

Coordination of the Kurdish Women's Movement: Letter from Kurdish Women's Movement to Spokeswoman of Indigenous Governing Council

This article was originally published on [Avispa](#).



For María de Jesús Patricio Martínez, representative of the indigenous people of Mexico and the National Indigenous Congress CNI.

First of all, we want to send our deepest respect and revolutionary greetings to our Mexican sister, from the mountains of Kurdistan to the Sierra Madre mountain range beyond the oceans. Despite the rivers, mountains, deserts, valleys, canyons and seas that separate us, we are indigenous sisters and brothers, no matter what part of the world we are in.

With you, we share our struggle, our resistance against occupation and colonialism, and our dream of a free life, and in this sense, we who belong to the Kurdish Liberation Movement

declare that we consider the struggle for self-determination, self-administration and self-defense of the indigenous peoples of Mexico organized in the National Indigenous Congress (CNI) as our own struggle, and we support you on the basis of principles of revolutionary solidarity.

Indigenous peoples are the veins through which the most important social and cultural values of humanity have been transmitted, from the first moments of socialization until our times. Without a doubt, no people is superior to another, but at a time when capitalist modernity is trying to destroy every communal value, indigenous peoples are the safeguard of the social fabric of all humanity. Thousands of years of collective memory resurge in our songs, our rituals, our prayers, our tattoos, our dances and our traditions. And so the struggle for our own identity against the efforts of capitalist modernity to erase the roots and the memory of our peoples becomes the most meaningful of all forms of resistance.

In Latin America, as in Kurdistan, women are leading this resistance. In our countries, which were the cradles for thousands of years of the culture of the mother goddess, we see that women and life, women and freedom, women and land, and women and nature are inextricably related. In Kurdistan, we express this reality in our slogan “Jin Jiyan Azadî,” which means “Women Life Freedom.”

The bodies and souls of women are the reflection of the universe on the land. Thousands of years ago, during the Neolithic Revolution, it was the women, through their social organization, who led in making changes that enabled the cultivation of the land and the beginning of a sedentary life in harmony with nature. That’s why women were the first to be enslaved by the patriarchal state civilization, which arose as a counterrevolution based on domination, exploitation and occupation.

Parallel to the domination of women was the ever more rapid domination of nature. It was through the oppression of the first form of nature that the second came about, transforming both into the pincers that capitalist modernity used to forcefully exert pressure against historical society, with a greater ability to destroy it. Consequently, legitimate resistance arising in pursuit of self-government, self-determination and self-defense represents the greatest possible struggle for freedom.

We in Kurdistan, enlightened by the struggles of the indigenous peoples of Latin America, have developed our own defense against modernist capitalist forces and attacks from the colonialist states that occupy our soil. We want you to know that we continually receive special inspiration from your experiences of self-government, good government and communalism. We hope that our experiences and breakthroughs in the struggle will likewise serve as sources of inspiration for you.

One of the greatest achievements in our movement is the equal participation and representation of women. This was the result of great sacrifices made and intense struggles

waged by women, and we finally won equal participation in making all decisions. Not as individuals, but as representatives of the organized, collective will of the Kurdish Women's Liberation Movement. This is the way we are taking our place in each and every aspect of struggle. With our system of co-presidencies, established from the ground up, we represent the will of women in each and every decision and develop a democratic kind of politics that goes against all patriarchal, traditional forms of politics. But to be able to do this, it was necessary for us to become an organized force once and for all. Being organized is the most important requirement for winning victories. To the extent that we're organized, we're capable of resisting the dominant colonialist system and building our own governmental alternative.

For that matter, organization is our most important arm for self-defense. In the past, many peoples and movements have not been able to attain the hoped-for results because they weren't well enough organized. It wasn't possible to transform some historical moments into great victories precisely due to the lack of organization. We may not have reached an in-depth understanding of the meaning and importance of this fact, but we're now in another stage of struggle. We're obliged to multiply our efforts to heighten our levels of organization in order to take advantage of this new opportunity to triumph - at a time when the modernist capitalist system is going through yet another deep crisis in its most decisive aspects. History demands it of us. You of the National Indigenous Congress have shown that you recognize this reality by declaring the presidential elections in Mexico a key stage in a process that will result in a rise in your levels of organization.

We, of the Kurdish Women's Liberation Movement wish to express our support for your decision, based on the conviction that this goal will be reached and taken to a much higher level, starting with these elections and the strategies developed around them. Our leader Abdullah Öcalan, who has been imprisoned under the harshest of conditions of isolation by the Turkish colonialist state since 1999, made a highly important analysis of this at the end of the twentieth century. Our leader Apo, foresaw that the twenty-first century would be the century of women's liberation if we are able to grow and decide on our manners and mechanisms of organization. The reason for this conclusion was the evident structural crisis of the patriarchal system, which has been based on our enslavement.

The patriarchal system seeks to overcome this crisis by raising the level of attacks against women to the level of a systematic war. By concentrating its attacks against women the world over through different means and methods, the system aims to cut off the road to liberation that we've taken. The murders of women that have reached the level of genocide in your country, and the murders of women leaders in Latin America are the most concrete indicators of this reality. We want you to know that we consider all the women and leaders of indigenous peoples who have been killed by the operative arms of the dominant system as our own martyrs. We are also struggling to make our hopes and dreams reality. Our martyrs

never die. We draw force from them, and they are reborn in every struggle we undertake.

In this context, your decision as Mexican indigenous people to name a woman comrade as representative of your will and make her your candidate in the upcoming presidential elections is very significant. As a matter of fact, comrade Marichuy is not only the voice of the indigenous peoples of Mexico, but at the same time, the voice of the women of the world. We want to say that we affirm the importance and value of her candidacy as the representative of peoples denied, women enslaved and thousands of years of ancestral wisdom threatened with disappearance by capitalist modernity.

As the Kurdish Women's Liberation Movement, we declare our support and solidarity with the compañera and the National Indigenous Congress, not only at the moment of this electoral juncture, but in the entire struggle that your movement is pursuing. We know that the results of the elections themselves do not matter, that they are only one of the roads that the indigenous peoples of Mexico have taken in this process at this particular moment of struggle. In this light, the victory is already a fact because the modernist capitalist system feeds off of the division of forces and the disorganization of peoples and societies that it aims to dominate, but you have constructed the terrain for success by forging organized unity.

From this point on, it is important not to lose sight of this goal, which is none other than stronger organization. Your triumph will be our triumph. Our struggle is your struggle. We are the brother and sister people of the mountains that have risen from the same deep waters. Even in our different tongues, we share the same dreams, we fall in love with the same utopia, and we resist for the sake of the same love. From here, we send you all the force necessary in this new stage, we greet you with our most genuine revolutionary feelings, and we embrace you with all our solidarity and comradeship.

Long live the sisterhood of the peoples!

Long live the sisterhood of the people!

Long live revolutionary internationalism!

Women-life-freedom! Jin Jiyan Azadi

Coordination of the Kurdish Women's Movement Komalén Jinén Kurdistan (KJK)

June 7th, 2017

Swearing in of the Indigenous Governing Council and its Spokeswoman

*This is a transcript of the swearing in **ceremony**, which took place on May 28, 2017 at the CIDECI-UNITIERRA in Chiapas, Mexico.*



"Compañeras, compañeros, we now ask everyone to please rise. Please remove your hats. We are now going to do the swearing in and take the oath by which we are formally constituting this Indigenous Governing Council for Mexico.

Brother and sister council members, sister spokesperson for the word of this Indigenous Governing Council.

We are in the middle of a war, a cruel war. We need your strength, bravery, determination,

intelligence, and above all love, a great deal of love from all of you, to move forward with the purpose and task that we have set for ourselves, for the good of our peoples, for the good of our communities, for the good of this abused, pained, and humiliated country.

Brother and sister council members, sister spokesperson for this council:

Do you swear to uphold the word and the decision of your peoples and communities, fulfilling and struggling for freedom, justice, and democracy, and respecting the seven principles of the National Indigenous Congress?"

"We do."

"Do you swear to care for and respect your peoples, communities, girls, boys, elderly, men and women, our mother earth, our cultures and our languages?"

"We do."

"Do you swear to defend with your life, your thoughts, your hearts and your bodies, our peoples, communities and our mother earth?"

"We do."

"Do you swear to be the spokespeople for the word of our peoples, of the National Indigenous Congress, without lies, duplicity, or betrayal of any kind, remaining steadfastly anticapitalist, below and to the left, constructing rebellion and resistance with all the exploited men and women of this country and this world, against those above, the capitalists and their administrators and overseers, for a world where many worlds fit?"

"We do."

"Finally, do you swear to not fall into the temptation to seek votes and power, to not sell out, not give up, and not give in to those above?"

"We do."

"That is what we demand of you, and if you don't do it, we won't complain or bring suit against you: we will sanction you and remove you. Thank you, *compañeras, compañeros*.

Long live the National Indigenous Congress!"

"Viva!"

“Long live the Zapatista Army of National Liberation!”

“Viva!”

“Long live Mexico!”

“Viva!”

“Long live the anticapitalist and leftist struggle!”

“Viva!”

“Long live our peoples!”

“Viva!”

“Long live Mexico!”

“Viva!”

“Long live the National Indigenous Congress!”

“Viva!”

“Long live the struggle of the exploited men and women of this country and this world!”

“Viva!”

“Thank you *compañeros, compañeras*.”

CNI/EZLN: The Time Has Come

This communique was originally published by [Enlace Zapatista](#).



To To the People of Mexico,
To the Peoples of the World,
To the Media,
To the National and International Sixth,

We send our urgent word to the world from the Constitutive Assembly for the Indigenous Governing Council, where we met as peoples, communities, nations, and tribes of the National Indigenous Congress: Apache, Amuzgo, Chatino, Chichimeca, Chinanteco, Chol, Chontal of Oaxaca, Chontal of Tabasco, Coca, Cuicateco, Mestizo, Hñähñü, Ñathö, Ñuhhü, Ikoots, Kumiai, Lakota, Mam, Matlazinca, Maya, Mayo, Mazahua, Mazateco, Me`phaa, Mixe, Mixe-Popoluca, Mixteco, Mochó, Nahuatl or Mexicano, Nayeri, Popolucan, Purépecha, Q'anjob'al, Rarámuri, Tének, Tepehua, Tlahuica, Tohono Odham, Tojolabal, Totonaco, Triqui, Tseltal, Tsotsil, Wixárika, Xi'iuy, Yaqui, Binniza, Zoque, Akimel O'otham, and Comkaac.

THE WAR THAT WE LIVE AND CONFRONT

We find ourselves in a very serious moment of violence, fear, mourning, and rage due to the intensification of the capitalist war against everyone, everywhere throughout the national territory. We see the murder of women for being women, of children for being children, of whole peoples for being peoples.

The political class has dedicated itself to turning the State into a corporation that sells off the land of the originary peoples, campesinos, and city dwellers, that sells people as if they were just another commodity to kill and bury like raw material for the drug cartels, that

sells people to capitalist businesses that exploit them until they are sick or dead, or that sells them off in parts to the illegal organ market.

Then there is the pain of the families of the disappeared and their decision to find their loved ones despite the fact that the government is determined for them not to, because there they will also find the rot that rules this country.

This is the destiny that those above have built for us, bent on the destruction of the social fabric—what allows us to recognize ourselves as peoples, nations, tribes, barrios, neighborhoods, and families—in order to keep us isolated and alone in our desolation as they consolidate the appropriation of entire territories in the mountains, valleys, coasts, and cities.

This is the destruction that we have not only denounced but confronted for the past 20 years and which in a large part of the country is evolving into open war carried out by criminal corporations which act in shameless complicity with all branches of the bad government and with all of the political parties and institutions. Together they constitute the power of above and provoke revulsion in millions of Mexicans in the countryside and the city.

In the midst of this revulsion they continue to tell us to vote for them, to believe in the power from above, to let them continue to design and impose our destiny.

On that path we see only an expanding war, a horizon of death and destruction for our lands, our families, and our lives, and the absolute certainty that this will only get worse—much worse—for everyone.

OUR WAGER

We reiterate that only through resistance and rebellion have we found possible paths by which we can continue to live and through which we find not only a way to survive the war of money against humanity and against our Mother Earth, but also the path to our rebirth along with that of every seed we sow and every dream and every hope that now materializes across large regions in autonomous forms of security, communication, and self-government for the protection and defense of our territories. In this regard there is no other path than the one walked below. Above we have no path; that path is theirs and we are mere obstacles.

These sole alternative paths, born in the struggle of our peoples, are found in the indigenous geographies throughout all of our Mexico and which together make up the National Indigenous Congress. We have decided not to wait for the inevitable disaster brought by the capitalist hitmen that govern us, but to go on the offensive and convert our hope into an

Indigenous Governing Council for Mexico which stakes its claim on life from below and to the anticapitalist left, which is secular, and which responds to the seven principles of Rule by Obeying as our moral pledge.

No demand of our peoples, no determination and exercise of autonomy, no hope made into reality has ever corresponded to the electoral ways and times that the powerful call “democracy”. Given that, we intend not only to wrest back from them our destiny which they have stolen and spoiled, but also to dismantle the rotten power that is killing our peoples and our mother earth. For that task, the only cracks we have found that have liberated consciences and territories, giving comfort and hope, are resistance and rebellion.

By agreement of this constitutive assembly of the Indigenous Governing Council [CIG when abbreviated in Spanish], we have decided to name as spokesperson our compañera María de Jesús Patricio Martínez of the Nahuatl people, whose name we will seek to place on the electoral ballot for the Mexican presidency in 2018 and who will be the carrier of the word of the peoples who make up the CIG, which in turn is highly representative of the indigenous geography of our country.

So then, we do not seek to administer power; we want to dismantle it from within the cracks from which we know we are able.

OUR CALL

We trust in the dignity and honesty of those who struggle: teachers, students, campesinos, workers, and day laborers, and we want to deepen the cracks that each of them has forged, dismantling power from above from the smallest level to the largest. We want to make so many cracks that they become our honest and anticapitalist government.

We call on the thousands of Mexicans who have stopped counting their dead and disappeared and who, with grief and suffering, have raised their fists and risked their own lives to charge forward without fear of the size of the enemy, and have seen that there are indeed paths but that they have been hidden by corruption, repression, disrespect, and exploitation.

We call on those who believe in themselves, who believe in the compañero at their side, who believe in their history and their future: we call on them to not be afraid to do something new, as this is the only path that gives us certainty in the steps we take.

Our call is to organize ourselves in every corner of the country, to gather the necessary elements for the Indigenous Governing Council and our spokeswoman to be registered as an independent candidate for the presidency of this country and, yes, to crash the party of

those above which is based on our death and make it our own, based on dignity, organization, and the construction of a new country and a new world.

We convoke all sectors of society to be attentive to the steps decided and defined by the Indigenous Governing Council, through our spokeswoman, to not give in, to not sell out, and to neither stray nor tire from the task of carving the arrow that will carry the offensive of all of the indigenous and non-indigenous peoples, organized or not, straight toward the true enemy.

From CIDECI-UNITIERRA, San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas

May 28, 2017

For the Full Reconstitution of Our Peoples

Never Again a Mexico Without Us

National Indigenous Congress

Zapatista Army for National Liberation

Alvaro Reyes: Zapatismo: Other Geographies Circa the “End of the World”

Originally Published by [Society and Space](#).



Introduction: the walking dead

As daylight broke across the Southeastern Mexican state of Chiapas on 21 December 2012, news cameras fixated on the throngs of tourists that had overtaken the state to witness the ‘end of the world’ purportedly predicted by the ancient Maya. Yet in the cities of Altamirano, Palenque, Las Margaritas, Ocosingo, and San Cristóbal de las Casas reports began to emerge of unusual activity: groups of indigenous people constructing makeshift wood stages atop the back of pickup trucks. Hours later 45 000 masked members of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN), all of them Chol, Tzeltal, Mam, Tojolobal, Zoque, and Tzotzil Mayan indigenous peoples, descended on these city centers in perfectly ordered columns. Bystanders stood incredulously in front of the improvised stages waiting for the masked Mayans to make a statement of some sort, but the Zapatistas marched by the thousands across the stages in chilling silence with their left fists in the air. In a matter of hours, the Zapatista contingent had left the city centers in the same silence and with the same much-commented-upon discipline with which they had arrived, leaving many wondering what this—the largest march in the history of Chiapas and the largest mobilization of Zapatistas ever seen—was all about. Late that evening, an equally cryptic five-line message appeared on the EZLN’s website. Signed by *Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos* for the General Command of the EZLN, it read:

“ To Whom It May Concern: Did you hear that?

That is the sound of your world crumbling.

That is the sound of our world resurging.

The day that was day was night.

And night shall be the day that will be day” (EZLN, 2012a, my translation).

In a communiqué a few days later, the Zapatistas would further aid us in unraveling the mystery surrounding their actions of 21 December 2012, stating that what others had mistaken for prophecy (that is, ‘the end of the world’), they had set out to make promise (that is, ending *this* world) (EZLN, 2012b).

Amazingly, just months before their massive ‘End of the World’ march, the EZLN had been declared all but dead by a number of sectors of Mexican society. In this paper I will attempt to fill a lacuna in Anglophone academic discourse by offering a comprehensive analysis of the events surrounding both the ‘death’ and ‘resurgence’ of the EZLN. The paper is divided into two major sections. The first, titled “The death of the EZLN? Or the death of Mexico?” begins with an examination of the way in which, after an explicitly ‘anticapitalist’ reorientation of its political strategy in the early to mid-2000s, the EZLN became radically isolated from the ‘progressive’ and institutional left in Mexican society and was effectively declared dead by the Mexican government. In order to understand the epochal societal shifts that made the EZLN’s strategic reorientation necessary, I examine the contemporary decomposition of Mexico that began with the evisceration of communal land tenure and Article 27 of the Mexican constitution, opening it to the destructive dynamics of neoliberal reterritorialization. Having laid out the end of the social contract that had made ‘the people of Mexico’ a reality, I end this first section by outlining the contemporary growth of legal exceptionality in Mexico and of political rule through the terror that now engulfs the country with the full complicity of the entire Mexican political class. In the second major section of this paper, “Life after death: how the EZLN proposes to build postcapitalism”, I develop three major points through a close reading of Zapatista texts and a firsthand account of contemporary Zapatista political institutions. First, I show that the EZLN, through a systematic analysis of the structural crisis of capitalism, both foresaw and explained the situation that now grips Mexico and increasingly, according to the Zapatistas, the rest of the world. Second, I analyze the way that the EZLN, by adding new dimensions to the ‘geometry’ of political struggle, is able to conceptualize a ‘world’ in the here and now beyond that of neoliberal capitalism, potentially freeing political thought and action far beyond Chiapas from the mutually reinforcing dead ends of either reviving neoliberal capitalism or falling into apocalyptic despair. Finally, through a brief personal narrative of my own experience in 2013 as a student of what the Zapatistas termed their ‘Little School’, I examine the ways in which the Zapatistas’ political strategy, based on the construction of

alternative institutionality, has been intimately tied to the practices of building what they call 'another geography'. This construction of new nonseparatist territorial practices has today been taken up by other organizations across Mexico and increasingly overlaps and contradicts the territories of neoliberal calculation and destruction. I argue that these Zapatista 'other geographies' might serve as concrete examples of a viable anticapitalist spatial strategy and therefore must be taken far more seriously than they have been by the left generally and critical geography more specifically.

Section I: the death of the EZLN? Or the death of Mexico?

A Chronicle of a death foretold

The EZLN is today still most widely known for its 1 January 1994 uprising against the Mexican government. Those twelve days of armed action turned out to be one of the first volleys in what would become a generalized region-wide wave of resistance against the ever-deepening consolidation of an incredibly unstable and brutal neoliberal project in Latin America (Reyes, 2012). The EZLN's uprising soon gave way to negotiations with the Mexican government and the then ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI)—negotiations that from the very beginning centered on the EZLN's demand for the reintroduction of the *de jure* protection of collective land tenure that had been eviscerated as a condition of Mexico's entry into the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Through these negotiations the EZLN's struggle became a central rallying point for a wide panoply of opponents of neoliberal 'reform' in Mexico, from radical unions to debtors' organizations, from indigenous and peasant organizations to the progressive elements of Mexico's 'left of center' Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD).

In order to achieve this, the Zapatistas chose to develop (at least publicly) a discursive strategy centered on the voice and image of Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos. In formulations that suggestively parallel Ernesto Laclau's (1996) analysis regarding the political centrality of the "empty signifier", the Zapatistas describe their discursive strategy as an attempt to construct the figure of 'Marcos' as a placeholder for the desires of the widest swath of Mexican society possible. As the EZLN notes, at that time there was a 'Marcos' for every occasion and every political persuasion (EZLN, 2014a). Mexican society took up this figure as their own, as could be evidenced by the highly popular refrain of "*Todos somos Marcos*". This was a phrase that had the virtue of illustrating precisely the political potential of the empty signifier, in that in Spanish it simultaneously denotes this figure's power to unite ("We are all Marcos") and premises that space of unity on radical social dispersal ("Marcos is all of us"). The Zapatistas hoped, then, that through this empty

signifier an extremely fragmented Mexican 'civil society' might unite against the common neoliberal enemy embodied by the PRI. The figure of 'Marcos' was thus the placeholder for the 'counter-hegemony of the diverse' (page 402) that would seek not so much to impose 'a revolution' as to coordinate the forces inside and outside of the state in order to build a space of egalitarian articulation (Rabasa, 1997). This would be a 'radical democracy' (page 418) where the direction and purpose of that future revolution might be disputed by Mexican 'civil society' (Rabasa, 1997). Importantly, through this discursive strategy, the EZLN's influence at the time was such that, as the Mexican analyst Luis Hernández Navarro (2013) reminds us, its uprising and subsequent opposition was the single largest (but not the only) reason for the eventual fall of the PRI's seventy-year dictatorship.

Salinas de Gortari and his PRI successors, for their part, eschewed serious negotiation with the EZLN and sought instead to isolate the EZLN through a counterinsurgency plan detailed in the Mexican Secretary of Defense's *Plan de Campaña Chiapas 94* that included the formation of paramilitary organizations in Zapatista-influenced regions, as well as the targeted use of government subsidies to divide Zapatista communities.(1)

In 2001, with the PRI out of presidential office for the first time in seventy years, the Zapatistas took their initiative for Constitutional Reforms on Indigenous Rights and Culture across Mexico in what they termed 'The march of the color of the earth'. Millions of Mexicans, with representatives from fifty-six of Mexico's indigenous peoples and more than a few internationals, came out in an overwhelming show of support for this new initiative. The march culminated on 11 March 2001, with over a million Zapatista supporters filling Mexico City's enormous *Zócalo*. The magnitude of support for the event generated widespread expectation that at least some versions of the Zapatistas' proposed reforms would be approved by the Mexican legislature and signed by then President Vicente Fox. Despite widespread support for their initiative, the Zapatistas' efforts at constitutional reform met with utter failure as all three major political parties in the Mexican senate—the right-wing National Action Party (PAN), the center-right PRI, and, most surprisingly, the institutional 'left' represented by the PRD—joined together to oppose the EZLN's constitutional reforms. Thus, after years of (at least outwardly) crafting a national counterhegemonic project, what had been the Zapatistas' discursive strategy up until that point reached an obvious dead end. Many analysts believed at the time that the EZLN would simply return to Chiapas and limit its activities to its communities of influence while leaving questions of national political power to others. More specifically, much of the 'progressive' left in Mexico imagined that the EZLN would support the growing strength of the electoral left embodied in the PRD—a party that many in Mexico imagined would come to power in direct parallel to the rise of counterhegemonic 'progressive governments' throughout the rest of Latin America. Much to their dismay, the EZLN instead released the Sixth Declaration of the Lacandón Jungle on 25 June 2005, explicitly severing all ties to the entire Mexican political class. Most surprisingly, it definitively and harshly distanced itself from

the presidential campaign of the PRD's Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO), noting that it could not and would not partake in the 'change' that the electoral left imagined he embodied. The EZLN reasoned that the PRD had explicitly worked to defeat the Zapatistas' initiative on constitutional reforms, that PRD officials (the great majority of them ex-PRI operatives) had partaken in counterinsurgent actions against the Zapatistas, and most importantly, that the PRD and AMLO had explicitly made their peace with the international neoliberal order (EZLN, 2005a). AMLO had praised the PAN's Vicente Fox for having achieved what he termed 'macroeconomic equilibrium' (specifically referring to the neoliberal axioms of reduced deficit spending and low inflation) for Mexico. AMLO vowed to maintain that 'equilibrium' and asserted that "State action does not suffocate the [private] initiative of civil society" (Petrich, 2011). Thanks to documents obtained by Wikileaks, we know such statements had their desired effect, if only with the US embassy in Mexico. In an aptly titled cable, "AMLO: Apocalypse Not", US ambassador Tony Garza concluded that AMLO was "putting the correct pieces into place" and that among its proposed cabinet members, "none of them are radicals." In fact, subsequent US embassy cables go on to speculate that much of AMLO's 'populism' was simply 'campaign rhetoric', and that when faced with proposals emanating from within left sectors of Mexico's political class, the embassy reassured Washington, "We don't think AMLO will support these more radical ideas" (Petrich, 2011, page 2).

Yet the Zapatistas did not read the PRD's political betrayal as an attack solely on them, nor as the result of the personal failings of AMLO. As would later become evident, they saw their predicament as a clear sign of the arrival of a new objective political situation in Mexico as a whole. On the basis of what they had learned over previous years, they stated, "we rose up against a national power only to realize that that power no longer exists ... what exists is a global power that produces uneven dominations in different locations, what we are up against is finance capital and speculation" (*Zapatista* 1999). This realization, then, required a new strategic outlook for Zapatismo, one whose tone was captured by Subcomandante Marcos when he stated, "we no longer make the distinctions we once made [among the Mexican political class], between those who are bad and those who are better. No, they are all the same" (Castellanos, 2008, page 54).

As a direct contestation to the political class, the Zapatistas set out in 2006 on what they called 'the other campaign'. This was neither an initiative for any of the existing presidential candidates nor a call for abstention. Rather, it was a campaign to highlight the need to build an explicitly anticapitalist organization across Mexico that would in effect create what they called 'another politics' and thus act as a counterforce to the alliance of the political class and capitalism. The Zapatistas predicted that many of their former supporters would quickly turn on them and staunchly defend the presidential candidacy of AMLO and electoralism more generally. In fact, they were so certain of this outcome that they wrote a preemptive '(non)farewell' letter addressed to 'civil society' attempting to explain their

position and, in a sense, publicly foretelling their impending death (EZLN, 2005b). Their intuition proved correct: Mexico's institutional left was flabbergasted, and reactions to the EZLN's new initiatives were swift and often vicious. The isolation of the EZLN from the institutional left would only become more severe when, after what was almost certainly electoral fraud during the 2006 presidential election (Díaz-Polanco, 2012)—the mechanics of which were detailed and roundly denounced by Subcomandante Marcos live on radio the day after the election(2)—some on the electoral left went so far as to tie the EZLN's critique to AMLO defeat (Rodriguez Araujo, 2006). Subsequently, coverage of the EZLN and EZLN communiqués all but disappeared from Mexico's 'progressive' press. From that point on, it was not uncommon to encounter among the institutional left and its progressive allies (especially in Mexico City), the idea that "the EZLN no longer exist[ed]."(3)

Upon assuming the presidency in December of 2006, Felipe Calderón of the right-wing PAN quickly seized upon the EZLN's political isolation. Calderón designated a long-time PAN operative, the nonindigenous Luis H Álvarez, as Director of the Office of Indigenous Development. Álvarez by his own account spent much of his initial years in this post trying to mount what he termed a 'peaceful' counterinsurgency strategy in Chiapas. Álvarez's strategy in effect served as an intensification of the counterinsurgency strategy Plan Chiapas 94. By directing federal subsidies toward Zapatista communities that would agree to leave the organization (and thereby abandon its policy of not accepting government money), Álvarez hoped to pull the EZLN base away from its leadership, a strategy that by 2012 Álvarez claimed had been a resounding success.

With the release of Álvarez's book *Indigenous Heart: Struggle and Hope of the Original Peoples of Mexico* in June 2012, the narrative of the supposed demise of the EZLN that circulated within the political class reached its peak (only a few months before the Zapatistas' thunderous reappearance on 21 December 2012). The book release became a celebration and a funeral of sorts, organized in order to show the Mexican nation the body of the defunct EZLN via live stream. Both Calderón and an ecstatic Álvarez openly reveled in the disappearance of the EZLN and personally took credit for resolving what they called the 'indigenous problem' in Chiapas. If the EZLN had, as Álvarez and Calderón claimed, in effect been killed off, the body of EZLN spokesperson and military strategist Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos stood in for the EZLN as a whole. According to Álvarez, reading aloud from his book, as Marcos languished in the throes of terminal lung cancer, he had, unbeknownst to the rest of the EZLN, approached the Mexican government for medical help that would save him. According to another story, circulated by the Al Jazeera News Network, Subcomandante Marcos was about to suffer what must certainly be the only fate worse than death for a Latin American guerrilla leader: he had accepted an offer to leave the EZLN and live out his life as a professor in a small town in upstate New York (Arsenault, 2011).(4)

In sum, for Mexico's traditional political class, its 'progressive' left, and many of their would-be international supporters, as of mid-2012 the Zapatistas and their spokesperson Subcomandante Marcos were as good as dead.

B. Neoliberal reterritorialization: the death of Mexico?

From the late 1980s to 2000 the PRI, still operating as a de facto state party, attempted to implement a series of structural reforms to privatize electricity, education, collectively held lands, and the national oil industry and thus erode the mechanisms of redistribution that had been established by the postrevolutionary constitution of 1917. This initial set of reforms was touted by the PRI, and more specifically by Carlos Salinas de Gortari, as the dawn of a bright new neoliberal era for Mexico.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, under the advisement of the World Bank and in preparation for the upcoming NAFTA, the burgeoning neoliberal establishment in Mexico viewed the collective forms of land tenure as *the* key impediment to foreign direct investment and 'economic growth'.⁽⁵⁾ These forms of inalienable, imprescriptible, and nontransferrable land tenure—*ejidos* and *bienes comunales*—had been protected by Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution. Article 27 had also granted agrarian communities rights over common-use lands and their resources, making all natural resources found in the subsoil property of the nation. Through changes to Article 27 that opened communal land to rent, sale, and use as collateral to obtain commercial credit, and through state programs such as PROCEDURE⁽⁶⁾ providing economic subsidies in exchange for the individual 'certification' of collective lands (the first step in a process that it was hoped would end in private titles), the PRI took direct aim at what they viewed as the least 'income-yielding' sector of the Mexican economy.

If we take up the legal theorist Carl Schmitt's (2003) lesson that all political ideas imply a particular spatial order and vice versa, there is no single piece of legislation in postrevolutionary Mexico that embodies this precept as obviously as Article 27 of the Mexican constitution. The territorial reordering implied in attacks on *ejidal* and communal land that were frequently discussed in terms of simple 'economic' expediency were in fact nothing short of a direct attack on the postrevolutionary political status quo that had tenuously reigned in Mexico since 1917.

Postrevolutionary Mexico's capitalist fractions had hoped to contain the threat of radical forces such as those of Emiliano Zapata's *Ejército Libertador del Sur* by creating a territorial order that would provide the material and symbolic suture between capitalist economic growth, the institutions of state mediation, and the majority of the Mexican people understood as peasant laborers. They did this by placing the *ejido* (and the productive labor therein) at the very center of the postrevolutionary juridical order. In effect, I think we must

understand Article 27 as the space and juridical ground upon which the constitutional entity of 'the Mexican people' found its material existence beyond that of an abstract existential entity, beyond that of an 'identity'. Article 27 contained the specific spatial ordering in which 'the people' (be they capitalists or Zapatistas) could (co)exist in a clearly hierarchical but (potentially) redistributionist truce.

In this way, Mexico prefigured in an agricultural context what Antonio Negri calls the 'constitutions of labor' formed in the factory-centered societies of Europe and the United States after the Second World War. In these societies, labor (in the case of Mexico, agrarian labor) is recognized as both the basis of social valorization and "the source of institutional and constitutional structures" (Negri, 1994).(7) Importantly, then, when all three major political parties struck down the EZLN's initiative to revive Article 27 through the Constitutional Reforms on Indigenous Rights and Culture, this was not due solely to the fact that the Mexican political class desired to exclude the indigenous peoples of Mexico from 'the Mexican people'. It was also due to the far more novel situation in which the Mexican political class, through its complete abandonment of the territorial ordering implied in Article 27, was now willing to openly acknowledge that the breakdown of the postrevolutionary mediational state was in fact irreversible. The actions of the political class were alerting all of Mexico (although few outside of the EZLN seemed to notice) to the fact that the death of 'the Mexican people' had already taken place, and that no one can be included or excluded from something that no longer exists.

C. Terror as strategy

By the mid-2000s, and despite enormous efforts such as PROCEDE and cuts to agricultural subsidies, it became clear that the great majority of collective landholders in Mexico refused to give up their collective titles, preferring even to rent out their land in order to generate income rather than modify its collective character (de Ita, 2006). This led actors within the World Bank, the ever-interventionist community of US military analysts, and the Mexican political class to assert that before further neoliberal reforms could succeed, the longstanding efforts to dismantle collective land tenure would have to be redoubled (Bessi and Navarro, 2014; World Bank, 2001).

At the very moment when the Mexican state was reinforcing its efforts to cut back social programs for, and mediational presence in, agricultural communities, an increasingly unprotected workforce was coming into contact with the transnational drug economy. That burgeoning economy not only sought to use Mexico as a transportation corridor for South American cocaine headed for the US, but also looked to amass the land, workforce, and transportation infrastructure necessary to make Mexico the fastest growing producer and supplier of heroin and methamphetamines for US consumption (Watt and Zepeda, 2012, pages 76-83). Thus, the reterritorialization implicit in the changes to Article 27 abutted

and abetted the territorial reorganization required by the increasing competition for land, transportation routes, and profits within the illicit drug trade.

Although competition for the high-yielding speculative profits of this illicit trade are bound to involve heightened levels of violence, many today believe that Calderón's policy response to the growth of the drug trade—the rollout of a full-blown 'war on drugs'—did not arise from the existence or nature of the drug trade itself. As the academic and military affairs analyst Carlos Fazio hypothesizes, Calderón, in conjunction with the US State Department, circulated the notion that the illicit drug trade amounted to a 'narco-insurgency', a rogue 'parallel state' in the making. This narrative, Fazio believes, served to propagate the idea that the widespread militarization of Mexican society was absolutely necessary in order to neutralize the threat from what Calderón called a burgeoning 'internal enemy' (Fazio, 2013). The danger posed by this 'internal enemy' in turn justified the nullification of constitutional measures that prohibited the Mexican military from fulfilling domestic police functions, as well as the implicit cancellation of civil liberties and due process this would imply on a daily basis in the country's streets. For Fazio (2013, pages 371–406) then, this 'war' would necessarily amount to nothing less than the de facto imposition of a 'state of exception' in which as Giorgio Agamben (2005) explains, the application of the norm is suspended, "while the law remains in force" (page 31).

Notably, after Calderón's declaration of a war on drugs and the consolidation of a state of exception, the drug trade in Mexico actually flourished. Consider, for example, the fact that between 2006 and 2012 the production of heroin and marijuana grew and the production of methamphetamines absolutely exploded, while at the same time fewer poppy fields and marijuana plants were destroyed and seizures of cocaine went down. Consequently, six years after Calderón's war on drugs began, Mexico had become the single largest point of production and transportation for the illicit drug trade in the Americas (Hernández, 2013a).

If the growing state of exception seemed to leave the drug trade untouched, it did result in what *Le Monde* called "the most deadly conflict on the planet in the last few years": between 80 000 and 150 000 dead, approximately 30 000 more disappeared, and some 1.5 million people forcibly displaced (Hernández, 2013a, pages 9–13). As Melissa Wright has pointed out, rather than provoking outrage, these grim statistics seemed to have become the very foundation of the Mexican state's new efforts at legitimization. That is, given its inability to provide the redistributive benefits of past decades, the new Mexican state began to redefine social progress by shifting from a discourse of national development to that of national 'security'. Within this new discourse of security, the Mexican state now functions under the assumption that all those killed in drug-related violence should be presumed elements of the 'narco-insurgency'. Therefore, the worse these drug-related statistics become, the greater the proof that the Mexican state has fulfilled its duty to protect the population from this growing internal threat (Wright, 2011, pages 285–298).

Given this apparent shift from the discourse of development to that of security, Fazio and the Mexican sociologist Raquel Gutierrez (among others) believe it is a mistake to simply discount the Mexican state's war on drugs as a failure. These analysts believe that in addition to providing the basis for a new form of state legitimation, this 'war' is best understood as a direct response to the antineoliberal resistance that immediately preceded the war on drugs. It is important to remember that the package of neoliberal reforms from the late 1980s onwards was met with an uncoordinated yet unprecedented wave of resistance across Mexico (Gilly et al, 2006). Although this is rarely acknowledged, this wave of antineoliberal resistance or 'generalized social insubordination' to neoliberalism proved to be the determining political factor in Mexico for years to come, just as in the rest of Latin America (Gutierrez Aguilar, 2005; Reyes, 2012). In fact, these scholars argue that the actions of the Mexican political class in the last two decades can be understood only when viewed as a counteroffensive to this resistance. More specifically, these analysts claim that the purpose of this war on drugs was to neutralize these struggles in three very specific ways. First, the inordinate amount of violence this 'war' unleashed allowed the Mexican political class to conjoin politics and terror—to practice politics *as* terror—which in turn created a sense of fear and social isolation among Mexico's residents and undermined the web of alternative socialities that had subtended antineoliberal resistance (Fazio, 2013, pages 377–380). Second, the social fragmentation produced by the generalization of fear in the war on drugs had the 'benefit' of breaking down Mexican society's capacity to come to a general understanding of what was actually taking place (of what was what, and who was who). As Gutierrez explains, this in turn opened the possibility that instead of the political 'cooptation' that had characterized the counterinsurgency practices of the PRI dictatorship, today's counterinsurgency (sans redistributionary mechanisms) might instead consist of sowing 'confusion' so that the very reasons for struggle are irretrievably lost, even to social movements themselves (Brighenti, 2013). Finally, on the ground across Mexico, the war on drugs allowed for coordinated action of state and paramilitary forces—under the orders of the political class, drug cartels, and transnational corporations—against community-level resistance (Lopez y Rivas, 2014). As a perfect illustration of Gutierrez's point regarding the political deployment of confusion, these forces are often presented to the public by state officials and the media as grassroots community movements that have arisen against the power of drug cartels.

Given the effects of these strategies, the political class now felt prepared to square the macabre circle of neoliberal policy in Mexico. In December 2012, after twelve years of absence, the PRI, through Enrique Peña Nieto, returned to the presidency. In what has been referred to as a 'lightning' strategy, and counting on the weakening of antineoliberal resistance, Peña Nieto once again presented the longstanding proposals for the privatization of oil, education, and health care, the further evisceration of protection of collective land tenure, the elimination of the progressive elements of the federal tax code, and the deregulation of labor law. Amidst the giddiness of a reactivated neoliberal offensive (as well

as an unmentioned 25 000 drug- war-related deaths during his first year in office), *TIME* magazine concluded Peña Nieto and this package of reforms were poised to 'save Mexico' (Crowley and Mascareñas, 2014). This time around, and unlike in the mid-1990s, the Mexican political class as a whole stood shoulder to shoulder with the core of PRI policy. In fact, within weeks of the PRI's return to the presidency, all three major political parties (PAN, PRI, and PRD) signed the 'national pact for Mexico'. The 'national pact' was an outline agreement of how these parties would cooperate in the Mexican legislature and senate to finally achieve the neoliberal reforms that had been slowed by the resistance of the past decades. For many, the PRD's participation in Peña Nieto's neoliberal 'pact' made it painfully clear where the left's electoralist strategy in Mexico had led: in the words of PRD founder Porfirio Muñoz Ledo, the PRD and the electoral left in Mexico as a whole had over the last two decades "accomplished everything [they had] set out to oppose" (Villamil, 2013, page 32).

Importantly then, the Mexico that the EZLN marched 'back' into on 21 December 2012 was not the same country. Rather, the tendencies toward national decomposition pointed out long ago by the EZLN had clearly taken a devastating toll on Mexican society. As became clear to the rest of the world through the much-publicized case of Ayotzinapa, Guerrero (Gibler, 2015), the consequences of this social disintegration have been grave: the death of 'the Mexican people', the generalization of terror, the weakening of antineoliberal resistance, a fully complicit institutional left, and tens of thousands of dead and disappeared. Given this context, it is no exaggeration to suggest that, in its rush to bury the Zapatistas, the 'progressive' left neglected to ask itself if throughout those same years it was not Mexico itself that was slowly dying.

Section II: life after death: how the EZLN proposes to build postcapitalism

A. The world that is crumbling

Despite the disastrous role of the electoral left in both legislating and legitimating neoliberalism in Mexico, as biting summarized by Muñoz Ledo above, there exist few systemic accounts (that is, accounts that move beyond personalist narratives of 'greed' and 'betrayal') that offer us a comprehensive explanatory framework for the contemporary decomposition of Mexico and the changing structural role of the state and political class within that decomposition. Lacking this systemic account, a number of theorists have turned their attention to the Zapatistas' break with the Mexican political class and their attempts at

building 'another politics', and concluded that these amount to nothing more than a sectarian 'antipolitical' drift that has led to the 'failure' of Zapatista initiatives and to their increasing political irrelevance (Almeyra, 2014; Mondonesi, 2014; Wilson, 2014). It should be noted here that these supposed EZLN shortcomings are often explained in terms of the personal failings (that is, the intransigence, sectarianism, and envy) of its (former) spokesperson Subcomandante Marcos (Almeyra, 2014; Rodriguez Araujo, 2008).

Yet, in sharp contrast to these analyses, after the failure of their initiative on constitutional reforms, the Zapatistas set out on an extensive evaluation of contemporary capitalism that in many ways foresaw the destructive dynamics that today grip Mexico and, increasingly, the rest of the world. In order to examine the Zapatistas' account of these dynamics, we might first ask what it is that they meant in their 21 December 2012 message that 'your world' is 'crumbling'. Examination of the Zapatistas' extensive literature on this topic makes evident that for them, the world that is crumbling is that of capitalism. In their description of the crumbling of this world, the Zapatistas ask us to imagine capitalism as a building of sorts. In the past, those on top of this world would add floors to the building—what Marx would have referred to as the expanding 'self-valorization of value' (Marx, 1976), or what is often erroneously referred to as 'growth'. This is a process made possible through the exploitation, dispossession, repression, and disvalorization of those below—what the EZLN refers to as 'the four wheels of capitalism' (EZLN, 2013). This allowed those on top to further distinguish themselves, while creating the possibility (however remote) that those below (at least those willing to give in to the social relations of the value form) might move up a floor (most often through redistributive state action).

Today, as the Zapatistas explain, within neoliberal globalization the four wheels of capitalism continue on with a vengeance, but have come unhinged from the capitalist motor that previously drove the construction of new floors (EZLN, 2013). Absent the capacity to build new floors (to rise on the back of the expansion of the self-valorization of value), those on the top of the capitalist world building have little choice but to systematically turn to 'speculation' (that is, the attempt to stay on top through profitability minus value expansion) (EZLN, 2014a). According to the Zapatistas, these 'speculative' attempts of those at the top to maintain their elevated positions can only come at the cost of the short-sighted and disastrous demolition of the floors and building foundations below them (EZLN, 2013). Consequently, the social relations, territories, and institutions dependent on the expansive dynamic of the self-valorization of value—perhaps most importantly, the state—are completely refunctionalized. From this perspective, political spaces (that is, those spaces between state and civil society), which previously served as sites for mediation, deliberation, and representation, today are reduced to guaranteeing immediate corporate profitability. Lacking the material with which to mediate social conflict (that is, growing self-valorizing value) that in previous eras might have allowed for redistribution and some dialectic of demand and reform, the state now becomes the central machine for demolition, for

unilateral dispossession and repression (the cause of the dynamics of 'exceptionality' highlighted by Fazio above). Thus, the Zapatistas claim that the era in which capital and the state could uphold even a semblance of peace and stability is over (EZLN, 2014a).

Given this refunctionalization of the state, the problem for Mexico under the "reign of speculation" (that is, neoliberal globalization), according to the Zapatistas, is not "that the political system has links to organized crime, to narcotrafficking, to attacks, aggressions, rapes, beatings, imprisonments, disappearances, and murders", but rather "that all of this today constitutes its essence" (EZLN, 2014b, no page number). The Italian journalist Roberto Saviano offers a strikingly parallel insight in his 2013 foreword to Anabel Hernández's *Narcoland*. Saviano notes that too often the cataclysmic violence that Mexico faces has been minimized and misunderstood by attributing it to a "mafia that has transformed itself into a [transnational] capitalist enterprise", effectively coopting the Mexican state. For Saviano, however (as well as for the Zapatistas), this perspective entirely misses the point that in the era of speculation "[transnational] capitalism has transformed itself into a mafia", effectively creating a world in which political economy and criminal economy are but one and the same (Hernández, 2013b, pages viii-x). According to the Zapatistas, then, the problem is not that states have disappeared but rather that they have been entirely remade as nodes of a single global network of contemporary 'mafia capitalism' [what the EZLN calls 'the empire of money'].

I think we must understand three important points that follow from this Zapatista analysis. First, in sharp contrast to the analysis suggested in 2009 by the (now defunct) US Joint Forces Command (Debusmann, 2009), the Zapatistas in no way believe that Mexico is—or is on the verge of becoming—a 'failed state'. For them Mexico is, rather, a paradigmatic example of a 'successful' contemporary capitalist '(non)national state', with all the death, fragmentation, and destruction this entails (EZLN, 2005a). Second, the political class and the institutional left cannot simply stand above the refunctionalization of the state. Rather, if we assume that the left has historically had some relation to the egalitarian but that even the minimally redistributive mechanisms of the state have disappeared, there can by definition be no state-based left today. These positions, which the Zapatistas refer to as "above and to the left", are simply attempts to enact what for them in today's world is an "impossible geometry" (EZLN, 2005a, no page number). It would be far more accurate, they claim, to speak of the existence within state politics of a far-right, a right, and a moderate-right, all of which during the electoral cycle fight to appear under the banner of the 'center' (EZLN, 2005a). This helps us to understand why it is that (far beyond personal failings) those within the institutional left are constantly reduced to offering themselves as better managers of the very same demolition of the institutions and social relations required by contemporary capital [thus AMLO's insistence on the need to maintain "macroeconomic equilibrium"] (EZLN, 2005a, no page number). Beyond Mexico, this analysis might also help us to understand how it is that counterhegemonic projects in the rest of Latin America—so

admired by the progressive left in Mexico—shifted from the construction of ‘socialism for the 21st century’ only a decade ago to propounding ‘Andean-Amazonian capitalism’ today, or from the idea of building ‘oil sovereignty’ via the ‘Bolivarian Revolution’ to pleading for the securitization of oil debts in the offices of Goldman Sachs (Rathbone and Schipani, 2014; Svampa and Stefanoni, 2007). Third, given the crumbling of the world above, there arises the necessity of rebuilding politics from outside of the state apparatus (what the Zapatistas call ‘another politics’). This necessity rises to the level of an unprecedented urgency given that the destructive and runaway character of contemporary capitalism, as described by the Zapatistas, presents the very real possibility that, as Mexican society can intuit from the experience of the last two decades, the entire building of capitalism itself may collapse, taking the conditions for social and biological life on Planet Earth along with it (EZLN, 2013).

B. The politics of changing worlds

As should be clear by now, the Zapatistas’ post-2001 conjunctural analysis of contemporary capitalism led them to conclude that the world up above was in fact crumbling and that, as they stated, “there is nothing that can be done up there” (EZLN, 2005a). They carefully avoided, however, promoting either some form of paralysis (that is, nothing can be done) or some form of automatism (that is, capitalism will disappear of its own accord). Rather, they insisted that even as the expansion of capitalist valorization was no longer a possibility, without concerted collective action the processes of exploitation, dispossession, repression, and devalorization could continue indefinitely. Yet, if the Zapatistas believe that a politics ‘above and to the left’ is today an ‘impossible geometry’, the question still remains as to where in the social diagram they think their idea of ‘another politics’ might arise.

In order to understand the Zapatistas’ answer to this question, we must begin by highlighting their insistence, much like that of Karl Marx in his (1976) ‘idyllic proceedings’, that capitalism was not born of commodity production. Rather, as they state, “capitalism was born of the blood of our [indigenous] peoples and the millions of our brothers and sisters who died during the European invasion” (EZLN, 2014c). From its beginning, then, capitalism was made possible by that ‘dispossession’, ‘plunder’, and ‘invasion’ called ‘the conquest of the Americas’. This attempted conquest, the Zapatistas claim, initiated a ‘war of extermination’ against indigenous peoples that has lasted for more than 520 years, and has been characterized by “massacres, jail, death and more death” (National Indigenous Congress and EZLN, 2014, no page number). Thus, for the Zapatistas, capitalism has always been a two-sided affair: on one side the processes, institutions, and subjects associated with the expansion of the self-valorization of value (that is, the ‘world up above’); and on the other, a foundational and ever-present exceptionality, a permanent state of war, directed at the non-European ‘originary peoples’ of the world. By identifying this ‘global apartheid’ (EZLN, 2013) as the ever-present condition for the production of capitalist value, the

Zapatistas are able to see that although firmly *within* the world of capitalism, not all social subjects are *of* that world. By recovering this unique structural position (and note that this is not an identity or culture) of the ‘damned of the earth’ (Rodriguez Lascano, 2013) within capitalist modernity, the EZLN is able to further identify that below the network of transnational corporations, armies, and states that comprise the world of capitalist valorization, there exists a web of distinct social relations and structures of value that have been created by the always already walking dead subjects of capitalist modernity. Here, then, the Zapatistas are able to add coordinates to our contemporary ‘political geometry’: there is the dominant world of capitalist valorization ‘up above’, but there are simultaneously many worlds, immanent to the first, down below.

Having identified these new coordinates of above and below, the Zapatistas do not simply throw away the distinction between left and right. According to them, today these dualistic evaluations must be further complexified: everything must be examined within a quadrangular grid consisting simultaneously of left and right as well as above and below. On a conceptual level, this grid allows the Zapatistas to avoid falling into a series of traps latent within these more dualistic frameworks. First, by identifying both sides of the moving contradiction that is capitalism—that of capitalist valorization and that of a genocidal disvalorization—they avoid the trap of furthering the life of the former at the expense of those subject to the latter (that is, they avoid falling into the complicity of those above and to the left with racialized colonial and imperial projects). Second, as the world above crumbles and consequently expels large masses of people from its realm, this perspective opens the horizon of a politics beyond that of the attempted stabilization of that world (that is, the ‘impossible geometry’ of today’s institutional left). Third, the Zapatistas are able to recognize that there are many projects that would simply like to harness these other worlds below in order to gain entrance into the world above (that is, projects that might attempt to draw a bridge between the world below and the one above and to the right). Finally, from this perspective the Zapatistas can resist the temptation of believing that one can simply hide in the worlds below, as if it was possible to forget that the existence of the world above necessitates the destruction of these other worlds. This allows them to recognize as a mere chimera any strategy from below that presents itself as ‘beyond left and right’, thus seeking to jump over the necessity of ending capitalism (strategies that the Zapatistas might very well categorize as ‘below and to the right’).

Given this analysis, the Zapatistas conclude that only a politics ‘below and to the left’ might open the way beyond either apocalyptic despair or social democratic illusion. If for the Zapatistas the counterhegemonic strategy ‘above and to the left’ of ‘changing governments’ has been nullified by the neoliberal onslaught, their new political geometry helps clarify that politics today must be one of ‘changing worlds’ (EZLN, 2013). Concretely, instead of simply presuming the exteriority of the worlds below [as has been the depoliticizing tendency of the US-based academic discourse that goes by the name of ‘the decolonial’, see Rivera

Cusicanqui (2012)], the Zapatistas propose that the politics of changing worlds requires the harnessing of the structures of value and social relations that are present below for the construction of organizational forces that would make possible the definitive exteriorization of those worlds from the world of capitalism.

C. Other geographies: the Zapatista construction of new territorialities

On 5 August 2013, a matter of months after the EZLN's 'End of the World' march, I boarded an open-back three-ton truck headed toward Zapatista territory as one of some 7000 students who would attend the Zapatistas' 'Little School' over the next six months. Each student of the Little School was sent to one of the five zones of Zapatista territory and assigned a family and a 'guardian' responsible for our care and education. We were then further distributed among the forty autonomous municipalities and finally into the hundreds of Zapatista communities that constitute each of these municipalities. The Little School itself deserves far more analysis and attention than I can provide here; I will limit myself to a very preliminary description of what the Zapatistas shared through this event, with the specific goal of providing elements to better grasp the strategy the EZLN has followed given its analysis of contemporary capitalism as laid out above.

As we arrived at the Little School, each student was handed a packet of four Zapatista textbooks titled *Autonomous Government I and II*, *Women's Participation*, and *Autonomous Resistance*. These were not a series of directives from organizational leadership, but rather accounts from hundreds of community members from each Zapatista zone explaining their daily experiences of building another politics. These textbooks served not just as primers for students to learn the history of building self-government in each zone, but as an introduction to Zapatista areas of work that we would witness in person: education, healthcare, traditional medicine, and collective productive projects, the latter serving as the primary source of income at a local level. Each day we were methodically introduced to the schools, clinics, women's collectives, and fields where each of these work areas were carried out, and many students were able to sit in on local assemblies convoked in each community to plan our lessons. We then continued our education with zone-level courses where our Zapatista teachers detailed how each area of work we had witnessed was coordinated between the local communities (commissions), the municipal level (autonomous councils), and the zone (Good Government Councils). Here we also learned about municipal-level communal radio and video projects and, at the most expansive scale, zone-wide agroecological projects and commercial trade. All of this took place, at least in part, on the hundreds of thousands of acres of land recuperated by the EZLN in the 1994 uprising.

Through the Little School, what became apparent even in this brief glimpse into the intricacies of Zapatista autonomous institutional life was that the EZLN had for a long time followed what in the language of traditional Maoism we might call 'a two- legged strategy'.

If the Zapatistas had publicly attempted to help weld together a national counterhegemonic project through the empty signifier of 'Marcos' they had also, since the founding of their autonomous municipalities in late 1994, expended enormous energy on the parallel strategy of building 'dual power'—the creation of a set of institutions that stand as a direct alternative to the existing institutions of the state (Lenin, 1964).(8) It seems that once the EZLN had concluded that the crumbling of the world above had obliterated the already tenuous tie between the counterhegemonic and the antisystemic— thus making the building of a project below and to the left an immediate necessity—its public discursive strategy became superfluous (something that might help explain why, on 25 May 2014, the figure of 'Marcos' was officially declared 'dead' by the very man behind that figure, now appearing in perfect health under the name of *Subcomandante Insurgente Galeano*). Hence its previously internal work, now solidified by two decades of experience, was brought to the fore as a concrete existing example of a strategic anticapitalist alternative for the left as whole.

Yet, even the Leninist concept of 'dual power' or the parallel Maoist strategy of 'building red bases' ultimately proves inadequate to describe the Zapatista strategy. Both these ideas leave open the possibility that, even as their alternative institutions build mechanisms for the contestation of power, they depend on (and ultimately seek) the same single social substance of power as that of the state. In other words, from the ambivalence inherent in these concepts it might appear that the Zapatistas have attempted to construct a demarcated subterritory "within the territorial logic of power commanded by the Mexican state" (Harvey, 2010, page 252). However, from the Zapatista's perspective, 'the territorial logic' of the Mexican state (the territory of the Mexican nation-state) no longer exists as such. The EZLN is acutely aware that in the latest wave of reterritorialization, Mexico's formerly 'national' territory (like its spaces of institutional mediation) has been fragmented into hundreds of pieces, each subordinated to the needs of multinational corporations, drug cartels, and local political mafias (that is, the needs of contemporary capitalism). This is the territorial consequence of the formation of what the Zapatistas refer to as a capitalist "non-nation state" (EZLN, 2005a), reflecting a process of fragmentation that is in their eyes irreversible.

Furthermore, for the Zapatistas, the entire purpose of the respatialization of struggle that we witnessed as students of the Little School—what they refer to as the construction of 'another geography'—is to break (with) the logic of power of the state. As they say, "we think if we conceptualize a change in the premise of power, the problem of power, starting from the fact that we don't want to take it, that could produce another kind of politics and another kind of political actor, other human beings that do politics differently than the politicians we have today across the political spectrum" (EZLN, 1997, page 69).

In the Zapatista project, then, 'territory' does not refer to the relations of a preexisting given subject to a given demarcated spatial extension as is imagined in the dominant

conceptions of state territory (Brighenti, 2010). Rather, the Zapatistas take on the construction of new communities, municipalities, and zones—and the nonstate forms of government associated with each—as mechanisms for the production of this new subject of politics. In this practice, territory is not some “neutral carrier” of a single substance of power, but rather “the material inscription of social relations” that can be radically transformed in order to create another power (Brighenti, 2010, page 57). We might best characterize the Zapatista strategy, then, as the construction of another structure of relation between a newly produced collective subject and space—a new ‘territoriality’ (Raffestin and Butler, 2012). This allows the Zapatistas to grow their idea and practice of territory quite literally side-by-side (in the same communities) with the overlapping and contradictory territories of neoliberal calculation and destruction. From this perspective we can understand why it is that the Zapatistas see their territory not as a lever with which to enter this world, but rather as a strategy in the here and now to exit it.

Finally, as Alain Badiou (2008) has noted, the affirmative project of Zapatismo (theorized here as the building ‘other geographies’ that will sustain the new political subject) has allowed the Zapatistas to avoid imagining the process of exiting this world as a civil war—a violent and cataclysmic clash between worlds. Given their affirmative project, the military elements of Zapatismo have been steadily subordinated to the role of defending their political innovations. The importance of this shift should not be underestimated when, given the disappearance of its mediational capacity, the state seems to want nothing more than the militarization of political conflict, a medium it understands and easily dominates.

Conclusion: create two, three, many other geographies

As the decomposition of the world above reaches new heights, and far from the cameras that previously fixated on ‘Marcos’, the Zapatistas’ strategy of building ‘other geographies’ has grown in influence—from the construction of the autonomous municipalities of Cherán and Santa María de Ostula (Michoacan) to the reconsolidation of Mexico’s National Indigenous Congress; from the recent declaration of twenty-two autonomous municipalities in the state of Guerrero to the explicitly Zapatista-inspired ‘democratic confederalism’ of today’s Kurdish movement.

It is important to note that, despite the inspirational perseverance of the EZLN, the long-term temporal framework implicit in the Zapatistas’ current political strategy renders unwarranted any conclusions about its ultimate success or failure. Yet the EZLN has undeniably added strategic coordinates to our contemporary ‘political geometry’, offering a distinct path to a global left that has tended to oscillate wildly and with little success

between counterhegemony (verticalization) and spontaneity (horizontalism) in its effort to 'change governments'. That is, our era has been marked on the one hand by the counterhegemonic strategies of either rebuilding sovereignty over the national territory or working within the 'nonspaces' of transnational capital, and on the other hand by the spontaneist practices of protest, occupation, and the establishment of temporary autonomous zones. But in none of these left-wing strategies does the possibility of an innovative territorial production actually appear, as all are ultimately attempts to occupy, reproduce, or at best redistribute the given territory. If, as Claude Raffestin claims, "the production of territories by means of territories is the operation of the creation and recreation of values" (Raffestin and Butler, 2012, page 131), how is it then that through the acceptance of the given territory these strategies will somehow overcome the values of capitalism? It is in this context that the singular contribution of the Zapatistas' efforts might best be appreciated. For them, it is only through the long and arduous process of enacting the explicitly antiseparatist yet simultaneously territorial strategy of building other geographies that a rather different left might today 'change worlds', abandoning capitalist value and in effect 'ending this world'. Although some within the left (in Mexico and globally) will find the Zapatistas' strategy an uncomfortable impediment to their counterhegemonic aspirations, and others may sincerely disagree with their analysis, it behooves no one to do so by simply wishing them dead. We must instead open the discussion, as they clearly have, of what it actually means to be on the left today.

Endnotes

(1) For leaked excerpts of the counterinsurgency plan against the EZLN in 1994, see Carlos Marin (1998).

(2) XENK Radio 620, "Política de Banqueta", Transcription here:

<http://enlacezapatista.ezln.org.mx/2006/07/05/radio-insurgente-en-el-df-donde-se-da-informacion-sobre-las-elecciones-del-2-de-julio/>

(3) For just one first-hand account of the thesis of the EZLN's disappearance within Mexico's 'progressive' intellectual circles, see Raul Zibechi (2012).

(4) Even the Anglophone academic world was not untouched by the perception of the EZLN as a spent force. Take, for example, the widely circulated words of David Harvey, who, even half a decade after the Zapatistas' break with the Mexican political class, concluded (with thinly veiled disappointment) that the Zapatistas had given up on political revolution and instead decided to "remain a movement within the state" (2010, page 252).

(5) For a good summary of Article 27's provisions for the protection of common land tenure, see Ana de Ita (2006, page 149).

(6) The most important of these programs was PROCEDE (Certification Program for Ejidal Rights and Titling of Parcels). For an analysis of PROCEDE and its relation to the evisceration of Article 27, see de Ita (2006).

(7) For a similar argument regarding Article 27 of the Mexican constitution, see Gareth Williams (2011, pages 158-165).

(8) For a more detailed description of the Zapatista's alternative institutions, see Reyes and Kaufman (2012).

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Roland Denis - El milagro Kurdo: Ocalam y el sentido de la revolución 1

Originalmente publicado en [Aporrea](#).



El mundo en todo el transcurso de la era moderna ha estado plagado de luchas guerrilleras, estallidos rebeldes y luchas socio-políticas de cualquier dimensión pero solo en muy pocas insurgen realmente los pueblos, cobran vida e identidad como máquinas de liberación que

se constituyen desde el escenario de su propio levantamiento. La relación lucha-pensamiento-trascendencia de un pueblo, tríada expresada en una política que se afianza desde los acontecimientos producidos en una determinada situación, se logra muy raras veces. Esta vez, bajo el escenario de las terribles guerras que el imperialismo ha generado directa o indirectamente en las últimas décadas en el Medio Oriente, esa tríada vuelve a brotar de una manera casi milagrosa alrededor del sur montañoso de Turquía y su caída sobre los valles verdes al norte de Siria. Es la región kurda de Rojava donde nuevamente se presenta esta síntesis, sostenida política y militarmente por las milicias y partidos revolucionarios allí organizados, extendidos desde el estallido de la guerra civil en Siria, e inspirados por lo que ha sido la evolución del pensamiento político de su líder histórico preso en Turquía desde hace 17 años Abdula Ocalam; personaje clave en esta historia lograda.

Este trabajo pretende adentrarse en lo que podamos dentro de este acontecimiento, tratando de entender los nudos esenciales de un pensamiento que se ha traducido en política y estrategia del pueblo kurdo revolucionario. Sostenemos que es desde estas tierras donde se libra una de las batallas libertarias más importantes del mundo, ya que se trata de un escenario de guerra central donde intervienen todas las potencias imperiales del mundo actual, en una durísima lucha de hegemonía y control estratégico del territorio por donde transcurre el mayor comercio petrolero y gasífero del mundo, además de los puentes que ligan a Asia y Europa. El “Medio Oriente” es en realidad el centro estratégico de la humanidad, lugar donde por cierto nacieron las primeras civilizaciones humanas, las primeras ciudades, los Estados centralizados y la escritura, es decir un centro estratégico desde siempre. Estamos hablando entonces de una batalla clave para el futuro de la humanidad, cuyos elementos sustanciales solo los hemos conocido por medio de las grandes corporaciones noticieras limitados a sus aspectos fenoménicos exteriores: las batallas, las destrucciones, los agentes políticos, militares y religiosos implicados, sus alianzas y enfrentamientos, las migraciones poblacionales que huyen de la guerra. Pero sin tomar en cuenta que en esta confrontación general subyace una dura lucha de clases entre pueblos empobrecidos que por lo general han sido utilizados en provecho de las políticas mercenarias internas, las barbaries religiosas aupadas por los grandes Estados y la Otan, y los agentes de dominio que desde distintas posiciones e intereses sirven para reforzar la presencia imperial.

Es aquí donde toma una importancia clave y trascendental la lucha del pueblo kurdo, expresión de una larga resistencia política y guerrillera al interno del Estado turco que termina extendiéndose en estos últimos años de guerra generalizada hacia el norte de Siria, Irak hasta las zonas kurdas de Irán. Un vasto pueblo sin Estado, de más de 40 millones de seres y una enorme diáspora de exilio hacia Europa de cerca de 5 millones que (apartando sus agentes colaboracionistas, ligados a los intereses de las castas dominantes, que siempre ha tenido) ha logrado configurar un complejo laberinto político-militar sustentando

políticamente en las líneas estratégicas que emanan de una organización madre fundamental: el PKK (Partido de los Trabajadores del Kurdistan), desde cuyo avance podemos verificar en qué medida la tríada mágica de la política revolucionaria: lucha-pensamiento-trascendencia de un pueblo, se está logrando, creando un enorme eco que ya se extiende sobre el mundo entero.

El falso e hipócrita dilema que pretenden vender la Otan y los EEUU de una supuesta democracia confrontada con las dictaduras locales y el terrorismo islámico, aspecto que se deshace todos los días al ver los niveles de alianza estrecha entre los regímenes de despotismo puro como el de Arabia Saudita, Catar, Emiratos, y la misma Turquía, en este caso es develado por una verdadera política de liberación de los pueblos, de la mujer, de la naturaleza, en confrontación abierta con los despotismos de Estado, el imperialismo y las barbaries islámicas. La política de liberación kurda, expresada en todos sus meandros de partidos, guerrillas, milicias territoriales y urbanas, de hombres y mujeres,, frentes sociales y confederación de comunidades, poco a poco va atrayendo otros pueblos garantizando no solo las grandes y pequeñas victorias militares en el norte de Siria, sino generando un bloque hegemónico revolucionario, que supera todo chauvinismo nacionalista y se convierte en una línea de liberación válida para todos los pueblos y culturas del Medio Oriente. No por casualidad, mientras se ejercen acciones laterales de solidaridad por parte de EEUU hacia las milicias kurdas en Siria, al mismo tiempo se ha utilizado al régimen de Erdogan en Turquía como el perro sucio y rabioso, punta de lanza para atacar la verdadera revolución social que representan los kurdos dentro y fuera de Turquía, provocando actualmente un verdadero genocidio sobre la zona kurda de turca (llamada Bakur o Kurdistán del norte), e impidiendo su presencia en las conversaciones de Ginebra, así como lo ayudan a la actual invasión del ejército y aviación turca en el norte de Siria, con el pretexto de atacar al ISIS . Se hace bajo una acusación de “terroristas” que tiene larga data con respecto al PKK, y que todos los países europeos reiteran abiertamente, siendo víctimas de ello militantes y periodistas particularmente españoles que han sido encarcelados en su país por su colaboración con los kurdos.

Se trata sin duda de una revolución en curso que es temida por todos aunque por razones tácticas en algún momento la necesiten en el terreno de la batalla. Ni siquiera los rusos, después de la contundente prueba de poderío militar que han demostrado en Siria han sido claros respecto al movimiento de liberación kurdo mas allá de las ambiguas declaraciones a su favor, y por lo visto no se han sentado cara a cara, dejando que sean atacados por el propia ejército Sirio en Hasaka y Qamishla, por tropas apoyadas por los turcos y el ISIS. No obstante el ejército y gobierno Sirio en algunos lugares como Alepo hoy luchan junto a los kurdos y kurdas de las milicias apodadas YPJ, YPG y el Ejercito Democrático de Siria (frente militar con otras naciones al interno de Siria -árabes, turcomanos, asrios, etc- construido desde las milicias kurdas) mientras son apoyados tácticamente por los EEUU en su avance sobre Al-Raqa y la estratégica ciudad de Manbij que ya ha sido tomada por el Ejército

Democrático de Siria. Son diversos frentes de batalla que por razones tácticas en unos lugares se enfrentan en otros se alían, pero ni el gobierno sirio ni el turco dan su mano a torcer frente a la propuesta federativa constitucional que le proponen los kurdos y la formación de la confederación democrática del norte de Siria, lo que los ha llevado a dichos enfrentamientos y declaraciones encontradas, además del rechazo explícito e “inaceptable” por parte de Turquía de dicha confederación ya asumida por los pueblos kurdos de las montañas del sur de Turquía (Bakur) en su guerra interna con el Estado turco. El nacionalismo burgués, reaccionario y de castas dominantes le teme mucho más a esta propuesta revolucionaria que a los propios islámicos que usa y a la vez ataca. Es decir, es una guerra de pueblos contra los gobiernos de las clases dominantes sirias y turcas que pareciera va proseguir indefinidamente, con posibilidades de extenderse sobre Irak e Iran donde ya se ha hecho presente el movimiento revolucionario kurdo, en contra incluso de los jefes feudales, chovinistas y proimperialistas que aún reinan en la zona kurda de Irak. Es importante ver lo que fue a toma de Shenjal en el norte de Irak y la salvación de miles de pobladores por parte de las milicias kurdas YPJ-YPJ, luego de la traición de Barzani y todas estas fuerzas feudales kurdas al pueblo Yaizidie (pueblo kurdo de raíces religiosas zoroástricas) entregándolo a la barbarie del ISIS.

Por todas estas razones nos interesa conocer y divulgar los aspectos esenciales de una lucha y el pensamiento adjunto a ella que le ha dado este poder a la lucha de liberación kurda. Es la historia de una de las tantas células de combate libertario que día a día se forman en el mundo con los más diversos destinos pero que en este caso ha logrado una trascendencia extraordinaria.

Video sobre la propuesta del Congreso Nacional Indígena

“La propuesta no es ir a votar por una candidata...la propuesta es, no es a las elecciones, no es ir a votar a una urna...la propuesta es que les tiremos la fiesta y que ocupemos ese lugar y que aprovechemos ese lugar para denunciar todo lo que esta pasando, que ocupemos ese lugar que esta vetado para nosotros para decir la verdad...Pero no es solamente denunciar, es una oportunidad para llegar a todos esos lugares que no hemos podido llegar...y organizarnos...ese es el objetivo de esto, la meta de esto que cada uno desde su lugar...se organice. “

Huey Newton: Speech At Boston College

Speech originally given at Boston College on November 18, 1970.



Power to the people, brothers and sisters. I would like to thank you for my presence here tonight because you are responsible for it. I would be in a maximum-security penitentiary if it were not for the power of the people.

Chairman, for Ericka Huggins, for Angela Davis, for the New York 21 and the Soledad Brothers. For all political prisoners and prisoners of war. On the 28th and 29th of November we will have a People's Revolutionary Constitutional convention in Washington, D.C. We cannot have that convention if the people do not come. After all, the people are the makers of world history and responsible for everything.

How can we have a convention if we have no people? Some believe a people's convention is possible without the people being there. As I recall, that was the case in 1777.

Tonight, I would like to outline for you the Black Panther Party's program and explain how we arrived at our ideological position and why we feel it necessary to institute a Ten-Point Program. A Ten-Point Program is not revolutionary in itself, nor is it reformist. It is a survival program. We, the people, are threatened with genocide because racism and fascism are rampant in this country and throughout the world. And the ruling circle in North America is responsible. We intend to change all of that, and in order to change it, there must be a total transformation. But until we can achieve that total transformation, we must exist. In order to exist, we must survive; therefore, we need a survival kit: the Ten-Point Program. It is necessary for our children to grow up healthy with functional and creative minds. They cannot do this if they do not get the correct nutrition. That is why we have a breakfast program for children. We also have community health programs. We have a busing program. We call it "The Bus for Relatives and Parents of Prisoners," We realize that the fascist regime that operates the prisons throughout America would like to do their treachery in the dark. But if we get the relatives, parents, and friends to the prisons they can expose the treachery of the fascists. This too is a survival program.

We must not regard our survival programs as an answer to the whole problem of oppression. We don't even claim it to be a revolutionary program. Revolutions are made of sterner stuff. We do say that if the people are not here revolution cannot be achieved, for the people and only the people make revolutions.

The theme of our Revolutionary People's Constitutional Convention is "Survival Through Service to the People." At our convention we will present our total survival program. It is a program that works very much like the first-aid kit that is used when a plane falls and you find yourself in the middle of the sea on a rubber raft. You need a few things to last until you can get to the shore, until you can get to that oasis where you can be happy and healthy. If you do not have the things necessary to get you to that shore, then you will probably not exist. At this time the ruling circle threatens us to the extent that we are afraid that we might not exist to see the next day or see the revolution. The Black Panther Party will not accept the total destruction of the people. As a matter of fact, we have drawn a line of demarcation and we will no longer tolerate fascism, aggression, brutality, and murder of any kind. We will not sit around and allow ourselves to be murdered. Each person has an obligation to preserve himself. If he does not preserve himself then I accuse him of suicide: reactionary suicide because reactionary conditions will have caused his death. If we do nothing we are accepting the situation and allowing ourselves to die. We will not accept that. If the alternatives are very narrow we still will not sit around, we will not die the death of the Jews in Germany. We would rather die the death of the Jews in Warsaw!

Where there is courage, where there is self-respect and dignity, there is a possibility that we can change the conditions and win. This is a possibility that we can change the conditions and win. This is called revolutionary enthusiasm and it is the kind of struggle that is needed in order to guarantee a victory. If we must die, then we will die the death of a revolutionary suicide that says, "If I am put down, if I am driven out, I refuse to be swept out with a broom. I would much rather be driven out with a stick because if I am swept out with the broom it will humiliate me and I will lose my self-respect. But if I am driven out with the stick, then, at least, I can claim the dignity of a man and die the death of a man rather than the death of a dog."

Of course, our real desire is to live, but we will not be cowed, we will not be intimidated.

I would like to explain to you the method that the Black Panther Party used to arrive at our ideological position, and more than that, I would like to give to you a framework or a process of thinking that might help us solve the problems and the contradictions that exist today. Before we approach the problem we must get a clear picture of what is really going on; a clear image divorced from the attitudes and emotions that we usually project into a situation. We must be as objective as possible without accepting dogma, letting the facts speak for themselves. But we will not remain totally objective; we will become subjective in the application of the knowledge received from the external world. We will use the scientific method to acquire this knowledge, but we will openly acknowledge our ultimate subjectivity. Once we apply knowledge in order to will a certain outcome our objectivity ends and our subjectivity begins. We call this integrating theory with practice, and this is what the Black Panther Party is all about.

In order to understand a group of forces operating at the same time, science developed what is called the scientific method. One of the characteristics or properties of this method is disinterest. Not uninterest, but disinterest: no special interest in the outcome. In other words, the scientist does not promote an outcome, he just collects the facts. Nevertheless, in acquiring his facts he must begin with a basic premise. Most basic premises stem from a set of assumptions because it is very difficult to test a first premise without these assumptions. After an agreement is reached on certain assumptions, an intelligent argument can follow, for then logic and consistency are all that is required to reach a valid conclusion.

Tonight I ask you to assume that an external world exists. An external world that exists independently of us. The second assumption I would like for you to make is that things are in a constant state of change, transformation, or flux. With agreement on these two assumptions we can go on with our discussion.

The scientific method relies heavily on empiricism. But the problem with empiricism is that it tells you very little about the future; it tells you only about the past, about information

which you have already discovered through observation and experience. It always refers to past experience.

Long after the rules of empirical knowledge had been ascertained, a man by the name of Karl Marx integrated these rules with a theory developed by Immanuel Kant called rationale. Kant called his process of reasoning pure reason because it did not depend on the external world. Instead it only depended on consistency in manipulating symbols in order to come up with a conclusion based upon reason. For example, in this sentence "If the sky is above my head when I turn my head upwards, I will see the sky" there is nothing wrong with the conclusion. As a matter of fact, it is accurate. But I haven't said anything about the existence of the sky. I said "if" With rationale we are not dependent upon the external world. With empiricism we can tell very little about the future. So what will we do? What Marx did. In order to understand what was happening in the world Marx found it necessary to integrate rationale with empiricism. He called his concept dialectical materialism. If, like Marx, we integrate these two concepts or these two ways of thinking, not only are we in touch with the world outside us but we can also explain the constant state of transformation. Therefore, we can also make some predictions about the outcome of certain social phenomena that is not only in constant change but also in conflict.

Marx, as a social scientist, criticized other social scientists for attempting to explain phenomena, or one phenomenon, by taking it out of its environment, isolating it, putting it into a category, and not acknowledging the fact that once it was taken out of its environment the phenomenon was transformed. For example, if in a discipline such as sociology we study the activity of groups - how they hold together and why they fall apart - without understanding everything else related to that group, we may arrive at a false conclusion about the nature of the group. What Marx attempted to do was to develop a way of thinking that would explain phenomena realistically.

When atoms collide, in physics, they divide into electrons, protons, and neutrons, if I remember correctly. What happened to the atom? It was transformed. In the social world a similar thing happens. We can apply the same principle. When two cultures collide a process or condition occurs which the sociologists call acculturation: the modification of cultures as a result of their contact with each other. Marx called the collision of social forces or classes a contradiction. In the physical world, when forces collide we sometimes call it just that - a collision. For example, when two cars meet head on, trying to occupy the same space at the same time, both are transformed. Sometimes other things happen. Had those two cars been turned back to back and sped off in opposite directions they would not be a contradiction; they would be contrary, covering different spaces at different times. Sometimes when people meet they argue and misunderstand each other because they think they are having a contradiction when they are only being contrary. For example, I can say the wall is ten feet tall and you can say the wall is red, and we can argue all day thinking we are having a

contradiction when actually we are only being contrary. When people argue, when one offers a thesis and the other offers an anti-thesis, we say there is a contradiction and hope that if we argue long enough, provided that we agree on one premise, we can have some kind of synthesis. Tonight I hope I can have some form of agreement or synthesis with those who have criticized the Black Panther Party.

I think that the mistake is that some people have taken the apparent as the actual fact in spite of their claims of scholarly research and following the discipline of dialectical materialism. They fail to search deeper, as the scientist is required to do, to get beyond the apparent and come up with the more significant. Let me explain how this relates to the Black Panther Party. The Black Panther Party is a Marxist-Leninist party because we follow the dialectical method and we also integrate theory with practice. We are not mechanical Marxists and we are not historical materialists. Some people think they are Marxists when actually they are following the thoughts of Hegel. Some people think they are Marxist-Leninists but they refuse to be creative, and are, therefore, tied to the past. They are tied to a rhetoric that does not apply to the present set of conditions. They are tied to a set of thoughts that approaches dogma - what we call flunkeyism.

Marx attempted to set up a framework which could be applied to a number of conditions. And in applying this framework we cannot be afraid of the outcome because things change and we must be willing to acknowledge that change because we are objective. If we are using the method of dialectical materialism we don't expect to find anything the same even one minute later because "one minute later" is history. If things are in a constant state of change, we cannot expect them to be the same. Words used to describe old phenomena may be useless to describe the new. And if we use the old words to describe new events we run the risk of confusing people and misleading them into thinking that things are static.

In 1917 an event occurred in the Soviet Union that was called a revolution. Two classes had a contradiction and the whole country was transformed. In this country, 1970, the Black Panther Party issued a document. Our Minister of Information, Eldridge Cleaver, who now is in Algeria, wrote a pamphlet called "On the Ideology of the Black Panther Party." In that work Eldridge Cleaver stated that neither the proletarians nor the industrial workers carry the potentialities for revolution in this country at this time. He claimed that the left wing of the proletarians, the lumpen proletarians, have that revolutionary potential, and in fact, acting as the vanguard, they would carry the people of the world to the final climax of the transformation of society. It has been stated by some people, by some parties, by some organizations, by the Progressive Labor Party, that revolution is impossible. How can the lumpen proletarians carry out a successful socialist transformation when they are only a minority? And in fact how can they do it when history shows that only the proletarians have carried out a successful social revolution? I agree that it is necessary for the people who carry out a social revolution to represent the popular majority's interests. It is necessary for

this group to represent the broad masses of the people. We analyzed what happened in the Soviet Union in 1917. I also agree that the lumpen proletarians are the minority in this country. No disagreement. Have I contradicted myself? It only goes to show that what's apparent might not actually be a fact. What appears to be a contradiction may be only a paradox. Let's examine this apparent contradiction.

The Soviet Union, in 1917, was basically an agricultural society with very large peasantry. A set of social conditions existing there at that time was responsible for the development of a small industrial base. The people who worked in this industrial base were called proletarians. Lenin, using Marx's theory, saw the trends. He was not a historical materialist, but a dialectical materialist, and therefore very interested in the ever-changing status of things. He saw that while the proletarians were a minority in 1917, they had the potential to carry out a revolution because their class was increasing and the peasantry was declining. That was one of the conditions. The proletarians were destined to be a popular force. They also had access to the properties necessary for carrying out a socialist revolution.

In this country the Black Panther Party, taking careful note of the dialectical method, taking careful note of the social trends and the ever-changing nature of things, sees that while the lumpen proletarians are the minority and the proletarians are the majority, technology is developing at such a rapid rate that automation will progress to cybernation, and cybernation probably to technocracy. As I came into town I saw MIT over the way. If the ruling circle remains in power it seems to me that capitalists will continue to develop their technological machinery because they are not interested in the people. Therefore, I expect from them the logic that they have always followed: to make as much money as possible, and pay the people as little as possible - until the people demand more, and finally demand their heads. If revolution does not occur almost immediately, and I say almost immediately because technology is making leaps (it made a leap all the way to the moon), and if the ruling circle remains in power the proletarian working class will definitely be on the decline because they will be unemployables and therefore swell the ranks of the lumpens, who are the present unemployables. Every worker is in jeopardy because of the ruling circle, which is why we say that the lumpen proletarians have the potential for revolution, will probably carry out the revolution, and in the near future will be the popular majority. Of course, I would not like to see more of my people unemployed or become unemployables, but being objective, because we're dialectical materialists, we must acknowledge the facts.

Marx outlined a rough process of the development of society. He said that society goes from a slave class to a feudalistic class structure to a capitalistic class structure to a socialistic class structure and finally to communism. Or in other words, from capitalist state to socialist state to nonstate: communism. I think we can all agree that the slave class in the world has virtually been transformed into the wage slave. In other words, the slave class in the world no longer exists as a significant force, and if we agree to that we can agree that classes can

be transformed literally out of existence. If this is so, if the slave class can disappear and become something else - or not disappear but just be transformed - and take on other characteristics, then it is also true that the proletarians or the industrial working class can possibly be transformed out of existence. Of course the people themselves would not disappear; they would only take on other attributes. The attribute that I am interested in is the fact that soon the ruling circle will not need the workers, and if the ruling circle is in control of the means of production the working class will become unemployables or lumpens. That is logical; that is dialectical. I think it would be wrong to say that only the slave class could disappear.

Marx was a very intelligent man. He was not a dogmatist. Once he said, "One thing I'm not, I'm not a Marxist." In those words, he was trying to tell the Progressive Labor Party and others not to accept the past as the present or the future, but to understand it and be able to predict what might happen in the future and therefore act in an intelligent way to bring about the revolution that we all want.

After taking those things into consideration we see that as time changes and the world is transformed we need some new definitions, for if we keep using the old terms people might think the old situation still exists. I would be amazed if the same conditions that existed in 1917 were still existing today.

You know Marx and Lenin were pretty lazy dudes when it came to working for somebody. They looked at toil, working for your necessities, as something of a curse. And Lenin's whole theory, after he put Marx's analysis into practice, was geared to get rid of the proletarians. In other words, when the proletarian class or the working class seized the means of production, they would plan their society in such a way as to be free from toil. As a matter of fact, Lenin saw a time in which man could stand in one place, push buttons and move mountains. It sounds to me as though he saw a proletarian working class transformed and in possession of a free block of time, to indulge in productive creativity, to think about developing their universe, so that they could have the happiness, the freedom, and the pleasure that all men seek and value.

Today's capitalist has developed machinery to such a point that he can hire a group of specialized people called technocrats. In the near future he will certainly do more of this, and the technocrat will be too specialized to be identified as a proletarian. In fact that group of technocrats will be so vital we will have to do something to explain the presence of other people; we will have to come up with another definition and reason for existing.

But we must not confine our discussion to theory; we must have practical application of our theory to come up with anything worthwhile. In spite of the criticism that we have received from certain people, the Party has a practical application of its theories. Many of our

activities provide the working class and the unemployed with a reason and a means for existing in the future. The people will not disappear-not with our survival programs they will not. They will still be around.

The Black Panther Party says it is perfectly correct to organize the proletarians because after they are kicked out of the factory and are called unemployable or lumpen, they still want to live, and in order to live they have to eat. It is in the proletarian's own best interest to seize the machinery that he has made in order to produce in abundance, so he and his brethren can live. We will not wait until the proletarian becomes the lumpen proletarian to educate him. Today we must lift the consciousness of the people. The wind is rising and the rivers flowing, times are getting hard and we can't go home again. We can't go back to our mother's womb, nor can we go back to 1917.

The United States, or what I like to call North America, was transformed at the hands of the ruling circle from a nation to an empire. This caused a total change in the world, because no part of an interrelated thing can change and leave everything else the same. So when the United States, or North America, became an empire it changed the whole composition of the world. There were other nations in the world. But "empire" means that the ruling circle who lives in the empire (the imperialists) control other nations. Now some time ago there existed a phenomenon we called-well, I call - primitive empire. An example of that would be the Roman Empire because the Romans controlled all of what was thought to be the known world. In fact they did not know all of the world, therefore some nations still existed independent of it. Now, probably all of the world is known. The United States as an empire necessarily controls the whole world either directly or indirectly.

If we understand dialectics we know that every determination brings about a limitation and every limitation brings about a determination. In other words, while one force may give rise to one thing it might crush other things, including itself. We might call this concept "the negation of the negation." So, while in 1917 the ruling circle created an industrial base and used the system of capitalism they were also creating the necessary conditions for socialism. They were doing this because in a socialist society it is necessary to have some centralization of the wealth, some equal distribution of the wealth, and some harmony among the people.

Now, I will give you roughly some characteristics that any people who call themselves a nation should have. These are economic independence, cultural determination, control of the political institutions, territorial integrity, and safety.

In 1966 we called our Party a Black Nationalist Party. We called ourselves Black Nationalists because we thought that nationhood was the answer. Shortly after that we decided that what was really needed was revolutionary nationalism, that is, nationalism plus

socialism. After analyzing conditions a little more, we found that it was impractical and even contradictory. Therefore, we went to a higher level of consciousness. We saw that in order to be free we had to crush the ruling circle and therefore we had to unite with the peoples of the world. So we called ourselves Internationalists. We sought solidarity with the peoples of the world. We sought solidarity with what we thought were the nations of the world. But then what happened? We found that because everything is in a constant state of transformation, because of the development of technology, because of the development of the mass media, because of the fire power of the imperialist, and because of the fact that the United States is no longer a nation but an empire, nations could not exist, for they did not have the criteria for nationhood. Their self-determination, economic determination, and cultural determination has been transformed by the imperialists and the ruling circle. They were no longer nations. We found that in order to be Internationalists we had to be also Nationalists, or at least acknowledge nationhood. Internationalism, if I understand the word, means the interrelationship among a group of nations. But since no nation exists, and since the United States is in fact an empire, it is impossible for us to be Internationalists.

These transformations and phenomena require us to call ourselves "intercommunalists" because nations have been transformed into communities of the world. The Black Panther Party now disclaims internationalism and supports intercommunalism.

Marx and Lenin felt, with the information they had, that when the non-state finally came to be a reality, it would be caused or ushered in by the people and by communism. A strange thing happened. The ruling reactionary circle, through the consequence of being imperialists, transformed the world into what we call "Reactionary Intercommunalism." They laid siege upon all the communities of the world, dominating the institutions to such an extent that the people were not served by the institutions in their own land. The Black Panther Party would like to reverse that trend and lead the people of the world into the age of "Revolutionary Intercommunalism." This would be the time when the people seize the means of production and distribute the wealth and the technology in an egalitarian way to the many communities of the world.

We see very little difference in what happens to a community here in North America and what happens to a community in Vietnam. We see very little difference in what happens, even culturally, to a Chinese community in San Francisco and a Chinese community in Hong Kong. We see very little difference in what happens to a Black community in Harlem and a Black community in South America, a Black community in Angola and one in Mozambique. We see very little difference.

So, what has actually happened, is that the non-state has already been accomplished, but it is reactionary. A community by way of definition is a comprehensive collection of institutions that serve the people who live there. It differs from a nation because a community evolves

around a greater structure that we usually call the state, and the state has certain control over the community if the administration represents the people or if the administration happens to be the people's commissar. It is not so at this time, so there's still something to be done. I mentioned earlier the "negation of the negation," I mentioned earlier the necessity for the redistribution of wealth. We think that it is very important to know that as things are in the world today socialism in the United States will never exist. Why? It will not exist because it cannot exist. It cannot at this time exist anywhere in the world. Socialism would require a socialist state, and if a state does not exist how could socialism exist? So how do we define certain progressive countries such as the People's Republic of China? How do we describe certain progressive countries, or communities as we call them, as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea?

How do we define certain communities such as North Vietnam and the provisional government in the South? How do we explain these communities if in fact they too cannot claim nationhood? We say this: we say they represent the people's liberated territory. They represent a community liberated. But that community is not sufficient, it is not satisfied, just as the National Liberation Front is not satisfied with the liberated territory in the South. It is only the groundwork and preparation for the liberation of the world-seizing the wealth from the ruling circle, equal distribution and proportional representation in an intercommunal framework. This is what the Black Panther Party would like to achieve with the help of the power of the people, because without the people nothing can be achieved.

I stated that in the United States socialism would never exist. In order for a revolution to occur in the United States you would have to have a redistribution of wealth not on a national or an international level, but on an intercommunal level. Because how can we say that we have accomplished revolution if we redistribute the wealth just to the people here in North America when the ruling circle itself is guilty of trespass de bonis asportatis. That is, they have taken away the goods of the people of the world, transported them to America and used them as their very own.

In 1917, when the revolution occurred, there could be a redistribution of wealth on a national level because nations existed. Now, if you talk in terms of planning an economy on a world-wide level, on an intercommunal level, you are saying something important: that the people have been ripped off very much like one country being ripped off. Simple reparation is not enough because the people have not only been robbed of their raw materials, but of the wealth accrued from the investment of those materials-an investment which has created the technological machine. The people of the world will have to have control - not a limited share of control for "X" amount of time, but total control forever.

In order to plan a real intercommunal economy we will have to acknowledge how the world is hooked up. We will also have to acknowledge that nations have not existed for some time.

Some people will argue that nations still exist because of the cultural differences. By way of definition, just for practical argument, culture is a collection of learned patterns of behavior. Here in the United States Black people, Africans, were raped from the mother country, and consequently we have literally lost most of our African values. Perhaps we still hold on to some surviving Africanisms, but by and large you can see the transformation which was achieved by time and the highly technological society whose tremendous mass media functions as an indoctrination center. The ruling circle has launched satellites in order to project a beam across the earth and indoctrinate the world, and while there might be some cultural differences, these differences are not qualitative but quantitative. In other words, if technology and the ruling circle go on as they are now the people of the world will be conditioned to adopt Western values. (I think Japan is a good example.) The differences between people are getting very small, but again that is in the interest of the ruling circle. I do not believe that history can be backtracked. If the world is really that interconnected then we have to acknowledge that and say that in order for the people to be free, they will have to control the institutions of their community, and have some form of representation in the technological center that they have produced. The United States, in order to correct its robbery of the world, will have to first return much of which it has stolen. I don't see how we can talk about socialism when the problem is world distribution. I think this is what Marx meant when he talked about the non-state.

I was at Alex Haley's house some time ago and he talked to me about his search for his past. He found it in Africa but when he returned there shortly afterward, he was in a state of panic. His village hadn't changed very much, but when he went there he saw an old man walking down the road, holding something that he cherished to his car. It was a small transistor radio that was zeroed in on the British broadcasting network. What I'm trying to say is that mass media plus the development of transportation make it impossible for us to think of ourselves in terms of separate entities, as nations. Do you realize that it only took me approximately five hours to get from San Francisco to here? It only takes ten hours to get from here to Vietnam. The ruling circle no longer even acknowledges wars; they call them "police actions." They call the riots of the Vietnamese people "domestic disturbance." What I am saying is that the ruling circle must realize and accept the consequences of what they have done. They know that there is only one world, but they are determined to follow the logic of their exploitation.

A short time ago in Detroit, the community was under siege, and now sixteen members of the Party are in prison. The local police laid siege on that community and that house, and they used the same weapons they use in Vietnam (as a matter of fact, two tanks rolled up). The same thing happens in Vietnam because the "police" are there also. The "police" are everywhere and they all wear the same uniform and use the same tools, and have the same purpose: the protection of the ruling circle here in North America. It is true that the world is one community, but we are not satisfied with the concentration of its power. We want the

power for the people.

I said earlier (but I strayed away) that the theory of the “negation of the negation” is valid. Some scholars have been wondering why in Asia, Africa, and Latin America the resistance always seeks the goal of a collective society. They seem not to institute the economy of the capitalist. They seem to jump all the way from feudalism to a collective society, and some people can't understand why. Why won't they follow historical Marxism, or historical materialism? Why won't they go from feudalism to the development of a capitalistic base and finally to socialism? They don't do it because they can't do it. They don't do it for the same reason that the Black community in Harlem cannot develop capitalism, that the Black community in Oakland or San Francisco cannot develop capitalism, because the imperialists have already pre-empted the field. They have already centralized the wealth. Therefore, in order to deal with them all we can do is liberate our community and then move on them as a collective force.

We've had long arguments with people about our convictions. Before we became conscious we used to call ourselves a dispersed collection of colonies here in North America. And people argued with me all day and all night, asking, “How can you possibly be a colony? In order to be a colony you have to have a nation, and you're not a nation, you're a community. You're a dispersed collection of communities.” Because the Black Panther Party is not embarrassed to change or admit error, tonight I would like to accept the criticism and say that those critics were absolutely right. We are a collection of communities just as the Korean people, the Vietnamese people, and the Chinese people are a collection of communities—a dispersed collection of communities because we have no superstructure of our own. The superstructure we have is the superstructure of Wall Street, which all of our labor produced. This is a distorted form of collectivity. Everything's been collected but it's used exclusively in the interest of the ruling circle. This is why the Black Panther Party denounces Black capitalism and says that all we can do is liberate our community, not only in Vietnam but here, not only in Cambodia and the People's Republics of China and Korea but the communities of the world. We must unite as one community and then transform the world into a place where people will be happy, wars will end, the state itself will no longer exist, and we will have communism. But we cannot do this right away. When transformation takes place, when structural change takes place, the result is usually cultural lag. After the people possess the means of production we will probably not move directly into communism but linger with Revolutionary Intercommunalism until such time as we can wash away bourgeois thought, until such time as we can wash away racism and reactionary thinking, until such time as people are not attached to their nation as a peasant is attached to the soil, until such time as that people can gain their sanity and develop a culture that is “essentially human,” that will serve the people instead of some god. Because we cannot avoid contact with each other we will have to develop a value system that will help us function together in harmony.

Gerald Horne and Paul Jay: Trump Attack on Syria a Deadly Political Game and Reflection of Deep Systemic Crisis

Interview originally published on [The Real News](#).

“...Unfortunately, we’re not finished, I’m afraid. As noted, North Korea is certainly in the crosshairs. The problem there, of course, is that North Korea is rapidly developing the capability to have missiles that it can reach Hawaii at least, if not the west coast of the United States of America. And likewise, I think that Washington may be under-estimating the ability of Iran, to organize and resist an attack. That if launched, could open the gates of hell.”

Watch the full interview below.

Maurizio Lazzarato and Éric Alliez: To Our Enemies (A Nuestros Enemigos - incluído en

Español)

Originally published in [e-flux](#). En español [aquí](#).



1. We are living in the time of the subjectivation of civil wars. We did not leave the period of triumph of the market, automation of governmentality, and depoliticization of the economy of debt to go back to the era of “world views” and the conflicts between them. We have entered a time of building new war machines.

2. Capitalism and neoliberalism carry wars within them like clouds carry storms. While the financialization of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries led to total war and the Russian Revolution, the 1929 crash and European civil wars, contemporary financialization is at the helm of global civil war and controls all its polarizations.

3. Since 2011, the multiple forms of subjectivation of civil wars have deeply altered both the semiology of capital and the pragmatics of the struggle to keep the manifold powers of war from being the perpetual framework of life. Among the experiments with anticapitalist machines, Occupy Wall Street in the US, the Indignados in Spain, the student movements in Chile and Quebec, and Greece in 2015 all fought with unequal arms against the debt

economy and austerity policies. The “Arab Spring,” the major protests in Brazil, and the Gezi Park clashes in Turkey circulated the same watchwords of organization and disorder throughout the Global South. Nuit Debout in France is the latest development in a cycle of conflict and occupation that may have started with Tiananmen Square in 1989. On the side of power, neoliberalism promotes an authoritarian and policed post-democracy managed by market technicians to stoke the flames of its predatory economic policies, while the new right (or “strong right”) declares war on foreigners, immigrants, Muslims, and the underclasses in the name of the “de-demonized” extreme right. This extreme right openly comes to occupy the terrain of civil wars, which it subjectivizes by rekindling *racial class warfare*. Neofascist hegemony over the processes of subjectivation is confirmed by the renewed war on the autonomy of women and the becoming-minor of sexuality (in France, “La Manif pour tous”) as an *extension of the endocolonial domain of civil war*.

The era of limitless deterritorialization under Thatcher and Reagan is now followed by the racist, nationalist, sexist, and xenophobic reterritorialization of Trump, who has already become the leader of the new fascisms. The American Dream has been transformed into the nightmare of an insomniac planet.

4. There is a flagrant imbalance between the war machines of Capital and the new fascisms on the one hand, and the multiform struggles against the world-system of new capitalism on the other. It is a political imbalance but also an *intellectual* one. This text focuses on a void, a blank, a theoretical and practical repressed which is, however, always at the heart of the power and powerlessness of revolutionary movements: the concept of “war” and “civil war.”

5. “It’s like being in a war,” was heard in Athens during the weekend of July 11-12, 2015. And for good reason. The population was faced with a large-scale strategy of continuing war by means of debt: it completed the destruction of Greece and, at the same time, triggered the self-destruction of the “construction of Europe.” The goal of the European Commission, the ECB, and the IMF was never mediation or finding compromise but defeating the adversary on an open field.

The statement “It’s like being in a war” should be immediately corrected: *it is a war*. The reversibility of war and economy is at the very basis of capitalism. And it has been a long time since Carl Schmitt revealed the “pacifist” hypocrisy of neoliberalism by reestablishing the continuity between economy and war: the economy pursues the objectives of war through other means (“blocking credit, embargo on raw materials, devaluation of foreign currency”).

Two superior officers in the Chinese Air Force, Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, define financial offensives as “bloodless wars”; a *cold* violence, just as cruel and effective as “bloody wars.” With globalization, as they explain, “while constricting the battlespace in the

narrow sense, at the same time we have turned the entire world into a battlefield in the broad sense.”

The expansion of war and the multiplication of its domain names has led to the establishment of a continuum between war, economy, and politics. Yet from the beginning, liberalism has been a *philosophy of total war*.

(Pope Francis seems to be preaching in the desert when he asserts, with a clarity that is lacking in politicians, experts of all stripes, and even the most hardened critics of capitalism, “Let’s recognize it. *The world is in a state of war in bits and pieces* ... When I speak of war, I talk about real war. Not a war of religion. No. There is a war of interests. There is a war for money. There is a war for natural resources. There is a war for domination of peoples. This is the war.”)

6. During that same year of 2015, a few months after the defeat of the Greek “radical left,” the president of the French Republic announced on the evening of November 13 that France was “at war” and declared a state of emergency. The law authorizing him to do so and authorizing the suspension of “democratic freedoms” to grant “extraordinary” powers to the administration of public security had been passed in 1955 during the colonial war in Algeria. Implemented in New Caledonia in 1984 and during the “suburban riots” in 2005, the state of emergency brought colonial and postcolonial war back into the spotlight.

What happened in Paris on an awful night in November is what occurs daily in cities in the Middle East. This is the horror that the millions of refugees “pouring” into Europe are fleeing. They are visible evidence of the oldest colonialist technology to regulate migratory movement by its “apocalyptic” extension in the “infinite wars” started by Christian fundamentalist George Bush and his cabinet of neocons. Neocolonial war is no longer taking place only in the “margins” of the world. In every way possible, it moves through the “center” by taking on the figure of the “internal Islamist enemy,” immigrants, refugees, and migrants. The eternal outcasts are not left out: the poor and impoverished workers, those in unstable jobs and long-term unemployment, and the “endocolonized” on both sides of the Atlantic ...

7. The “stability pact” (“financial” state of emergency in Greece) and the “security pact” (“political” state of emergency in France) are two sides of the same coin. Constantly dismantling and restructuring the world-economy, the flows of credit and the flows of war are, with the States that *integrate* them, the condition of existence, production, and reproduction of contemporary capitalism.

Money and war are the global market’s military police, which is still referred to as the “governance” of the world-economy. In Europe, it is incarnated in the financial state of

emergency that shrinks workers' rights and social security rights (health, education, housing, and so forth.) to nothing while the antiterrorist state of emergency suspends their already emptied "democratic" rights.

8. Our first thesis is that war, money, and the State are constitutive or constituent forces, in other words the ontological forces of capitalism. The critique of political economy is insufficient to the extent that the economy does not replace war but continues it by other means, ones that go necessarily through the State: monetary regulation and the legitimate monopoly on force for internal and external wars. To produce the genealogy of capitalism and reconstruct its "development," we must always engage and articulate together the critique of political economy, critique of war, and critique of the State.

The accumulation of and monopoly on property titles by Capital, and the accumulation of and monopoly on force by the State feed off of each other. Without the external exercise of war, and without the exercise of civil war by the State inside its borders, it would never have been possible to amass capital. And inversely: without the capture and valorization of wealth carried out by capital, the State would never have been able to exercise its administrative, legal, and governmental functions or organize armies of ever growing power. The expropriation of the means of production and the appropriation of the means of exercising force are the conditions of the formation of Capital and the constitution of the State that develop in parallel. Military proletarianization goes hand in hand with industrial proletarianization.

9. But what "war" are we talking about? Does the concept of "global civil war," advanced at the same time (1961) by Carl Schmitt and Hannah Arendt, impose itself at the end of the Cold War as the most appropriate form? Do the categories of "infinite war," "just war," and "war on terrorism" correspond to the new conflicts of globalization?

And is it possible to use the syntagma of "the" war without immediately assuming the point of view of the State? The history of capitalism, since its origin, is crisscrossed and constituted by a multiplicity of wars: wars of class(es), race(s), sex(es),

wars of subjectivity(ies), wars of civilization (the singular gave its capital letter to History). "*Wars*" and not *the* war is our second thesis. "Wars" as the foundation of internal and external order, as organizing principle of society. Wars, not only wars of class, but also military, civil, sex, and race wars are integrated so constitutively in the definition of Capital that *Das Kapital* should be rewritten from start to finish to account for their dynamic in its most real functioning. At all of the major turning points in capitalism, we do not find the "creative destruction" of Schumpeter carried out by entrepreneurial innovation, but always the enterprise of civil wars.

10. Since 1492, Year One of Capital, the formation of capital has unfolded through this multiplicity of wars on both sides of the Atlantic. Internal colonization (Europe) and external colonization (Americas) are parallel, mutually reinforcing, and together define the world-economy. This dual colonization defines what Marx called primitive accumulation. Unlike, if not Marx, then at least a certain long-dominant Marxism, we do not restrict primitive accumulation to a mere phase in the development of capital destined to be surpassed in and through the “specific mode of production” of capital. We consider that it constitutes a condition of existence that constantly accompanies the development of capital, such that if primitive accumulation is pursued in all of the forms of expropriation of a continued accumulation, then *the wars* of class, race, sex, and subjectivity are *endless*. The conjunction of these wars, and in particular the wars against the poor and women in the internal colonization of Europe, and the wars against the “first” peoples in external colonization, precede and make possible the “class struggles” of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by projecting them into a common war against *productive pacification*. Pacification obtained by any means (“bloody” and “not bloody”) is the goal of the war of capital as “social relationship.”

11. “By focusing exclusively on the relationship between capitalism and industrialism, in the end, Marx gives no attention to the close connection between these two phenomena and militarism.”

War and the arms race have been conditions for both economic development and technological and scientific innovation since the start of capitalism. Each stage in the development of capital invents its own “Keynesianism of war.” The only fault in this thesis by Giovanni Arrighi is in limiting itself to “the” war between States and paying “no attention to the close connection” that Capital, technology, and science maintain with civil wars. A colonel in the French army sums up the directly economic functions of war as follows: “We are producers like any other.” He reveals one of the most troubling aspects of the concept of production and work, an aspect that economists, unions, and Marxist recruits avoid thematizing.

12. Since primitive accumulation, the strategic force of destructure/restructure of the world-economy is Capital in its most deterritorialized form: financial Capital (which had to be expressed as such before receiving its letters of credit from Balzac). Foucault critiques the Marxist conception of Capital because there will never be “the” capitalism but always a historically qualified “political-institutional ensemble” (an argument that received much attention).

Although Marx never in fact used the concept of capitalism, we must still maintain the distinction between it and “the” capital, because “its” logic, the logic of financial Capital (M-M’), is (still historically) the most operational one. What has been called the “financial

crisis" shows it at work even in its most "innovative" post-critical performances. The multiplicity of State forms and transnational organizations of power, the plurality of political-institutional ensembles defining the variety of national "capitalisms," are violently centralized, subordinated, and commanded by globalized financial Capital in its aim of "growth." The multiplicity of power formations submits, more or less docilely (albeit more rather than less), to the logic of the most abstract property, that of the creditors. "The" Capital, with "its" logic (M-M') of planetary reconfiguration of space through the constant acceleration of time, is an historical category, a "real abstraction" as Marx would say, producing the most real effects of universal privatization of "human" and "nonhuman" Earth, and removal of the "commons" of the world. (Think here of the land grabbing which is both a direct consequence of the "food crisis" of 2007-08 and one of the *exit strategies* from the "worst financial crisis in Global History.") We are using the "historical-transcendental" concept of Capital in this way by pulling it (and dropping the capitalization as often as possible) towards the systematic colonization of the world of which it is the long-distance agent.

13. Why doesn't the development of capitalism go through cities, which have long served as its vectors, but instead through the State? Because only the State, throughout the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, was capable of achieving the expropriation/appropriation of the multiplicity of war machines of the feudal period (turned towards "private" wars), to centralize them and institutionalize them in a war machine transformed into an army with the legitimate monopoly on public force. The division of labor does not only take place in production, but also in the specialization of war and the professional soldier. While centralization and the exercise of force in a "regulated army" is the work of the State, it is also the condition for the accumulation of "wealth" by "civilized and opulent" nations at the expense of poor nations (Adam Smith)—which, in truth, are not nations at all but "wastelands" (John Locke).

14. The constitution of the State as a "megamachine" of power thus relied on the capture, centralization, and institutionalization of the means of exercising force. Starting in the 1870s, however, and especially under the effect of the brutal acceleration imposed by "total war," Capital was no longer satisfied with maintaining a relationship of alliance with the State and its war machine. It started to appropriate it *directly* by integrating its instruments of polarization. The construction of this new capitalist war machine integrated the State, its sovereignty (political and military), and all its "administrative" functions by profoundly modifying them under the direction of financial Capital. Starting with the First World War, the model of scientific organization of labor and the military model of organization and execution of war deeply penetrated the political functioning of the State by reconfiguring the liberal division of powers under the hegemony of the executive, while inversely the politics, not of the State but of Capital, were imposed on the organization, execution, and aims of war. With neoliberalism, this process of capture of the war machine and the State

was fully realized in the axiomatics of Integrated Global Capitalism. In this way, we bring in Félix Guattari's IGC to serve our third thesis: Integrated Global Capitalism is the axiomatic of the war machine of Capital that was able to submit the military deterritorialization of the State to the superior deterritorialization of Capital. The machine of production is no longer distinguishable from the war machine integrating civilian and military, peace and war, in the single process of a continuum of isomorphic power in all its forms of valuation.

15. In the *longue durée* of the capital/war relationship, the outbreak of "economic war" between imperialisms at the end of the nineteenth century represented a turning point, a process of irreversible transformation of war and the economy, the State and society. *Financial capital transmits the unlimitedness (of its valuation) to war by making it into a power without limits (total war)*. The conjunction of the unlimited flows of war and the unlimited flows of financial capital during the First World War pushed back the limits of both production and war by raising the terrifying specter of *unlimited production for unlimited war*. The two World Wars are responsible for realizing, for the first time, "total" subordination (or "real subsumption") of society and its "productive forces" to the war economy through the organization and planning of production, labor and technology, science and consumption, at a hitherto unheard-of scale. Implicating the entire population in "production" was accompanied by the constitution of processes of mass subjectivation through the management of communications techniques and opinion creation. From the establishment of unprecedented research programs with the aim of "destruction" came scientific and technological discoveries that, transferred to the production of the means of production of "goods," would constitute the new generations of constant capital. This entire process was missed by workerism (and post-workerism) in the short-circuit which made it situate the Great Bifurcation of Capital in the 1960s-70s, combined in this way with the critical movement of self-affirmation of workerism *in the factory* (it would take the arrival of post-Fordism to reach the "diffuse factory").

16. The origin of *welfare* cannot be found solely within a logic of insurance against the risks of "work" and the risks of "life" (the Foucauldian school under managerial influence), but first and foremost in the logic of war. *Warfare* largely anticipated and prepared *welfare*. Starting in the 1930s, the two became indistinguishable.

The enormous militarization of total war, which transformed internationalist workers into sixty million nationalist soldiers, was "democratically" reterritorialized by and in welfare. The conversion of the war economy into the liberal economy, the conversion of the science and technology of the instruments of death into the means of production of "goods," and the subjective conversion of the militarized population into "workers" took place thanks to the enormous apparatus of state intervention along with the active participation of "companies" (corporate capitalism). Warfare pursued its logic by other means in welfare. Keynes himself recognized that the policy of effective demand had no other model of realization than a

regime of war.

17. Inserted in 1951 into his “Overcoming Metaphysics” (the overcoming in question was conceived during the Second World War), this passage by Heidegger defines exactly what the concepts of “war” and “peace” became at the end of the two total wars:

Changed into their deformation of essence, “war” and “peace” are taken up into erring, and disappear into the mere course of the escalating manufacture of what can be manufactured, because they have become unrecognizable with regard to any distinction. The question of when and where there will be peace cannot be answered not because the duration of war is unfathomable, but rather because the question already asks about something which no longer exists, since war is no longer anything which could terminate in peace. War has become a distortion of the consumption of beings which is continued in peace ... This long war in its length slowly eventuated not in a peace of the traditional kind, but rather in a condition in which warlike characteristics are no longer as such at all and peaceful characteristics have become meaningless and without content.

This passage was later rewritten at the end of *A Thousand Plateaus* to indicate how technical-scientific “capitalization” (referring to what we call the “military-industrial, scientific-university complex”) creates “a new conception of security as materialized war, as organized insecurity or molecularized, distributed, programmed catastrophe.”¹⁸ The Cold War is intensive socialization and capitalization of the real subsumption of society and populations in the war economy of the first half of the twentieth century. It constitutes a

fundamental passage in the formation of the war machine of Capital, which does not appropriate the State and war without subordinating “knowledge” to its process. The Cold War stoked the hearth of technological and scientific production that had been lit by the total wars. Practically all contemporary technologies, and in particular cybernetics, computer, and information technologies, are, directly or indirectly, the fruits of total war re-totalized by the Cold War. What Marx called “General Intellect” was born of/in the “production for destruction” of total wars before being reorganized by the Operational Research (OR) of the Cold War into an instrument (R&D) of command and control of the world-economy. The war history of Capital constrains us to this other major displacement in relation to workerism and post-workerism. The order of labor (“*Arbeit macht frei*”) established by the total wars is transformed into a liberal-democratic order of full employment as an instrument of social regulation of the “mass-worker” *and of his or her entire domestic environment.*

19. '68 is situated under the sign of the political reemergence of wars of class, race, sex, and subjectivity that the “working class” could no longer subordinate to its “interests” and its forms of organization (party-unions). While labor struggles “reached the highest absolute level of their development” in the United States (“Marx in Detroit”), they were also defeated there after the major postwar strikes. The destruction of the “order of labor” resulting from the total wars and continuing in and through the Cold War as “order of the wage system” was not only the objective of a new working class rediscovering its political autonomy; it is also the effect of the multiplicity of all these wars which, somewhat all at the same time, were inflamed by tracing back from the singular experiences of “group-subjects” that carried them towards their common conditions of subjective rupture. The wars of decolonization and of all the racial minorities, women, students, homosexuals, alternatives, antinuclear protesters, “*lumpen*,” and so on. thus define new modalities of struggle, organization, and especially the delegitimation of all “power-knowledge” throughout the 1960s and 1970s. We not only read the history of capital through war, but we also read war through '68, which is the only possible way to make the theoretical and political passage from “war” to “wars.”

20. War and strategy occupy a central place in the revolutionary theory and practices of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. Lenin, Mao, and General Giap conscientiously annotated Clausewitz's *On War*. '68 Thought refrained from theorizing war, with the notable exception of Foucault and Deleuze-Guattari. They not only proposed a reversal of Clausewitz's celebrated formula (“war is the continuation of politics by other means”) by analyzing the modalities through which “politics” can be seen as war continued by other means: *they especially and radically transformed the concepts of war and politics.* Their problematization of war is strictly dependent on the mutations of capitalism and the struggles against it in the so-called postwar period, before crystallizing in the strange revolution of 1968: the “microphysics” of power advanced by Foucault is a critical

actualization of “generalized civil war”; the “micropolitics” of Deleuze and Guattari is inseparable from the concept of “war machine” (its construction relies on the activist history of one of the pair). If we isolate the analysis of power relations from generalized civil war, like Foucauldian critique does, the theory of governmentality is nothing more than a variant of neoliberal “governance”; and if we cut micropolitics from the war machine, like Deleuzian critique does (it also undertakes an aestheticization of the war machine), only “minorities” remain that are powerless in the face of Capital, which keeps the initiative.

21. Siliconed by new technologies that they developed into a strike force, the military combined technological machines with war machines. The political consequences were formidable.

The USA planned and led the war in Afghanistan (2001) and in Iraq (2003) based on the principle “Clausewitz out, computer in” (the same operation is oddly enough used by the defenders of cognitive capitalism who dissolve the omni-reality of wars into computers and the “algorithms” that had served in the first place to wage them). Believing they could dissipate the “fog” and uncertainty of war by nothing less than the primitive accumulation of information, the strategists of hyper-technological, digital, and “network-centered” war quickly changed their tune: the victory that was so rapidly attained turned into a political-military disaster that triggered the disaster in the Middle East *in situ*, without sparing the Free World that had arrived bringing its values like a remake of *Dr. Strangelove*. The technical machine explains nothing and can do little without mobilizing all the other “machines.” Its efficacy and its very existence depend on the social machine and the war machine, which most often outline the technological avatar according to a model of society based on divisions, dominations, and exploitations (*Fast Cars, Clean Bodies*, to use the title of Kristin Ross’s fine work).

22. If the fall of the Wall delivered the death certificate of a mummy whose Communist prehistory ’68 made us forget, and if it is to be considered a nonevent (as the thesis of the *End of History* states in its melancholic way), the bloody fiasco of the imperial war machine’s first post-Communist wars made history. In part because of the debate that it started *inside the military*, where a new paradigm of war appeared. An antithesis of the industrial wars of the twentieth century, the new paradigm is defined as a “war amongst the population.” This concept, which inspired an improbable “military humanism,” is one we make our own by returning its meaning to the source and real terrain of wars of capital, and by rewriting this “war within the population” in the plural of *our wars*. The population is the battlefield in which counter-insurrectional operations of all kinds are underway. At the same time, and indistinguishably, they are both military and nonmilitary because they also carry the new identity of “bloody wars” and “non-bloody wars.”

Under Fordism, the State not only guaranteed State territorialization of Capital but also of

war. As a result, globalization cannot not free capital from State control without also freeing war, which passes to a superior power of continuity by integrating the *plane of capital*. Deterritorialized war is no longer inter-State war at all, but an uninterrupted succession of multiple wars against populations, definitively sending “governmentality” to the side of governance in a common enterprise of denial of global civil wars. What is governed and what allows governing are the *divisions* that project wars into the heart of the population at the level of the real content of biopolitics. A biopolitical governmentality of war as differential distribution of instability and norm of “daily life.” The complete opposite of the Great Narrative of the liberal birth of biopolitics taking place in a famous course at the Collège de France in the break between the 1970s and 1980s.

23. Accentuating divisions, aggravating the polarization of every capitalist society, the debt economy transforms “global civil war” (Schmitt, Arendt) into interconnected civil wars: class wars, neocolonialist wars on “minorities,” wars on women, wars of subjectivity. The matrix of these civil wars is the colonial war. Colonial war was never a war between States but, in essence, a war *in and against* the population, where the distinctions between war and peace, between combatants and noncombatants, between economy, politics, and military were never used. Colonial war in and against populations is the model of the war that financial Capital unleashed starting in the 1970s in the name of a neoliberalism of combat. Its war is both fractal and transversal: fractal, because it indefinitely produces its invariance by constant changes of scale (its “irregularity” and the “cracks” it introduces operate at different scales of reality); and transversal, because it is simultaneously deployed at the macropolitical level (by playing on all of the major binary oppositions: social classes, whites and nonwhites, men and women) and the micropolitical level (by molecular “engineering” privileging the highest interactions). It can also connect the civilian and military levels in the Global South and North, in the Souths and Norths of *everyone* (or almost everyone). Its first characteristic is therefore to be less *indiscriminate* war than *irregular* war.

The war machine of capital which, in the early 1970s, definitively integrated the State, war, science, and technology, clearly declares the strategy of contemporary globalization: to bring to an end the very short history of reforming capital—*Full Employment in a Free Society*, according to the manifesto of Lord Beveridge published in 1944—by attacking everywhere and with all means available the conditions of reality of the power struggle that imposed it. An infernal creativity is deployed by the neoliberal political project in pretending to grant the “market” superhuman qualities of *information processing*: the market as the ultimate cyborg.

24. The newfound consistency of neofascisms starting with the financial “crisis” in 2008 represents a turning point in the waging of wars amongst populations. Their dimensions, both fractal and transversal, take on a new and formidable effectiveness in dividing and polarizing. The new fascisms challenge all of the resources of the “war machine,” because if

the “war machine” is not necessarily identified with the State, it can also escape the control of Capital. While the war machine of Capital governs through an “inclusive” differentiation of property and wealth, the new fascist war machines function through exclusion based on racial, sexual, and national identity. The two logics seem incompatible. In reality, they inevitably converge (see “national preference”) as the state of economic and political emergency takes residence in the coercive time of *global flow*.

If the capitalist machine continues to be wary of the new fascisms, it is not because of its democratic principles (Capital is ontologically antidemocratic!) or the *rule of law*, but because, as it happened with Nazism, post-fascism can claim its “autonomy” from the war machine of Capital and escape its control. Isn’t this exactly the same thing that has happened with Islamic fascisms? Trained, armed, and financed by the US, they turned their weapons against the superpower and its allies who had instrumentalized them. From the West to the lands of the Caliphate *and back*, the neo-Nazis of all allegiances embody the suicidal subjectivation of the capitalist “mode of destruction.” It is also the final scene of the return of the colonial repressed: the jihadists of generation 2.0 haunt Western cities like their most internal enemy. Endocolonization also becomes the generalized conjugation of “topical” violence of the most intense domination of capitalism over populations. As for the process of convergence or divergence between the capitalist and neofascist war machines, it will depend on the evolution of the civil wars now underway and the risks that a future revolutionary process could run for private property, and more generally for the power of Capital.

25. Prohibiting the reduction of Capital and capitalism to a system or a structure, and of the economy to a history of self-enclosed cycles, wars of class, race, sex, and subjectivity also challenge every principle of autonomy in science and technology, every highway to “complexity” or emancipation forged by the progressive (and now accelerationist) idea of the movement of History.

Wars constantly inject the indeterminacy of conflict into open strategic relationships, making inoperable every mechanism of self-regulation (of the market) or every regulation by feedback (“man-machine systems” open their “complexity” to the future). The strategic “opening” of war is radically other than the systematic opening of cybernetics, which was not born in/of war for nothing. Capital is not structure or system; it is “machine” and *war machine*, of which the economy, politics, technology, the State, the media, and so forth are only the articulations informed by strategic relations. In the Marxist/Marxian definition of *General Intellect*, the war machine integrating science, technology, and communication into its functioning is curiously neglected for the sake of a hardly credible “communism of capital.”

26. Capital is not a mode of production without being at the same time a mode of

destruction. The infinite accumulation that constantly moves its limits to recreate them again is at the same time unlimited, widespread destruction. The gains in productivity and gains of destructiveness progress in parallel. They manifest themselves in the generalized war that scientists prefer to call “Anthropocene” rather than “Capitalocene,” even if, in all evidence, the destruction of the environments in and through which we live does not begin with “humans” and their growing needs, but with Capital. The “ecological crisis” is not the result of a modernity and humanity blinded to the negative effects of technological development but the “fruit of the will” of some people to exercise absolute domination over other people through a global geopolitical strategy of unlimited exploitation of all human and nonhuman resources.

Capitalism is not only the deadliest civilization in the history of humanity, the one that introduced us to the “shame of being human”; it is also the civilization through which labor, science, and technology have created—another (absolute) privilege in the history of humanity—the possibility of (absolute) annihilation of all species and the planet that houses them. In the meantime, the “complexity” of (saving) “nature” still offers the prospect of healthy profits combining the *techno* utopia of *geoengineering* and the reality of the new markets of “polluting rights.” At the confluence of one and the other, the Capitalocene does not send capitalism to the Moon (it has been there and back); it completes the global merchandizing of the planet by asserting its rights to the well-named troposphere.

27. The logic of Capital is the logistics of an infinite valuation. It implies the accumulation of a power that is not merely economic for the simple reason that it is complicated by strategic power and knowledge of the *strength* and *weakness* of the classes struggling, to which it is applied and with which they are in constant explanation. Foucault tells us that the Marxists turned their attention to the concept of “class” to the detriment of the concept of “struggle.” Knowledge of strategy is thus evacuated in favor of an alternative enterprise of pacification (Tronti offers the most *epic* version of this). Who is strong and who is weak? In what way did the strong become weak, and why did the weak become strong? How to strengthen oneself and weaken the other to dominate and exploit it? We propose to follow and reinvent the anticapitalist path of French Nietzscheism.

28. Capital came out the victor in the total wars and in the confrontation with global revolution, for which the number for us is 1968. Since then, it has gone from victory to victory, perfecting its *self-cooled motor*, where it verifies that the first function of power is to deny the existence of civil wars by erasing even the memory of them (pacification is a *scorched earth* policy). Walter Benjamin is there to remind us that reactivating the memory of the victories and defeats from which the victors take their domination can only come from the “defeated.” Problem: the “defeated” of ’68 threw out the bath water of civil wars with the old Leninist baby at the end of the “Hot Autumn” sealed by the failure of the dialectic of the “party of autonomy.” Entry into the “winter years” on the edge of a second Cold War

that ensures the triumph of the “people of capitalism” (“‘*People’s Capitalism*’—*This IS America!*”), the End of History will take the relay without stopping at a Gulf War that “did not take place.” Except there is a constellation of new wars, revolutionary machines, or mutant militants (Chiapas, Birmingham, Seattle, Washington, Genoa ...) and new defeats. The new writing generations describe “the missing people” dreaming of insomnia and destituent processes unfortunately reserved *for their friends*.

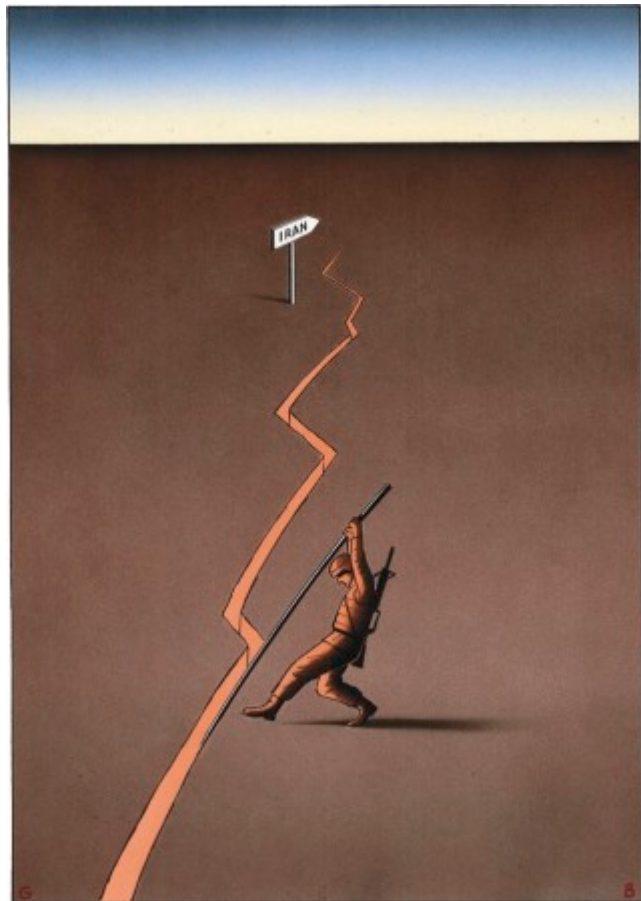
29. We will cut it short, in addressing *our enemies*. Because this text has no other object, under the economy and its “democracy,” behind the technological revolutions and “mass intellectuality” of the General Intellect, than to make heard the “rumble” of real wars now underway in all of their multiplicity. A multiplicity which is not to be made but *unmade and remade* to charge the “masses or flows,” which are doubly *subjects*, with new possibilities. On the side of relations of power as subject *to* war or/and on the side of strategic relationships that are capable of projecting them to the rank of subjects *of wars*, with “their mutations, their quanta of deterritorialization, their connections, their precipitations.” In short, it is a question of drawing the lessons from what seems to us like the failure of the thought of ’68 which we have inherited, even in our inability to think and construct a collective war machine equal to the civil war unleashed in the name of neoliberalism and the absolute primacy of the economy as exclusive policy of capital. Everything is taking place as if ’68 was unable *to think all the way*, not its defeat (there are, since the New Philosophers, professionals in the matter), but the warring order of reasons that broke its insistence through a *continuous destruction*, placed in the present infinitive of the struggles of “resistance.”

30. It is not a question, it is not at all a question of *stopping resistance*. It is a question of dropping a “theoricism” satisfied with a strategic discourse that is powerless in the face of what is happening. And what has happened to us. Because if the mechanisms of power are constitutive, to the detriment of strategic relationships and the wars taking place there, there can only be phenomena of “resistance” against them. With the success we all know. *Graecia docet*.

Seymour M. Hersh: The

Redirection

This article was originally published on March 5, 2007 in [The New Yorker](#).



GUY BILLOUT

A STRATEGIC SHIFT

In the past few months, as the situation in Iraq has deteriorated, the Bush Administration, in both its public diplomacy and its covert operations, has significantly shifted its Middle East strategy. The “redirection,” as some inside the White House have called the new strategy, has brought the United States closer to an open confrontation with Iran and, in parts of the region, propelled it into a widening sectarian conflict between Shiite and Sunni Muslims.

To undermine Iran, which is predominantly Shiite, the Bush Administration has decided, in effect, to reconfigure its priorities in the Middle East. In Lebanon, the Administration has coöperated with Saudi Arabia’s government, which is Sunni, in clandestine operations that are intended to weaken Hezbollah, the Shiite organization that is backed by Iran. The U.S. has also taken part in clandestine operations aimed at Iran and its ally Syria. A by-product

of these activities has been the bolstering of Sunni extremist groups that espouse a militant vision of Islam and are hostile to America and sympathetic to Al Qaeda.

One contradictory aspect of the new strategy is that, in Iraq, most of the insurgent violence directed at the American military has come from Sunni forces, and not from Shiites. But, from the Administration's perspective, the most profound—and unintended—strategic consequence of the Iraq war is the empowerment of Iran. Its President, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, has made defiant pronouncements about the destruction of Israel and his country's right to pursue its nuclear program, and last week its supreme religious leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, said on state television that "realities in the region show that the arrogant front, headed by the U.S. and its allies, will be the principal loser in the region."

After the revolution of 1979 brought a religious government to power, the United States broke with Iran and cultivated closer relations with the leaders of Sunni Arab states such as Jordan, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. That calculation became more complex after the September 11th attacks, especially with regard to the Saudis. Al Qaeda is Sunni, and many of its operatives came from extremist religious circles inside Saudi Arabia. Before the invasion of Iraq, in 2003, Administration officials, influenced by neoconservative ideologues, assumed that a Shiite government there could provide a pro-American balance to Sunni extremists, since Iraq's Shiite majority had been oppressed under Saddam Hussein. They ignored warnings from the intelligence community about the ties between Iraqi Shiite leaders and Iran, where some had lived in exile for years. Now, to the distress of the White House, Iran has forged a close relationship with the Shiite-dominated government of Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki.

The new American policy, in its broad outlines, has been discussed publicly. In testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in January, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said that there is "a new strategic alignment in the Middle East," separating "reformers" and "extremists"; she pointed to the Sunni states as centers of moderation, and said that Iran, Syria, and Hezbollah were "on the other side of that divide." (Syria's Sunni majority is dominated by the Alawi sect.) Iran and Syria, she said, "have made their choice and their choice is to destabilize."

Some of the core tactics of the redirection are not public, however. The clandestine operations have been kept secret, in some cases, by leaving the execution or the funding to the Saudis, or by finding other ways to work around the normal congressional appropriations process, current and former officials close to the Administration said.

A senior member of the House Appropriations Committee told me that he had heard about the new strategy, but felt that he and his colleagues had not been adequately briefed. "We haven't got any of this," he said. "We ask for anything going on, and they say there's nothing. And when we ask specific questions they say, 'We're going to get back to you.' It's so frustrating."

The key players behind the redirection are Vice-President Dick Cheney, the deputy national-security adviser Elliott Abrams, the departing Ambassador to Iraq (and nominee for United Nations Ambassador), Zalmay Khalilzad, and Prince Bandar bin Sultan, the Saudi national-security adviser. While Rice has been deeply involved in shaping the public policy, former and current officials said that the clandestine side has been guided by Cheney. (Cheney's office and the White House declined to comment for this story; the Pentagon did not respond to specific queries but said, "The United States is not planning to go to war with Iran.")

The policy shift has brought Saudi Arabia and Israel into a new strategic embrace, largely because both countries see Iran as an existential threat. They have been involved in direct talks, and the Saudis, who believe that greater stability in Israel and Palestine will give Iran less leverage in the region, have become more involved in Arab-Israeli negotiations.

The new strategy "is a major shift in American policy—it's a sea change," a U.S. government consultant with close ties to Israel said. The Sunni states "were petrified of a Shiite resurgence, and there was growing resentment with our gambling on the moderate Shiites in Iraq," he said. "We cannot reverse the Shiite gain in Iraq, but we can contain it."

"It seems there has been a debate inside the government over what's the biggest danger—Iran or Sunni radicals," Vali Nasr, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, who has written widely on Shiites, Iran, and Iraq, told me. "The Saudis and some in the Administration have been arguing that the biggest threat is Iran and the Sunni radicals are the lesser enemies. This is a victory for the Saudi line."

Martin Indyk, a senior State Department official in the Clinton Administration who also served as Ambassador to Israel, said that "the Middle East is heading into a serious Sunni-Shiite Cold War." Indyk, who is the director of the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution, added that, in his opinion, it was not clear whether the White House was fully aware of the strategic implications of its new policy. "The White House is not just doubling the bet in Iraq," he said. "It's doubling the bet across the region. This could get very complicated. Everything is upside down."

The Administration's new policy for containing Iran seems to complicate its strategy for winning the war in Iraq. Patrick Clawson, an expert on Iran and the deputy director for research at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, argued, however, that closer ties between the United States and moderate or even radical Sunnis could put "fear" into the government of Prime Minister Maliki and "make him worry that the Sunnis could actually win" the civil war there. Clawson said that this might give Maliki an incentive to cooperate with the United States in suppressing radical Shiite militias, such as Moqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army.

Even so, for the moment, the U.S. remains dependent on the cooperation of Iraqi Shiite leaders. The Mahdi Army may be openly hostile to American interests, but other Shiite militias are counted as U.S. allies. Both Moqtada al-Sadr and the White House back Maliki. A memorandum written late last year by Stephen Hadley, the national-security adviser, suggested that the Administration try to separate Maliki from his more radical Shiite allies by building his base among moderate Sunnis and Kurds, but so far the trends have been in the opposite direction. As the Iraqi Army continues to founder in its confrontations with insurgents, the power of the Shiite militias has steadily increased.

Flynt Leverett, a former Bush Administration National Security Council official, told me that “there is nothing coincidental or ironic” about the new strategy with regard to Iraq. “The Administration is trying to make a case that Iran is more dangerous and more provocative than the Sunni insurgents to American interests in Iraq, when—if you look at the actual casualty numbers—the punishment inflicted on America by the Sunnis is greater by an order of magnitude,” Leverett said. “This is all part of the campaign of provocative steps to increase the pressure on Iran. The idea is that at some point the Iranians will respond and then the Administration will have an open door to strike at them.”

President George W. Bush, in a speech on January 10th, partially spelled out this approach. “These two regimes”—Iran and Syria—“are allowing terrorists and insurgents to use their territory to move in and out of Iraq,” Bush said. “Iran is providing material support for attacks on American troops. We will disrupt the attacks on our forces. We’ll interrupt the flow of support from Iran and Syria. And we will seek out and destroy the networks providing advanced weaponry and training to our enemies in Iraq.”

In the following weeks, there was a wave of allegations from the Administration about Iranian involvement in the Iraq war. On February 11th, reporters were shown sophisticated explosive devices, captured in Iraq, that the Administration claimed had come from Iran. The Administration’s message was, in essence, that the bleak situation in Iraq was the result not of its own failures of planning and execution but of Iran’s interference.

The U.S. military also has arrested and interrogated hundreds of Iranians in Iraq. “The word went out last August for the military to snatch as many Iranians in Iraq as they can,” a former senior intelligence official said. “They had five hundred locked up at one time. We’re working these guys and getting information from them. The White House goal is to build a case that the Iranians have been fomenting the insurgency and they’ve been doing it all along—that Iran is, in fact, supporting the killing of Americans.” The Pentagon consultant confirmed that hundreds of Iranians have been captured by American forces in recent months. But he told me that that total includes many Iranian humanitarian and aid workers who “get scooped up and released in a short time,” after they have been interrogated.

"We are not planning for a war with Iran," Robert Gates, the new Defense Secretary, announced on February 2nd, and yet the atmosphere of confrontation has deepened. According to current and former American intelligence and military officials, secret operations in Lebanon have been accompanied by clandestine operations targeting Iran. American military and special-operations teams have escalated their activities in Iran to gather intelligence and, according to a Pentagon consultant on terrorism and the former senior intelligence official, have also crossed the border in pursuit of Iranian operatives from Iraq.

At Rice's Senate appearance in January, Democratic Senator Joseph Biden, of Delaware, pointedly asked her whether the U.S. planned to cross the Iranian or the Syrian border in the course of a pursuit. "Obviously, the President isn't going to rule anything out to protect our troops, but the plan is to take down these networks in Iraq," Rice said, adding, "I do think that everyone will understand that—the American people and I assume the Congress expect the President to do what is necessary to protect our forces."

The ambiguity of Rice's reply prompted a response from Nebraska Senator Chuck Hagel, a Republican, who has been critical of the Administration:

Some of us remember 1970, Madam Secretary. And that was Cambodia. And when our government lied to the American people and said, "We didn't cross the border going into Cambodia," in fact we did.

I happen to know something about that, as do some on this committee. So, Madam Secretary, when you set in motion the kind of policy that the President is talking about here, it's very, very dangerous.

The Administration's concern about Iran's role in Iraq is coupled with its long-standing alarm over Iran's nuclear program. On Fox News on January 14th, Cheney warned of the possibility, in a few years, "of a nuclear-armed Iran, astride the world's supply of oil, able to affect adversely the global economy, prepared to use terrorist organizations and/or their nuclear weapons to threaten their neighbors and others around the world." He also said, "If

you go and talk with the Gulf states or if you talk with the Saudis or if you talk with the Israelis or the Jordanians, the entire region is worried. . . . The threat Iran represents is growing.”

The Administration is now examining a wave of new intelligence on Iran’s weapons programs. Current and former American officials told me that the intelligence, which came from Israeli agents operating in Iran, includes a claim that Iran has developed a three-stage solid-fuelled intercontinental missile capable of delivering several small warheads—each with limited accuracy—inside Europe. The validity of this human intelligence is still being debated.

A similar argument about an imminent threat posed by weapons of mass destruction—and questions about the intelligence used to make that case—formed the prelude to the invasion of Iraq. Many in Congress have greeted the claims about Iran with wariness; in the Senate on February 14th, Hillary Clinton said, “We have all learned lessons from the conflict in Iraq, and we have to apply those lessons to any allegations that are being raised about Iran. Because, Mr. President, what we are hearing has too familiar a ring and we must be on guard that we never again make decisions on the basis of intelligence that turns out to be faulty.”

Still, the Pentagon is continuing intensive planning for a possible bombing attack on Iran, a process that began last year, at the direction of the President. In recent months, the former intelligence official told me, a special planning group has been established in the offices of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, charged with creating a contingency bombing plan for Iran that can be implemented, upon orders from the President, within twenty-four hours.

In the past month, I was told by an Air Force adviser on targeting and the Pentagon consultant on terrorism, the Iran planning group has been handed a new assignment: to identify targets in Iran that may be involved in supplying or aiding militants in Iraq. Previously, the focus had been on the destruction of Iran’s nuclear facilities and possible regime change.

Two carrier strike groups—the Eisenhower and the Stennis—are now in the Arabian Sea. One plan is for them to be relieved early in the spring, but there is worry within the military that they may be ordered to stay in the area after the new carriers arrive, according to several sources. (Among other concerns, war games have shown that the carriers could be vulnerable to swarming tactics involving large numbers of small boats, a technique that the Iranians have practiced in the past; carriers have limited maneuverability in the narrow Strait of Hormuz, off Iran’s southern coast.) The former senior intelligence official said that the current contingency plans allow for an attack order this spring. He added, however, that senior officers on the Joint Chiefs were counting on the White House’s not being “foolish

enough to do this in the face of Iraq, and the problems it would give the Republicans in 2008.”

PRINCE BANDAR’S GAME

The Administration’s effort to diminish Iranian authority in the Middle East has relied heavily on Saudi Arabia and on Prince Bandar, the Saudi national-security adviser. Bandar served as the Ambassador to the United States for twenty-two years, until 2005, and has maintained a friendship with President Bush and Vice-President Cheney. In his new post, he continues to meet privately with them. Senior White House officials have made several visits to Saudi Arabia recently, some of them not disclosed.

Last November, Cheney flew to Saudi Arabia for a surprise meeting with King Abdullah and Bandar. The *Times* reported that the King warned Cheney that Saudi Arabia would back its fellow-Sunnis in Iraq if the United States were to withdraw. A European intelligence official told me that the meeting also focussed on more general Saudi fears about “the rise of the Shiites.” In response, “The Saudis are starting to use their leverage—money.”

In a royal family rife with competition, Bandar has, over the years, built a power base that relies largely on his close relationship with the U.S., which is crucial to the Saudis. Bandar was succeeded as Ambassador by Prince Turki al-Faisal; Turki resigned after eighteen months and was replaced by Adel A. al-Jubeir, a bureaucrat who has worked with Bandar. A former Saudi diplomat told me that during Turki’s tenure he became aware of private meetings involving Bandar and senior White House officials, including Cheney and Abrams. “I assume Turki was not happy with that,” the Saudi said. But, he added, “I don’t think that Bandar is going off on his own.” Although Turki dislikes Bandar, the Saudi said, he shared his goal of challenging the spread of Shiite power in the Middle East.

The split between Shiites and Sunnis goes back to a bitter divide, in the seventh century, over who should succeed the Prophet Muhammad. Sunnis dominated the medieval caliphate and the Ottoman Empire, and Shiites, traditionally, have been regarded more as outsiders. Worldwide, ninety per cent of Muslims are Sunni, but Shiites are a majority in Iran, Iraq, and Bahrain, and are the largest Muslim group in Lebanon. Their concentration in a volatile, oil-rich region has led to concern in the West and among Sunnis about the emergence of a “Shiite crescent”—especially given Iran’s increased geopolitical weight.

“The Saudis still see the world through the days of the Ottoman Empire, when Sunni Muslims ruled the roost and the Shiites were the lowest class,” Frederic Hof, a retired military officer who is an expert on the Middle East, told me. If Bandar was seen as bringing about a shift in U.S. policy in favor of the Sunnis, he added, it would greatly enhance his standing within the royal family.

The Saudis are driven by their fear that Iran could tilt the balance of power not only in the region but within their own country. Saudi Arabia has a significant Shiite minority in its Eastern Province, a region of major oil fields; sectarian tensions are high in the province. The royal family believes that Iranian operatives, working with local Shiites, have been behind many terrorist attacks inside the kingdom, according to Vali Nasr. "Today, the only army capable of containing Iran"—the Iraqi Army—"has been destroyed by the United States. You're now dealing with an Iran that could be nuclear-capable and has a standing army of four hundred and fifty thousand soldiers." (Saudi Arabia has seventy-five thousand troops in its standing army.)

Nasr went on, "The Saudis have considerable financial means, and have deep relations with the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafis"—Sunni extremists who view Shiites as apostates. "The last time Iran was a threat, the Saudis were able to mobilize the worst kinds of Islamic radicals. Once you get them out of the box, you can't put them back."

The Saudi royal family has been, by turns, both a sponsor and a target of Sunni extremists, who object to the corruption and decadence among the family's myriad princes. The princes are gambling that they will not be overthrown as long as they continue to support religious schools and charities linked to the extremists. The Administration's new strategy is heavily dependent on this bargain.

Nasr compared the current situation to the period in which Al Qaeda first emerged. In the nineteen-eighties and the early nineties, the Saudi government offered to subsidize the covert American C.I.A. proxy war against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. Hundreds of young Saudis were sent into the border areas of Pakistan, where they set up religious schools, training bases, and recruiting facilities. Then, as now, many of the operatives who were paid with Saudi money were Salafis. Among them, of course, were Osama bin Laden and his associates, who founded Al Qaeda, in 1988.

This time, the U.S. government consultant told me, Bandar and other Saudis have assured the White House that "they will keep a very close eye on the religious fundamentalists. Their message to us was 'We've created this movement, and we can control it.' It's not that we don't want the Salafis to throw bombs; it's *who* they throw them at—Hezbollah, Moqtada al-Sadr, Iran, and at the Syrians, if they continue to work with Hezbollah and Iran."

The Saudi said that, in his country's view, it was taking a political risk by joining the U.S. in challenging Iran: Bandar is already seen in the Arab world as being too close to the Bush Administration. "We have two nightmares," the former diplomat told me. "For Iran to acquire the bomb and for the United States to attack Iran. I'd rather the Israelis bomb the Iranians, so we can blame them. If America does it, we will be blamed."

In the past year, the Saudis, the Israelis, and the Bush Administration have developed a series of informal understandings about their new strategic direction. At least four main elements were involved, the U.S. government consultant told me. First, Israel would be assured that its security was paramount and that Washington and Saudi Arabia and other Sunni states shared its concern about Iran.

Second, the Saudis would urge Hamas, the Islamist Palestinian party that has received support from Iran, to curtail its anti-Israeli aggression and to begin serious talks about sharing leadership with Fatah, the more secular Palestinian group. (In February, the Saudis brokered a deal at Mecca between the two factions. However, Israel and the U.S. have expressed dissatisfaction with the terms.)

The third component was that the Bush Administration would work directly with Sunni nations to counteract Shiite ascendance in the region.

Fourth, the Saudi government, with Washington's approval, would provide funds and logistical aid to weaken the government of President Bashir Assad, of Syria. The Israelis believe that putting such pressure on the Assad government will make it more conciliatory and open to negotiations. Syria is a major conduit of arms to Hezbollah. The Saudi government is also at odds with the Syrians over the assassination of Rafik Hariri, the former Lebanese Prime Minister, in Beirut in 2005, for which it believes the Assad government was responsible. Hariri, a billionaire Sunni, was closely associated with the Saudi regime and with Prince Bandar. (A U.N. inquiry strongly suggested that the Syrians were involved, but offered no direct evidence; there are plans for another investigation, by an international tribunal.)

Patrick Clawson, of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, depicted the Saudis' coöperation with the White House as a significant breakthrough. "The Saudis understand that if they want the Administration to make a more generous political offer to the Palestinians they have to persuade the Arab states to make a more generous offer to the Israelis," Clawson told me. The new diplomatic approach, he added, "shows a real degree of effort and sophistication as well as a deftness of touch not always associated with this Administration. Who's running the greater risk—we or the Saudis? At a time when America's standing in the Middle East is extremely low, the Saudis are actually embracing us. We should count our blessings."

The Pentagon consultant had a different view. He said that the Administration had turned to Bandar as a "fallback," because it had realized that the failing war in Iraq could leave the Middle East "up for grabs."

JIHADIS IN LEBANON

The focus of the U.S.-Saudi relationship, after Iran, is Lebanon, where the Saudis have been deeply involved in efforts by the Administration to support the Lebanese government. Prime Minister Fouad Siniora is struggling to stay in power against a persistent opposition led by Hezbollah, the Shiite organization, and its leader, Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah. Hezbollah has an extensive infrastructure, an estimated two to three thousand active fighters, and thousands of additional members.

Hezbollah has been on the State Department's terrorist list since 1997. The organization has been implicated in the 1983 bombing of a Marine barracks in Beirut that killed two hundred and forty-one military men. It has also been accused of complicity in the kidnapping of Americans, including the C.I.A. station chief in Lebanon, who died in captivity, and a Marine colonel serving on a U.N. peacekeeping mission, who was killed. (Nasrallah has denied that the group was involved in these incidents.) Nasrallah is seen by many as a staunch terrorist, who has said that he regards Israel as a state that has no right to exist. Many in the Arab world, however, especially Shiites, view him as a resistance leader who withstood Israel in last summer's thirty-three-day war, and Siniora as a weak politician who relies on America's support but was unable to persuade President Bush to call for an end to the Israeli bombing of Lebanon. (Photographs of Siniora kissing Condoleezza Rice on the cheek when she visited during the war were prominently displayed during street protests in Beirut.)

The Bush Administration has publicly pledged the Siniora government a billion dollars in aid since last summer. A donors' conference in Paris, in January, which the U.S. helped organize, yielded pledges of almost eight billion more, including a promise of more than a billion from the Saudis. The American pledge includes more than two hundred million dollars in military aid, and forty million dollars for internal security.

The United States has also given clandestine support to the Siniora government, according to the former senior intelligence official and the U.S. government consultant. "We are in a program to enhance the Sunni capability to resist Shiite influence, and we're spreading the money around as much as we can," the former senior intelligence official said. The problem was that such money "always gets in more pockets than you think it will," he said. "In this process, we're financing a lot of bad guys with some serious potential unintended consequences. We don't have the ability to determine and get pay vouchers signed by the people we like and avoid the people we don't like. It's a very high-risk venture."

American, European, and Arab officials I spoke to told me that the Siniora government and its allies had allowed some aid to end up in the hands of emerging Sunni radical groups in northern Lebanon, the Bekaa Valley, and around Palestinian refugee camps in the south. These groups, though small, are seen as a buffer to Hezbollah; at the same time, their ideological ties are with Al Qaeda.

During a conversation with me, the former Saudi diplomat accused Nasrallah of attempting “to hijack the state,” but he also objected to the Lebanese and Saudi sponsorship of Sunni jihadists in Lebanon. “Salafis are sick and hateful, and I’m very much against the idea of flirting with them,” he said. “They hate the Shiites, but they hate Americans more. If you try to outsmart them, they will outsmart us. It will be ugly.”

Alastair Crooke, who spent nearly thirty years in MI6, the British intelligence service, and now works for Conflicts Forum, a think tank in Beirut, told me, “The Lebanese government is opening space for these people to come in. It could be very dangerous.” Crooke said that one Sunni extremist group, Fatah al-Islam, had splintered from its pro-Syrian parent group, Fatah al-Intifada, in the Nahr al-Bared refugee camp, in northern Lebanon. Its membership at the time was less than two hundred. “I was told that within twenty-four hours they were being offered weapons and money by people presenting themselves as representatives of the Lebanese government’s interests—presumably to take on Hezbollah,” Crooke said.

The largest of the groups, Asbat al-Ansar, is situated in the Ain al-Hilweh Palestinian refugee camp. Asbat al-Ansar has received arms and supplies from Lebanese internal-security forces and militias associated with the Siniora government.

In 2005, according to a report by the U.S.-based International Crisis Group, Saad Hariri, the Sunni majority leader of the Lebanese parliament and the son of the slain former Prime Minister—Saad inherited more than four billion dollars after his father’s assassination—paid forty-eight thousand dollars in bail for four members of an Islamic militant group from Dinniyeh. The men had been arrested while trying to establish an Islamic mini-state in northern Lebanon. The Crisis Group noted that many of the militants “had trained in al-Qaeda camps in Afghanistan.”

According to the Crisis Group report, Saad Hariri later used his parliamentary majority to obtain amnesty for twenty-two of the Dinniyeh Islamists, as well as for seven militants suspected of plotting to bomb the Italian and Ukrainian embassies in Beirut, the previous year. (He also arranged a pardon for Samir Geagea, a Maronite Christian militia leader, who had been convicted of four political murders, including the assassination, in 1987, of Prime Minister Rashid Karami.) Hariri described his actions to reporters as humanitarian.

In an interview in Beirut, a senior official in the Siniora government acknowledged that there were Sunni jihadists operating inside Lebanon. “We have a liberal attitude that allows Al Qaeda types to have a presence here,” he said. He related this to concerns that Iran or Syria might decide to turn Lebanon into a “theatre of conflict.”

The official said that his government was in a no-win situation. Without a political settlement with Hezbollah, he said, Lebanon could “slide into a conflict,” in which Hezbollah

fought openly with Sunni forces, with potentially horrific consequences. But if Hezbollah agreed to a settlement yet still maintained a separate army, allied with Iran and Syria, “Lebanon could become a target. In both cases, we become a target.”

The Bush Administration has portrayed its support of the Siniora government as an example of the President’s belief in democracy, and his desire to prevent other powers from interfering in Lebanon. When Hezbollah led street demonstrations in Beirut in December, John Bolton, who was then the U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., called them “part of the Iran-Syria-inspired coup.”

Leslie H. Gelb, a past president of the Council on Foreign Relations, said that the Administration’s policy was less pro democracy than “pro American national security. The fact is that it would be terribly dangerous if Hezbollah ran Lebanon.” The fall of the Siniora government would be seen, Gelb said, “as a signal in the Middle East of the decline of the United States and the ascendancy of the terrorism threat. And so any change in the distribution of political power in Lebanon has to be opposed by the United States—and we’re justified in helping any non-Shiite parties resist that change. We should say this publicly, instead of talking about democracy.”

Martin Indyk, of the Saban Center, said, however, that the United States “does not have enough pull to stop the moderates in Lebanon from dealing with the extremists.” He added, “The President sees the region as divided between moderates and extremists, but our regional friends see it as divided between Sunnis and Shia. The Sunnis that we view as extremists are regarded by our Sunni allies simply as Sunnis.”

In January, after an outburst of street violence in Beirut involving supporters of both the Siniora government and Hezbollah, Prince Bandar flew to Tehran to discuss the political impasse in Lebanon and to meet with Ali Larijani, the Iranians’ negotiator on nuclear issues. According to a Middle Eastern ambassador, Bandar’s mission—which the ambassador said was endorsed by the White House—also aimed “to create problems between the Iranians and Syria.” There had been tensions between the two countries about Syrian talks with Israel, and the Saudis’ goal was to encourage a breach. However, the ambassador said, “It did not work. Syria and Iran are not going to betray each other. Bandar’s approach is very unlikely to succeed.”

Walid Jumblatt, who is the leader of the Druze minority in Lebanon and a strong Siniora supporter, has attacked Nasrallah as an agent of Syria, and has repeatedly told foreign journalists that Hezbollah is under the direct control of the religious leadership in Iran. In a conversation with me last December, he depicted Bashar Assad, the Syrian President, as a “serial killer.” Nasrallah, he said, was “morally guilty” of the assassination of Rafik Hariri and the murder, last November, of Pierre Gemayel, a member of the Siniora Cabinet,

because of his support for the Syrians.

Jumblatt then told me that he had met with Vice-President Cheney in Washington last fall to discuss, among other issues, the possibility of undermining Assad. He and his colleagues advised Cheney that, if the United States does try to move against Syria, members of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood would be “the ones to talk to,” Jumblatt said.

The Syrian Muslim Brotherhood, a branch of a radical Sunni movement founded in Egypt in 1928, engaged in more than a decade of violent opposition to the regime of Hafez Assad, Bashir’s father. In 1982, the Brotherhood took control of the city of Hama; Assad bombarded the city for a week, killing between six thousand and twenty thousand people. Membership in the Brotherhood is punishable by death in Syria. The Brotherhood is also an avowed enemy of the U.S. and of Israel. Nevertheless, Jumblatt said, “We told Cheney that the basic link between Iran and Lebanon is Syria—and to weaken Iran you need to open the door to effective Syrian opposition.”

There is evidence that the Administration’s redirection strategy has already benefitted the Brotherhood. The Syrian National Salvation Front is a coalition of opposition groups whose principal members are a faction led by Abdul Halim Khaddam, a former Syrian Vice-President who defected in 2005, and the Brotherhood. A former high-ranking C.I.A. officer told me, “The Americans have provided both political and financial support. The Saudis are taking the lead with financial support, but there is American involvement.” He said that Khaddam, who now lives in Paris, was getting money from Saudi Arabia, with the knowledge of the White House. (In 2005, a delegation of the Front’s members met with officials from the National Security Council, according to press reports.) A former White House official told me that the Saudis had provided members of the Front with travel documents.

Jumblatt said he understood that the issue was a sensitive one for the White House. “I told Cheney that some people in the Arab world, mainly the Egyptians”—whose moderate Sunni leadership has been fighting the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood for decades—“won’t like it if the United States helps the Brotherhood. But if you don’t take on Syria we will be face to face in Lebanon with Hezbollah in a long fight, and one we might not win.”

THE SHEIKH

On a warm, clear night early last December, in a bombed-out suburb a few miles south of downtown Beirut, I got a preview of how the Administration’s new strategy might play out in Lebanon. Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, the Hezbollah leader, who has been in hiding, had agreed to an interview. Security arrangements for the meeting were secretive and elaborate. I was driven, in the back seat of a darkened car, to a damaged underground garage somewhere in Beirut, searched with a handheld scanner, placed in a second car to

be driven to yet another bomb-scarred underground garage, and transferred again. Last summer, it was reported that Israel was trying to kill Nasrallah, but the extraordinary precautions were not due only to that threat. Nasrallah's aides told me that they believe he is a prime target of fellow-Arabs, primarily Jordanian intelligence operatives, as well as Sunni jihadists who they believe are affiliated with Al Qaeda. (The government consultant and a retired four-star general said that Jordanian intelligence, with support from the U.S. and Israel, had been trying to infiltrate Shiite groups, to work against Hezbollah. Jordan's King Abdullah II has warned that a Shiite government in Iraq that was close to Iran would lead to the emergence of a Shiite crescent.) This is something of an ironic turn: Nasrallah's battle with Israel last summer turned him—a Shiite—into the most popular and influential figure among Sunnis and Shiites throughout the region. In recent months, however, he has increasingly been seen by many Sunnis not as a symbol of Arab unity but as a participant in a sectarian war.

Nasrallah, dressed, as usual, in religious garb, was waiting for me in an unremarkable apartment. One of his advisers said that he was not likely to remain there overnight; he has been on the move since his decision, last July, to order the kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers in a cross-border raid set off the thirty-three-day war. Nasrallah has since said publicly—and repeated to me—that he misjudged the Israeli response. "We just wanted to capture prisoners for exchange purposes," he told me. "We never wanted to drag the region into war."

Nasrallah accused the Bush Administration of working with Israel to deliberately instigate *fitna*, an Arabic word that is used to mean "insurrection and fragmentation within Islam." "In my opinion, there is a huge campaign through the media throughout the world to put each side up against the other," he said. "I believe that all this is being run by American and Israeli intelligence." (He did not provide any specific evidence for this.) He said that the U.S. war in Iraq had increased sectarian tensions, but argued that Hezbollah had tried to prevent them from spreading into Lebanon. (Sunni-Shiite confrontations increased, along with violence, in the weeks after we talked.)

Nasrallah said he believed that President Bush's goal was "the drawing of a new map for the region. They want the partition of Iraq. Iraq is not on the edge of a civil war—there is a civil war. There is ethnic and sectarian cleansing. The daily killing and displacement which is taking place in Iraq aims at achieving three Iraqi parts, which will be sectarian and ethnically pure as a prelude to the partition of Iraq. Within one or two years at the most, there will be total Sunni areas, total Shiite areas, and total Kurdish areas. Even in Baghdad, there is a fear that it might be divided into two areas, one Sunni and one Shiite."

He went on, "I can say that President Bush is lying when he says he does not want Iraq to be partitioned. All the facts occurring now on the ground make you swear he is dragging Iraq

to partition. And a day will come when he will say, 'I cannot do anything, since the Iraqis want the partition of their country and I honor the wishes of the people of Iraq.' "

Nasrallah said he believed that America also wanted to bring about the partition of Lebanon and of Syria. In Syria, he said, the result would be to push the country "into chaos and internal battles like in Iraq." In Lebanon, "There will be a Sunni state, an Alawi state, a Christian state, and a Druze state." But, he said, "I do not know if there will be a Shiite state." Nasrallah told me that he suspected that one aim of the Israeli bombing of Lebanon last summer was "the destruction of Shiite areas and the displacement of Shiites from Lebanon. The idea was to have the Shiites of Lebanon and Syria flee to southern Iraq," which is dominated by Shiites. "I am not sure, but I smell this," he told me.

Partition would leave Israel surrounded by "small tranquil states," he said. "I can assure you that the Saudi kingdom will also be divided, and the issue will reach to North African states. There will be small ethnic and confessional states," he said. "In other words, Israel will be the most important and the strongest state in a region that has been partitioned into ethnic and confessional states that are in agreement with each other. This is the new Middle East."

In fact, the Bush Administration has adamantly resisted talk of partitioning Iraq, and its public stances suggest that the White House sees a future Lebanon that is intact, with a weak, disarmed Hezbollah playing, at most, a minor political role. There is also no evidence to support Nasrallah's belief that the Israelis were seeking to drive the Shiites into southern Iraq. Nevertheless, Nasrallah's vision of a larger sectarian conflict in which the United States is implicated suggests a possible consequence of the White House's new strategy.

In the interview, Nasrallah made mollifying gestures and promises that would likely be met with skepticism by his opponents. "If the United States says that discussions with the likes of us can be useful and influential in determining American policy in the region, we have no objection to talks or meetings," he said. "But, if their aim through this meeting is to impose their policy on us, it will be a waste of time." He said that the Hezbollah militia, unless attacked, would operate only within the borders of Lebanon, and pledged to disarm it when the Lebanese Army was able to stand up. Nasrallah said that he had no interest in initiating another war with Israel. However, he added that he was anticipating, and preparing for, another Israeli attack, later this year.

Nasrallah further insisted that the street demonstrations in Beirut would continue until the Siniora government fell or met his coalition's political demands. "Practically speaking, this government cannot rule," he told me. "It might issue orders, but the majority of the Lebanese people will not abide and will not recognize the legitimacy of this government. Siniora remains in office because of international support, but this does not mean that Siniora can rule Lebanon."

President Bush's repeated praise of the Siniora government, Nasrallah said, "is the best service to the Lebanese opposition he can give, because it weakens their position vis-à-vis the Lebanese people and the Arab and Islamic populations. They are betting on us getting tired. We did not get tired during the war, so how could we get tired in a demonstration?"

There is sharp division inside and outside the Bush Administration about how best to deal with Nasrallah, and whether he could, in fact, be a partner in a political settlement. The outgoing director of National Intelligence, John Negroponte, in a farewell briefing to the Senate Intelligence Committee, in January, said that Hezbollah "lies at the center of Iran's terrorist strategy. . . . It could decide to conduct attacks against U.S. interests in the event it feels its survival or that of Iran is threatened. . . . Lebanese Hezbollah sees itself as Tehran's partner."

In 2002, Richard Armitage, then the Deputy Secretary of State, called Hezbollah "the A-team" of terrorists. In a recent interview, however, Armitage acknowledged that the issue has become somewhat more complicated. Nasrallah, Armitage told me, has emerged as "a political force of some note, with a political role to play inside Lebanon if he chooses to do so." In terms of public relations and political gamesmanship, Armitage said, Nasrallah "is the smartest man in the Middle East." But, he added, Nasrallah "has got to make it clear that he wants to play an appropriate role as the loyal opposition. For me, there's still a blood debt to pay"—a reference to the murdered colonel and the Marine barracks bombing.

Robert Baer, a former longtime C.I.A. agent in Lebanon, has been a severe critic of Hezbollah and has warned of its links to Iranian-sponsored terrorism. But now, he told me, "we've got Sunni Arabs preparing for cataclysmic conflict, and we will need somebody to protect the Christians in Lebanon. It used to be the French and the United States who would do it, and now it's going to be Nasrallah and the Shiites.

"The most important story in the Middle East is the growth of Nasrallah from a street guy to a leader—from a terrorist to a statesman," Baer added. "The dog that didn't bark this summer"—during the war with Israel—"is Shiite terrorism." Baer was referring to fears that Nasrallah, in addition to firing rockets into Israel and kidnapping its soldiers, might set in motion a wave of terror attacks on Israeli and American targets around the world. "He could have pulled the trigger, but he did not," Baer said.

Most members of the intelligence and diplomatic communities acknowledge Hezbollah's ongoing ties to Iran. But there is disagreement about the extent to which Nasrallah would put aside Hezbollah's interests in favor of Iran's. A former C.I.A. officer who also served in Lebanon called Nasrallah "a Lebanese phenomenon," adding, "Yes, he's aided by Iran and Syria, but Hezbollah's gone beyond that." He told me that there was a period in the late eighties and early nineties when the C.I.A. station in Beirut was able to clandestinely

monitor Nasrallah's conversations. He described Nasrallah as "a gang leader who was able to make deals with the other gangs. He had contacts with everybody."

TELLING CONGRESS

The Bush Administration's reliance on clandestine operations that have not been reported to Congress and its dealings with intermediaries with questionable agendas have recalled, for some in Washington, an earlier chapter in history. Two decades ago, the Reagan Administration attempted to fund the Nicaraguan contras illegally, with the help of secret arms sales to Iran. Saudi money was involved in what became known as the Iran-Contra scandal, and a few of the players back then—notably Prince Bandar and Elliott Abrams—are involved in today's dealings.

Iran-Contra was the subject of an informal "lessons learned" discussion two years ago among veterans of the scandal. Abrams led the discussion. One conclusion was that even though the program was eventually exposed, it had been possible to execute it without telling Congress. As to what the experience taught them, in terms of future covert operations, the participants found: "One, you can't trust our friends. Two, the C.I.A. has got to be totally out of it. Three, you can't trust the uniformed military, and four, it's got to be run out of the Vice-President's office"—a reference to Cheney's role, the former senior intelligence official said.

I was subsequently told by the two government consultants and the former senior intelligence official that the echoes of Iran-Contra were a factor in Negroponte's decision to resign from the National Intelligence directorship and accept a sub-Cabinet position of Deputy Secretary of State. (Negroponte declined to comment.)

The former senior intelligence official also told me that Negroponte did not want a repeat of his experience in the Reagan Administration, when he served as Ambassador to Honduras. "Negroponte said, 'No way. I'm not going down that road again, with the N.S.C. running operations off the books, with no finding.' " (In the case of covert C.I.A. operations, the President must issue a written finding and inform Congress.) Negroponte stayed on as Deputy Secretary of State, he added, because "he believes he can influence the government in a positive way."

The government consultant said that Negroponte shared the White House's policy goals but "wanted to do it by the book." The Pentagon consultant also told me that "there was a sense at the senior-ranks level that he wasn't fully on board with the more adventurous clandestine initiatives." It was also true, he said, that Negroponte "had problems with this Rube Goldberg policy contraption for fixing the Middle East."

The Pentagon consultant added that one difficulty, in terms of oversight, was accounting for covert funds. "There are many, many pots of black money, scattered in many places and used all over the world on a variety of missions," he said. The budgetary chaos in Iraq, where billions of dollars are unaccounted for, has made it a vehicle for such transactions, according to the former senior intelligence official and the retired four-star general.

"This goes back to Iran-Contra," a former National Security Council aide told me. "And much of what they're doing is to keep the agency out of it." He said that Congress was not being briefed on the full extent of the U.S.-Saudi operations. And, he said, "The C.I.A. is asking, 'What's going on?' They're concerned, because they think it's amateur hour."

The issue of oversight is beginning to get more attention from Congress. Last November, the Congressional Research Service issued a report for Congress on what it depicted as the Administration's blurring of the line between C.I.A. activities and strictly military ones, which do not have the same reporting requirements. And the Senate Intelligence Committee, headed by Senator Jay Rockefeller, has scheduled a hearing for March 8th on Defense Department intelligence activities.

Senator Ron Wyden, of Oregon, a Democrat who is a member of the Intelligence Committee, told me, "The Bush Administration has frequently failed to meet its legal obligation to keep the Intelligence Committee fully and currently informed. Time and again, the answer has been 'Trust us.' " Wyden said, "It is hard for me to trust the Administration."