

# Introduction to the Apocalypse

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“The slogan ‘Revolution or Death!’ is no longer the lyrical expression of consciousness in revolt: rather, it is the last word of the scientific thought of our century. It applies to the perils facing the species as to the inability of individuals to belong in a society where it is wellknown that the suicide rate is on the increase. The experts had to admit, reluctantly, that during May 1968 in France it fell to almost nil. That spring also vouchsafed us a clear sky, and it did so effortlessly, because a few cars were burnt and the shortage of petrol prevented others from polluting the air. When it rains, where there are clouds of smog over Paris, let us never forget that it is the government’s fault. Alienated production makes the smog. Revolution makes the sunshine.”

— Guy Debord, *A Sick Planet* (1971)

All of us secretly desire for this world to end. The future lasts forever. Or at least, it used to. The grand illusion of Western civilisation has always been the myth of progress, namely that the flow of history would beneficently extend into an infinite future. To our parents, civilisation offered houses in the suburbs, computers, and automobiles. And civilisation delivered. To the children of these workers, civilisation offered life on the moon, artificial intelligence, endless peace. All of which have failed to emerge. While our parents cling to the belief that someday the mortgage will be repaid and they can retire in happiness, their lost children know this is a lie. This world offers nothing to us: no meaningful work, no rest, no future — only fear. Over and over again, we find ourselves conditioned like rats by the images of not just our own death, but of total destruction. From the collapse of the World Trade Centre to the alien invasion, from the spectre of nuclear war to the hole in the ozone layer — and now the melting glaciers — these images ingrain themselves in our very being. These images are nothing more than modern projections of the deep-set fantasy of all religions: the apocalypse.

Today, catastrophic climate change is the image of the apocalypse. Nothing has escaped the touch of humanity, from the deepest oceans to the atmosphere itself. There is little doubt that carbon emissions caused by human activity may bring about the end of the world as we know it. It’s just a matter of listening to the ticking of the doomsday clock as it counts down to a climactic apocalypse. Never before in recorded history has the question of the earth’s survival been so starkly posed, and never before has such news been greeted with such indifference.

What is to be done in the face of a crisis so large it dwarfs the imagination? We are left with nothing but a sense of impending doom, a strange depression that keeps us oscillating between hysterical hedonism and sad loneliness, and in the end both responses are merely the two faces of the selfsame despair. Those self-appointed to “save” us from this crisis — the governments, scientists, activists — seem incapable of anything but sloganeering: clean development, carbon markets, sustainable development, climate justice, ecological reparations, green capitalism. We know in our heart of hearts that these fantasies give any sensible person as much cold comfort as a stiff drink. Confronted with the real possibility of the apocalypse, the world becomes inverted: to continue as if everything *is normal* in the present moment is the most refined act of nihilism.

This generalised delirium, formerly confined to only a handful of activists, has spread over the last few years to the population at large, and even the state seems a sincere believer in catastrophic climate change. Observe the reaction of the nation-states who, while in endless summits to “solve” the climate crisis, such as the COP15, continue to build airport after airport, highway after highway, giving industries the remit to emit ever-more carbon. The nation-states continue

to act as *if everything is normal*, while at the same time lying through their gritted teeth that “we are solving the climate crisis.” No-one today, even the children, believe them. Their summits and pledges are mere fiddling while Rome burns. The absurd plots hatched by scientists to avert this coming apocalypse, from putting mirrors into space to pumping water from the bottom of the ocean, have only the virtue of being at least mildly entertaining. There is a distinct air of madness about our rulers, a madness that reminds us only too much of the monarchs of the *ancien regime* shortly before their beheading. Yet, what can a single person do? The despair felt when confronted by the reality of climate change is an honest appraisal of a disaster where there is no easy escape. Let us hold this despair close, let it nurture us. Honesty is always the best policy for survival.

# The Apocalypse is upon Us

“Wild, dark times are rumbling toward us, and the prophet who wishes to write a new apocalypse will have to invent entirely new beasts, and beasts so terrible that the ancient animal symbols of St. John will seem like cooing doves and cupids in comparison.”

— Heinrich Heine, *Lutetia; or, Paris* (1842)

The apocalypse is above all a relationship that we have to our time. The apocalypse is always a singular event in the future, so that while there is a sense of impending doom, there is also strange relief in that things can go on exactly as they are now, perhaps indefinitely. Two minor variations exist: Either that this world will be replaced with a new world, shiny and perfect, or that it will just end simpliciter, with nothing at all to follow. Regardless, all apocalyptic thinking holds that this present world will at some point be utterly destroyed. So there is no reason to care for this world, to preserve it, to sustain it.

There are two contradictory attitudes one can take to a world whose days are numbered. The first is to continue a steady course towards the apocalypse, to *bring it on* with a certain glee. In a world without a future, one can abuse this planet without even a the slightest hint of guilt. This vision of the apocalypse justifies the exploitation of ever-more carbon by the oil barons and coal lords to maintain the present form of life, and make a quick buck of profit in the process. It is precisely this madness that throws the Christian apocalyptic cults into bed with with these fossil-fuel magnates. The second attitude is to do everything possible to delay the coming apocalypse. In this case, the state is the only possible saviour that can prevent the apocalypse, if not indefinitely, at least for a few more years. Just as any atrocity would be justified by preventing the return of the Antichrist, so the state must restructure the lives of its citizens in order to prevent the apocalypse. Apocalyptic time then places any possibility of change far into the distant future, taking all agency from our lives and giving it to some supernatural or scientific event, so negating the possibility of an all-too-human revolution in the present.

The apocalypse may be all too real. If science is the new religion, then the present equivalent of prophets would be scientists, and climate change is their secular apocalypse. It is tempting then to dismiss climate change as mere rhetoric, some sort of collective delusion perhaps propagated for nefarious purposes. Yet science has one supposed crucial advantage over religion; science consists of hypotheses that may be tested, proved true or false, so that science consists of an always limited and yet constantly growing approximation of reality. Even in this era where mysticism is far more popular than science (merely compare the relative number of books on physics sold as compared to those on astrology in any bookstore), there is a lurking suspicion that science actually does matter. Its hypotheses have resulted in everything from the cure to malaria to unmanned drones in Afghanistan. So there is a cause for concern when scientists themselves begin to speak of the apocalypse like mad prophets. The new hobby of science is predicting like bean-counters how

many years we have left: Fifty, twenty, ten, five. And as long as the apocalypse is not happening right now, we smile and shrug, and continue our daily lives.

All signs indicate that the apocalypse is underway right at this moment, not an event in some distant future. The sudden reality of the apocalypse is not to be doubted by anyone who has any protracted connection to the planet, from gardeners to nomads. Only in the cocoon-like and concrete metropolis, where any connection to the vast array of nonhuman life has been sundered long ago, can anyone fail to notice that the “natural” world is in a state of advanced destruction. Our society claimed to be possessed of miraculous powers. These miracles have become perverse. The fish have left the seas: soon the North Sea will be devoid of cod, as the warming oceans devastate the plankton which are their main food source. Fertile land becomes desert: the emptying of the vast Ogallala aquifer, the tremendous heat waves in France, the fires in Greece. To dream of milk and honey in this age is absurd; the honey bees have disappeared, leaving their hives empty and threatening the reproduction of even the flowers. Even our breast-milk is full of toxins. Our ancestors would be shocked beyond belief that it took so little time to make the world not only *unbearable*, but uninhabitable.

For those who can remember that our planet lives not only in political history but in geological time, a wave of massive extinction has commenced, aptly named the “anthropocene” extinction event. Nearly half of all species may be gone within the coming decades. Perhaps therein lies the source of a vague feeling of guilt and an inability to even appreciate other species except as cartoons or in cages? The only comparable extinction event in fossil records is the Permian-Triassic extinction event of nearly two-hundred and fifty million years ago, in which nearly all sea life died and three-quarters of animals on land. The cause of the earlier “Great Dying” of the Permian Triassic extinction event is almost certainly global warming of between 5 and 6 degrees. Great volcanic eruptions in Siberia released huge amounts of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse-gases into the air, resulting in a warming that led to the release of the even more dangerous methane trapped in ice — a gas twenty times more potent than carbon dioxide. This wiped out almost all life in the oceans and nearly all life on land. There is perpetual fear that we will soon encounter positive feedback cycles, events like the destruction of the Brazilian and African rainforests that will cause an inexorable skyrocketing of carbon emissions, making catastrophic climate change inevitable. Due to climate change, already we are seeing evidence that the permafrost in Siberia is melting in an area the size of France and Germany combined, and billions of tons of methane may soon be released: a “tipping point” straight into extinction.

There is without a doubt something religious to these convictions, with reports on melting glaciers being the equivalent to fiery sermons and carbon offsetting being nothing more than indulgences. The apocalypse is at this historical moment a very real extinction event; it is a particular biological extinction event conjoined with what can only be termed a religious understanding of time, an apocalyptic vision that was long held in check by the Enlightenment. To separate these two distinct phenomena, we can call the real wave of extinctions caused by extreme ecological degradation the “biocrisis”, while we should reserve the “apocalypse” for the imagined possibility of the end of the world. The biocrisis is the true in the moment of the apocalyptic false. With science itself turned from the secular savior to the creator of the atom bomb, the hope for a bright tomorrow is objectively insane. *All we can hope for is some definite “end” to the situation.*

Everyone knows the task of our generation is the overthrow of the existing order, yet like the early Christians describing the end of feudalism in religious rather than political language, our

generation is unable to express the obvious necessity of revolution in any more than the scientific language of catastrophic climate change. The closest parallel to our era is then the Peasant Wars of the late middle ages, where the peasant insurrectionists phrased what was fundamentally the desire for a social revolution in religious terms. Perhaps then it is not without a sense of irony that a “climate camp” to reduce carbon emissions seized Blackheath, where centuries earlier Wat Tyler and an insurrectionary army of peasants nearly overthrew the English monarchy: the first of modern failed revolutions. As Engels noted, it would take centuries for a revolutionary language to be created that could phrase the struggle of beggar-kings and heretic priests like Thomas Muntzer for “omnia est communia”, for everything to be held in common, to be phrased in a way that could be understood without God. The first step in overthrowing the present order is no different: to formulate a new political language of insurrection from the scientific language of catastrophic climate change.

# Of Markets and Carbon Markets

“It seems to be easier for us today to imagine the thoroughgoing deterioration of the earth and of nature than the breakdown of late capitalism; perhaps that is due to some weakness in our imaginations.”

— Fredric Jameson, *The Seeds of Time* (1994)

The apocalypse is not happening in the future, it is happening now. It is not the result of our personal sins and it is not the “collective responsibility of humanity”. Climate change (or God, or whatever) will not bring about the apocalypse. The apocalypse began with the advent of our current form of life based on industrial production. It is easy to assume that there is no alternative to this form of life, that the way we live in this present moment is simply a reflection of the way things are. Implicit in this common-sense is the not-so-hidden assumption that the present will extend indefinitely into the future, which both provides a measure of comfort as well as the feeling of imprisonment. In times of crisis, a space of freedom returns, and the possibility of a rupture with the present opens. History, long banished to dreary scholastic books, returns to us fresh and alive. To push away that which is closest to us, our very form of life, and see it objectively — this might seem impossible. Yet it is not: the first step is to give our form of life a name, to identify it as something finite in time and space, so capable of ending. This perpetual present that has its only favor being the certainty of its own destruction has a name: capitalism. Capitalism is based on an equation so simple a child could understand it: technology plus human labour plus natural resources creates commodities. These commodities can be either more technology for production — otherwise known as capital — or commodities for consumption. The iron law of value states that everything may become a commodity to be exchanged for some value, and value is incarnated as monetary price. Commodities are exchanged not to fulfil human needs, but to accumulate more value. The flow of commodities produces flows of carbon as a trivial side-effect of industrial production, and hence the destruction of our entire ecosystem is built into the logic of capitalism. The constantly decreasing term in our equation is the finite “natural” resources of our planet, which taken to their wild asymptotic end spells the real possible extinction of the vast majority of currently existing forms of life.

Capitalism is a relationship based on force and class division. For capitalism to continue the vast majority of humanity must sell our time producing more wealth for the capitalist bourgeoisie. The vast majority of humanity has no option but to sell its labour upon the market in return for commodities to help them survive. The proletariat, the “working-class” in its broadest sense, includes the vast amounts of excluded and unemployed (who stand as a reserve army of labour) that are not necessarily *actually at work*, and so consists of everyone who have *nothing* except their time to sell. The bourgeoisie, also called capitalists or owning classes, are those that own the capital.

Capitalism tends to go hand-in-hand with private property, as all of these commodities, resources and capital are private property, owned by an individual, corporation, or even the state.



The inescapable logic of capitalism is then to colonize every sphere of life, assigning that which was held in common both a private owner and value. This double operation must take place so that this newly valued commodity can be exchanged on the market in order to produce more profit for its owner, and hence, expand value and capitalism. As capitalism has now encompassed the entire globe, it needs new kinds of commodities. Even the most immaterial components of life — from our genes to our future (via insurance) — can be given a price. There seems to be possibly infinite commodities; these are so-called “immaterial” commodities in the form of code, emotions, and knowledge itself. The inconvenient truth is that even the most immaterial of commodities such as the Internet or intellectual property rests upon a firmly material foundation, currently the foundation of oil-based products such as food, plastic, computers.

Climate change is just symptomatic of capitalism reaching the limits of its expansion in the world of natural resources that evolved before capitalism. It is then fitting that a totalising crisis like climate change accompanies a totalising system of production like capitalism. Carbon emissions are the by-product of capitalism just as defecation is the by-product of humans eating, as fossil-fuel intensive energies are the primary source of cheap energy that capitalism harnesses for production. Yet even stopping carbon emissions would not halt the totalising biocrisis brought on by capitalism.

Carbon emissions and climate change are a mere symptom of the ecological degradation caused by capitalism. Taken as an isolated issue in-and-of-itself, climate change is ludicrous. Even if burning fossil fuels didn't cause climate change, it would still be cancerous to humans, pollute the ocean and atmosphere, fueling death-dealing automobiles and missiles, creating the raw materials of everything from disposable plastic bags to useless toys. Just as cutting down the forest reduces the planet's ability to store carbon, it also destroys uncountable species, ripping asunder indigenous forms of life and evicting them from their homes, and destroying even the possibility of the joy many humans get from being outside. While a “green” zero-carbon capitalism may be possible, if implausible, even a zero-carbon capitalism inexorably transforms living natural resources into dead capital. If it's not production of carbon, it will be the destruction of water, of the soil, of lives of the poor, all sacrificed to the ravenous appetite of capital for the production of commodities, even if it means the end of the reproduction of life. Capitalism is the origin of the biocrisis, the last and final crisis of capitalism.

The logic of crisis is the logic of capitalism, and capitalism has been in a state of crisis for decades although it has only become self-evident in the financial crisis of 2008. By far the most productive social system the world has ever seen, capitalism over-produces, leading to an over-accumulation of capital. In any social system shaped around the survival of humanity and the world, this would be viewed as a miracle: the hungry could be fed, the homeless housed, and the creativity of humanity unfettered by mere material concerns. Yet by the perverse logic of capital, this over-productivity is a crisis: it is increasingly harder to make a profit when more and more commodities are made cheaper and cheaper, and workers are paid less and less.

The only way out of crisis is through either a war that destroys capital — the World Wars being the obvious solution to the Great Depression — or by some act of black magic to invent a new market of commodities. As total war is viewed as suicidal in the nuclear era, the giant lie of debt and financial markets were created to save capital from crisis in the 1970s and 1980s. With the labour movement destroyed by Thatcher and Reagan — a process globalised through the IMF, the WTO, and the other instruments of neoliberal capitalism — the social peace that followed World War II was terminated. The Left reacted in moralistic horror, but only stood mouth agape as the

social solidarity of the worker's world was destroyed, replaced with precarity and the cult of self-interested individualism. The replacement for the wage was debt — money one could spend, but that had to be paid back, literally binding the once-rebellious poor to the infinite continuation of capitalism. Debt is the perfect commodity, and the future itself became the new market; the financial market was born, ushering in the era of postmodernism. It is into this world that we are born, a world of skyscrapers and monstrous mega-malls, whose towering glass exteriors show that this world was not built for humans, but for the monstrous and inhuman subjectivity of capital. Even with a map, it is impossible not to get lost in metropolis. And the option of war has not been taken off the table. Far from it, the postmodern world is a world of continual police operations. Instead of a purely military war, a social war that encompasses all of daily life is waged against the population: wars against drugs, against immigration, against political dissent, against "terrorism." Politicians can move from the war on terrorism to the war against climate change without skipping a beat.

As the space of the world was bound tighter to financial capital via the spectacular technology of cybernetic networks, all sense of the past evaporated into an ever-present now of instant satisfaction. As no-one knows how to actually value debt, a wild cornucopia of highly profitable measures arose: markets for risk, derivatives, collateralised debt obligations, credit default swaps. The value of the financial system grew to an astounding four times the real productivity of capital. Furthermore, the very concept of debt has as its implicit promise that the future must be an eternally frozen version of the present, as debt is a claim on the materialisation of future profits. As it became evident that the poor could never pay back such massive debts, the age of financial capitalism and its secret religion of the free-market ended. No-one believed in the banks and they collapsed, just as the pagan temples of ancient Greece fell into ruins when no-one believed in Zeus any longer. The banks themselves did not even know how much money was worth, and no-one trusted the state to fix this crisis of value. The British Chancellor said that it was "his word" that the savings of people would be protected, but there were long lines outside the banks nonetheless. How could anyone trust the government that had claimed there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq?

Only an event of nearly divine proportions can resurrect the belief in capital and the state, and luckily there is a miracle: the advent of catastrophic climate change. From Greenpeace to Obama, the solution everyone touts to climate change is, unsurprisingly, the expansion of capitalism into the very atmosphere via carbon trading. By government decree at summits like the COP process of the United Nations, carbon is assigned a monetary value, and then exchanging carbon on a market, carbon emissions are supposed to decrease. However, this contradicts all past experience and the axioms of capitalism itself. The creation of yet another market will undoubtedly lead to more capitalist production, and so accelerate ecological degradation. While capitalism has figured out how to assign values to simple material necessities like shoes and coal, the price of carbon will simply be made out of thin air. The resemblances to the pricing of "risk" on financial markets to the pricing of carbon on carbon markets are almost all-too-clear. Such inability to assign adequate value is a recipe for a boom of rampant fraud and speculation, followed by a resounding crash. A carbon market is just like the financial market, as the failure of the European Union's Emission Trading System, later a part of the Kyoto Protocol, has already demonstrated in spades. Carbon markets require more production, and so more carbon, which in turn signs the collective death sentence of the biocrisis. How does one assign a price for carbon? How can one give the continued existence of human life as we know it a monetary value? The market demands such questions be

answered. To burn a car dealership to the ground is more ecologically sustainable than carbon trading; it is precisely the creation and flow of commodities that threatens the future of life on this planet.

# Sabotage the Carbon Flows

“For years, decades, we have pleaded and petitioned those in power, those responsible for injustice, genocide and ecocide. This pleading has gone unanswered. It is time to use actions that can not be ignored.”

— Jeff “Free” Luers, *On Sabotage* (2001)

Far into the horizon, the coal moves endlessly down the conveyor belt, from open-cast coal mine to the smoke-stacks of the power plant. In Glentaggart suddenly there is a break, a rupture, something almost unheard of: sabotage. The belt has been cut; the coal tumbles to the ground. Sabotage is the elementary form of resistance to capitalism. And so, sabotage is simultaneously the elementary form of preventing catastrophic climate change.

Sabotage is a generalised phenomenon. Everyone is doing it. Who doesn't hate their job? As capitalism tries to squeeze ever more productivity out of people, workers themselves attempt to self-manage, perhaps by reading “7 Habits of Highly Effective People” or other self-help books, blaming themselves for their persistent depression. More often workers go insane, and if wealthy will end up in psychiatrist offices... and if not, homeless on the street. No one can work all the time unless they somehow self-manage themselves into becoming part and parcel of capital itself. In response to the frantic pace of capitalism, there is the proliferation of everyday resistance to capitalist productivity. This can take two forms: First, that of individual ‘acts’ of resistance or survival, taking sick days from work, sleeping in, stealing, fake benefit claims, the sabotage of equipment. The second form, that of collective action through strikes or occupations is more dangerous to capitalisms maintenance. As such the state and the capitalist owning class have developed tactics to deal with such threats. These can take forms ranging from the police club to the scab union official.

A limited and controlled amount of sabotage is the grease behind the wheels of the capitalist machine. A small amount of stolen time for “tobacco breaks” is tolerated, as is the use of computers for checking personal e-mail and playing video games in offices. These activities are not clamped down either because they are not noticed, or because truly wise managers realise this small amount of sabotage is necessary to prevent the working-class from going insane at work. To give the worker at least some minor level of autonomy is necessary for the smooth operation of the entire machine. To off-load coal from a train to the power-plant on a conveyor belt, the worker must actively involve himself in making certain that the coal is off-loaded at a uniform speed, to personally deal with any disruptions and irregularities in a way that a mere robot would be incapable of doing. If for some reason the train is late, the worker can wait patiently. If the conveyor belt stops, the worker can also stop and investigate the reason. However, this autonomy can always be used against capitalist production itself. From this potential is the long tradition of worker sabotage that has always been the scourge of capitalism. For example, workers in the USA once put empty beer cans inside the hollow spaces of automobile doors, so that as soon as they hit the highway the cars made noises, forcing the recall of thousands of vehicles and a

tremendous loss of profit. This is what a small act at the heart of production can do. Imagine what small acts at the sensitive heart of the carbon-emitting infrastructure could do.

Sabotage is any act that destroys the reproduction of capitalism. The individual as worker is the basic unit of the reproduction of capitalism and this worker can mutate out of the confines of capitalism, into something entirely new, a potential saboteur, a Luddite for the twenty-first century. One can even consider dropping out of school or a career — and therefore wasting the considerable “investment” made in a person by society — to be a form of life-sabotage. Even generalised depression will lead to sabotage, as one becomes a “bad” employee or simply fails to turn up to work. The problem is not the lack of small acts of sabotage. The problem is to increase their intensity and organisation to a point where the flows of commodities — and so carbon — are blocked. This will require a new kind of mass sabotage, a new kind of strike: the human strike.

There is a constant tension between protest and sabotage that goes under the term “direct action.” The thesis of the protest is always that if “the masses” were only told by placard-waving activists about the disastrous state of the world, then they would rise up and force things to change. However, people outside “activism” already realise the dire state of affairs. Most people find it easier to push it out of their minds rather than march in endless circles with signs, correctly realising that protest is an ineffective tactic. Protest merely asks the powers that be of capital and the state to politely stop. Millions tried this to stop the Iraq War in 2003, to no effect.

The difference between protest and sabotage comes down to the following maxim: The point is not to ask for something to stop, but to make it stop. In this vein, a movement towards “direct action” emerges. This motto of “direct action” in terms of climate change has mostly been taken up by the Climate Camp movement originating from the United Kingdom. The climate camps, while effective at raising awareness of different forms of life, have proved to be ineffective themselves at actually halting carbon-intensive infrastructure via direct action. This is not to say that their spectacular influence via the media has not had an effect, for surely it has been one of the factors that prevented a third runway at Heathrow airport from being built, or a new coal-burning power plant at Kingsnorth not to be constructed. To be clear, the climate camps have failed at the task of stopping the flows of carbon via direct action without mediation. At best, the workers themselves shut down the infrastructure for the announced day of action. Shutting down a coal-burning plant here, stopping an airport expansion there, halting some carbon emissions for a day: these are all concessions the state will more than happily give as long as overall the flows of carbon and commodities are not threatened. Eventually, any strategy based on media manipulation will reach its limits. To shut down every coal-burning power-plant, while necessary to halt catastrophic climate change, would be a catastrophe for the economy. The failures of mass direct action by the climate camps have a silver lining, for a truly successful direct action on carbon-intensive infrastructure like the Heathrow airport in London or the Kingsnorth coal-burning power plant in Kent would bring down an iron fist of repression far greater than any yet seen by protest. The state finds that an attempt to shut down infrastructure critical to the maintenance of global capitalism, like power-plants and airports, is of far more danger to capitalism than street parties and summit mobilizations. The irony of the situation is that despite the fact that the protests against catastrophic climate change are primarily symbolic, to halt climate change is far from symbolic.

The question is not *what* to do, but *how*. While these camps and mass protests are useful as educational battle-grounds, they can not in general succeed in halting the flows of carbon directly. As the police raid on the Kingsnorth camp showed, the territory of the climate camps almost

always puts direct action at a disadvantage. It is just difficult to mount a successful mass direct action in a field, isolated in the middle of nowhere, surrounded by police and cameras, with only a few rather obvious targets nearby. The climate camps suffered from “picturethinking.” Being unable to grasp the totality of capitalism as the source of climate change, climate camps resort to only concrete targets that are obviously emitting carbon, leading to the likely re-cuperation of these direct actions by green capitalism. Creativity should be called for, as coal-burning factories with large smoke stacks and airplanes with huge combustion engines are not the only source of carbon emissions. Carbon emissions are the by-product of the very flows of global capital itself and the infrastructure of the state that maintains it, and these flows can be blockaded, stopped, and shut down. To stop pollution in an era in which the entire world has become a factory, all one has to do is to choose a date and a target, where the situation is to the advantage.

The choice of targets often comes down to what resonates and what one can *get away with*. The actual methods include anything considered suitable, and violence never need be employed; both blockades and sabotage of industrial production are strangely non-violent. Whilst any attempts to actually storm the coal-burning power-plants of Kingsnorth and Drax to “shut them down” failed, a train-line holding coal was blocked by an act of civil disobedience in 2008. If the protesters in the UK could learn from the decades-old movement of the anti-Castor autonomen in Germany, then they would realise the multitudes of ways to paralyse a train full of coal that does not even involve arrests. The most successful sabotages do not only directly and without mediation halt production, but chose targets that provoke popular sympathy. These targets need no communique: by their very nature, they are impossible to ignore. The sabotage of coal transfer lines in Glentaggart carried out at the Scottish Climate Camp serves as a prime example. For years, the devastated mining community of Douglas had been fighting the creation of another strip-mine. Climate “activists” set up a tree-sit in order to prevent the expansion of strip-mining, and were given food and support by the locals. Even the police were sympathetic. When it was realised that kilometres upon kilometres of convey belts transporting coal across Scotland could be easily destroyed with a single cut, they were. Where decades of protest had failed, a single act of sabotage had succeeded, albeit momentarily.

To block the flows, sabotage must move from moments to sustained duration. Sabotage at the heart of production with the complicity of the workers themselves could return. Look at the widespread strikes, bossnappings, and threatened explosions by workers in France today, where they do not want to return to work, to be a *worker*, but want immediate abolition of their own role within capital, which they concretely see as possible via large pay-offs. On the other hand, watch how the antiglobalisation and radical ecological movements have transformed into a movement to stop climate change. Imagine if these two tendencies combined, as they came close to at the Vestas occupation. Who else knows how to halt the flows better than the workers themselves? A million people in the streets could not halt the Iraq War, but the dockworkers could easily halt arm shipments.

The spread of sabotage as an offensive in the generalised social war is the most promising terrain of struggle against capitalism. The vast majority of people may not show up to a demonstration, but it does not mean that they are insensible to the dizzying social and economic disintegration of capital; their cynicism only proves only they are better tacticians than the self-described activists. Yet in a future of declining natural resources and crisis, increasingly large swathes of the population will want a *way out*. Without a doubt, those who fight today will be the children of the last generation to truly believe in capitalism. For the youth today have no hope. If a few

dying old men want to bring apocalypse, their children must bring on the insurrection. Perhaps their children will meet at night covered in black masks. Or perhaps these new-born saboteurs will operate in broad daylight, flight attendants and construction workers, students and baristas, junior accountants and even...the police. The question is no longer one of theory, but of practice: How to blockade the flows of capitalism as to halt ecological degradation and human exploitation? It may end with generalised social war, but it begins with groups of friends. Hand in hand, bands of friends can co-ordinate to halt the flow of commodities and carbon. Flexing their muscles, perhaps just first for an hour. Then a day. Then a month. The goal: forever.

After the coal-line is sabotaged in Glentagart, the locals from the town of Douglas who have been resisting the open-cast coal mine visited the Scottish Climate Camp. The villagers wanted to express their concern. The coal is now moved on trucks through their village illegally. Yet since when has capitalism ever cared for legality when profit is at stake? The villagers were worried that the media would paint them all as saboteurs and so put back their struggle against the open-cast coal mine. Perhaps the sabotage went too far. The reality of the matter is obvious. The sabotage did not go far enough.

# The Spectacle of Green Capitalism

“As long as there is Man and Environment, the police will be there between them.”

— Anonymous, *The Coming Insurrection* (2006)

It must be an almost religious force then that keeps people enthralled to capitalism. Debord calls this force the “spectacle” — the advertisements, television, blogs, web-sites, video-games — that is nothing more than the collection of images that serve as the revealed religion of capital. Sartre remarked that he had never seen perfection until he had seen a movie. The world of advertisements is to us as central as the world of Christ and his angels was to our medieval ancestors. The spectacle is when the relationships between humans become mediated not just through commodities, but images produced by capital. As capital over-accumulates to ever more absurd heights, in the search for more markets, capital colonises the very social life of humans. Capitalism is to colonise the totality of our social life precisely to the extent it is able to capitalise any other form of life. One step of this colonisation was depriving the multitude of their traditional form of life in order to put them to work in factories. Yet somehow, after work, workers rejoiced and, shedding their work-day clothes, became human again: playing music in the bar, dreaming in the park, laying in each other’s arms. In order to extract perpetually more profit, there became ever-longer hours and evermore perfected assembly lines, with a global division of labour that undermines traditional factory organizing. However, eventually a limit is reached in classical capitalism.

To continue the production of endless commodities, capitalism must colonise all of human time and culture. A new and terrible prison of the imagination is imposed upon people via the perfect image of the commodity, transmitted electrically around the world via the mass media. These images of commodities direct our collective human activity, so that our relationships become commodities themselves, the sickening appearance of social capital. This global collection of disjointed images of commodities and super-stars then becomes the abstract unity that binds the fragmented humanity together, masking the very real divisions of power and wealth.

For decades, capitalism produced only the spectacle of its own perfectibility in the form of sexy young people consuming shiny new things eternally, but always leaving out the images of its own waste. All the obvious causes and results of capitalism were artfully hidden, from the millions of pounds of plastic in the oceans to the endless acres of forests reduced to stumps. As the process of natural resource extraction can not continue infinitely on a finite planet without some physical side-effects that will eventually wake even the most hypnotized of workers from their spectacular slumber, the spectacle can no longer present itself as images of heaven on earth. The happiness promised by commodities is transformed into terror. The dream of capital becomes its nightmare: the image of the apocalypse.

In the era of the apocalypse, the spectacle must invert itself. In the analysis of Debord, the spectacle as a collection of images was the summit of industrial capitalism, the symbol of its total power. As a new and very material reconfiguration of capitalism is in order, the first step is the



transformation of the images of the spectacle. Images of the apocalypse are endlessly repeated in movies starring Al Gore, in the pleas of scientists, and the last of polar bears hanging desperately onto the final melting iceberg. When produced by capitalism, these images are not innocent reflections of reality, but instead signal a conscious manipulation of our inner lives in order to make us willing slaves to the transformation of late capitalism into green capitalism, even if due to the biocrisis some measure of alarmism is justified. Green capitalism is merely a spectacular form of capitalism that denies its own role in the consumption of natural resources. The image of green capitalism as a latter-day technological messiah that must rescue a powerless humanity from the apocalypse produces again only an unreal unity that masks the real divisions between those who benefit and the vast majority of the world that suffers from ecological degradation.

A Greenpeace ad in the New York Times said, "It wasn't the Exxon Valdez captain's driving that caused the Alaskan oil spill. It was yours." Any desire for a genuinely social revolution is transferred to the ascetic self-management of the individual, the care of the self. Remember that self-management is still nothing more than management, with a tinge of self-righteous puritanism. Only the righteous will be saved, and your individual carbon emissions are a perfect way of measuring your sins. Google has even commenced the production of devices to allow self-management of personal electricity consumption and, no doubt soon, carbon emissions. True salvation is now being "carbon neutral" or more "realistically" a 50% carbon reduction, a 65% reduction, an 85% reduction. These goals employ all the fanaticism of fad diets and flagellation. Of course, this perfectly alienated solution to climate change ignores the obvious contradiction that a single individual reducing their personal carbon emissions has little to no effect. For example, unplugging your phone charger only reduces your personal energy consumption by one-hundredth of one percent at most. A more sinister agenda is at work. The world's population is so vast, so huge, that it is even inconceivable to imagine policing this multitude, to coerce them into green capitalism. The new slaves must enter into green capitalism willingly, and must *police* themselves, cleansing themselves of all impure thoughts of communism and violence; these thoughts are taken to be the result of some neurochemical disorder, or childhood trauma.

Green capitalism must refuse to admit, under all circumstances, that our mode of production is responsible for carbon emissions, since from that terrible hypothesis would come the obvious conclusion that such an edifice must be overthrown, and that those who benefit from it, the planetary bourgeoisie, are those who have truly caused the catastrophe of climate change. They try to escape by placing the blame on a 'collective' humanity who have harnessed industrial production for their 'common' needs at the expense of the environment, ignoring the historical reality that climate change is being precipitated not by humanity as a whole, the vast majority of which was dragged kicking and screaming into the factories and sweat-shops, but by capitalism, married as it is to industrial production. Indeed, carbon emissions and climate change more than clearly reveal what can only be called a class divide: the carbon emissions of a jet-setting businessman from either Britain or Qatar outstrip those of the thousands of unemployed, from the United States to Guatemala, that have been excluded from the planetary bourgeoisie, or those workers enslaved by the self-same planetary bourgeoisie in the vast factories in China and Brazil. Whilst the social peace of the last fifty years in Europe and the United States seemed to make the division between classes disappear, so that the working-class thought itself a part of the bourgeoisie (for example, by partaking in the financial markets) and the bourgeoisie simply pretended it did not exist, in an era of declining natural resources it would be surprising not to see a return of

class hatred. Unless, of course, green capitalism can via the image of the apocalypse convince everyone that “we’re all in it together”.

Never is capitalist production itself to be questioned; far from it, a whole new market of green commodities is produced for a profit. Everything from electric cars to “fair trade and carbon-neutral” lattes, whose production only worsens the real crisis of natural resources whilst stroking the egos of a new green bourgeoisie who can afford such precious green products as the rest of the world descends into food riots. Green restaurants, green airports, green banks, soon enough there will be lead-free green bullets and green torture chambers. Climate change only produces a whole new round of profit for everyone from professional activists from Greenpeace, climate change scientists, green-washing advertising companies, and now the very state itself. With every prophesy of the coming apocalypse, there is a ring at the cash register by green capitalism. Green capitalism institutionalises the apocalypse rather than escaping it. Those who would call to the state to find a solution, solutions which would include further taxation on the working class and poor in the form of carbon credits and other measures of green austerity, will only lead to increased state control over our everyday lives. These calls will only be used to consolidate state power and secure the profitability of capital whether the technologies it employs are ‘green’ or not. It is ridiculous to beg for the ‘capitalist management’ of a crisis that capitalism itself created.

The solutions of green capitalism, when inspected under the light of science, are *science fiction*. Sustainable energy just doesn’t add up. To give the standard of living of the planetary bourgeoisie to the rest of the world is mathematically impossible on “sustainable energy,” as anyone with a basic knowledge of arithmetic can determine. Even if all of Africa was covered in biofuel-producing plants like jatropha, we would only cover a third of our current oil consumption. This is even without considering that biofuels transform desperately needed land for growing food into land for producing biofuels. Wind, geothermal, tidal energy, even if exploited to their maximum via currently non-existent global facilities, can not even cover a third of current consumption. To reduce carbon emissions by planting trees would require nation-state sized tree plantations — which are impossible given population constraints. The bottom-line is clear: sustainable energy requires both massive solar farms in *other people’s* deserts and, even then, it would require the restarting of nuclear power. The obvious motor of any “carbon-free” economy will be uranium.

Or just keep mining and burning coal. Luckily for those afraid of strikes, mines for coal can be re-opened, yet *without workers*. Mountaintop removal — destroying mountains older than humanity by sheer explosives that leave only a lunar landscape behind in order to retrieve coal — is accelerating, replacing the traditional mining communities, and their world. Complete fabrications like “carbon capture” (otherwise known as the eminently paradoxical “clean coal”) will be the green herrings dangled in front of the population as the use of fossil-fuels accelerates. Carbon capture requires a considerable amount of energy produced, to power the technology to capture the carbon; where is that energy supposed to come from? We emit carbon so we eventually emit less. We destroy the planet in order to save it. The reign of the green spectacle turns this paradox into gospel.

Green capitalism is green colonialism, albeit more confused as the distinctions between the Global North and the Global South dissolve as what the colonial British called the “coloured empires” of India and China today compete directly with the traditional colonial West for natural resources. China is buying tremendous swathes of Africa and the United States creating military bases near every bastion of oil, whilst plans have started for massive solar panel farms in Northern Africa to ship electricity straight to Europe. Green capitalism is nothing but a strangely

postmodern ‘green’ colonialism. The reason for this game is not just a lack of energy sources, as there is no shortage of coal and the ever increasing prospects of oil shortage. The reason is much more deadly, for climate change is expected to lead to a sharp decline in food production as the world population grows to nearly nine billion. Follow the money: the large investments of green capitalism are to construct new border fortifications – the present day equivalent of Hadrian’s Wall – to stop the flow of climate refugees, whose numbers are sure to mount. We don’t need a climatologist to tell us which way the wind is blowing.

This new era of capitalism will not be heralded by a military war, but by a generalised low-intensity conflict that encompasses the totality of life: the global social war. Increased police violence, constant surveillance, RFID chips, and biometric identity cards are tactical operations in a war of capital against “the enemy within,” ever so easily exemplified by anarchists, unemployed youth, and immigrants. As this social war becomes ever more mundane, climate change will force wartime measures upon every citizen. Carbon emissions limits and trading will be excuses for new austerity measures to inflict upon the poor. Green technology will maintain the bourgeoisie form of life even inside the most privileged of countries, whilst the rest of the world must be left to starve to death. Every metropolis will be divided into a “Green Zone” for the planetary eco-bourgeoisie and vast swathes of exclusion for the new proletariat. The contrast between the cafes outside Notre Dame and the excluded banlieus is not the exception, this contrast is the foundation for the model city of the future, and in this regard, the riots in Paris in 2005 are the most normal of responses to this new urbanism. These riots were only a sneak preview of the future, for the first effects of catastrophic climate change will be food riots and mass migrations as the waters rise and the deserts creep irreversibly into arable land. Only the most massive of psychological and spectacular operations, green capitalism, can save capitalism from this crisis of its own making. If you don’t want to assist in the spectacle of the end of the world, you must work toward ending the world of the spectacle.

“How true that the most ‘practical’ people are often the most naïve utopians!”

– Enrico Malatesta, *The anarchists in the present time* (1930)

In order For The machinery of this envisioned green capitalism to work, it is vital that everyone actively participate in generalised self-management in order to “stop carbon emissions”. Who should we blame for carbon emissions? The corporation that makes them? The nation that the corporation is in? A mode of transport between countries? Its consumers? It’s obvious: in spite of the spectacle of green capitalism, the totality of the circuit of consumption and production must be halted to stop climate change. Utopian plans that sketch in detail precisely how a carbon market can result in a low-carbon world, from Kyoto2 to “Contraction and Convergence”, never confront the self-evident truth that their plans only require more than ever an all-powerful state. A state we can believe in. The state uses the rhetoric of “democracy” to justify its existence, for democracy denies the very real class tensions – tensions that will be exasperated by climate changed – induced food riots.

Activists who call for a more “democratic” mechanism for constraining carbon emissions serve merely as the vanguard of capitalism itself. Whilst in the era of neo-liberalism the call for democracy may have been the most radical of gestures, in the era of climate change the demand for democratic self-management is the new ideology of capital, as capitalism realises the only way

to prevent an increasingly obvious class conflict is to have everyone believe that “we are all in it together.”

How old-fashioned the demands of the alter-globalisation movement appear in this new era, just as the red flag itself appeared hopelessly out of date in 1999. “Less coal, more democracy!” these most conservative of revolutionaries beg. If only the indigenous people were represented! The women! The poor! Let us pretend that everyone could “have their voices heard” in the most massive of summits. With no material force to compel an actual change in our form of life, even the most well-intentioned will find themselves accomplices to the next round of green capitalist restructuring.

Do not forget that the institutions of neoliberal capitalism were more than happy to give the NGOs and “developing world” a seat at the table of the World Bank. This is precisely how the radical democrats of the alter-globalisation movement were defeated. The G8 is dead, long live the G20! A few more people of colour at the table aren’t going to halt the march towards green capitalism, let alone halt the biocrisis. Barack Obama, Gordon Brown, Bono, Bill Gates and all the rest would be more than happy to sit down and have a latte with the representatives of the “Global South” as long as they can get a good photo-shoot and be quoted in the newspaper as saying “I feel your pain”.

During a food crisis, one does not sit at the table and beg for the crumbs from the plates of the rich. Demand nothing. Instead, occupy everything and blockade the flows! Forget the NGOs who “represent” the Global South, they are basically in a jet-setting elite of professional “representatives” that exist to balm the soul of capitalism, and so to soften the very real colonisation of the Global South. A far better representative would be the people from Papua New Guinea, who when delivered medical supplies by British activists, asked instead for guns.

To declare oneself to be against democracy is akin to declaring oneself fit for a mental asylum even in the most “radical” of social circles, despite the fact that the primary obstacle to a social revolution against capitalism is representative democracy itself. Historically, social revolution is ignited via the gathered intensity of a *minority* that takes action into their own hands, not waiting for a vote or consensus. From the Paris Commune to St. Petersburg, almost every revolution has only had one out of a hundred people on the streets, with Tehran in 1979 having one in ten people in the streets. One does not wait for permission to act. One acts, with those who are willing, and then if the act is taken at the right time, the action may then generalise. Historically, waiting for a vote has been the enemy of revolution: DeGaulle defeated the unrest in May 1968 by calling for an election.

It is not by accident that democracy and capitalism have since their historical inception been joined at the hip, declared by Fukuyama to be the best of all possible flavors of governance. While it is certain that capitalism can continue under many possible governmental forms, Chinese authoritarianism and the faded remnants of European social democracy leap to mind, this is not to deny there is a certain attachment of capitalism to representative democracy. Capitalism and democracy mirror within each other the same abstract law of value: democracy is the great equaliser of politics in which every individual is the same, just as the market is the great equaliser on which every commodity is the same. Just as every absurd thing from plastic baubles to carbon can be bought and sold on the market, every possible mundane issue can be voted for and ratified, from the placement of traffic signals to what proportion of carbon states will be allowed to emit. Would a vote on the collective destruction of vast swathes of humanity somehow justify it? Capitalism reduces all things — even imaginary and invisible things — to the same abstract

form of the commodity, with an owner and a price. Democracy does the exact same operation on the political sphere, as it reduces all of us to abstract individuals with the ability to express our “opinion” through voting. Even consensus can devolve from the creation of new collective thoughts in common into mere process, an extreme form of democratic voting where everyone is *compelled* to agree. Capitalism and democracy pretend to separate the sphere of politics from that of economy — and both those spheres from the rest of life. So, what should one expect of endless meetings, plenums, summits, protocols, voting? Nothing. One cannot expect a democratic vote, even in the midst of the most democratic and inclusive of summits, to end climate change. One might as well believe in fairy tales: Which is after all, all democracy is.

Calls for “climate justice” ignores the root of the problem if its demands are made in terms of ‘rights’ granted to individuals via the state. The concept of climate justice advocated by NGOs and activists has little to do with the irreversible historical tragedy visited upon vast swathes of the world by Western colonialism, which no “technology transfer” (the forcing of giant centralised energy production) or “ecological reparations” (pretending the cost of colonialism can be given a monetary price) can possibly redeem. On its current terrain, “just transition” concerns itself solely with ensuring that proletarians remain proletarians, swapping the carbon factory floor of the present for the windmill farm of the future. By failing to address by whose agency a meaningful “just transition” will be achieved, “just transition” activists only help to maintain the management of work and production. Moreover it postpones the inevitable conclusion; namely that we are all fucked by ecological degradation at this very moment and there’s no room anymore for such pleasant illusions as justice, just as there is no room for bourgeoisie comfort. The reality of the situation is that vast swathes of working-class Americans and Western Europeans will have to make do with the same material resources of Africans. The state makes empty promises of “clean development” and even “climate justice” knowing true and well the reality of the nightmarish politics of scarce resources the world is entering. What is needed is not the mystification of social justice, but a realisation of our position within the global social war. Not the question of justice, but of vengeance.

A million tricks — anything and everything except the abolishment of capitalism and the state — will be played to delay the inevitable insurrection. What if the workers could decide democratically what to produce, and what to consume, adhering to the most strict of carbon-setting principles? This paradise of the radical democrats, who so loved Argentina, would not solve anything. One needs only to look at the network of “ecological co-operatives” that are now just soulless corporate enterprises. As witnessed by co-operatives like Mondragon, the co-operative today is the most advanced form of self-manged enslavement, as the worker is supposed to identify with the co-operative more than with the rest of the working-class. When everyone becomes a little bit of a manager, how can one not have some sympathy for the boss, who is just another worker in the same co-operative? “How could you go on strike? Don’t unionise, don’t rebel. If you have any problems you can just talk to me. After all, I’m not really the boss, I’m just another human being.” One cannot expect capitalism, even co-operatively managed, to produce anything other than ecological devastation, as the accumulation of dead capital from the living world is built into its dynamics. In a world of ever-rising unemployment where it is production itself that is causing ecological degradation, it is the concept of work that is itself superfluous.

The best we can hope for is another sentimental education. Even the most radical democrats must see their hopes dashed, as capitalism betrays them again and again. Defeated protest after defeated protest, useless treaty after useless treaty, perhaps at some point even activists will sur-

render hope that capitalism and the state can “cure” catastrophic climate change. The poor, the working-class, the indigenous and others know the illusion of development, sustainable or otherwise, is gone. The only option — as pioneered by the workers in Bangladesh who burnt down their factories to the youth in France who burnt down their libraries — is the destruction of their identity as workers under capitalism. To want absolutely nothing from capital and the state except its abolition by our own hands. A zero-carbon world is possible, but not an authoritarian nightmare imposed from above by “democratic” capitalism, but one created and self-organized from below. We do not have forty years for this sentimental education, for as a species we are running out of time to halt the biocrisis. If possible, this sentimental education must be accelerated. The managers and architects of the movement, the NGOs and all of civil society, the moralistic social democrats masquerading as anarchists, are only the experimental ground for the state to perfect its methods of governance. The point is not to perfect the State. The point is to destroy it.

# Ecological Fascism

“We have modified our environment so radically that we must now modify ourselves to exist in this new environment.”

— Norbert Wiener, *the Human Use of Human Beings* (1954)

Other worlds are possible, it's just that some are worse. Fascism is the logical escape route of capitalism in crisis: the perfection of the state. The cycle of crisis leading to fascism is as follows: the internal dynamics of capitalism, based on selfish interest and profit, cannot lead to an overcoming of the crisis of over-accumulation; only a massive revolution in the mode of production and social relationships points a way out. The very same conditions that could breed a social revolution against capitalism is also the breeding ground of fascism.

Fascism is the modernizing saviour of capitalism when it enters crisis. Do not forget that it was Hitler who built the highways, the factories, and even normalised the alphabet when the late-forming German nation-state was lagging behind the rest of Europe in terms of modernisation. Fascism did what the bourgeoisie, left to their own devices, were incapable of doing, namely to dominate the most resistant forms of society and organise them into a new unity. Like politicians today, fascists cynically promise everything to everyone, even if it entails contradictions: and so actually resonate with people, but direct them in the long-term interests of capitalism. In response to climate change, a new kind of eco-fascism is almost sure to arise, either as capitalism fails to reform itself into green capitalism or when the distinction between fascism and capitalism disappear. Right-wing zealots have a moment of truth when they declare that they don't like the new “green” government that will prevent them from burning fires in their own backyard. Given that carbon markets are only going to increase carbon emissions, the purported solution to climate change in the form of strict carbon emission reductions would require nothing less than an authoritarian state with control over every facet of life. In the name of “saving the planet,” we will submit ourselves to join the new collectivity of the state in the form of eco-fascism.

Eco-fascism is only the possibility of a movement to come, so we can only offer a sketch of its seeds in the present rather than a perfect description. Still, the signs are hard to ignore. George Monbiot, an influential British journalist, told his devoted fans that to stop global warming, we must riot for austerity. Never has the new form of ecofascism been more clear. Fascism is the copying of revolutionary organisation to the counter-revolution and eco-fascism will be no exception. The transformation of fascism to national socialism was an ideological operation. The national socialists adopted the techniques of revolutionary communism such as the mass meetings, the street fighting, and a desire for collectivity. The methodology of communism was perverted away from its goals of a new Internationale into the service of the “people” — the *Volk* — and the Land. There is no reason to believe that eco-fascism will be any different, although the sources of its new form of organisation will be anarchism, not communism. For a superficial example, notice that in Germany and Bulgaria, the fascists have adopted the dress and even the

tactics of the anarchist Black Bloc. However, a less superficial example is more important: anarchist sub-cultures have been the vanguard of taking full responsibility of personal consumption, of “punishing” themselves for drinking Cola, eating meat, using the “wrong” words. It is then no wonder that some of the anarchist sub-cultures were the first to fall victim to the spectacle of self-management in the name of “saving the environment.” The individualist moralism of anarchism can easily be transformed to eco-fascism. These methods of self-control, now strictly enforced as austerity measures, will become the first phase of eco-fascism, and this moralism will justify any repression against social revolution. The marking of those who consume products not expensive enough to be certified as sustainable, those who don’t truly believe, those who overspend carbon credits, those who defy forced austerity measures, combined with spying on neighbours, militarised borders, camps for climate refugees...this is the nightmare of the beginnings of eco-fascism. Monbiot and the rest of the planetary bourgeoisie in their pleasant eco-villages should give each other a toast – over organic wine grown in Cornwall – as none of this will disturb their ever-so-perfect green zone. Their recuperation of anarchism is almost too perfect.

Capitalism fragments our lives into a million little pieces, and fascism offers to re-assemble them into a new kind of collectivity. Fascism offers to let us abolish ourselves as individuals in order for the supposed greater good of the species, the group, the nation...yet in reality, it only enslaves us to the domination of a small clique, a leader, a prophet. Given the widespread fear that any crisis causes, fascism takes advantage of people’s desire to survive by offering to dominate them to assure their survival. How is that we desire our own domination? Fear and the attraction to power. There is something strangely comforting, and even erotic, in the submission of one’s self to a collectivity. Unlike anarchism, instead of creating collectivities based on free association and mutual aid that begin with the relationships between individuals, fascism creates this new collective form of life based on the abstract domination of a single individual, thus the propensity of fascism for figures like Hitler and Mussolini. Unwilling to change the fundamental social relationships of domination, fascism blames concrete groups of individuals. So the fascists personify capitalism in particular individuals or ethnic groups, with the conspiracy theory of the Jewish bankers being the ideal template, and eco-fascists will apply this personification against those who that violate austerity measures. Unfortunately, with the total collapse of our social life at the hands of the spectacle, this “picture-thinking” is all-too-easy to understand. In this new era of dwindling natural resources, immigrants are likely to be the first to suffer.

To the surprise of many, the beating heart of fascism has always been ecology. The dream of a green and fecund agrarian world, a dream foolishly thrown out by communism and kept alive by anarchism, is given as the connection between blood and soil. It fulfils the need for an ahistorical and transcendental essence upon which the abstract unity of eco-fascism can be built; namely the relationship between people and the land. Ecology as a science was defined by its founder, the biologist Ernst Haeckel, as “the total science of the connections of the organism to the surrounding external world.” In a misinterpretation of Darwin, Haeckel believed that the same “laws” of Social Darwinism prevailed throughout both the natural world and social life, only the strongest – be they individuals or nations – would survive, and so he became a proponent of racial purity, joining the Thule Society. From the doctrine of the Thule Society, Hitler formulated the foundation of an ideology for national socialism, so that Nazism was to be a “politically applied biology” to return humanity into harmony with the environment. By opposing a pure ecological ideal to the metropolitan anomie of capital, classically fascists were the first who effectively merged ecology and politics. The relationship between the People and the Land



must be cleansed and renewed, and in this context cleansing means the murder of those outside the fascist collectivity. This would fit all-too-easily into the border regimes being put in place across the world. Yet even more disturbing future scenarios are being dreamt up today by those like Kaarlo Linkola – who, speaking against free-market capitalism and unlimited growth in his award-winning book “Can Life Prevail?” believes that to survive the biocrisis, humanity must be forced from the city and into agricultural production. Trees must be planted, all airplanes grounded, construction stopped. While these may not seem to be such terrible demands, Linkola adds that children who are deemed unfit should be killed.

Fascism is the technophilic ideology of the apocalypse. The visions of a green and harmonious future that serve as the kernel of fascism are to be realised in the distant and never-quite-arriving future. All the power of technology developed under capitalism should be harnessed now at whatever the cost in death. Eco-fascism is apocalyptic insofar as it must destroy the current world in the here-and-now in order to restore it to its perfect condition in some infinitely deferred future. This explains the seeming schizophrenia of fascism, the contrast between the smokestacks of the concentration camps and dictates of Nazi Germany to commence nation-wide organic farming. Indeed, an underlying logic connects the perfectionist ecology of the National Socialists with their attempt to eliminate, like any productive farmer, what they considered to be unproductive. As the apocalypse is in the future, all manner of techniques can be deployed today to bring about the thousand-year reign of the new heaven on the new earth. Unlike those purists for which the ends and means must be compatible, ecofascists are more than happy to employ a mass-based movement and high technology to realise their state of primordial green virtue. In the era of global climate change, this combination will be even more tempting, as eco-fascists will also play to the technophilia of capitalism, since eco-fascism will be more than willing to use whatever technology can be used to preserve survival of the land and people. More than traditional capitalism, eco-fascists will be able to put forward an alternative to capitalism that connects personal survival to the promise of a restored ecosystem due to technology.

The coming fascism will not be on that we necessarily recognise and will not even necessarily be nationalist. There is a common misunderstanding of fascism, namely that somehow fascism is only about the purification of races and nations. The murder of the “foreign element” of the unintegrated Roma fits the mold of classical racism all too well, but something more happened with the destruction even of the completely integrated six million European Jews in the Holocaust. Fascism as an extreme case of racism or nationalism is a myth, and the reality is much more complicated. The selection of Jews and Roma for extermination was only the beginning. Including the selection of communists, anarchists, queers, the disabled and prisoners of war, the victims of the Holocaust more than double. The true nature of fascism is then revealed by the final law – the *Gemeinschaftsfremdengesetz* – that Hitler passed on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January of 1945, but never implemented. In this law, the selection begun by the Holocaust was never to end. Next the weak, the morally dissolute, those insufficiently part of the fascist society ... all were to be killed. This selection would include anyone whose behaviour was less than perfectly aligned with the envisioned perfect fascist society, and this selection was to take place infinitely and ever more stringently into the future. Those “foreign to the community” were those who “have been unable to show personality and lifestyle, especially because of an exceptional defect of reason or character, that meet with the minimum requirements of the national community”, including those who “from idleness or debauchery lead a worthless, uneconomical, or disorderly life, and thus another of the public burden or risk...or have an inclination to beg, to loafing, thefts, frauds or other non-

serious offences” and especially those who “from intolerance or belligerence persistently disturb the peace of the public.” In other words, the Holocaust merely spreads, and *anyone who doesn't fit in* to the ecological fantasy must be eliminated. The parallel to the fate of the excluded under a regime of climate politics could not be more obvious.

The first step of the fascist programme is to record *everything*. That which the state cannot locate, cannot join its perfect community — or must be killed for being outside of it. The origin of this peculiar madness may lie in the idea of the Book of Judgement, in which the sins of every person are recorded to determine their destiny after the apocalypse. When this vision materialized as the aptly-named Domesday book in medieval England, it is no wonder that the peasantry believed that its completion would herald the doomsday itself. The latter-day descendants of the Domesday book are the vast computerized databases of today, and it is forgotten that the Nazi dictatorship started the stocktaking of individuals to be eliminated with the construction giant files. That the state should soon be able to measure the ecological virtue of its citizens may only be a step towards the dark side of a regime of genrealised self-management, in which everyone is expected to either become a pure and model citizen or die trying. For those with long memories, it is not without a sense of disturbance that one hears the green capitalists talking about increasingly punishing those who emit more carbon than is allowed. The logic of fascism is the logic of the “perfection” of the human in a “harmonious and ecological” community. The coming eco-fascism will represent the completion of the project that the fascists failed to complete with the *Gemeinschaftsfremdengesetz*: the rebuilding of the human in the interests of capital by the unholy marriage of ecology and cybernetics.

# Communitisation

“The Hassidim tell a story about the world to come that says everything there will be just as it is here. Just as our room is now, so it will be in the world to come; where our baby sleeps now, there too it will sleep in the other world. And the clothes we wear in this world, those too we will wear there. Everything will be as it is now just, just a little different.”

— Walter Benjamin

The coming of a new form of life is imagined to be an apocalyptic event to those who desire the continuation of capitalism. It is the image of the apocalypse that holds us back from the obvious: the only way to overcome climate change is not zero-carbon towns, not green technology, not sustainable development, not carbon trading, not eco-fascism, but another form of life. A social revolution is precisely the *reverse* of the apocalypse, for in the creation of a new form of life is the possibility of the survival in the most adverse of conditions.

A ‘form of life’ is the totality of how life relates to the world, the uncountable concrete adaptations to a world that allow a form of life to reproduce. Evolutionary pressures — natural selection — force changes in forms of life, as some particular adaptations allow successful reproduction, while others cause extinction. The adaptations that allow reproduction to continue in the selfsame manner for a period of time are evolutionary stable strategies. Capitalism was once a successful evolutionary strategy for at least some portion of humanity, but as climate change abolishes the very conditions that capitalism was created under, namely an unending New World of infinite natural resources, something has to *break*. The possibility of a crisis that forces a change in a form of life is not unique to humanity. Even rabbits face extinction when they consume all the edible food in their habitats. Nor is an extinction-level crisis unique to this moment in history, as the destruction of forests by humans on Easter Island led to an inability to grow food and build canoes needed to fish. By the verdict of evolution, creating a world that is unfit for the survival of your own children — your own genes — is insane. An adult lion does not go out onto the savannah and murder all the gazelles for food, and so leave nothing but bones for its cubs. This is precisely what capitalism is in the process of doing: climate change is making the world uninhabitable for children.

Life can not be reduced to facts, to a simple set of permanent and essential “human” characteristics. The primary evolutionary advantage of humanity is that the social relationships that provide the food, clothing, and shelter necessary for reproduction can be reconfigured endlessly and *changed* immediately, rather than held hostage to the slow march of natural selection. This is especially important as climate change threatens to radically alter our planet in decades, rather than millennia. Self-described capitalists misinterpret evolution as an endless war of individuals against individuals, with the fittest — or wealthiest — surviving. Fascists further misinterpret evolution as the war of groups against groups, with the culling of the weak being somehow for the good of the group or even species. However, evolution is blind, without any moral bias for

either individuals or groups: the only criteria for evolutionary success is genetic reproduction. The anarchist hypothesis that can then be put forward is that a new strategy for organizing our social relationships is necessary, a strategy based on co-operation. This is not as far-fetched as it seems, for this is the very strategy employed successfully by the cells that collectively create our body. From the flying of birds in flocks to the co-operation of plants with the fungus that helps them absorb nutrients from the soil, Kropotkin was right: co-operation can mean survival as easily as competition. In a world of scarce resources, this is precisely the form of life that we will likely flourish. Communisation is the process of this new form of life coming to be.

Communisation means the end of capitalist production, the end of private property and monetary exchange, and the destruction of separate spheres of work and politics from life. However, communisation does not mean the apocalyptic destruction of capital. While self-declared “primitivists” moralistically decry that all technology must be destroyed, it would be a mistake to want to return to nuts and berries: especially as the Earth is so damaged by capitalism at this point that it’s hard to believe there’s enough nuts and berries left to go around. A return to the “primitive” that would happen as a result of an industrial collapse is nothing but a particularly juvenile longing for the apocalypse, one that does not take the possibility of eco-fascism seriously. Capital in-and-of-itself – the technology, the engines, the silicon chips, the conveyor-belts – is by itself harmless, although one would find it hard to imagine a form of life so dreary that it would create the machinery of an industrial factory besides capitalism. What makes machines “capital” is their use for producing profit in the circuit of capitalist production and consumption. The same goes for a worker; a worker is not a worker when she is at home from the factory, the office, the fast-food joint. When not at work, when the worker is a mother, a friend, a comrade, a jokester, a lover. It is only when the potential of humans is aimed at the accumulation of profit (which can be done as easily by watching television as working in the factory), that they become human capital, as put bluntly by latter-day economists. The question is then not how to destroy things, but to dispel a certain way of viewing the world.

What if we did not view revolution as the end of things in a moment of total destruction? What if instead, we viewed revolution as a little shift, as a change in viewing the world without the logic of capitalism? Instead of waiting for the end of the world, this little shift could happen literally overnight, and everything would remain the same, but *a little different*. While it is impossible to positively predict without falling into utopian daydreams, we can imagine the negation of this world. The day after the revolution, we would wake up in our same clothing, our same shoes, in the arms of our same lovers. Yet, something would be different. Humans would see the walls of separation between them dispel. Under capitalism, people relate to commodities like people and treat their relationships to people like commodities. Once this little shift had passed, our relationships would become immediately social, and we would be free to pursue whatever our relationships demanded of us. Objects would no longer be stripped of their history and context in order to be given some market value, but understood as embedded in the no-longer-hidden social relationships, existing to be absolutely shared between friends. The same offices and factories would still be there, but no one would have to go to work in the morning. The technology therein would no longer be alien to human needs, but could be resurrected in new and more creative ways to serve human survival and new forms of life. This world created by human labour would appear to us again as beautiful. From each according to their ability, to each according to their need.

Communisation would end climate change from the bottom-up rather than being directed by the state and capital, who would only cynically manipulate the issue of catastrophic climate change to restructure labour and thus continue their domination. In direct contrast to the implausible carbon markets and technological fantasies: communisation ends catastrophic climate change by the most direct of methods: the end of the economy. The only countries that fulfilled their Kyoto limits on carbon emissions were precisely those countries whose economies collapsed: Romania and Ukraine. The key difference is that communisation collapses the capitalist economy *on purpose* by humanity itself, a controlled demolition that maximises the survival of those excluded by capitalism and the manifold non-human forms of life. What appears to be only a little shift would be the difference between the survival of our world and the certainty of its destruction by excessive work.

Capitalism is only the latest incarnation of more fundamental framing of the world that far pre-dates capitalism. The alienation of humanity from the commodities we create is only symptomatic of the larger alienation of humanity from our planet. It is this very separation that allows us to conceive of our planet as an “environment” full of “natural resources,” with other species that can be destroyed on a whim. This framing of the world must be obliterated, so that future generations can be carefully attuned to the flows not only of carbon, but of the world of life outside humanity and our plastic toys. It is exactly this sensibility that our world needs, the sort of sensibility many Europeans imagine the indigenous tribes of the rest of the world as possessing, although remember that the barbarians of Europe were at one point indigenous before becoming “Europeans”. Able to prognosticate from movement of clouds and slight shifts in temperature the coming weather, able to determine the health of the soil by feeling for worms: all of this incalculable knowledge that has nearly been obliterated by capital must be re-learned. Techniques like permaculture and biomediation, pioneered only for the planetary bourgeoisie, could be applied for the good of all. Contra the all-too-easy solutions posed by green capitalism, this new form of life would present a new evolutionarily stable strategy able to not only cope, but flourish, in the world as altered by catastrophic climate change. As has been said, more than our holiday habits must change to sustain the world to come.

The apocalypse is not unique to capitalism or Christianity: Marx in his most dreary moments gave us only a secular language for the apocalypse, holding off “the revolution” until the time is right. There was always something of a prophet about Marx, and his beard does not help to dispel the suspicions. The communism of Marx was always infinitely deferred, justifying the horrors of the Gulag, the bloodstained Chinese factories, and the ruins of Eastern Europe, and so the possibility of a new form of life became itself thought of as impossible, a mere sociopathic ideology. We are against communism as political ideology, and for for the immediacy of communisation in our lives at this moment.

Far from a distant future apocalyptic revolution, communisation begins whenever humans socialise material conditions. This goes beyond such consciously explicit anti-capitalist projects like temporary autonomous zones, but into much of everyday life. When you give of yourself selflessly, share food with friends, nurture a child, lose yourself in a lover, face the risk of arrest or death in defence of your home, and even present all of yourself to another in conversation: without a doubt, the majority of human life is real-existing communisation. It is precisely this everyday solidarity that allows the poor to survive on as little as a dollar a day, a task that would appear logically impossible if the survival of the poor were not so empirically self-evident.

Communisation takes this material solidarity and propels it as a new evolutionary strategy for the planet, based on the demand for the release of the possibilities to form collectivities based on our common desire to survive. Far from the forced collectivisations of the Soviet Union or even the social factory of capitalism (where we are forced to circulate constantly from job to job and to work with all sorts of people with whom we would never otherwise associate), communisation is based on ancient anarchist principles of free association and mutual aid. Therefore, communisation would also be the right to withdraw from this circulation depending on your mood and circumstance, while there simultaneously being at any time the possibility to increase your intensity by combining with others. By brushing aside the mediation of capital and the state, self-organized forms of life can emerge that are attuned to their world and so can solve its actual evolutionary problems.

Even if communisation begins in everyday life on the margins of capital, to succeed communisation must become an explicitly international revolutionary project within and against the totality of capital. That this should happen *immediately* is our evolutionary imperative, for with every passing moment, further irrevocable damage is done by capital that will make the task of future generations even more difficult. It would be a tragedy on the level of the species if we began to communise, but the process started too late to halt a “tipping point” in catastrophic climate change. We must tolerate no feeble half-measures; unless communisation causes an explicit revolution, communisation itself reaches a limit and loses its revolutionary momentum, fossilising into some sort of social democracy or eco-fascism after a momentary breaking out of revolutionary fever, which would have the same deadly result as the the continuation of the capitalist present. Thus the paradox is that communisation must begin now under the most local of conditions with none other than our own activity, and yet it can only succeed ultimately by forcing the totality of capitalism to crumble, so that the tremendous task of a revolution in our social relationships takes place not on the level of spectacular illusion, but in material reality. Only a social revolution will successfully steer us through an era where we must confront a species-level crisis on a global scale. We as a species now have our back against the wall due to catastrophic climate change. Compared to ecofascism and green capitalism, communisation is the least bloody of paths to bring an end to this situation.

Despite the anthropological evidence that humans lived for millenia without capital or even states, some would say the project of communisation is unrealistic and fantastical. Perhaps. The only philosophy which can be responsibly practiced in the face of despair is the attempt to contemplate all things as they would present themselves from the standpoint of revolution. Communisation is the antidote to the apocalypse.

# The Art of Insurrection

“The social revolution .. will not ... put up its sword before it has destroyed every state ... across the whole civilised world.”

— Michael Bakunin, *The Program of the Brotherhood* (1865)

In order to prevent catastrophic climate change, the evolutionary imperative of our era is to destroy the state. The lie of capitalism, green or otherwise, has in the last determining instance the sheer material force — the army, the police, the *belief* of the people — of the state. Nearly forgotten and long forbidden questions return unbidden to the table of history: the question of insurrection, the art of the destruction of the state. Insurrection is always an open question rather than a plan. When the question is answered, it is answered not in theory but in the practice of those that take a self-conscious stand against the state itself. Insurrection is the answer to the anarchist hypothesis that we can live without the state.

It was fashionable during the height of the neo-liberal era to say that the state was irrelevant, yet today to speak of destroying capitalism without the destruction of the state is to speak only of fascism. During the financial crisis, the state’s ability to create untold sums of money from nothingness has proved that, far from irrelevant, the State is the final guarantor of capitalism, the grand magician behind the curtain of value. While revolutionaries have endless pages of analysis of capitalism, on the more topical subject of the destruction of the state we barely know more than a few slogans. As was witnessed by the monstrosities of “real existing socialism” given by Lenin and Stalin, Marx fails completely to provide a theory of the destruction of the state. The central question of anarchism has never been answered satisfactorily: How to destroy the state? It is none other than this generation that must elaborate an answer if a new form of life is to arise that no longer needs a state.

This is not an easy question to answer. The state seeks above all to preserve itself, even as forms of life like capitalism come and go. There is without a doubt something timeless about the state: the statues of Greek gods, the Latin engravings, the imperious towers. All nation-states, from the United States to Denmark, act as if they were new images of Rome, and their décor reveals their terrible continuity. Therein lies the key to the mystique of the state; if the key to capital is the flow of commodities, the key to the state is the flow of *belief*.

The state is a massive machine based on the belief of its own necessity, the greatest of hypnotist in whose presence almost all fail to act in their own self-interest. Take, for example, policemen. While the politicians are usually incredibly wealthy individuals who move from a role within the corporation to the state with ease, are not policemen often children of the poor, acting against their own class interest? What massive ideological brain-washing goes on that makes the police, the secret services, the bureaucrats, and every other human appendage of the state machine operate against their own interests and even the survival of the planet? Even revolutionaries will rally around the state in a period of crisis. To take an example that is only superficially different from that of the police, Monbiot and a million other activists and NGOs plea for us to return to

the waiting arms of the state, claiming that only the state can save us from catastrophic climate change. The same tin-man which upholds the entire social order that created climate change will have a *change of heart*. It's more sad than returning to an abusive lover.

Monbiot and other liberals ask us to ignore the obvious: the conditions for a new era of insurrection have never been better; the planet resembles nothing more than a globalised version of early 19<sup>th</sup> century capitalism, with a massive unorganised working-class being uprooted from their previous pre-capitalist forms of life, but the key difference being this time it is the end of capitalism rather than the beginning. With the almost complete elimination of the anarchist movement in the 1930s and the disaster of Stalin destroying the ultra-left communist movement in its very infancy, those who stand against the capitalist form of life find themselves starting from literally almost nothing. Thus the revival of conspiracies, secret societies, bands of friends, gangs, and the tender shoots of new internationals. Before the attempted insurrection of the Paris Commune, over six-hundred secret societies flourished in the belly of the beast. How many gangs today exist in the heart of every metropolis?

One does not need guns and violence for insurrection to begin, although one would be foolish to believe that any insurrection will happen without violence. A certain comfort with violence is necessary. Still, the state is far more than a capitol or an army. The path of militarism is a game in which it is manifestly impossible to beat the state. A revival of the armed struggle must be avoided at all costs, as a direct attack on institutions like the state is no longer necessary. In a world in which power has become decentralised, it is merely necessary to block the flows indirectly. While the Bank of England or even the headquarters of Exxon can be guarded like the Winter Palace, the diffuse tentacles of production and consumption are everywhere. The state is ultimately just another institution, albeit one that is far more ancient, wily, and dangerous than the others; yet its flows can also be blocked. The primary flow that maintains the state is the belief in the state itself. One blocks the belief in the state by showing that life without a state is possible, and then via the immediacy of communism showing that such life is better than life within capitalism and the state. Or, at least, that such a life is more likely to lead to the survival of your children. As the state and capital enter into irreversible ecological crisis, the spaces for such a social revolution bloom a thousandfold.

Whilst throughout history the state has been destroyed by marauding barbarian hordes, within recent history the state has been destroyed by an insurrection of its own people. The example par excellence of this was the Paris Commune, where ordinary workers overthrew the government. After only seventy-two days, the king re-gathered his army in Versailles and then massacred the Commune. The Paris Commune showed that a new form of life was possible if the state was destroyed, but it lacked the means to defend itself. The question then that faced revolutionaries was how to survive the inevitable counter-revolution and to this end the Bolsheviks built their Party, which not only seized power but held off the counter-revolutionary armies of all of Europe. However, the "revolutionary" Party erected only a new state, rather than destroying the state itself, and eventually turned its weapons against the most committed of revolutionaries at Kronstadt, and then countless others. Only an academic would wonder why no-one believes the communist hypothesis today. The lesson of the Russian Revolution is all too clear. What is needed is not only the destruction of the State, but a revolution in our social relationships. Previous theorists assumed this happened after the revolutionary destruction of the state apparatus. Glimpses of this new form of life return again and again, from Paris in 1968 to Oaxaca in 2006, from Italy in



1977 to Greece in 2008. The question of insurrection becomes double: Not only how to destroy the state, but how to prevent its return?

The answer to this question is to create the new social relationships at the same time as the insurrection, via the concrete practice of communisation: this is our position within social war. While this position begins as little shift, it must mature into a practice for the survival and self-defense of the working-class and the excluded. The question of survival develops as the intensities of the blockades grow and capital and the state enter into further crisis. After all, to shut down the flow of carbon at this stage would mean to halt electricity for the world, and so would doom many to premature death. With every flow blocked by insurrection, in order for the victory not be used for the counter-revolution, the space that opens must be immediately communized or destroyed. To block the flows to the extent that enables the creation of a new form of life in the spaces opened. And we do not need to plan these new forms of life down to the most of absurd of details: Any grand plan like ecological economics and participatory economics are just the modern-day idiotic brethren of Fourier and St. Simon. The theories of any self-professed expert always trails behind the living movement of ordinary people, since the new form of life arises in the course of concrete insurrection. The word “communism” and “communisation” both come from the Paris Commune, where the ordinary workers and unemployed showed that they could, against the bets of revolutionary astrologists like Marx, begin a new form of life: turning churches into universities, seizing food, arming themselves, organising assemblies. What is the equivalent today? From the communal kitchens to squats and even self-organised hospitals, we can catch glimpses of communisation in contemporary anarchist projects. However, we can learn more about the possibilities and sheer scale of communisation if we look outside of self-identified anarchists to the wider world of the working-class and excluded. Everywhere, even in the most inhospitable climates, people have managed to find or grow food successfully. From massive shanty towns to so-called failed states (and when is a state a success?), the poor of the world have a million examples if only we open our eyes.

The riot of the Black Bloc is the perfect example of the dialectic between communisation and insurrection in action. In the moment of insurrection, things that were given a market value are immediately re-appropriated and used; the food in the shopping market becomes free, the glass that separates us from commodities we desire is broken. All that which was once considered foreign and alien, the debris of construction and dumpsters suddenly come back to life as barricades, appropriated to fulfil the very real need for self-defence. No-one is afraid except the cops and perhaps stand-byers who fail to join or understand. Ideally, everything that is attacked is precisely those institutions that no-one needs: banks and finance capital, corporate high-street shops full of overpriced clothing and jewelery, fast-food joints selling poison masquerading as food. The world is better off with these institutions in ashes. The act of expropriation is present in the moment of insurrection: Everything that we cannot steal we will burn. After we have burned everything we could not steal, we are free to pursue the survival of our species, with all of the immense knowledge, technology, and power of humanity at our collective disposal to ensure our survival. Without a doubt one of the first acts would be the planting of gardens, the soil enriched not by petrochemicals but by the ashes of all the things we do not need.

For an insurrection to generalise, it must be open so that anyone can join in, from the youth dressed in black to the elderly and children. Otherwise, the insurrection will reach a limit and fail. The insurrection should also make sense, with telling examples being the defence of the autonomous spaces like Ungdomhuset in 2006 in Denmark or the fight back against police violence

in Greece in 2008. Some will say that insurrection brings violence, and this will terrify exactly those who are needed to participate. Yet is not the world today overflowing with violence? Just ask anyone whose family was killed by an unmanned drone in Afghanistan, or who lost a friend to the police, or to rape within their own homes. People know the world is violent. The revolutionary question is how to halt this violence that is inflicted upon the world by state and capital. As opposed to the armed struggle, an insurrection is based on actions that everyone with a modicum of fitness feels that they could do, as long as their courage holds: storming offices, throwing tear gas canister back at police, mass seizures of food and other supplies from capitalism, building barricades. Outside of the defense of autonomous space there are endless roles for all sorts, from care and healing, to learning and preserving the knowledge needed, keeping the autonomous space alive. At some point, the limit of the insurrection is reached where the state feels like it must stop the insurrection. The army will be called out to shoot their own people. Let us not pretend this would not have happened in France in 1968 or Greece in 2008 had the insurrection generalised and the infrastructure of production had been destroyed and seized. When the army refuse to shoot upon their own families and friends, when they mutiny and join the insurrection, the material force of the state collapses like the house of cards it always was. While some of the material conditions of insurrection have changed since the turn of the century, we should not blind ourselves that revolutions in the street either win or fail due to the insurrection spreading into the army itself.

The question of insurrection transforms from a question of the destruction of the state into the question of building a new world without capital and the state. How to sustain the insurrection? The answer is exquisitely simple: ask the people themselves. Ask nuclear power plant workers how to shut down the plant. Ask nurses how the hospitals can continue to run in a situation of scarcity of pharmaceuticals. Ask the immigrants employed as slave labour by large farms how they would run their farms communally. Ask the army how they could have an insurrection against their officers. The knowledge needed for communisation is already in everyone's heads. The only task then is to put the question of insurrection on everyone's lips. Asking the question of how to survive without the state, and then opening the space through insurrection so that people can put their answers into practice, this is the abstract methodology of blocking the flows of belief in the state. The task of revolutionaries is to make it obvious that the belief in any state is unnecessary. That instead, people can believe in *themselves*. From this, action follows, the abstract methodology of the insurrectionary inquiry becomes real, and the social war is won by life rather than capital.

The insurrection and the apocalypse are of different orders, and nowhere is this contrast more apparent than in the central defining moment of the religious imagination: the crucifixion. Jesus Christ, the son of God, was the original prophet of the apocalypse. Believing that the apocalypse would come to pass in his lifetime, as he was crucified he cried that his God had abandoned him, that the apocalypse had not yet come to pass. There was another lesser-known Jesus, Jesus Barabbas. Barabbas, not the son of God but the son of a mortal father, was none other than an imprisoned insurrectionist. Unlike Jesus Christ, Jesus Barabbas did not wait vainly for the destruction of this world, but instead desired to give this world a renewed lease on life through revolution. When Pontius Pilate gave the people a choice of who to free from death, the people did not chose the apocalypse, but instead chose insurrection. "Give us Barabbas!" Perhaps it is not surprising today that the contemporary English version of the Bible calls Barabbas a terrorist.

Never forget that when given the choice between apocalypse and insurrection, the people chose insurrection.

# Revelations

The cities of Europe are littered with the ruins of aqueducts and Roman triumphs, and in the future our children will look upon the ruins of our highways and skyscrapers with a similar mixture of awe and disdain. Every empire has always believed that it could last forever, and from the thousand-year Reich to the self-described “end of history” of liberal democracy and global capitalism, always the result has been the same. In the era of globalisation, the Zapatistas took centre stage for a world of dignity and humanity and against neoliberalism. They invited thousands to participate in their world – La Realidad – in the outskirts of the jungle. There is no doubt that that revolutionaries of the world gained far more from their experiments in international solidarity and self-organisation than the Zapatistas did from those faraway revolutionaries. Times change. And the question of democracy and rights brought up in the era of globalisation can only be used against those who fight for genuine revolution. And just as the Romans by virtue of over-intensive farming turned the breadbasket of North Africa into a desert, the new Romans return to make a new kind of farm from the desert. A million acres of solar panels across the Sahara is needed in order to feed the hunger of Europe for electricity. Every ounce of uranium beneath the Sahara must be mined, even if there is not enough uranium in all of the world to fuel the new nuclear stations that are planned to be built. There is only one glitch in their master plan: the desert is not empty. The desert is full of life.

People live – flourish – in the desert. If the Zapatistas were the conceptual figures of resistance in the era of globalisation, resistance to this era is best embodied by the Tuareg. These nomads, proud Africans that are impossibly elegant draped in their blue robes, live their lives criss-crossing the desert. When Qaddafi tried to turn them into a mere military appendage of Libya, giving them training in arms and his little Green book, all the Tuareg took away was jazz. Although it becomes increasingly difficult for their children to continue to live their lives without fleeing to refuge, some still live in the desert, as they have for millennia. The Tuareg know that their final conflict is on the horizon. The Sahara desert itself must be colonised by the Empire that wishes to harness the power of the sun and the poisonous uranium that lies far beneath their desert home. Again, it is Empire versus the nomads. The attitude of the Tuareg that should be held up as an example to revolutionaries in this new era that is strangely like the old: we do not need solidarity, charity-work of activism. All empires fall, and this empire is no exception. And we shall remain.

There is no coming apocalypse to be caused by climate change. We are living in the midst of the apocalypse today. Extinction is not in the future. We live in the midst of the greatest era of mass extinction since the Permian-Triassic extinction event, an extinction event caused by capitalism. Apocalyptic thinking itself is the direct result of our own alienation from time under capitalism, for it strips away other possible relationships to time and reduces them to the linear time of the Fordist factory. Other forms of relating to time exist of course; merely look at the cycles of the moon, the society of the seasons, the movements of the stars. Trapped within the conceptual prison-house of the apocalypse, you can't say at any moment you want something completely

different. Yet every moment in history yearns to be insurrectionary. However, making the insurrection generalise and succeed is a question not only of our subjective desire to overthrow capital and the state, but also of objective conditions in which such an overthrow of the existing order *makes sense* to people in terms of their survival and the survival of their children. With catastrophic climate change, the objective conditions have never been better.

This is the dialectic of the present moment: Climate change is simultaneously both the best and worst thing that has ever happened to humanity. For all the endless chatter of crisis, there is little comprehension of what a true crisis on the level of the planet looks like. To both the capitalists and anti-capitalists, a crisis is a crisis in the market, a war, a plague. These are all relatively minor crises compared to catastrophic climate change, a biocrisis that may threaten the continued existence of most life on the planet under current conditions. The global social war of life versus dead capital has commenced, and there is no neutrality. One must take a position, to either side with the continued existence of capitalism and the state...or to be unified in the necessity of its destruction. The apocalypse is only the religious grasping of the very real possibility of social revolution in a world that has lost the very language to express revolution, a genuine if contorted reflection of the evolutionary necessity for insurrection.

There is a secret meaning to the apocalypse. It is not the end of time, but the end of this *particular* time. Not the end of the world, but the end of this *particular* world. In other words, the end of capital and the state. By projecting the apocalypse into the future, all human agency in the present becomes frozen and lost. Yet this entire understanding of time as a coming apocalypse is a mere fantastic invention. With a little shift, agency returns to the present. History is redeemed. The peasant revolts, the Paris Commune, the Spanish Civil War, Kronstadt, the Seminoles, the Panthers, autonomia, the antiglobalisation movement, suddenly transform from a litany of failures to past moments that were building precisely to this present moment. The future transforms from a bleak nothingness to one rich in possibility, where any moment can open the door to insurrection. In the present, every breathe is infused with a new kind of intensity. A certain quickening of the blood that was long thought disappeared from humanity returns, a clarity of purpose that is available only to those whose life is given not to waiting for the apocalypse, but to the survival of life. Far more important than the theoretical possibility of revolution, revolutionaries appear, as does a kind of redemption that lies not in the future, but in the here-and-now.

**Take One.** *The President of the United States, hand in hand with the Premier of China, walk out onto the stage to announce the crafting of a new carbon market that will save humanity. The tears are literally streaming from the Prime Minister of Britain's face, ruining his make-up for the cameras. "We did it! We did it!" he yells, the jowls around his neck convulsing, his eyes fiery with what could only appear to be divine fervour. On cue, the lights cut to the audience. A perfectly selected and photogenic crowd, carefully mixed to include people of all races (ideally in somewhat kitschy yet exquisitely tailored "ethnic" clothing), rise up and begin applauding, just as the teleprompter in front of them tells them to. The stock-market goes up.*

**Take two.** *The stage seems strangely empty with the telling absence of the most powerful men in the world. Only the Prime Minister of Britain remains, and dourly rising to the podium, wiping what can only be tear from his eye, his voice quavers, yet retains a certain sense of moral certitude. "Today, while we have no binding treaty, we have agreed on important milestones, and we must not shirk our historical responsibilities despite what appear to be insurmountable difficulties..." The camera flips to pictures of what's outside, protesters in black masks destroying things in what appears to be at random, people in colourful clothing blockading delegates, and quickly the pundits begin blaming these trouble-makers for the failure of the summit. The stock-market goes up.*

**Outside the conference centre,** *nothing has changed. The same clothing lies upon our bare mattress and our child still sleeps soundly nearby. We put on the same shoes that we put on yesterday. And yet, something has irrevocably shifted. It's like any other morning, except the police line the streets. No-one even bothers to watch the Prime Minister run through his scripts, since everyone knows one of us will be shot today. This morning, coffee isn't even necessary. As we open our door, our neighbours have already assembled. The sun shines.*

**Social War Not Climate Chaos**

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