

**HOW IS IT
TO BE DONE?**

Don't know what I want,
but I know how to get it.

– Sex Pistols, *Anarchy in the UK*

L.

TWENTY YEARS. Twenty years of *counter-revolution*.
Of *preventive* counter-revolution.

In Italy.

And elsewhere.

Twenty years of a sleep studded with fences, haunted by
security guards. A sleep of *bodies*,
imposed by curfew.

Twenty years. The past does not pass. Because the war
continues. Ramifies. Extends.

In a global reticulation of local apparatuses. In a newfound
calibration of subjectivities.

Within a new superficial peace.

An *armed* peace

crafted to cover the uncoiling of an imperceptible civil war.

Twenty years ago, there was
punk, the Movement of '77, the "area" of Autonomy, the
metropolitan Indians and diffuse guerrilla warfare.

All at once there sprung up,

as if issuing from some underground region of civilization,
an entire counter-world of subjectivities

that no longer wanted to consume, that no longer wanted to
produce,

that no longer even wanted to be subjectivities.

The revolution was molecular, and so was the counter-
revolution.

On the offensive, THEY set up,
then left in place,

an entire complex machine to neutralize all that carries intense
charge. A machine for defusing all that *might* explode.

All the individuals that pose a risk,
the intractable bodies,
the autonomous human aggregations.
Then came twenty years of foolishness, vulgarity, isolation.
and desolation.
How is it to be done?

Get back up. *Pick your head up.* By choice or by necessity. No
matter, really, from now on.
Look each other in the eyes and say we are starting over. Let
everyone know it, as quickly as possible.
We are starting over.
We are done with passive resistance, inner exile. conflict
through subtraction, survival. We are starting over. In twenty
years, we have had time to see. We have understood.
Democracy for all, the "anti-terrorist" struggle, the State
massacres, the capitalist restructuring and its Great Work of
social purging,
by selection,
by precariousness,
by normalization,
by "modernization."
We have seen, we have understood. The means and the ends.
The future held in store for us. The one we have been denied.
The state of exception. The law that puts the police, civil
servants, public officials above the law. The growing
judicialization, psychiatrization, the medicalization of all that
is out of bounds. Of all that *flees*.
We have seen. We have understood. The means and the ends.
When power establishes its own legitimacy in real time, when
its violence becomes preventive
and its right is a "right to intervene,"
then it is now useless to be right. To be right *against it*.

One must be stronger, or more clever.

This is also why
we are starting over.

To start over is never to begin *something* again. Nor
to pick up things where they had been left off. What one begins
again is always *something else*. Is always unprecedented.
Because it is not the past that drives us, but precisely what in it
has not
happened.

And because it is also *ourselves*, then, that we start over with.
To begin again means: to exit the suspension. To reestablish
contact between our becomings.
To start out from,
once again,
wherever we are, now.

For instance, there are some rackets
that THEY will not pull on us anymore.

The "society" racket. Transform it. Destroy it.
Make it better.

The social pact racket. That some would break
and others pretend to "restore" it.

These rackets, THEY will not pull them on us anymore.

You have to be a militant element of the planetary petty
bourgeoisie,
a *citizen* really

Not to see that it, society, no longer
exists.

That it has imploded. That it is nothing more than
an argument for the terror of those who claim to re/present it.

This society that has turned up missing.

All that is social has become foreign to us.

We consider ourselves absolutely unbound to any obligation,
to any prerogative, to any belonging that is *social*.

"Society,"

is the name the Irreparable has often received
from those who also wanted to turn it into
the Unassumable.

He who refuses this lure will have to take
a step to the side.

To perform
a slight shift away
from the logic common
to Empire and to its contestation,
that of *mobilization*,

A step to the side of their common temporality,
that of *urgency*.

Starting over means: inhabiting this gap. To take on the capitalist schizophrenia as a kind of growing capacity for *desubjectivization*.

To desert *while keeping arms*.

To flee, imperceptibly:

Starting over means: to rally social secession, opacity, to enter

into demobilization,

Ripping off, from this or that imperial network of production-consumption, the means to live and fight in order, at the chosen moment, to scuttle it.

We speak of a new war,

a new war of *partisans*. With neither front nor uniform, with neither army nor decisive battle.

A war whose focii concentrate themselves away from the commercial flows, while still remaining plugged in to them.¹

We speak of a completely latent war. That *has time*.

Of a war of *position*.

That is waged here where we are.

In the name of no one.

In the name of our own existence, which has no name.

¹ Alternatively translated "A guerrilla whose *focos* concentrate themselves..." by Tiqqunista

Perform this slight shift.

No longer fear our time.

"Not to fear one's time is a question of space."

In a squat. In an orgy. In a riot. In a train or an occupied village. In search of, amid unknowns, a free party that is unfindable. I experience this slight shift. The experience

of my desubjectivization. I *become*

a whatever singularity. Some *play* opens up between my presence and the whole apparatus of qualities that are ordinarily attached to me.

In the eyes of a being who, being present, wants to assess me for what I am, I savor the disappointment, his disappointment in seeing me become so *common*, so perfectly *accessible*. In the gestures of another, it is an unexpected complicity.

All that isolates me as a *subject*, as a body endowed with a public configuration of attributes, I feel it founder. Bodies brush up against each other at their edges. At their edges, are indistinct. Neighborhood after neighborhood, the whatever lays waste to equivalence. And I reach a new nakedness, a nakedness that is not my own, as if clothed in love.

Does one ever escape alone from the prison of the Self?

In a squat. In an orgy. In a riot. In a train or an occupied village. We meet again.

We meet again

as whatever singularities. That is to say not on the basis of a common belonging, but of a *common presence*.

Thus is
our *need for communism*. The need for nocturnal spaces, where
we can
meet up
beyond
our predicates.

Beyond the *tyranny* of recognition. Which imposes re/cognition
as the *final* distance between bodies.

As an unavoidable separation.

Everything THEY – fiancé, family, environment,
business, the State, public opinion – recognize in
me, THEY use to seize hold of me.

By constantly reminding me of what I am, of my
qualities, THEY would like to abstract me from each situation.
In every circumstance, THEY would like
to extort from me a fidelity to myself which is a
fidelity to my predicates.

THEY expect that I should act as a man, as an
employee, as an unemployed person, as a mother,
as an activist, or as a philosopher.

THEY want to contain within the bounds of an
identity the unpredictable flow of my becomings.

THEY want to convert me to the religion of a coherence that
THEY chose for me.

The more I am *recognized*, the more my gestures
are hindered, hindered *from within*. And here I am
caught in the ultra-tight meshwork of the new
power. In the impalpable snares of the new police:
THE IMPERIAL POLICE OF QUALITIES.

There is a whole network of apparatuses that I slip into
in order to "integrate" myself, and which
incorporate in me these qualities.

A whole little system of filing, identification, and mutual
policing.

A whole diffuse prescription of absence.

A whole machinery of comport/mental control, aiming toward
panopticism, toward transparent
privatization, toward atomization.

And in which I struggle.

I need to become anonymous. In order to be present.

The more I am anonymous, the more I am present.

I need zones of indistinction
in order to reach the Common.

To no longer *recognize* myself in my name. To no longer hear in
my name anything but the voice that calls it.

To give consistency to the *how* of beings, not what they are, but
how they are what they are. Their form-of-life.

I need zones of opacity where attributes,
even criminal, even brilliant,
no longer separate bodies.

Become whatever. Becoming a whatever *singularity*
is not given.

Always possible, but never given.

There is a *politics* of whatever singularity.

Which consists in tearing back from Empire
the conditions and the means,
even interstitial,

to experience yourself as such.

This is a politics, because it presupposes a capacity
for confrontation,
and because a new human aggregation
corresponds to it.

Politics of whatever singularity: freeing up these spaces where an action is no longer assignable to any given body.

Where bodies rediscover their aptitude for *gesture*, something that the canny distribution of metropolitan apparatuses—computers, automobiles, schools, cameras, mobile phones, sports arenas, hospitals, televisions, cinemas, etc.—had stolen from them.

By recognizing them.

By immobilizing them.

By letting them spin against nothing.

By making the head exist separately from the body. Politics of whatever singularity.

A becoming-whatever is more revolutionary than any kind of being-whatever.

Liberating spaces liberates us a hundred times more than any kind of "liberated space."

More than putting a power into action, I enjoy the circulation of my potentiality.

The politics of whatever singularity lies in the offensive. In the circumstances, the moments, and the places where we tear away

the circumstances, the moments, and the places

for such an anonymity,

for a momentary halt in a state of simplicity,

the chance to extract from all our forms *the pure adequation to presence*,

the chance to be, at last,

here.

II.

HOW IS IT TO BE DONE? Not *what is to be done?*

How to? A question of means.

Not a question of goals, or *objectives*,

of what there is to do, strategically, in the absolute.

A question of what one *can* do, tactically; in a situation, and of the *acquisition* of this power.

How is it to be done? How to desert? How does it work? How to conjugate my wounds with communism?

How to stay at war without losing our tenderness?

The question is technical. Not a problem. Problems are profitable.

The experts live off them.

A question.

Technical. Which requires in turn the question of *transmission* techniques for those techniques.

How is it to be done? The result always belies the goal. Because to set a goal

is still a means,

another means.

What Is to Be Done? Babeuf, Chernyshevsky, Lenin. Classical virility demands an analgesic, a mirage, something. A *means* to ignore oneself a bit more.

As a presence.

As a form-of-life. As a being in a *situation*, endowed with inclinations.

Determined inclinations.

What is to be done? Voluntarism as the ultimate nihilism.

As the nihilism appropriate
to classical virility.

What is to be done? The answer is simple: submit
once again to the logic of mobilization, to the
temporality of urgency. Under pretext of rebellion.
Set down ends, words. Tend toward their accomplishment.
Toward the accomplishment of
words. In the meantime, put off existing. Bracket
yourself. Dwell in the exception of self. Separated
from time. That passes. That does not pass. That stops. Until...
Until the next. End.

What is to be done? In other words: useless to live. Everything
you have not lived, History will give back to you.
What is to be done? It is the forgetting of the self
projected onto the world.
As a forgetting of the world.

How is it to be done? The question is *how*. Not *what*
a being, a gesture, a thing *is*, but *how* it is what it is.
How its predicates relate to it.
And it to them.

Let it be. Leave the gap between the subject and its predicates.
The *abyss* of presence.

A man is not "a man." "White horse" is not "horse."

A question of *how*. Attention to the *how*. Attention
to the way a woman is, and is not,

a woman—it takes apparatuses to make "a woman" of a
sexually female being, or "a Black" of a man with black skin.

Attention to *ethical difference*. To the *ethical* element.

To the irreducibilities that traverse it. What
happens between bodies during an occupation
is more interesting than the occupation itself.

How is it to be done? means that military confrontation with Empire must be subordinated to the intensification of relations within our party. That the political is only a certain degree of intensity *amidst* the ethical element. That revolutionary war should no longer be confused with its representation: the raw moment of combat.

Question of *how*. Become attentive to the taking-place of things, of beings. To their event. To the obstinate and silent salience of their own temporality beneath the planetary flattening of all temporalities by the time of urgency. The "*What is to be done?*" as programmatic ignorance of all that. As inaugural formula for frantically falling out of love.

The "*What is to be done?*" returns. For some years now. Since the middle of the nineties, not just since Seattle.

A revival of *critique* pretends to confront Empire with slogans, recipes from the sixties. Except that this time, they're faking it. Innocence, indignation, good conscience, and the need for society are simulated. The old gamut of social-democratic affects are back in circulation. *Christian* affects. And once again, there are demonstrations. Desire-killing demonstrations. Where nothing happens.

That only demonstrate
a collective absence.

Forever.

For those nostalgic for Woodstock, weed, May '68 and militancy, there are counter-summits. THEY have rebuilt the facades, minus the possible.

This is what the "*What Is to Be Done?*" demands today: go to the ends of the earth to contest the global commodity

only to come back, after a long bath of unanimity and mediatized separation, and submit to the local commodity.

Once back, there's a photo in the paper ... Everyone alone together! ... Once upon a time ...

These young people! ...

Too bad for the few living bodies that strayed there, searching in vain for a space for their desire.

They come back a little more bored.

A little more empty. Worn out.

From counter-summit to counter-summit, they will figure it out. Or not.

Empire can't be faulted for its management. You can't *critique* Empire.

You *oppose* its forces. Wherever you are.

Giving your opinion on some alternative, going wherever ONE calls us — this no longer makes

sense. There is no global project that would be an alternative to the global project of Empire. Because there is no global project of Empire.

There is an *imperial management*.

There is no good management.

Those who call for another society would do better

by beginning to see that there is no longer such a thing.

And maybe then they'll stop being managers-in-training.
Citizens. *Indignant* citizens.

You can't take the global order for an enemy.
Not directly.

For the global order has no place. To the contrary.
It is the order of non-places.

It is perfect not because it is global, but because
it is *globally local*. The global order is the warding off
of every event, it is the complete, authoritarian
occupation of the local.

You can only oppose the global order *locally*. By
extending shadowy zones over the maps of Empire.
And by progressively putting them into contact.
Underground.

The coming politics. Politics of local insurrection
against global management. The triumph of presence
over absence to self. Over the imperial estrangement
of the citizen.

Presence triumphing through theft, fraud, crime, friendship,
enmity, conspiracy.

*Through the elaboration of modes of life
that are also modes of struggle.*

Politics of taking-place.

Empire *does not take place*. It administers absence
through a hovering threat of police intervention.

Whoever tries to measure up against the imperial adversary
will be preventively annihilated.

From now on, to be perceived is to be defeated.

Learn to become indiscernible. Blend in. Revive the taste
for anonymity,

for promiscuity.
Renounce distinction
in order to evade repression:
arrange for the most favorable conditions
of confrontation.
Become crafty. Become pitiless. To do so,
become whatever.

How is it to be done? is a question for the lost children. Those who haven't been told. Whose gestures are awkward. To whom nothing has been *given*. Whose creatureness, whose wandering never stops revealing itself.
The coming revolt is the revolt of lost children.
The transmission line of history has snapped.
Orphans of the revolutionary tradition itself.
The worker's movement above all. The worker's movement that was transformed into an instrument of greater integration into the Process. Into the new, cybernetic, Process of social valorization.
In 1978, in the name of this Process, the Italian Communist Party, the "party with clean hands," started hunting down Autonomia.
In the name of its classist conception of the proletariat, its mysticism of society, its respect for work, the useful and the decent.
In the name of defending "democratic gains" and the rule of law.
The worker's movement that survived up to *operaismo*.
Sole existing critique of capitalism *from the point of view of Total Mobilization*.
Formidable and paradoxical doctrine,
that ended up saving objectivist Marxism by only speaking of "subjectivity."

That introduced new refinements in the denegation of the *how*,
The reabsorption of the gesture in its product.
The allergy of the *future anterior*.
That everything *will have been*.

Critique has become vain. Critique has
become vain because it amounts to an absence.
With the dominant order, everyone knows what to expect. We
no longer need critical theory. We no longer need teachers.
From now on, critique works for domination. *Even the critique
of domination*.
It reproduces absence. It speak to us from where we are not. It
drives us somewhere else. It consumes us.
It is cowardly.
And stays safe
when it sends us to slaughter.
Secretly in love with its object, it never stops lying to us.
Hence such brief affairs between proletarians and committed
intellectuals.
Marriages of convenience, *reasonable*, where neither has the
same idea of pleasure or freedom.
Rather than new critiques, new cartographies are what we
need.
Cartographies not for Empire, but for lines of flight out of it.
How is it to be done? We need maps. Not maps of what is off
the map.
We need navigation maps. *Maritime* maps. Tools
for *orientation*. That don't try to say or represent
what is within different archipelagoes of desertion,
but show us how to meet up with them.
Portolan charts.

III.

IT IS Tuesday; March 17, 1996, just before dawn.
The ROS (Special Operations Group) co-ordinates
the arrest up and down the peninsula
of 70 Italian anarchists.

Their aim is to put an end to 15 years of fruitless investigations
of insurrectional anarchists.

The technique is well-known: fabricate a "turn-coat,"
have him disclose the existence of a vast, hierarchical
organization of subversives.

Then, on the basis of this made-up construction,
accuse everyone you want to neutralize of being
part of it.

Once again, drain the sea to catch some fish.

Even when it's only a small pond.

And small fry.

An ROS "internal memorandum" was leaked
regarding this affair.

It revealed the strategy.

Founded on the principles of General Dalla Chiesa,
the ROS is a classic example of the imperial agency
of counter-insurrection.

It works on the population.

Wherever some intensity occurs, wherever
something happens, it is the "French Doctor"² of
the situation. The one who unfurls,
claiming it is a preventive measure,
the *cordon sanitaires* that will isolate

² A reference to Bernard Kouchner, co-founder of *Médecins du Monde*.

the contagion.

When it's scared, it says so. In this document, it spells it out. What it's scared of is the "swamp of political anonymity."

Empire is afraid.

Empire is afraid that we'll become whatever.

A delimited space,

a fighting force. These it has no fear of. It is afraid of an expansive constellation of squats, of self-managed farms, collective houses, *fine a se stesso* gatherings, radios, skills, and ideas. The whole bound together by an intense circulation of bodies and affects between bodies. Which is something else entirely.

Conspiracy of bodies. Not critical minds, but *critical corporealities*.

That's what Empire is scared of.

That's what's slowly coming about, with the increasing flow of social defection.

There is an opacity inherent to the *contact* between bodies. And that is incompatible with the imperial reign of a light that no longer illuminates things *except to break them down*.

Zones of Offensive Opacity do not have *to be created*.

They are already there, in any kind of relation that brings about a veritable putting into play of bodies.

What's needed is to *embrace* the fact that we take part in this opacity. And to give ourselves the means to spread it, defend it.

Everywhere you manage to sidestep the imperial apparatuses,
to ruin all the daily work of Biopower
and the Spectacle in order to extricate a fraction of
citizens from the population. To isolate new *untorelli*.³ In this
indistinction that's won back,
an autonomous ethical tissue,
a secessionist
plane of consistency
spontaneously forms.
Bodies gather. Get their breath back. Conspire.
That such zones are doomed to be flattened militarily means
little. What matters is that each time
we arrange a fairly secure escape route.
In order to gather together again elsewhere.
Later.
Behind the question "*What is to be done?*" was the
myth of the general strike.
Answering the question *How is it to be done?* is the
practice of the HUMAN STRIKE.
The general strike says that operations are limited in space and
time,
a piecemeal alienation, thanks to a recognizable,
and therefore defeatable, enemy.
The human strike corresponds to an era when the
borders between work and life have become
blurred.
When consuming and surviving,
producing "subversive texts» and protecting against

³ "Plague-carriers," a term used by the Italian Communist Party to describe *Autonomia*, and the subject of a 1977 issue of the journal *Recherches*, edited by Felix Guattari

the most toxic effects of industrial civilization,
playing sports, making love, being a parent or
being on Prozac.

Everything is work.

For Empire manages, digests, absorbs and reintegrates all that
lives.

Even "what I am," the subjectivation I don't refute

hic et nunc,

all is productive.

Empire has put everything to work.

Ideally, my professional profile will coincide with my own
face.

Even if it's not smiling.

The grimaces of the rebel sell quite well, after all.

Empire is when the means of production have become the
means of control and the means of control the means of
production.

Empire signifies that henceforth the political moment *dominates*
the economic moment.

And the general strike is powerless against it.

What must be opposed to Empire is
the human strike.

Which never attacks the relations of production without
attacking at the same time the affective relations that sustain it.

Which undermines the unavowable libidinal economy,
restores the ethical element — the how — repressed in every
contact between neutralized bodies.

The human strike is the strike that, whenever THEY expect
this or that predictable reaction,
some contrite or indignant tone,
PREFERS NOT TO.

Slips away from the apparatus. Saturates it, or

blows it away.

Gets ahold of itself, preferring
something else.

Something else that is not limited to the possibilities
authorized by the apparatus.

At the counter of some government office, at the
checkout counter of some grocery store, in a polite
conversation, when the cops intervene,
following the relations of force,
the human strike gives consistency
to the space between bodies,
pulverizes the *double bind* that holds them,
drives them to presence.

A new Luddism must be invented, a Luddism against the
human gears
that turn the wheels of Capital.

In Italy, radical feminism was an embryonic form of the human
strike.

"No more mothers, wives or daughters, let's destroy the family!" was
an invitation to make the gesture of breaking the predictable
chains of events,
of liberating compressed possibilities.

It targeted shitty affective exchanges, everyday prostitution.
It was a call to get beyond the couple, the elementary unit of
the management of alienation.

Call for complicity, then.

Practice that is untenable without circulation, without
contagion.

The women's strike implicitly called for a strike by
men and children, called to empty the factories,
schools, offices and prisons,
to reinvent for each situation another way of
being—another *how*.

In the 1970s, Italy was an enormous human strike zone.
Self-reductions, holdups, squatted neighborhoods,
armed demonstrations, pirate radio, untold cases of
"Stockholm syndrome,"
even the famous letters sent by Moro when he was
a hostage, toward the end,
practiced the human strike.
Back men, me Stalinists were talking about "diffuse
irrationality," which says it all.

There are also writers
for whom it is always
the human strike.
In Kafka, in Walser;
or in Michaux,
for example.

Acquire *collectively* the ability to shake out the
familiar.

The art of feeling at home
with the most uncanny of all guests.

In the present war,
where Capital's emergency reformism has to don
the revolutionary's clothes to make itself heard,
where the most democratic combats, the counter-
summits,

have recourse to direct action,
A role awaits us.

That of the martyrs of the democratic order,
which preventatively strikes every body that *might*
strike it.

I should sing the song of the victim. Since,

we all know,
everyone is victim, even the oppressors.
And savor the masochism whose discrete circulation makes the
situation magical again.

Today, the human strike means
refusing to play the role of victim.
Attacking it.

Reappropriating violence.
Appropriating impunity.
Alerting the stoned citizenry
*that if they don't join in the war
they are at war all the same.*
That when ONE tells us it's either this or death,
it's always
actually
this *and* death.
So,
from human strike
to human strike, spread
the insurrection,
where there's nothing but,
where we are all,
whatever
singularities.

TIQQUN