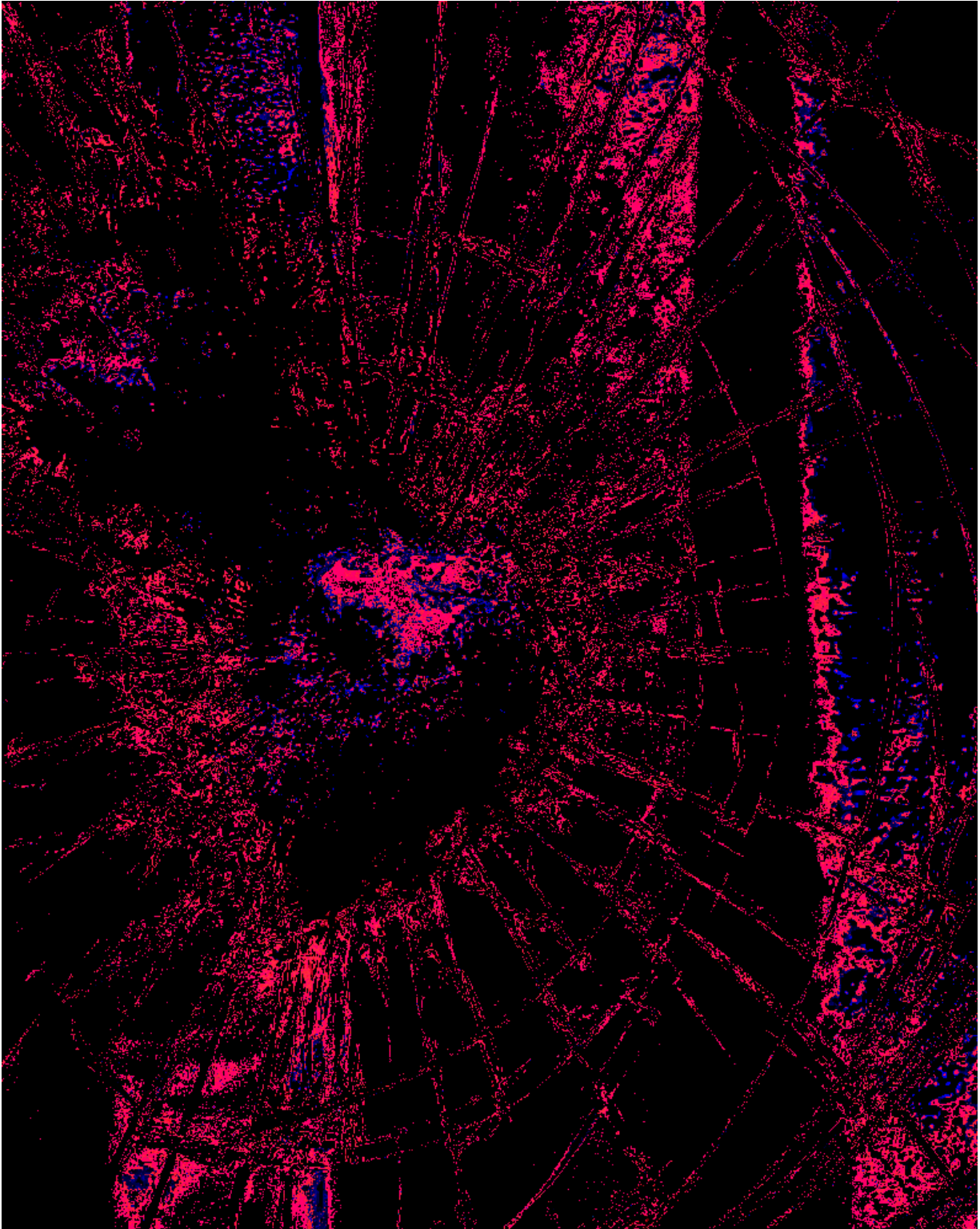


5. Post-Anarchist Communism



1. The Current Crisis

The final crisis, in its Marxist context, can no longer be conceptualised as a coming event, but rather must be seen as a process we are all immanent toward. We are no longer waiting for the fabled time when the revolution will arrive, where the contradictions of capitalism will lead to its destruction, for it is here. Yet where is the revolution, where is the fabled dictatorship of the proletariat, where is communism? There are riots, there are strikes, there are even small insurrections, yet there has been no end to capital's hegemony over the world. The riots of today are moments of clarity, where individuals disobey and begin to affirm their own future outside of the dominant discourse. Rioters, a crucial segment of the imaginary party as Tiqqun characterises them¹, are not in their current form part of the communist movement as Marx describes it. A riot is merely an expression of anger, but this anger never goes anywhere. The Marxist crisis is no longer recognized as a crisis within a stable system, but instead it is seen as the system itself. Thus to fight the crisis is to reclaim stability, to return to a sense of normality. The crisis has no becoming-event, it can neither be recognized as a break in the system or as a way to overcome the system. We live in the greatest civil war ever conceived, yet cannot recognize our own positions. As such the discourse collapses, and our forms of resistance become trapped and recuperated. There is no affirmative destruction of the institutions of society, there is no overcoming, there is no communization.

The Marxist response has been twofold: there is some false consciousness brought on by some cultural totality such as spectacle, capitalist realism, ideology, etc, or that the crisis is still yet to come. The first response realises correctly that revolution should be here, that the interests of the proletariat should lead to revolution, yet has not. To explain this they posit some cultural force that creates a false consciousness, a replacement or development of Marx's notions of ideology or superstructure. Ideology in Marx explained why the workers didn't turn to the communist movement, positing that the worker does not realise their true interest as a class². Many have correctly realised that this notion, based upon the reductive base and superstructure system in Marx, is insufficient for what is happening here. Realising this, they need a replacement to explain why the revolution is not here, to explain why the workers have not overcome capital. Reich³ and The Frankfurt School⁴ spoke of the desire for repression, derived from Freudian psychoanalysis, to explain why the revolution had not come. To them, the revolution should have come at the end of the First World War, yet it failed, the Spartakus were destroyed and the KPD became Stalinised. This in turn led to the

¹ Tiqqun. 2011. *This Is Not a Program*. Cambridge, Mass ; London: Semiotexte.

² Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels. (1846) 1995. *The German Ideology*. New York: International Publishers.

³ Wilhelm Reich, Mary Higgins, and Chester M Raphael. 2018. *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*. London: Souvenir Press (E & A), Cop.

⁴ Adorno, Theodor W, and Max Horkheimer. 1947. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. London: Verso.

rise of fascism, a rise similar to the recuperated discourse of resistance found today. The crisis of the First World War was supposed to be the straw that broke the camel's back. Lenin wrote that when the colonists had no new markets to acquire they would destroy themselves. Yet that crisis came and went, with the only thing resulting from it being repackaged capitalism in the form of Soviet Russia. Lenin had seen the imperialist war as the final event, yet all attempts to recognize this crisis' finality either failed or was transformed into something unrecognisable. The Situationists spoke of spectacle⁵, of the mediation of life by images. This is beyond the mere fetishism of commodities, as Marx describes in the first volume of *Capital*⁶, but comes to the point where the superstructure itself becomes a fetishism. All forms of culture become dominated by the commodity form, including gestures traditionally seen as threatening. There is no longer an accumulation of commodities but an accumulation of spectacles. Their methods for the overcoming of capital came to light in the events of May 68' in France. Much like the crises of today the mass insurrectionary potential settled, with the communist party settling for better working conditions. Even so the post-68 theorists were able to recognize this event as an event, one that fundamentally changed the dominant cultural attitude. Fisher speaks of capitalist realism⁷, where in Deleuzian terms all desire for post-capitalism has been repressed and repurposed into a desire for repression. The future is quite literally cancelled, the inevitable future of communism has been replaced by the liberal end of history. Fisher is perhaps the best contemporary theorist of our time in this sense, as he recognizes that all radicality is completely absorbed in the dominant discourse. We no longer recognize potentially transformative events as transformative, we can no longer affirm.

Each of these places their choice of a totalizing entity that controls revolutionary desire and then states that it leads to false consciousness. They conclude that there is some set interest, one that is revolutionary, and that the masses have been co-opted into a totalizing cultural apparatus. Yet many after 68' realised correctly that the politics of desire are more complicated than what the Marxists would have one believe. After 68' and the following struggles in Italy, Marxism had in a sense died and those who clung to it were carrying a corpse. The beginning of a post-68' approach to this revolutionary desire began to emerge with the work of Deleuze, Guattari, and Lyotard. These theorists realised correctly that political desire was not purely based on the base of Marx but rather formed a libidinal economy. This libidinal economy was not bound up in the discourse of Freud, but rather presented a radically novel philosophical approach. Deleuze and Guattari in *Anti-Oedipus*⁸ showed how repression resulted from the institution of the family, producing the Oedipus

⁵ Debord, Guy. 1967. *Society of the Spectacle*. Detroit, Michigan: Black & Red.

⁶ Marx, Karl. 1867. *Capital: Volume One*. New York: International Publishers.

⁷ Fisher, Mark. 2009. *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* Winchester: Zero Books.

⁸ Gilles Deleuze, and Félix Guattari. (1972) 2009. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. New York: Penguin Books.

complex. The pair also demonstrated that ideological desire is regulated via a series of desiring machines, leading to desire being constrained to what capital wishes. Lyotard examines this even further in *Libidinal Economy*⁹, demonstrating that workers desire their repression in the workforce. Along with Baudrillard, Lyotard begins to use this approach to deny any possibility of radicality. Thus these thinkers realise that the categories of true and false consciousness are poorly constructed and that there is merely free and repressed consciousness. We may be influenced towards certain paths, to that end, the various conclusions of these new Marxist approaches are in many ways correct, as capital does indeed involve a measure of repressing consciousness, but there is no base and superstructure. There is no ideology in the original Marxist sense. Baudrillard is a key thinker that does this, they explore this sense of alienation and false consciousness without a base of capital relations.

The other Marxist response has been to state that the crisis that will destroy capital has not yet happened. Some point to the third world and state that when the proletarianization is complete the mass crisis will come. Yet crisis is here, we are faced with it every day. The planet is burning, our institutions have become a public laughing stock, and no one is content. We live in an ever expanding state of war, yet we cannot offer any proper critique without becoming caught in an ever expanding web of nothing theories. The Invisible Committee places it best:

“This world no longer needs explaining, critiquing, denouncing. We live enveloped in a fog of commentaries and commentaries on commentaries, of critiques and critiques of critiques of critiques, of revelations that don’t trigger anything, other than revelations about the revelations. And this fog is taking away any purchase we might have on the world. There’s nothing to criticise about Donald Trump. As the worst that can be said about him, he’s already absorbed, incorporated it. He embodies it. He displays on a gold chain all the complaints that people have ever lodged against him. He is his own caricature, and he’s proud of it.”¹⁰

The world no longer makes sense, the clear cut institutions that leftists have opposed are no longer tactical enemies but have become laughing stocks. Trump is what Baudrillard calls obscene, he is not a break with the system but rather shows what it always has been. How can we properly wage a war when our enemy no longer can be properly seen or defined? The liberals who complain that politics has devolved from a noble affair to chaos do not see what politics always was, the modern scene of politics has both revealed itself for what it always

⁹ Jean-François Lyotard, and Iain Hamilton Grant. 2015. *Libidinal Economy*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

¹⁰ The Invisible Committee. 2018. *Now*. MIT Press.

was but also falls further from any authentic rule. Everyone sees it, the crisis is here, no one needs any further reason for a revolt. Yet where is it, where is the insurrectionary overthrow of the current order? The modern manifestations of the proletarian movement come about in the naive protester or striker, who while expressing rage settles for essentially nothing, and the imaginary party of Tiqqun, who provides a revolutionary subject without basis. Any proper action on the part of the imaginary party must first contend with its own invisibility. Its actions will never be seen as actions, as events, because the war they fight is not even recognized.

Capital has not fallen because it has evolved, it is no longer merely in the form of the circuit of commodities M-C-M' but has evolved beyond its own base. No one denies that the commodity form still is dominant within society, but it has evolved beyond its initial form. While this change should not be totalized into a new idol to fear as many heterodox Marxists have done and many traditional Marxists have done with capital itself, the fact that capital has changed is very apparent. The power that capital exerts has changed from a force centralised in exchanges to one at a far more fundamental level, creating a cultural apparatus that obscures any escape and pacifies any resistance. As such we as anti-capitalists must change the focus of our strategies from targeting the traditional notion of capital to fighting it in everyday life. Revolutionary struggle, which as the communizers point out merely reproduces the conditions of the proletariat, must transform into insurrectionary struggle. Here we can take from post-anarchism to reformulate an approach, as post-anarchism has transformed anarchism to face the modern forms of power and domination. Communism in the postmodern era must face capital head on, at the level of its domination. We must not seize the state, or any apparatus for that matter, but instead let our wars be waged, to seize our power.

2. The Post-Anarchist Approach to Power

To develop an idea of what the communist movement should take in the twenty-first century, its revolutionary partner in anarchism must also be considered. While the two in their original forms are very different, the theories are converging in the forms of things such as the post-anarchists, communizers, post-leftists, post-situationists, and the like. While it should be made clear that these currents have many differences, they are converging on the general point that the movement to abolish the current state of things must take place on the level of the everyday. This is why, despite the differences between the various currents, it is useful to take from these various currents. The framework and values have much in common. Regardless, anarchism in its modern form has undergone a radical transformation. Just as communism changed after the events of May 68' and its various associated movements, so did anarchism. Anarchism transformed from a theory based on the rejection of unjust hierarchies, a largely moralist and unhelpful notion, to a focus on liberation on the level of the everyday. Bookchin labels this trend in Anarchism as *lifestylism*¹¹, a focus on living anarchism rather than actual political change. He is very right that anarchism in its modern form is living anarchy, but this is not a pointless exercise. Anarchy is a way of life in its modern form rather than a vision of the future, it lives the movement of anarchy. Parker places this best in the context of egoist anarchism, which has seen a resurgence due to increased interest in Stirner:

“Anarchism is not a form of society. It is the cutting edge of individualism, the negative side of an egoist philosophy. The anarchist is not a peddler of schemes of social salvation, but a permanent resister of all attempts to subordinate the uniqueness of the individual to the authority of the collective. The anarchist is someone who refuses to be seduced even by the most glittering or most rational vision of a society in which diverse egoisms have been harnessed into harmonising one with another.”¹²

While modern anarchists of this attitude may reject or embrace Stirner, the idea remains much the same. The individual in living anarchy recognizes no master, resisting and asserting oneself. To explore how one reaches the conclusion of this contemporary anarchy and how it may be used in the context of the communist movement the post-structuralist reformulation of power must be explored. Foucault is the key theorist here, who radically changed philosophy's perspective on how power operates. He rejects a theory of power that asserts the primacy of the state, rather finding that power pervades throughout all society.

¹¹ Bookchin, Murray. 1995. *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism : The Unbridgeable Chasm*. Edinburgh, Scotland ; San Francisco, Ca: Ak Press.

¹² Parker, Sydney. 1981. “My Anarchism”

Throughout his work, he outlines how power operates in different places, always outlining how this power is not simply a restriction by a master but is far more ingrained. To quote Foucault:

“Power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society.”¹³

Power is no strength, nor an institution, rather it is immanent to all of society. It is far more complex than the Marxists or anarchists would have one believe. In *Discipline and Punish* he gives a genealogy of the ways that society has dealt with prisoners, outlining how society in the modern era has become disciplinary. He famously gives the example of the panopticon, in which prisoners do not know if they are being watched or not and thus always act as if they are being watched. In this case, it does not matter if the prisoners are under threat or not, they are always under the impression that they are and thus will regulate their own behaviour. Foucault extends this principle to all of society, stating that the pressure of society will lead to individuals regulating their own behaviour without any explicit force from society. He writes:

“The practice of placing individuals under ‘observation’ is a natural extension of a justice imbued with disciplinary methods and examination procedures. Is it surprising that the cellular prison, with its regular chronologies, forced labour, its authorities of surveillance and registration, its experts in normality, who continue and multiply the functions of the judge, should have become the modern instrument of penalty? Is it surprising that prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals, which all resemble prisons?”¹⁴

This is the main facet of disciplinary society, making individuals regulate themselves without any physical force from the institutions that we find ourselves in. This is power to Foucault, a complex social force regulating possibilities.

To Foucault, power also creates subjects, it creates the conceptual self that we define readily as our identity. This also comes out of knowledge, which Foucault views as complementary to power. Subjects aren't natural phenomena but come about due to power relationships. This idea is explored in all volumes of *The History of Sexuality*¹⁵ and his essay “The Subject and Power”¹⁶. It is not how we as people have agency, or how we as people act

¹³ Foucault, Michel. 1976. *The History of Sexuality. Vol. 1*. New York: Pantheon Books.

¹⁴ Foucault, Michel. 1975. *Discipline and Punish*. New York: Pantheon Books.

¹⁵ Foucault, Michel. 1976. *The History of Sexuality. Vol. 1*. New York: Pantheon Books.

¹⁶ Foucault, Michel. 1982. “The Subject and Power”

as transcendent or immanent to subjectivity, but rather how we come to have the identity and place we have. This is the same subject that Deleuze and Guattari speak of in their idea of creating subjectivity in their idea of schizoanalysis. This is determined by the relationship of power around oneself, the various pressures placed by those around us, the different things we are born into as possibilities, etc.

Foucault in his later life began to develop a theory of power operated in postmodern society, as society was trending beyond disciplinary society. He explained this through his conception of biopower, which while being a crucial facet of disciplinary power was beginning to be far more pervasive. Biopower is not localised in institutions or even in specific forms of domination like disciplinary society was, but rather is localised in the level of everyday experience. It is a form of power that conceptualises individuals as a species and in turn segments some forms of life as permissive and others as restricted. It can from there control the species, taking advantage of phenomena such as normalisation, medicalization, etc. Of course, power to Foucault was always located on the level of the everyday, the pressure of society throughout life always operate through constructing subjects, but in the case of biopower the forms of domination specifically focus on the everyday. In biopower, every aspect of life is under the influence of power, from the way one dresses to how one constructs oneself. Foucault introduces biopower as such:

“This year I would like to begin studying something that I have called, somewhat vaguely, bio-power.* By this I mean a number of phenomena that seem to me to be quite significant, namely, the set of mechanisms through which the basic biological features of the human species became the object of a political strategy, of a general strategy of power, or, in other words, how, starting from the eighteenth century, modern western societies took on board the fundamental biological fact that human beings are a species. This is roughly what I have called biopower.”¹⁷

Biopower is the regulation of all aspects of our lives as humans, transitioning from the regulation of individuals within institutions as is found in disciplinary power. This is both a social phenomenon and a direct strategy within our current institutions. Agamben slightly diverges from Foucault by emphasising institutions in his theory of the state as emphasised in his *State of Exception*. The state of exception deems certain segments of behaviour or certain groups of the population as restricted or prohibited and defines life in terms of what Agamben calls bare life. We can no longer live, express, or affirm, instead we must be constantly secure and normalised. Deleuze formulates his own post-disciplinary view of power in the control society. At this time both thinkers were largely inspired by the other and

¹⁷ Foucault, Michel. 1979. *The Birth of Biopolitics Lectures at the College de France, 1978-1979*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

converged on a very similar view, expressed by each in their own idiosyncratic language. The control society do Deleuze is where desire is free, yet only in a predefined area of possibilities. He writes:

“These are the societies of control, which are in the process of replacing the disciplinary societies. “Control” is the name Burroughs proposes as a term for the new monster, one that Foucault recognizes as our immediate future. Paul Virilio also is continually analysing the ultra-rapid forms of free-floating control that replaced the old disciplines operating in the time frame of a closed system. There is no need here to invoke the extraordinary pharmaceutical productions, the molecular engineering, the genetic manipulations, although these are slated to enter into the new process. There is no need to ask which is the toughest or most tolerable regime, for it’s within each of them that liberating and enslaving forces confront one another. For example, in the crisis of the hospital as an environment of enclosure, neighbourhood clinics, hospices, and day care could at first express new freedom, but they could participate as well in mechanisms of control that are equal to the harshest of confinements. There is no need to fear or hope, but only to look for new weapons.”¹⁸

Just as Foucault in his notion of biopower concludes that power is a general restriction of behaviour into preconceived boundaries, where we will regulate our own behaviour, the control society serves the same purpose. It is placed in the terms of Deleuze and Guattari’s conception of machines, where the free flow of desire in this case is territorialized to a certain area where it will not be harmful. Our divergent desires become caught up in a feedback loop of various machines and apparatuses. For example, we as communists are freely asserting ideas within the apparatus of the internet, where our ideas can be co-opted and become beneficial to capitalism, yet we will not dare to go out there and engage in insurrection. The only way capitalism and all other institutions can come under threat is through an insurrectionary assertion that requires an active resistance to biopower and the associated control society.

The post-anarchists realise this conception of power and formulate resistance against it. This does not include abolishing power, as by this conception of power that would be not to abolish the oppressive institutions but to abolish all means of assertion. Rather to the post-anarchists, there is an assertion, one many characterise as insurrectionary, of resistances towards power. Post-anarchism began with May, who critiqued classical anarchism for its simple and moralist conception of power¹⁹. Classical anarchism to May holds a conception

¹⁸ Deleuze, Gilles. 1990. “Postscript on the Society of Control”

¹⁹ May, Todd. 2021. *The Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism*. University Park, PA: Penn State University Press.

of power localised in the state and hierarchy, thus with the states and all unjust hierarchies abolished there is an abolition of power. Yet as we have seen in Foucault, Deleuze, Agamben, etc power is a far more complex social force, one that cannot be simply reduced to the idea of the state as a monopoly on power in a certain area. May does not embrace the Marxist conclusion of the state as a dictatorship of some class, as that too simplifies the complex workings of power. The totalizing notion of class within Marxism is reductive in order to define state power, as while there are material differences between classes in the means of production, placing it as a totalizing entity over the state is reductive and misses the complexity of power. Some Marxists like Althusser and the structural Marxists realise this, creating the notion of ideological state apparatuses²⁰. From this criticism of both classical anarchist and Marxist notions of state power, May creates a liberatory politics based on the new understanding of power developed by post-structuralist thinkers. This politics is based on a synthesis of the classical anarchist political vision, i.e. the abolition of the state and institutional forms of power, and the post-structuralist understanding of power.

While there are many other post-anarchists, each of which have things to offer in their thought, the one that is most important here is Newman. Newman is a theorist of post-anarchism, his own tendency often being labelled as Lacanian anarchism, that incorporates Stirner's own theories on egoism and insurrection with various post-structuralist and anarchist theorists. What is key to Newman is that he offers a uniquely insurrectionary vision of post-anarchism, deriving his vision of insurrection from Stirner, that posits insurrectionary resistance within power. This is to assert oneself and one's ownness, to resist the authority of other causes and institutions and posit your own way, whatever that may be. He takes from Foucault in his view of power relations who writes:

“First, it is not a question of having in view, at the end of a project, a society without power relations. It is rather a matter of putting non-power or the non-acceptability of power, not at the end of the enterprise, but rather at the beginning of the work, in the form of a questioning of all the ways in which power is in actual fact accepted. Second, it is not a question of saying all power is bad, but of starting from the point that no power whatsoever is acceptable by right and absolutely and definitely inevitable. You can see therefore that there is certainly some kind of relation between what is roughly called anarchy or anarchism and the methods I employ, but that the differences are equally clear.”²¹

Foucault in his later work on biopower takes a standpoint close yet critical to anarchy, stating that no power has any natural justification and should not be considered to be a fact of life.

²⁰ Althusser, Louis. (1970) 2014. *On the Reproduction of Capitalism: Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*. London: Verso.

²¹ Foucault, Michel. 1979. *The Birth of Biopolitics Lectures at the College de France, 1978-1979*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Newman takes this further and posits a politics of actively resisting power through insurrectionary activity. This is not to reject power outright, to seek its utter destruction in a naive utopianism, but to reject legitimising it or respecting it. To always remain vigilant and to always place oneself and oneself above it, not out of egotism or narcissism but out of a Stirnerite egoism. One bases one's cause on nothing. Newman writes:

“Postanarchist politics always starts from the assumption that no relation of power can be naturalised or taken for granted, that power is never automatically legitimate, that it is, on the contrary, always contingent, uncertain and therefore contestable. We should refuse to see power as being grounded in anything other than its own historical contingency. This divests the power of any claim to universal right, truth or inevitability. As Foucault says when describing his ‘archaeological’ approach, ‘there is no universal, immediate, and obvious right that can everywhere and always support any kind of relation of power’. This is not the same as saying that all power is bad; rather it means that no form of power is automatically admissible. This ethico-political standpoint is one that is largely consistent with most forms of anarchism. However, where it differs is in making the non-acceptability of power one's point of departure rather than where one finishes up. In other words, perhaps we need to think of anarchism today not so much as a specific project determined by a certain end goal—a fully liberated, non-alienated society without power relations—but rather as an open and contingent enterprise that takes the non-acceptance of power as its starting point.”²²

This is the post-anarchist approach towards power, the non-acceptance of power as a starting point. Radical politics today, as Newman sees it, should take this approach towards power in order for free affirmation to run free. If we are to take the non-acceptance of power as our starting point we cannot fall into the self-referential discourse that plagues modern politics. We cannot recognize empire as legitimate, just as we cannot deny that our times are a state of war.

What can the communist movement take from this? Just as state power, which as anarchists of some form the post-anarchists see as the main object of study, has changed its forms of dominance, so has capital. The body of capital, in the terms of Deleuze and Guattari, has in its libidinal economy moved towards a society of control, using Foucault's concept of biopower. The form of resistance that the post-anarchists propose must be applied to capital and thus to communism, the true movement to abolish the current state of things. Lifestylists, as Bookchin calls them, tell us to live anarchy; we as communists must

²² Newman, Saul. 2011. *Politics of Postanarchism*. Edinburgh University Press.

follow Vaneigem and Tiqqun and propose living communism, living the movement. This idea, in tandem with the form of communism most suited for this insurrectionary resistance, what might be called communization.

3. The Process of Communization

Communism as a movement underwent notable failures throughout the twentieth century, mostly due to the failures of the German Revolution and the rise of Stalinism. With no active revolutionary movement crisis cannot be taken advantage of, crisis turns into mere rage with no end goal. The communist movement had many reactions towards the failures found within Stalinism and the bolshevisation of communism, many being reformist actions that only reinforced capital. There was another reaction, that of the communist left, which reaffirmed the original communist tenets and critiqued deviations as reinforcing capital. This reaction was in line with Marx's original theories and emphasised the need for the real movement to abolish the current state of things. Communist commodity production was theorised by Stalin and even earlier there was the New Economic Policy, capitalist production was not in the process of being abolished but rather was being reinforced and reproduced. It had become clear to many western communists that a new approach was needed outside of the growing Stalinization of the Third International.

The ultra-left reaction was to reaffirm the original communist tenets, emphasising the ultimate abolition of capital and the movement toward communism. This goal was to be achieved through various strategies or programs, the two most prevalent in the ultra-left being the party form and the council form. Italian left communists emphasised the party and the doctrine of organic centralism as developed by Bordiga, which was said to remove the threat of the party becoming a renegade of communism. Bordiga describes it as such:

“The democratic criterion has been for us so far a material and incidental factor in the construction of our internal organisation and the formulation of our party statutes; it is not an indispensable platform for them. Therefore we will not raise the organisational formula known as "democratic centralism" to the level of a principle. Democracy cannot be a principle for us. Centralism is indisputably one, since the essential characteristics of party organisation must be unity of structure and action. The term centralism is sufficient to express the continuity of party structure in space; in order to introduce the essential idea of continuity in time, the historical continuity of the struggle which, surmounting successive obstacles, always advances towards the same goal, and in order to combine these two essential ideas of unity in the same formula, we would propose that the communist party base its organisation on "organic centralism". While preserving as much of the incidental democratic mechanism that can be used, we will eliminate the use of the term "democracy", which is dear to the worst demagogues but tainted with irony for the exploited, oppressed and cheated, abandoning it to the exclusive usage of the bourgeoisie and the champions of

liberalism in their diverse guises and sometimes extremist poses.”²³ (Bordiga, 1922, pg. 38-39).

The party to Bordiga and the rest of the Italian left, was the leader of the communist movement. It allowed the proletariat to rise from a mere class statistically to a real political force. This party was not meant to be above the proletariat, but of the proletariat, being its main expression of political force. Italian left communism provided the most radical and authentically Marxist expression of Leninism, not falling to the opportunism that was so prevalent during his time.

The Dutch-German left emphasised a different form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, expressing proletarian power through the council form. Councils are an expression of the power of the working class as itself, organised into councils of workers that manage the state apparatus. This is not a labour bureaucracy, nor a hierarchy of workers’ unions, but the expression of working-class power directly in a dictatorship of the proletariat. Pannekoek describes the state of the workers’ councils as such:

“The Workers' Councils are the form of self-government which in the times to come will replace the forms of government of the old world. Of course not for all future; none such form is for eternity. When life and work in community are natural habits, when mankind entirely controls its own life, necessity gives way to freedom and the strict rules of justice established before dissolve into spontaneous behaviour. Workers' councils are the form of organisation during the transition period in which the working class is fighting for dominance, is destroying capitalism and is organising social production. In order to know their true character it will be expedient to compare them with the existing forms of organisation and government as fixed by custom as self-evident in the minds of the people.”²⁴

Workers’ councils are an expression of power by a cohesive working class, to abolish capital and transition into communism. The workers through the council-form organise production, distribution, and work to destroy the bourgeoisie.

Council communists have very divergent views on the party, with some viewing it as a basis of education for the proletariat and others viewing it as inherently counterrevolutionary. This division created the division of the Dutch-German left into council communists and councilists. Many among the Italian left criticise both factions for having a fundamentally economic form of organisation that cannot express itself in the

²³ Bordiga, Amadeo. 1922. “The Democratic Foucault”

²⁴ Pannekoek, Anton, and Robert F Barsky. 2003. *Workers' Councils*. Edinburgh, Scotland ; Oakland, Calif.: Ak Press.

political realm. To them, the party represents the only true expression of proletarian force, using the state as its weapon. Bordiga is quite right that the party, if organised under organic centralist lines, is the truest expression of proletarian force in the political realm. Revolutionary spontaneity is a naive position, assuming that a mass movement without actual political organisation behind it can lead to a seizure of political power. The council communists, such as Guter, even admit this themselves, going against councilism by stating that the party is needed for revolutionary action.

Yet the workers' movement that inspired the debates over organisation and revolutionary strategy is dead and has been dead for some time. Its death was announced in the outcome of May 68'. This death was not an immediate one, but a slow burn. The various struggles of the New Left, as well as actions among Italian autonomists and anarchists, showed that anti-capitalist desire remained. Yet this desire only was shown in moments of clarity, of crisis, the workers' movement which had retained this desire among many for so long had died. Both Dauve and Bonanno mourn and celebrate this death, realising it is the end of an era. Dauve in *When Insurrections Die* gives a genealogy of this slow burn, while Bonanno sees it more as an immediate death after 68'. Regardless, the revolutionary potential of the past was dead, yet a new way forward could be seen among many. In the death of Marxism as the dominant narrative behind radical politics an explosion of new ways forward came about. The post-structuralists deconstructed the assumptions behind the philosophy of the past. Figures such as Derrida, following Heidegger's proclamation of the death of metaphysics, deconstructed the various essentialisms found throughout the history of philosophy. Through this radical conclusions on semiotics were reached that could have never been conceptualised within the dominant discourse of Marxism. Others such as Deleuze offered refreshing new paths forward, reversing many of the tenets of metaphysics to create a philosophy of pure immanence. Philosophy had abandoned the Marxist narrative of history, though of course, an honest reader would be hard-pressed to find this dominant narrative in Marx's more technical pieces. Within the political sphere, the death of the workers' movement left radicals searching for new frameworks to ground their desires. While Marxism lay dead, Derrida is quite right that a spectre remained throughout the supposed liberal end of history. The promise of a liberatory future hangs like a ghost above our current situation of self-referential recuperation. Escape, in whatever form it may appear, is seen only through the cracks in an increasingly well constructed illusion. The post-left developed out of a critique of many of the dogma and essentialism found throughout the traditional left, emphasising a politics of insurrectionary individuation. These folk naively abandoned communism, failing to see it as the only viable anti-capitalism. All individuation, the abolition of mediation between individuals motivated by ownness, must lead to communism. As communism is the true movement to abolish the current state of things, it is the movement

to abolish the mediation of capital and its various institutions. It is not a dream that hangs as a heaven above our current lives, but instead something we are immanent towards yet alienated from. Communism, despite the death of the workers' movement, remains the only viable anti-capitalist politics.

If we are to accept this, we must grapple with both the death of the old workers' movement and the transformations that capital has undertaken. As was outlined in the first two parts, capital as a force has transformed into the strict regulation of the everyday. For Tiquun and their successors, such as *The Invisible Committee* and *Culp*, the way in which capital regulates the everyday is explained by two forces. These two forces are biopower, taken from Foucault, and spectacle, taken from Debord. Tiquun in *Introduction to Civil War* write:

“But even if Empire could endow itself with a fake institutional facade, its actual reality would still remain concentrated in worldwide police and publicity, or, respectively, Biopower and Spectacle. The fact that the imperial wars present themselves as “international police operations” implemented by “intervention forces,” the fact that war itself is put outside the law by a form of domination that wants to pass off its own military offensives as little more than domestic administration, that is, as a police and not a political matter—to ensure “tranquillity, security, and order”—all this Schmitt had already anticipated sixty years ago, and in no way does it contribute to the gradual development of a “right of the police,” as Negri would like to believe. The momentary spectacular consensus against this or that “rogue State,” this or that “dictator” or “terrorist” only validates the temporary and reversible legitimacy of any imperial intervention that appeals to this consensus.”²⁵

The forces of capital, in this case placed under the term Empire following Hart and Negri, control in a Deleuzian sense through a regulation of the body seen in biopower and a mediation by false images seen in spectacle. This model is taken up by the majority of Tiquun's disciples. These two forces, though there have been challenges to both's theoretical legitimacy brought up by figures like Baudrillard, present an image of how capital operates in our contemporary context. This is well in line with the observations brought up in previous parts by Deleuze and Guattari, Lyotard, and Foucault. While we have previously elaborated upon the conception of power, spectacle requires further elaboration. We no longer live in the society of the spectacle as conceptualised by Debord in 1967²⁶, but we have not exited spectacle as Baudrillard claims. Instead this system of images has pervaded to the base of the

²⁵Tiquun. 2010. *Introduction to Civil War*. Los Angeles ; Cambridge, Mass. ; London: Semiotexte.

²⁶Debord, Guy. 1967. *Society of the Spectacle*. Detroit, Michigan: Black & Red.

base-superstructure paradigm. Capital relations came to dominate our collective senses of images, yet from there the image began to dominate our sense of capital. Capital as a construction becomes one among many concepts we exchange in our cultural scene. We now have an image of capital, in contrast to the body of capital. The question then becomes how do we distinguish spectacle from expression? How do we find an outside?

If we accept this as the modern state of capital, though there are of course critiques mentioned that will be discussed in another text, then we must accept that the horizon of struggles lie on the level of the everyday. This is of course to suggest an insurrectionary struggle, rather than a revolutionary one. Insurrection naturally leads on a wide scale to a revolutionary overthrow of power, communization, but does not create a reproduction of a new power structure. Vaneigem in his magnum opus *The Revolution of Everyday Life* explains everyday struggle as such:

“Assurance of security leaves unused a large supply of energy formerly expended in the struggle for survival. The will to power tries to recuperate, for the reinforcement of hierarchical slavery, this freefloating energy which could be used for the blossoming of individual life. Universal oppression forces almost everyone to withdraw strategically towards what they feel to be their only uncontaminated possession: their subjectivity. The revolution of everyday life must create practical forms for the countless attacks on the outside world launched daily by subjectivity.”²⁷

Vaneigem rightfully observes that dominance and oppression are at the level of everyday practices and places subjectivity as a potential outside of Capital. This is clearly correct, a pure unmediated subjectivity presents a clear outside to capital and thus must be the location of new struggles. We must propose, as the situationists did, an expression of pure creativity and playfulness. As Vaneigem once said: “creativity plus a machine gun is an unstoppable combination.” Now to be clear, this does not mean that we can realise communism by an alternative lifestyle, a commune, and supposed escapes from Capital. We must be sceptical of any expression of subjectivity grounded upon predefined boundaries. This is the error of Bey in the idea of the temporary autonomous zones, he assumes a readily made outside capital we can simply live in. Dauve in *Eclipse and Reemergence of the Communist Movement* gives a critique of these supposed outsides, he writes:

“Communism is not an ideal to be realised: it already exists, not as alternative lifestyles, autonomous zones or counter-communities that would grow within this society and ultimately change it into another one, but as an effort, a task to

²⁷ Raoul Vaneigem. 1967. *The Revolution of Everyday Life*. London (85 Regent's Park Rd, Nw1 8Xa): Action Books.

prepare for. It is the movement which tries to abolish the conditions of life determined by wage-labour, and it will abolish them only by revolution.’²⁸

The movement to abolish the current state of things is not to settle, to give up and seek a life in fake outsides, but instead to communize. Communization is the horizon of communism that we find in the twenty first century, the mode of struggle that finds itself operable. The notion of communization is one that has much internal conflict, with different groups and theorists while keeping to similar sensibilities having large disagreement. Our vision of communization follows from the post-anarchist vision of power presented in the previous parts. Communization traditionally presents a vision of an immediacy of communism, meaning that there are no institutional stages. These institutions presented, such as the traditional Marxist conception of the dictatorship of the proletariat, are seen as presenting a workerism. This workerism asserts the proletarian class as a class, rather than a negation of its conditions. Immediatism does not imply communism being immediate, communization is a process not a sudden switch. Kropotkin’s conception of the creation of communism follows a similar logic, though sadly many contemporary anarchists do not see this nuance. To escape this workerism a strategy of self exit from the proletariat becomes clear, a strategy presented by Theory Communiste. From this we find communization as a fundamentally insurrectionary process, based on the combined power of separate individual insurrection. Following from Stirner and Newman, we find the basis of our communization. Our communization is the post-anarchist strategy towards power applied to the body of capital, with the rejection of the legitimacy of its power leading to an insurrectionary rejection of its institutions. As The Invisible Committee stated: “Communism is not made through the expansion of new relations of production, but rather in their abolition.” Our idea of communization, our post-anarchist communism, is based not in a revolutionary construction of new institutions, but a communist free affirmation following from the destruction of the institutions of capital. The struggle to live an unmediated life is not dead with the death of the workers’ movement, it has only begun.

²⁸ Gilles Dauvé, and François Martin. 2015. *Eclipse and Re-Emergence of the Communist Movement*. PM Press.