

TWO

Capital, the Social Cohesion That Strangles Us

For those of you who weren't here last night or for those of you who may not remember, let me start off by telling you the story so far.

We started at the beginning, and what better starting place than to start with ourselves? We started with We. What we want to finish up with, but not today, what we want to finish up with tomorrow, is that We Are the Crisis of Capital. And proud of it.

We started at the beginning, and what better starting place than to start with ourselves? The starting point is important because if we start with domination, if we start with structures, then there is a great danger that we enclose ourselves, that we entrap ourselves within the structures of domination that we want to criticize. Once we create a framework of domination for ourselves, for our own thought, our own argument, really there is no way out. It's important, I think, to start with the force that can break those structures. It's important to start with something that is not closure, with something that is openness, with breaking. In other words, it is important to start with ourselves.

I made various points about We very briefly.

First, We are dignity, We are not victims. We are dignity and We are dignified rage. We are *digna rabia*, as the Zapatistas put it.

Second, We are richness. We are the rich, not the poor. It is not because we are poor that we rebel, it is because we are rich,

because we have in us the enormous richness of undefined creativity. And it is because this richness and this dignity is incarcerated within the forms of capital, within the commodity form, that we rise up and say no, we will not accept it. We don't start from the poor, we start from the rich. We don't start from being victims, we start from our own dignity. We are dignity, We are richness, We are the only creators of this society, and therefore we are the creators upon whom capital depends. We are in rebellion, otherwise I don't know why you would be here this evening if you weren't, in some sense, in rebellion. We are in rebellion not because We are special; our rebellion doesn't make us different from all those masses who didn't come this evening. We are in rebellion because We are ordinary. That is the greatest challenge of the Zapatistas, they say, "We are perfectly ordinary people, therefore we are rebels." We are ordinary dignities and our politics is the politics of trying to articulate and recognize the dignities of all of us. And that leads us to certain ideas about political organization. It leads us to considering ourselves part of the great anticapitalist tradition that goes back to the very origins of anticapitalism, that understands organization in terms of assemblies, in terms of councils, in terms of soviets, in terms of communes, in terms of organizing in a way that tries to articulate our anger and doesn't think about organization from an instrumental point of view, as simply how to gain power.

We are self-contradictory. And We are confused. We are self-contradictory because we must be, because our feet are caught in the mud of the society in which we live, even if our heads want to break away from it. Or perhaps it's the other way round, perhaps it's our heads that are caught in the mud of the society in which we live and our feet want to get away from it or are already running. But, in any case, the contradictions of this society are bound to reproduce themselves within us. So, inevitably, living in an antagonistic society means that we, too, are self-antagonistic. And that means that the concept or the

very idea of revolutionary purity is a load of nonsense. It is not just a load of nonsense, it is absolutely destructive. That also leads us to the idea that the only way forward is not by laying down the correct line but, again as the Zapatistas put it, asking. Asking, we walk. We advance by asking, by trying to connect with the other dignities that surround us, the other rebellions that surround us. We try and move forward through discussion, through hearing, through asking people about their rebelliousness, about their dignity.

We misfit. We misfit into this society. We misfit not because, or not only because, we are weird people on the edges of society, but we misfit because misfitting is actually a central aspect of existence in a capitalist society, because capital is the pushing of human lives into forms within which we cannot possibly fit. Capital pushes our activity into the labor form. It pushes our relations with one another into the commodity form or into the money form. And it can't work! It can have a huge effect, it obviously does, a huge, disastrous, destructive effect. But it's not totally successful, it can't be totally successful. And if it were totally successful we wouldn't have any way of talking about it. So we misfit.

We exist. The very fact of existing within capitalist society means we exist in, against, and beyond capitalist society. We exist in capitalism, and that has a huge effect on the way we think and what we do. But we also inevitably exist against capitalist society, because the very fact of being forced to exist in it forces us to protest against it, to rebel against it, to reject it. We exist in and against it, but also beyond capitalist society, because all the time we are trying to create something else, to create forms of relating to other people that are more adequate to what we are or what we think we are, or what we think we could be. So all the time we are not only in but also against, and we are also pushing beyond society, which means we don't fit in. We don't fit into any boxes, and we don't fit into any identities. So our politics, our anti-capitalism, is inevitably an

anti-identitarian politics. An anti-identitarian politics which says, "Fine, OK, we are women or we are gay or we are black or we are Irish or we are indigenous, but we are more than that." And if we don't say that, if we don't recognize how we spill over from our own identities, then it does seem to me that our language becomes too easily integrated, it becomes, I would say, reactionary. And, although it is the fifth time I refer to them and I don't know if I should go on talking about them, what seems to me to be exciting about the Zapatistas is not just that it is an indigenous movement. If they were just an indigenous movement we would say, "Oh great, very good, we'll show you our solidarity, good you're doing that, fine." But no, it's not that. They have said from the beginning, "We are a movement which is almost totally indigenous in composition, but we are not just an indigenous movement. We are not just fighting for indigenous rights, we are actually fighting for humanity." From the beginning, it is a movement that spills over. It consciously spills over from its own identity and that's what makes them exciting.

We overflow, then. We overflow from our identities, and I think that means also that We are anti-institutional. If We exist in, against, and beyond, then it means that We are in movement, it means that We are not nouns, We are actually verbs. We are movings, We are doings, We are human doings, We are verbs. And that means, I think, that We are anti-institutional. Institutions try to convert our verbness into nouns. They try to fix it, give it stability. They try to tie down our potentially unlimited becoming.

And finally, We are doers against labor. We are not just labor; we are actually doers against labor. If we think of the way in which capital entraps our dignity or imprisons our dignity, if we think of the way in which the commodity form or the money form incarcerates our richness, the richness of our potential, then we can say that the basis of that is actually that capital incarcerates our doing, our activity, and forces it

into the form of a labor that produces value or contributes to the production of value and therefore contributes to the production of capitalist profit. To say We are against capital, we absolutely have to say that We are against labor, in the sense that we are against capitalist labor, we are against what capital does to our activity as humans. And I think that is something that is actually becoming articulated more and more in anti-capitalist movements over the last fifteen to twenty years or thirty years: the idea that no, we cannot think of anticapitalism simply as being the struggle of labor against capital. It is, in the first place, and must be, the struggle of doing against labor. Against the labor that produces capital. Which doesn't mean, and perhaps I should emphasize that, it doesn't mean that our struggle is therefore outside the factory. In a way, on the contrary. Well, not on the contrary exactly, but partly on the contrary, because if we think of the people who suffer most directly from the imposition of labor upon doing, if you think of the people who suffer most directly, most painfully, from the subjection of their activity to the demands of labor that produces value or contributes to the production of value, then of course that means people who are employed, including obviously people who are in the factories. So, to say that our movement is the movement of doing against labor is not at all to say that our movement is outside the factories, but that our movement, whether within or without or wherever, is a movement of doing against labor, a movement for the recuperation of the self-determination of our own activity as humans. And that's really what it's all about, isn't it? And all this, all these points about We, can be seen not just in terms of abstract ideas of a professor; they are actually points that are emerging from the changing forms of social struggle, of anticapitalist struggle, over the last twenty years or so.

So that's the story so far, that's where we got to last night.

For me, what these three evenings are about is trying to think through or trying to talk about a change that is taking

place in the concept of revolution. A change that is taking place in the way we understand anticapitalist struggle. And that has to be a discussion, because our ideas, and I think the ideas of everybody, are in the process of formation. What we can say, I think, is that the collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of China as an aggressive capitalist power have made very clear, I think almost to everybody, what had already been said for many years before that. Namely, that the revolutions in China, in Russia, were a failure. Or that there was something wrong with the whole idea of revolution in the twentieth century. They can all be explained, of course, in terms of particular historical events, but there was something wrong in the way that people were talking about revolution. And, of course, thousands and thousands and millions of people fought and devoted their lives to those ideas of revolution and they devoted their lives to trying to make the world a different place, they devoted their lives and their deaths to a struggle to get rid of capitalism. Obviously, I think we are their heirs. We have to take that very seriously, it places a responsibility on us. That responsibility is not to say, "Ugh, they were filthy Stalinists or Trotskyists" or whatever; the responsibility on us is really to pick up the banners that they have left fallen on the ground. The only way that we can pick up those banners, I think, is by going off in a slightly different direction. The only way we can honor their memory is by saying, "Wow, fantastic, wonderful how you fought for a different society, but you were wrong. You were fantastic, but the way you thought about bringing about change was mistaken. We have learned, we have learned from your experience in the last century that that doesn't work. And so, to honor your memory, we have to take up the question of revolution again, but the only way we can take up the question of revolution is by rethinking what it means, by trying to reset the terms." What happened after the fall of the Soviet Union and China was that there was an initial reaction that said, "Well, revolution isn't really on the

cards, and there's not much point in talking about revolution or thinking about revolution anymore, but of course struggles are important." And that's not necessarily bad because, I think, perhaps what happened is that people, instead of wasting their energies on building up the party or on fighting out sectarian disputes with other parties—of course that continued and continues—but I think that perhaps people started to put more energy into actually fighting local struggles or fighting for particular things, struggles that set out to change and improve the world and, in some cases, have done so. But in that process, very often, the whole question of revolution became lost. Now I think we have to go back to the idea of revolution, because it's not just a question of winning little victories here and there, which we sometimes do but generally don't, but it's not that. It's a question of how on earth do we break the dynamic of existing society, how on earth do we break the dynamic of capital, the dynamic of money that is causing such appalling destruction throughout the world, appalling destruction to our lives, appalling destruction to other forms of life, appalling destruction to everything.

How on earth do we break that dynamic? How do we go beyond or how do we understand the particular struggles in the context of a possible dynamic, or a dynamic that seeks to break, or a push that seeks to break the dynamic of destruction? All these individual struggles are great, but I think we need to go back to the question of what revolution means today. How can we think, not just from a professorial point of view or from the point of view of a PhD or whatever, but how can we think on the basis of the development of struggles, how can we see a different conception of revolution being opened up? And for me that takes us back, in the first place, to what I was saying yesterday about We, and We are dignity and We are richness and We are self-contradictory and We are confused and all the rest of it. Because when we start with We, the point is that we are starting with the force or forces of rupture. If we want

to talk about how We are going to break the dynamic, then we have to talk about the forces or the force that can break that dynamic. I think it's no good to just say, "Well, the working class will break the dynamic of capital," because that really doesn't help us to think anew. It doesn't help us to open up new questions or try and think about new ways of posing the problems. I'm quite happy to say that the working class is the only force that can break the dynamic of capital, but only if we question the meaning of working class, only if we say we have to understand the working class as the movement of doing against labor. In other words, only if we understand working class as a movement against its own existence as working class. Then yes, perhaps.

When we were talking about We, we were talking about the forces of rupture. We're talking about the force of doing against labor. We're talking about understanding our richness, our dignity, our creativity, our doing, as being the forces of production. Rethinking the whole category of the forces of production, rethinking this whole conflict which is so embedded in the Marxist tradition, rethinking the conflict between the forces of production and the relations of production and saying, "Well, of course, We are the forces of production. Who else is going to create? It has to be We!" We, not just here and now, but We and our fathers and our grandfathers and our great-grandmothers and our great-great-grandmothers etc., in other words that We are part of a continuous development of human creativity. That's surely what the forces of production is all about. We will come back to this later.

So, in talking about We as the force of rupture, how is it that we can understand ourselves as the force that ruptures or that can rupture this terrible dynamic of destruction? One obvious thing to say is, "Well, We are, of course We are, we know We are, but our ruptures are like volcanic ruptures. They are sporadic ruptures, they are occasional ruptures, and they are ruptures that don't exist in the same intensity in all

places and at all times. If we look around us, if we just look at the people in this room, then I'm quite sure that we can see how our force is the force of breaking here and there, is the force of cracking the texture of capitalist domination. All of us, in one way or another, break through the dynamic, the cohesive logic of capital by saying, "No, sorry, we're not going to do things that way; we're going to do something else, we're going to walk in the opposite direction." You can think of these as being cracks in this closely woven weave of domination within which we live.

What are those cracks? We can see some cracks easily enough, we can see—that's the sixth or seventh time tonight—we can see the Zapatistas, If you go into the Zapatista areas in Chiapas, you pass a sign that says "Bad Government Stay Out, Here the People Rule." This is obviously a declaration that here, in this territory, We are walking in the opposite direction. We're not going to let the government in and We are not going to follow the logic of the government. We are not going to follow the logic of capital. We are going to organize ourselves in a different way. We are going to create an education that is different and pushes in another direction. We are going to organize a system of health care that pushes in a different direction, a system of justice that doesn't slot into the categories of capital. Obviously, there is a crack. A fantastic, lovely crack that's been going on for twenty years or more. And then you think, "Well, yes, but they're Mexicans. They're far away." And then you think, "Well, what about Occupy Oakland?" for example, to come closer to home. I was being told all about Occupy Oakland about half an hour ago. Wasn't that a crack, wasn't that a space where people were saying not only No, not only protesting but actually trying to create something different, actually trying to walk in the other direction, actually trying to create different sorts of social relations, actually trying to work out in practice the basis for some new form or different form of social organization? So there you've got a

medium-sized crack, that hasn't lasted perhaps for the twenty years that the Zapatistas have existed publicly, but of course it's an important crack. And then you think well, OK, what about us? What about us here, tonight, what are we doing, what are we talking about? We're not talking about how we can make a profit on our next essay or on our next dissertation or whatever, we're not talking about how we slot into the system. We're talking about how we can go in the opposite direction. How we can think in the opposite direction, how we can think against capital, how we can give a force to our own thought against capital, our own rejection of capital. You think well yes, that's nice, even if we're only going to last three days, perhaps, or a few hours, here we've got a crack too, we're trying to push in the opposite direction. It's not because we have some ambition to advance within the system of education, it's because this is actually what has meaning for us. This is actually what is important to us. And then you begin to look around and to think, well yes, there are lots, you can think of big cracks, you can think of the Zapatistas, you can think of Oaxaca, you can think of Buenos Aires in 2001–2002, you can think of . . . oh, 1968, there's a lovely big crack! You can think on and on and on. Or you can think of small or medium cracks or little cracks, you can think of autonomous radio stations, you can think of alternative education experiments, you can think of community gardens, you can think of all sort of things that go in the wrong direction. Then you begin to think, well yes, sometimes these cracks are territorial, sometimes they mark out a clear territorial space. They say here is a Zapatista area, or here Oaxaca, or here Zuccotti Park or whatever. Here we've got a little space.

But you don't have to think of it in territorial terms, you can think of it in terms of time. You can say, well, OK, we live in a society in which there are all sorts of pressures that push us to conform, but even in that context we can say No. There are times in which we will express our fury, times in which we will express our search for something else. Here we are,

meeting for a couple of hours. This is a temporally defined crack I suppose. But one that we hope spills over and over and over and over. Or you can think of it as being activity-related. You can say we live in a capitalist society. We live, at least for the moment, unfortunately, in a society in which products are sold as commodities. But water, no. No way will we accept the commodification of water. And then you rise up like the people in Cochabamba in the year 2000 in the war of water and say, "No, we will not accept the privatization of water." And they won. Or you rise up like the students of the UNAM, the main university of Mexico City, again in 1999–2000, and say, "No, we will not accept the introduction of fees, because that is the first step towards the privatization of public education." And they fought and they fought and they went on strike for ten months! And in the end they were repressed. But they won on that point. And since then no rector has even dared to mention the possibility of introducing fees. So you begin to look around, you begin to see that in fact we were right to start with We, we were right to start with overflowing, we were right not to start with domination, because when you look at the world you actually see that the world is full of cracks, full of these spaces of rejection, of refusal and creation, in which people push in the opposite direction.

One thing that characterizes all these cracks is that in those spaces, in those moments, in those activities, people are saying here, in this space, in this moment, in relation to this, we reject the integration of our activity into capitalism. We reject the logic of alienated labor, we reject the logic of abstract labor, we reject the logic of value, we reject the logic of money. Here we shall do what we consider to be desirable, what we consider to be necessary. So the core of these cracks is actually a revolt of doing against labor. This is something we are all aware of, and all these things have been developing and growing, they've been there all the time, but I think they've been developing with a new confidence over the last twenty, thirty years. We have all

sorts of names for them. We talk about them as autonomies, as autonomous spaces. We can talk about them as dignities; here we raise the flag of dignity and go in the opposite direction. We can think of them as being no-go areas, areas in which we will not allow capital to dominate, in which we will not allow money to dominate. We do it all the time, we do it also in our personal life. In a sense, that is what we mean by love. If we love somebody, if we love our children, if we love our partner or whoever, we are saying, "Here it's a different logic. We are not going to relate to our children or our loved ones on the basis of money. We are not going to try and think how will we get a good price for our children." That is part of the pushing in the opposite direction which is profoundly rooted in our everyday experience. Or you can talk of them, as Chris Carlsson does, as nowtopias, or you can talk of them, as Rebecca Solnit does, as paradises, a concept that is associated with the whole history of gardening. The way we fight is not, or not just, by looking for gradual reform, but it is by lifting an area of experience or a territorial area, lifting an area out of capital and, within that area, creating something else. In a way, you can think of it as us raising so many banners of a different world, or creating so many lighthouses that illuminate and shine onto the world and inspire people.

The reason why I like talking about cracks rather than autonomies is because, for me, cracks suggest movement. Cracks move all the time. They expand, they get covered over, they get plastered over, they open again, they join up, they are in constant movement. Whereas the danger, for me, of thinking in terms of an autonomous space or the danger in the practice of autonomous spaces is that they can become closed in on themselves. Once they cease to move then they cease to break, they cease to be ruptures. So that's why I talk about cracks, but you don't have to, call them what you like.

If that corresponds to what had been happening in anti-capitalist struggle over recent years, we can say that this is the

basis of a different way of thinking about revolution. We can begin to say, "Well, if we're going to pose the question of revolution again, we have to pose it not in terms of how we're going to take state power; that didn't work. We now have to think of revolution in terms of the creation, expansion, multiplication, and confluence of these cracks." Another way of saying that is that we have to think of revolution as being interstitial. We can't think of revolution as being the complete transformation of the whole world from one day to another. We have to think in terms of an interstitial process, a process of multiple ruptures. We have to think that capital won't be killed by a dagger-thrust to the heart; it will actually be killed by millions and millions of bee stings. And we are the bees that are stinging it and are going to keep on stinging it until it dies.

But if you say revolution has to be interstitial, in a sense that has always been true. The whole notion of taking state power was also an interstitial concept of revolution. You take control of one state, and then another state and another state—that is very clear, for example, in the Trotskyist idea of permanent revolution and the rejection of the idea of socialism in one country. Of course revolution has to be interstitial. But what is emerging now is the awareness that we have to think of these interstices, or these spaces, or these cracks, autonomies, as being *our* spaces. It doesn't work if we pour our rebellion into the organizational forms created for the reproduction of capital. Because to pour our rebellions into the state form, into capitalist forms, means to expropriate ourselves, means to exclude ourselves from our own rebellion. I was in Bolivia about five or six years ago and I had this feeling after the election of Evo Morales, and the MAS government, after the whole upsurge of rebellion from 2000 to 2005. What was happening was exciting, but it was a revolution expropriated. It was a process that had actually been taken away from the people who were creating it, or who had created the basis for it. And I think that has become ever more clear since then.

So, not through the state. If we are talking about cracks we are saying No, the cracks have to be *our* cracks, *our* forms of organization, *our* rethinkings of social relations. If we say No to the state, and this is surely fundamental, then we shoot clocks. This is the lovely thing of Walter Benjamin, in his "Theses on the Philosophy of History," where he says that in 1830, the first thing that the workers did in the uprising in Paris was they went out and shot the clocks. They took out their guns and fired at the clocks in the towers. In other words, if we say not through the state, then we have to rethink time. Because the state implies a certain concept of time, if we think of revolution as taking place through the state, then inevitably we think of the revolution as being in the future. We think of the Future Revolution. And we build for the glorious day, we build a party, we build the organization, we perhaps build the army or whatever, but we are building for the future, when we will take power and then we will bring about change. What is happening at the moment is exactly the opposite. The idea of creating cracks means creating revolution here and now. We won't wait, we can't wait. The idea of "Oh, there might be a socialist revolution in fifty years' time or in a hundred years' time. Well, of course we won't live to see it but perhaps our children or our grandchildren will," that idea is absolutely insane! It's insane because who knows if humans will still exist in a hundred years' time for a start off, if we don't do something to change the system. It's ridiculous! In other words, we have to think of the revolution as being here and now. And that's exactly what the cracks are doing. They are saying, "Here, in our little area perhaps we're mad, perhaps we're insignificant, but here and now we are going to transform things. Here and now we are going to do things in a different way." That doesn't solve the problem but it changes the temporalities. In the old traditional idea of revolution there are two temporalities. The first temporality is wait. Revolutionary patience. They have always talked about the virtue of revolutionary patience. Wait

until the conditions are right, until we build our organization strong enough. This year in the election we managed to get one percent of the vote, next year it's going to be two percent and maybe in ten years time we'll be up to four percent, so just a bit of revolutionary patience and we will get there in the end. So, the first temporality is the temporality of patience and then, of course, when the great day comes, then complete transformation.

I think that now, with the cracks, we have a reversal of temporalities. Again we have two temporalities. The first temporality is here and now we change things, we change things because we cannot stand it, we cannot accept what is happening. ¡Ya Basta! Here and now, enough! And we start walking in the wrong direction, here and now we start doing things in a different way. But I think there is also a second temporality, because we know all too well that the fact that we start to walk in the different direction does not unfortunately mean that capitalism will no longer exist tomorrow. It may do, I'm not saying it necessarily will exist tomorrow, but at least we know that it doesn't necessarily mean that just because we walk in the wrong direction then capitalism will disappear. In other words, the Zapatista "¡Ya Basta!" is complemented by another expression of theirs, which is "We walk, we do not run, because we are going a long way." In other words, there is behind the impatience, the refusal to say accept anymore, there is an arduous process of actually creating a different world.

So, if we ask not just what clever ideas can we find about revolution today but what is it that the struggles themselves are saying about revolution, then I think what they are doing is that they are posing the issue of revolution not in terms of taking power, not in terms of party politics and winning elections; they are posing the issue of revolution in terms of how do we break the logic of capital, how can we create spaces that go in the opposite direction, how can we break the social cohesion

that lies so heavily upon us? How can we break the social synthesis within which we live, how can we break this totality that sucks us all in so awfully, so unbearably, so horribly all the time? We rebel, We want to do something different, and all the time there's this horrible sucking noise that pulls us back into the logic of the system. How can we break that and how do we think about revolution? I think now this is the issue, not as the replacement of one totality by another totality, which was the old idea: you break capitalism and create a different total social system; you get rid of capitalism and install socialist planning which is going to be coordinated, initially at least, through the state, in other words the idea was to replace one totality with another. I think what is happening now is that we are saying no, that is not the issue, the issue is how we detotalize, how we break that totality. Not in order to create another totality, but to create—perhaps, who knows how it's going to work out—at least for the moment, a multiplicity of social patterns or social cohesions. In other words, what we want is a world of many worlds. If you're into those debates, you can see it in terms of Adorno's critique of Lukács. Lukács was wonderful but he was into the Leninist party and saw things very much from the point of view of totality and that was the central category for him. Adorno's critique was No, absolutely not, that is really just to reproduce a repressive system. The issue now, I think, is not how do we replace one totality with another, but how do we detotalize, how do we actually think of a world that unleashes its energies or unleashes our creativity in different directions? How do we uncouple ourselves from the dynamic of death?

When we think of creating autonomies or autonomous spaces or cracks, what are the forces we come up against? The most obvious force is the violence of the state. I was being told a little while ago about the repression in Oakland or the repression here, in San Francisco, the twelfth of October, was it? That is what the police are about: they are about trying to impose a social logic. That is what law and order means: it means, how

do we make you fit into the system, how do we repress attempts to misfit collectively, how do we repress attempts to break the logic of the system?

But behind that, it seems to me, there is a greater force of social cohesion, which is the force of money or the force of value. Maintaining law and order is about how you maintain favorable conditions for investment in San Francisco. By keeping people quiet, by getting them off the streets, by not allowing San Francisco to acquire the image of a place of rebellion. But the real force behind the policing is the logic of money. How do we integrate San Francisco as favorably as possible into a world in which it is the logic of money that dominates, the logic of profit? Or, as Marx points out, if we want to understand this logic of money, we have to break the surface and see that this logic of money expresses the logic of value. And what value is about, what determines the magnitude of value, is the amount of socially necessary time of labor required to produce a commodity. Not just socially necessary labor time, but labor time of a particular type. Not just the amount of dancing or kissing or jumping up and down that is required to produce the commodity, but the amount of value-producing labor. In other words, the amount of abstract labor, the amount of alienated labor.

Behind the movement of money, behind the logic of money, is the logic of abstract labor. The logic that pushes our activity as humans into a certain form. It's important to come back to that, it's important to think—and that was the argument yesterday—our politics from ourselves, from our activity. One of the slogans over the last twenty, thirty years has been the idea of a politics of use value, to look at things in terms of their utility rather than in terms of their profitability. I think we have to go beyond that and say, "No, our strength isn't visible at the level of value; our strength is visible at the level of labor, at the level of the contradictory character of labor." At the level of not only our ability, but our daily practice of trying to break the logic of

abstract labor all the time. Certainly, this logic poses all sorts of constraints and limits upon us, but we will not necessarily follow it, we will not necessarily make all our actions conform to that logic. Our real strength is in doing something else, in walking in the opposite direction. If we think not just of the problem of the police, behind that there is the more profound, more tightly integrated force which is the force of money, which is ultimately the force of abstract labor. If we ask how do we break that force, then we are beginning to get an answer by saying the way to break that cohesion is actually to do in a different way, to try and think from our own revolts against abstract labor. How can we break that logic?

Two points, just to finish—long points.

The first is that the social cohesion in which we live, this society, this tight weave within which we live, is obviously not total. At times we think it is, at times we think it's all domination, it's all money, that there's nothing that can be done. But the very fact that we perceive that domination, that we criticize it, means that that is not true. We can say, "Oh, we are special, we are the cleverest people in the world, that's why we can understand it." But if we don't want to say that, then we say, "Well no, the fact that we can see it actually indicates that that social cohesion is not as tight as it appears," that behind and beside that social cohesion is a constant movement against that cohesion. Behind money there is a constant movement against money; behind value there is a constant movement against value and for the creation of other values. If we think that, then we say, "We've been talking about that, the cracks. It's precisely what we've been saying, that the cohesion is not as tight as we thought." And then we think that the cohesion is not really a cohesion—it's not a noun, that's a false image—it's a verb, a cohering. It's a cohering, a kind of weaving together that is constantly going on, that is constantly tying us in. But We, at the same time, are constantly moving in the opposite direction. So then we begin to see that that means that money is

a struggle. It's not a thing; it's a struggle to push us into certain forms of behavior. Value is not a thing; it's a struggle to push us into certain forms of behavior. Capital is not a thing; it pushes us into certain forms of action. And we begin to dissolve the world from being a world of nouns that weighs so heavily upon us and to think of the world as a world of verbs. And once we begin to think of the world as a world of verbs, we are beginning to open up spaces.

The other thing is that—and this is terrible but it is also a source of hope—if we think of this social cohesion or social cohering as being established through the form of money or through the form of value, then we can see that not only is it a constant struggle, but it is a constantly intensifying struggle. The significance of abstract labor or the significance of value production is not the same today as it was yesterday. That is fairly obvious if you think that if I were to make a car, for example, today in the same way as fifty years ago, would I be producing value? Of course not. It might be fun as a hobby, but you certainly wouldn't be producing something that would sell on the market, you wouldn't be producing value. To produce a car costs a lot less time today than it did fifty years ago. The meaning of abstract labor changes from day to day. The meaning of value production changes from day to day. The very fact that it is the socially necessary labor required to produce something that determines its value means that capital is a constant movement of faster, faster, faster and a constant extension of control over the whole of society, a constant tighter, tighter, tighter control.

On the one hand, that is awful because it means a constant process of dehumanizing, of humiliating, of pushing us down onto our knees, but it also means a constant process of rebellion. Not rebellion against something that is there; it's rebellion that grows out of resistance against an attack upon us. That is what is both horrifying about the situation, but it is also where hope lies, since capital won't let us sit still. Certainly, being a

university professor today is nothing like it was when I first started teaching in the university. And that can be said, I think, of any job. The same for students. Writing a PhD today isn't at all the same as it was thirty years ago and that's because we suffer from this constant attack, this constant pressure. And that pushes us to rebel, that pushes us more and more to say "Ya Basta," to say more and more, "No, enough, this is insane. We have to do things in a different way, we have to walk in the opposite direction." It's this "faster, faster, faster," this "tighter, tighter, tighter control," this insatiable dynamic of capital that is in crisis today. The question then is, how do we understand that We are that crisis? And how do we think about the possibilities of revolutionary politics from that standpoint?

That's what I wanted to say today.