediate participation in the process of proletarian self-valorization can resolve. It is not the party that has to encounter or confront the subjective and the personal: it is the movement at its most intense. Now, at this point I must put myself within the contradiction. To say that living this contradiction brings about suffering is merely to speak the truth. This is all well and good – but can this suffering be survived? Yes, it can, if we place the autonomy of the proletarian movement over and above –

and occasionally against – the party. Yes, if at all times we have the strength to identify the process of proletarian self-valorization in its always victorious depth and intensity. As Rimbaud wrote in May 1871:

*Quand tes pieds ont dansé si fort dans les colères
Paris! quand tu reçus tant de coups de couteau,
Quand tu gis, retenant dans tes prunelles claires
Un peu de la bonté du fauve renouveau.*

(When your feet danced so strongly in anger,
Paris! when you took so many cuts of the knife,
When you lay, keeping in your bright eyes
A little of the bounty of savage renewal.)

Here is the path that permits us to master the contradiction and its knife-cuts: it lies wholly in tying ourselves directly to that experience of savage renewal. This is the proletarian foundation that turns the contradiction into the basis for a further leap forward, that turns *organization* into a powerful weapon, built by our strength and collectivity, that is aware a one and the same time of its instrumental character and its fundamental role.

10. ... AND THE PROLETARIANS

STORM HEAVEN⁴⁶

If it is true that all revolutions hitherto have only tended to perfect the state machine, this does not mean that the same fate necessarily awaits the actions taken by the working class in the future. If it is true that the destructuring power of the proletarian class is already weighing heavily on the state machine, then it follows that this perfecting of the state machine is gradually pushing it to the point of senselessness. But this is not just a generic diagnosis: the tendency is developing into an actuality that shows *very concrete signs of capitalist crisis*. Is this a definitive crisis? The question is merely rhetorical. Our whole position, in fact, is that, if there is a crisis, it is solely a crisis of the relations and form of capital's domination. We shall leave it to historical determinism and the ideology of socialism to make forecasts based on "objectivity," on the determinacy necessitated by the "objective contradictions." Here, the crisis is a crisis of the

⁴⁶ Marx, in a letter to Ludwig Kugelmann, 12 April, 1871: '... the present rising in Paris – even if it be crushed by the wolves, swine, and vile curs of the old society – is the most glorious deed of our Party since the June insurrection in Paris. Compare these Parisians, storming heaven, with the slaves to heaven of the German-Prussian Holy Roman Empire, with its posthumous masquerades reeking of the barracks, the Church, the clod-hopping junkers and above all, of the philistine' (Marx & Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975, p. 247). translated by I. Lasker.

relationship, but above all a crisis *in* the relationship. It will be definitive when workers' subjectivity has defined it as such. The crisis is a risk, a gamble by the working class and the proletariat. *Communism is not inevitable.* It is for this reason that we are so optimistic today: the contradiction between the state-form and the processes of proletarian self-valorization shows us, quantitatively and qualitatively, a schism in the capital relation that is antagonistic. This contradiction is irreversible. It is cumulative. It is general. Capital runs the risk of getting used to its own state of crisis. In very bad conscience, it considers the crisis to be one of its modes of existence. The working class does not see it that way. The direct and immediate overturning of the passages of restructuring into opportunities for struggle shows that the working class is tending to force a political simultaneity between the workers' cycle of struggle and the cycle of capital – and occasionally even to anticipate capital's cycle. This "simultaneity" is very different from the one that capital and its science would like to see. The crisis, in fact, establishes itself on the *failure of capital's cycle to anticipate the cycle of workers' struggles.* The workers' understanding of the cycle precedes, and destroys, capitalist planning, it destructures capital's state-form and its system. This is the crisis of capitalism as Marx defined it. It is a Marxian crisis in the most orthodox of terms: in the sense that the consciousness and reality of an alternative mode of production as foreseen by Marx are coming together, expressed through the productive forces – a process in which subjectivity is the key. The opportunity to grasp this antagonistic potentiality of the process could only have been presented to today's working class, in the sense that the opportunity is

constructed from the intersection of struggles with the liminal development of capital.

Capital responds to the presence of this crisis by increasing the rigidity of its own movements. The pure indifference of command transforms itself into ferocity, organizes itself into the blackmail threat of nuclear destruction.

So here we stand, on the eve of [*alla scadenza del*] storming heaven. On one side, a workers' power which is fully aware that it has emerged from its prehistory; that it has reappropriated the mechanisms of its own reproduction; that it has won autonomy and independence from valorization; that it has brought about a very profound crisis of capital. And on the other, a capital which, at the very moment that it acknowledges this tendency, rigidifies its own forms of expression, tragically, both as regards the political form in which it makes itself manifest, and as regards the mode of production that it organizes.

Marx said that between two equal rights, force decides. And in fact, as the crisis increasingly takes root, *violence takes on a fundamental valence*. On the one hand, it is the state counterpart of the indifference and rigidity of command. On the other hand, it is an ardent projection of the process of workers' self-valorization. We cannot imagine anything more completely determinate and laden with content than the workers' violence. Historical materialism defines the necessity of violence in history: we, for our part, charge it with an everyday quality arising out of the class struggle. We consider violence to be a

function legitimated by the escalation of the relation of force within the crisis and by the richness of the contents of proletarian self-valorization.

In the socialist tradition, violence and the use of violence are attributes of the party. The socialist party is the institutionalization of violence. But we are against this image of the party and against all of the various attempts to revive it today, be they overt, conscious, or implicit. It is the party's monopoly on violence, the fact of its being the inverse rather than the determinate antithesis of the state-form, that has brought about the functional possibility of repression of proletarian violence – the Gulag is born here. We are opposed to the conception of violence that this type of party has built for itself. For us, *violence* always presents itself as a *synthesis* of form and content. First of all as an expression of proletarian counterpower, as a manifestation of the process of self-valorization: then, directed toward the outside, as a destructuring and destabilizing force. Thus as a *productive force* and an *anti-institutional force*. So it is obvious that proletarian violence has no need to exhibit itself in an exemplary manner, nor to choose for itself exemplary objectives. But this is not all. In the tension that class composition reveals toward the transition to communism and the dictatorship of the proletariat, violence presents itself not only as central, but increasingly as a synthesis of form and content: a form which is exclusive, excluding the enemy, and a rational content which is measured and defined by the refusal of work. Violence is the *rational thread* which links proletarian valorization to the destructuring of the

system, and this latter to the destabilization of the regime. Violence is the revolutionary project at the point where it becomes efficacious, because the desirability of the content has been transformed into a program, and because the program is tending toward the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Enough of the bourgeois and reformist hypocrisy against violence! Even children know that the capitalist system is based on violence, and that this violence is certainly not clean in relation to the violence of the proletariat. *It is not by chance, then, that all the bourgeois and revisionist excommunications of violence are based on the threat of an even greater violence in return.* Whereas the Marxists' credo in this regard is precisely the overcoming of the violence of history, in the only way that is given to people and to classes to overcome it: by recognizing it – recognizing violence and dominating it within the fabric of social relations, relating it back to its real content, to the mode of collective production, in both the phase and the method of transformation of society – but also, above all, in the phase of communist dictatorship; making it immanent. But hypocrisy does not pay. So now let us speak of our proletarian violence with clarity as a *necessary and central ingredient of the communist program.*

Let us speak clearly, because if the exercise of violence by the proletariat is the efficacy of proletarian self-valorization, we must produce and reproduce the effort to legitimate it. For the bourgeoisie, the legitimation of violence means the construction of ordered systems [*ordinamenti*], whether juridical, economic or administrative. Every bourgeois social order is a sure

legitimation of violence. Capitalist development was the "rational" wellspring of the legitimation of violence in those ordered systems. With the law of value entering into crisis, capitalist violence and the ordered systems that allow it to function find that they no longer have a sphere of exercise and credibility. Violence is no longer mediated, is no longer rationally legitimated: the destructured orders live on as pure violence. We, the working class and the proletariat, have produced this destructured senselessness of power! And on the other hand, acting for the destructuring of its enemy, self-valorization develops in the absence of any homology, however small, with its adversary and in the discovery of the *rationality of the development of living labor* against capital's deadness in the revelation of the richness of the possibilities and qualities of collective life. This rationality of living labor, this qualitative intention, is the foundation for the collective and its practice; therefore *it is this rationality of fundamental needs that determines the legitimacy of our violence*. This violence is *not capable of homology* with capitalist violence, because the rationality that rules it is other, proletarian, absolutely different. However, in saying this, we should once again try to avoid confusing the proletarian determination of a new rationality by erasing its functional characteristics and plunging into a new irrationalism or – the correlative of the previous mistake – by denying the specificity of the function of violence. This violence is *contrary* to capitalist violence; it aims at the destruction of capital's system and regime; it is founded on class self-valorization; it is *not equal* in intensity to capitalist violence – it is *stronger*, more efficacious than capitalist violence. This is an essential precondition if we

are to win. An obvious condition. The whole of the process of self-valorization determines (and lies within) this violence, both in its qualitatively different aspect and in its quantitatively greater intensity. So we are not speaking of meeting terror with terror, and those who amuse themselves picturing the proletariat as intent on building its own pocket atomic bomb are mere provocateurs. Instead, we are speaking of opposing terror with an operation of sabotage and the reappropriation of knowledge [*conoscenza*] and power over the whole circuit of social reproduction, in such a way as to make the capitalist's recourse to terror into a suicidal prospect.

But how can we avoid the re-emergence of violence under the communist dictatorship, as an attribute of episodes of betrayal and restoration? Precisely by denying it a separate existence. *Violence is one element of the rationality of the processes of self-valorization.* Nothing else. The party, with the vanguard functions of violence that must be assigned to it, and the contradiction that this embodies – all this is to be subordinated *not dialectically, but violently* to workers' and proletarian power, to the direct organization of the processes of self-valorization. In the history of proletarian revolutions, every time the party's management of power takes precedence over the powers of proletarian organization, at that moment the revolution is finished. It happened in the Soviet Union and it happened in China. In our case it will not happen because the history of the revolutionary process already reveals to us a class composition that, when faced with any separated function whatsoever, increasingly exercises its powers of critique and destruction.

Ultimately, only the process of workers' valorization can exercise the logic of separation – and to the extent that it exercises that logic, it becomes the exclusive source of proletarian power.

From this point of view we can – and must – *begin our discussion of the constitution of the communist dictatorship*. It is time that we stopped laying out programs that are at best hazy. Of course, it is not on the terrain of the program that the project will find its greatest difficulties. On the other hand, on the terrain of the program, we have a number of powerful1 guiding ideas, such as the practice of the refusal of work and its projection in rational terms as a law and a measure of the transition; such as the development of innovative hypotheses, etc. The task of the proletariat is to unfold these propositions directly through the struggle. It is, rather, on the terrain of structure and constitution that we shall have to exert our greatest efforts now, operating, as ever, on the terrain of the mass movement, confronting the practice and institutions of the struggle with the overall project. Let us begin: many discoveries – we shall soon see – have already been made. Why have they not been theorized? Often because the practice has been too transitory and the experience too precarious. But in the struggles of the first years of this century, when the soviets were born – was not that experience of workers' government also something precarious and transitory? The real reason why we have not started on a mass attempt at intensifying the debate on the constitution of communist dictatorship is because this has been impeded by a repetition of the old expostulations of dogmatism, or by the

ideological strength of revisionism. Both of these destroyed the credibility of the developing project on the terrain of communism. Enough; it is time to start. The richness of our revolutionary imagination must be put to the test in mass debate, in a practical testing among the masses. The answers are to be found within the independence of the proletarian struggle.

This too is a target date [*scadenza*] for the storming of heaven. A fundamental target date. And let them now accuse us of "rationalism" – those who have for so long cursed our "irrationalism!" Or vice versa – what does it matter to us? What matters is something else. What matters is to be within this fine thing that is the independent struggle of the proletariat, to discover the density of the project. What matters the rational, desirable foundation that joins together our theoretical and our practical experience.

Domination and sabotage. *Sabotage is, therefore, the fundamental key to rationality that we possess at this level of class composition.* It is a key that permits us to unveil the processes through which the crisis of the law of value has gradually come to invest the entire structure of capitalist power, stripping it of any internal rationality and compelling it to be an efficacious spectacle of domination and destruction. Conversely, it is a key that allows us to identify the ability of the proletarian struggle to gain its independence according to the very rhythms of capitalist destructuring, but not in a homologous manner, to make progress in the process of its own self-valorization, and to transform the refusal of work into a measure of the process of

liberation. The form of capitalist domination is disintegrating before our eyes. The machinery of power is breaking down. *Sabotage follows on the heels of the irrationality of capital, and dictates the forms and the rhythms of its further disorganization.* The capitalist world reveals itself to us for what it is: once a machine for grinding out surplus-value, it has now become a net thrown down to block the workers' sabotage. But it is a net that is already too frayed. *The relation of force has been overturned:* the working class, its sabotage, is the highest force – and above all, the only source of rationality and value. From now on it becomes impossible, even in theory, to forget this paradox produced by the struggles: the more the form of domination perfects itself, the emptier it becomes; the more the workers' refusal grows, the fuller it is of rationality and value. Force, violence, power: they can measure themselves only against this law. And it is on this law, on the series of corollaries that derive from it, that the organization, the program, the forecasts of communists must be based. Our sabotage organizes the proletarian storming of heaven. And in the end that accursed heaven will no longer exist!