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The planetary urbanization of non-work

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This paper extends an earlier discussion on 'The Politics of the Encounter and the Urbanization of the World' (City 16 (3): 269–283). There, I outlined what a politics of the encounter is and might constitute, how it can be seen as a reframed politics of the urban and how it depends on a certain constituency coming together. With the development of urban society (as Lefebvre outlines it), the possibility for sustained and continued encounters between people will grow. But these encounters can be both affirmative attractions (like Occupy) and negative repulsions (like riots). In this present paper, Lefebvre's argument is taken a step further, because, he thinks, there's something else 'immanent' in urban society: a propensity to create 'post-work' conditions. This provocative thesis is voiced in an overlooked book called La pensée marxiste et la ville *(1972). A shift from cities to urban society is, for Lefebvre, correspondingly a shift from the world of steady work to informal work, or at least to 'post-salaried' work; and this in the developed as well as developing countries. What Lefebvre says about the city–urban dialectic chimes with what Fredric Jameson recently said about Marx's manufacture–modern industry dialectic: that the passage from the former to the latter necessarily results in the formation of unemployment. We can paraphrase Jameson to express Lefebvre's own thesis, a thesis I want to explore in more detail in what follows: unemployment is structurally inseparable from the dynamic of urbanization and its expansion on a planetary scale, which constitutes the very nature of capitalism as such. The paper is extracted from a book,* The Politics of the Encounter: Urban Theory and Protest under Planetary Urbanization, *due to appear with the University of Georgia Press in April 2013.*

'The world market is a space in which everyone has once been a productive laborer, and in which labor has everywhere begun to price itself out of the system.' (Fredric Jameson)
'Implicit in all these definitions is the assumption that the human conglomerate being dealt with is sufficiently large … and a further assumption is that the human conglomerate be itself unaware of psychohistoric analysis in order that its reactions be truly random …' (Isaac Asimov)
'The crowd sees the city around them with different eyes.' (John Berger)

1. Post-work and urban society

In 1968, in *The Right to the City*, Lefebvre claimed the right to the city was a 'cry and demand' for city life; two years on, in *The Urban Revolution*, he said we should no longer think about cities but about 'urban society'; two years on again, in *La pensée marxiste et la ville*, he's not only back using the term 'city' but is using it with a new twist, making the following assertion: the development of science and application of new

technology signal the knell of the city because they're both predicated on the need to supersede the city. Information Technology and automated work enable the urban to come into existence, Lefebvre says, enable the urban to expand its planetary domain. But as soon as the urban begins its planetary long march, 'post-employment' ensues, coupled with more planetary urbanization, and more industrial contradictions that now somehow manifest themselves as global-urban contradictions.

The industrial city had to give way to the urban, and this urban society is forever a society marked by relations we could describe as 'post-work', at least post-salaried-work. This seems to be Lefebvre's point, as he tosses ideas out—he loved the 'bubbling and fermenting of ideas', he'd told us in *La somme et le reste*—only to leave it up to us to sort them out, to figure these ideas out, to bottle them up in all their effervescence and volatility. Curiously, what Lefebvre says about the city–urban dialectic in *La pensée marxiste et la ville* chimes with what Fredric Jameson said recently in *Representing Capital* about Marx's manufacture–modern industry dialectic: that the passage from the former to the latter necessarily results in the formation of *unemployment*. Unemployment isn't so much a symptom of systemic crisis or depression as the 'normal' functioning order of the system, something endemic in its everyday operations. As Jameson writes, 'unemployment is structurally inseparable from the dynamic of accumulation and expansion which constitutes the very nature of capitalism as such'.[1] For many people around the world this means they've literally 'dropped out of history', are now 'officially' dispensable on the world market, 'officially' dispensable in capitalist urban society. We might paraphrase Jameson to express Lefebvre's own thesis: *unemployment is structurally inseparable from the dynamic of urbanization and its expansion on a planetary scale, which constitutes the very nature of capitalism as such*.

The claim is cavalier; we need to explore it in more detail in what follows. We need to bottle it up analytically, and bottle it up politically: we need to brew our own radical urban moonshine from Lefebvrian hops.

One initial difficulty examining a work like *La pensée marxiste et la ville* is why Lefebvre should want to revert to the 'city' after dissing it in *The Urban Revolution*? Urban society, he said in that latter text, is built upon the ruins of the city, and the city exists only as a 'historical entity'. Therein lies a little clue: it appears Lefebvre wants to write a *historical* text, a book about ideas of the city, of how the city has been conceptualized within Marx and Engels' analyses of the capitalist mode of production. Marx and Engels never gave us an explicit 'urban mode of production', Lefebvre says in *Pensée*, but if we look closely in their oeuvre, in a way they did: the city was itself a developmental force, the seat of modern industry, of the division of labor, of the reproduction of labor-power, of technological innovation; and the rise of the industrial city wasn't only vital for the expansion of the productive forces but crucial *politically* for an ascendant bourgeoisie asserting itself in the passage from feudalism to capitalism.

The other thing that's perhaps noteworthy about why Lefebvre should then want to write a text about a body of thought (*la pensée marxiste*) and the city (*la ville*) was the relative dominance of Althusser's thought. In his opening '*Avertissement*', Lefebvre warns readers what this book is and isn't; it isn't, he says, a '*symptômale*' reading of Marx and Engels. The word '*symptômale*' is put in inverted commas because it's a term Althusser made infamous in his 'Reading' of Marx's *Capital*, in his *symptomatic* reading of *Capital*. Lefebvre, on the other hand, says this is no symptomatic reading but a 'thematic' reading. He always disliked Althusser's Marxist formalism, stripping bare of content Marx's method and epistemology. Thus a 'thematic' reading is a reading that beds itself down specifically in *content*, which is to say, in the city; 'the

urban problematic within the theoretical framework of historical materialism'.[2] To a certain extent, one gets the impression that *La pensée marxiste et la ville* figures for Lefebvre the same way the *Grundrisse* figured for Marx: as a work of self-clarification, as a notebook for working through one's theoretical relationship with the subject matter, which in this case is the city–urban dialectic within Marxism.

A key text for Lefebvre is Marx and Engels' *German Ideology* in which the city is center stage rather than mere background. Taking leave from Marx and Engels, Lefebvre shows how the closed system of antiquity, with its feudal city as absolute space, became relativized with the Industrial Revolution. The Industrial Revolution, for Lefebvre—repeating what he'd said in *The Right to the City* and in *The Urban Revolution*—was really an urban revolution, and with the rise of the city came a corresponding rise of the modern state and modern property relations based on finance and speculation. All of which would fuel the further expansion of the city. Lefebvre gives us a great historical overview, makes a grand historical sweep, but 'the subject of history' here, he says, 'is incontestably the city'.[3]

'The greatest division of material and mental labor', say Marx and Engels in *The German Ideology*, 'is the separation of town and country.' 'The antagonism between the town and country begins with the transition from barbarism to civilization, from tribe to state, from locality to nation, and runs through the whole history of civilization to the present day', ours included.[4] In *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels trot through the history of the division of labor; from its countryside and town basis; from its entrenchment under 'the rise of manufacturing'; from the development of the state and property relations; to the 'forms of intercourse' that took hold within this process of continuous movement and change, within the 'all-embracing collisions' of history—collisions of various classes, collisions of consciousness, collisions of ideas, collisions

of political conflict. Throughout, 'the abolition of the antagonism between the town and the countryside is one of the first conditions of communal life, a condition which', Marx and Engels insist, 'depends on a mass of material premises and which cannot be fulfilled by mere will'.[5] Huge flows of people flooding into emergent industrial cities are at first devoid of power, disunited, detached and desperate, entering as 'individuals strange to one another' (70). Yet after a while, and after a few pages further on, Marx and Engels are able to posit communism somewhere in the midst, somewhere there as a 'form of intercourse', 'overturning the basis of all earlier relations of production and intercourse'. Communism will, they seem to suggest, be urban-based or it won't be. 'Isn't it evident', Lefebvre asks, 'that the city is at once place, instrument and *théâtre dramatique* of a gigantic transformation?'[6] Isn't it equally evident, he says, how Marx and Engels, 'no more and no less', announce '*the end of the city*, amongst other ends …'[7]

2. The urbanization of the 'general intellect'

One of the most fascinating parts of *La pensée marxiste et a ville* comes in the final 10 pages of Chapter II. There, Lefebvre wrestles with Marx and Engels' *German Ideology* and with the utopian pages of the *Grundrisse*. But first he must move through Engels himself, show how, from Engels' industrial city, emerges 'urban society'. Engels' *Condition of the Working Class in England* (1845) spoke at length of cities as places of worker 'agglomeration', of spaces where a 'reserve army of laborers' is piled up on top of one another, and how 'the capitalist order engenders an urban chaos'. The laboring masses, Engels noted, lived in specifically demarcated areas of 'great cities', in overcrowded hovels where they got ripped off in reproduction, at home, just as they got ripped off at the point of industrial

production, at work. The concentration of populations like this, of course, directly accompanied the concentration and exponential accumulation of capital; the two went hand in hand, alongside the advance of technology and the spatial and temporal development of mode of production. But the question that preoccupied Engels then, as it did 30 years later in *The Housing Question*, was how could you really resolve the ghettoization of worker's housing *without* resolving the problem of the capitalist mode of production itself?

But the twist here, the utopian twist for Lefebvre, comes from the '*fin du travail*', from the 'end of work' (121); 'what a paradox', he says, 'for those who have discovered the importance of work and who assume the role of the theoretician of the working class'. 'And yet, we know it already, that automation of production permits us to envisage the end of productive work. Theoretical and practical possibility? Incontestably … Utopia certainly, but a *concrete* utopia' (121/122). 'The socialization of the productive forces, the elimination of barriers, perturbations, waste, permits', Lefebvre says, 'henceforth the reduction of work time and the transformation of work.' The phrase could have easily come from André Gorz, who, though unacknowledged by Lefebvre, was writing about work and Marxism in the same vein as Lefebvre wrote about the city and Marxism.[8] Yet Lefebvre is more playful with the idea that the end of work correlates positively with growing urbanization, more playful with both its perils and possibilities.[9] What transpires in 'urban society' is a 'service' economy, he says, as well as a gradual dominance of finance over industrial capital; he spots the germ of all this early on in capitalism's urban development, and assesses whether these circumstances will really expand or gradually undermine the mode of production itself. Lefebvre insists that a service economy does produce surplus value rather than simply realize it, and that an urban constituency as an agent of revolutionary change behooves something

more than 'the working class'. If anything, it bids its farewell.

Gorz and Lefebvre tacitly concur that Marx's *Grundrisse* is a source of extraordinary intellectual and political sustenance. Maybe Engels had never read Marx's *Grundrisse* notebooks; the latter, after all, had kept them under wraps for his own entertainment in gloomy London winter nights, *c.*1857/58. Had Marx's 'General' read these notebooks, he would have likely endorsed Marx's view that the generalization of automated production, of post-industrial 'immaterial' labor—which Marx there theorized—would see off capitalism in the long term. The rise of the so-called 'general intellect' didn't symbolize the end of history and capitalism's ultimate victory, but its very opposite, the beginnings of its systemic demise. Therein lies the promise of urban society, of planetary urbanization. 'Capital thus works towards its own dissolution as the form dominating production', is how Marx put it.[10]

In the *Grundrisse*, Marx says the possibility to release ourselves from work comes about when living labor has materialized itself in machines, when 'the technological application of science' conditions the entire productive character of capital. When the world of work is dominated by machines, when we become appendages to machines, to new technology, to informational digitized technology, when technology 'suspends' human beings from 'the immediate form' of work, when dead labor valorizes living labor, then and seemingly only then are we on the brink of something new and possible. 'To the degree that large industry develops', Marx says,

> 'the creation of real wealth comes to depend less on labor time and on the amount of labor employed than on the power of the agencies set in motion during labor-time, whose "powerful effectiveness" is itself in turn out of all proportion to the direct labor time spent on their production, but depends rather on the general state of science and on the progress of technology, or the application of science to production.'[11]

The degree to which human ingenuity, human imagination, scientific know-how, and the vital powers of the human brain and hand have become objectified in fixed capital—in capital that apparently rules over us—that's the degree to which urban society defines our lives. At this point, Marx says,

> 'labor time ceases and *must cease* to be a measure of value, and hence exchange value must cease to be the measure of use value. The surplus labor of the masses has ceased to be the condition for the development of general wealth.'[12]

And 'with that', he says, 'production based on exchange value breaks down, and the direct material production process is stripped of the form of penury and antithesis'.[13] In the *Grundrisse*, Marx, the dialectician, seems to think up his own negation: he seems to problematize his own law of value, the theory of value he'd formulated in *Capital*, positing it as being unhinged with the growth of immaterial labor. High-tech, profit-laden, scientific, knowledge-based activities assume their own, apparently free-floating value dynamics within the overall economy, little of which can be stocked, quantified, formalized or objectified.

There's perhaps, then, little reason to doubt Gorz's words on the matter:

> 'By furnishing services, immaterial labor has become the hegemonic form of work; material labor is displaced to the periphery of the production process, or is summarily externalized. Although it remains indispensable and even dominant from a quantitative standpoint point, material labor has become a "subaltern moment" of the process. The heart of value creation is now immaterial labor.'[14]

As other writers like David Harvey have convincingly shown, expansion and capital accumulation over the past couple of decades has also had a marked penchant for *dispossession*; it has shown zilch commitment to investing in living labor in actual production. To believe that labor-time is the source of profit nowadays is an absurdity. Profit these days has little to do with companies mass producing products at lower prices than their competitors. And it has little to do with them necessarily exploiting workers absolutely, prevalent as this still is.[15] Invariably, it's more to do with monopolization, with destroying competition within a given field, with *privatizing* the general intellect, with re-appropriating and cashing in on scientific expertise. Moreover, from this comes a profit in the form of rent, gleaned from such privatization of specialist knowledge; that is the surplus value: its yardstick isn't the temporal application of labor. The enormous growth in wealth and the rise in productivity in high-tech industries consequently mean more and more redundant workers. Their services, their living labor, their physical presence on the job, are rendered defunct, are no longer required: living labor is a species en route to extinction. Instead, there's automation, computer-aided production, computer-aided design, robotics and a coterie of human appendages; only a relatively small number of salaried jobs exist for the knowledge-based few. For the masses, Marx described their circumstances thus:

> 'Labor no longer appears so much to be included with the production process; rather, the human being comes to relate more as watchman and regulator to the production process itself … He steps to the side of the production process instead of being its chief actor. In this transformation, it is neither the direct human labor he himself performs [that counts], nor the time during which he works, but rather the appropriation of his own general productive power.'[16]

Those rendered superfluous, suspended from the immediate process of production, aren't, however, just factory workers and industrial minions; they are *all* categories of workers—white-collar, blue-collar and no-collar—and in developed as well as developing countries. Blessing or curse? To be freed from the relative privilege of salaried

exploitation, and/or from actual workplace exploitation? No more bosses, no more blue Mondays, no more watching the clock and living for weekends, dreaming of early retirement? Marx plainly saw this as both bad and good news. He sees a world that suspends labor, that revolves around 'dead labor', around the production of social life under the control of the general intellect, as pregnant with its contrary, as a 'moving contradiction'. On the one hand, a privileged minority prospers through specialist knowledge; on the other, there's a huge number of people who are left bereft of a job and a future and who have little recourse other than their own ingenuity, their own practical spirit of self-innovation (therein resides the potential good news). Yet, for them, a reduction in the time of 'necessary' salaried labor doesn't free up more disposable time for their own 'self-development'; it frequently spells endless hustle in a sector that was once called 'informal'. And there it's not so much intellectual knowledge that counts, that helps survival, as 'vernacular knowledge', learnt on the street, the hard way, graduating in the university of life, which is another way we can construe the general intellect. Once again the question: 'free' working time—blessing or curse? Likely both, because both *depend*: a million-fold relative surplus population who's a crucial facet of urban life everywhere; a million-fold relative surplus population who's equally a latent political constituency in the process of making itself, a 99% breaking down the gates of the city, remaking it as the urban realm.

3.   The flea market in the free market

In 2009, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) suggested half of the world's population, around 1.8 billion people, engage in employment somehow self-made and irregular, usually undocumented and always self-reliant.[17] These activities generate a staggering net worth of $10 trillion, earnings bettered only by the US economy (with its $14 trillion). (Even the industrial might and surging factory labor force in China pales quantitatively alongside the numbers of self-reliant toilers; and the security of Chinese workers may yet be short-lived once it is really tested against the vicissitudes of the world market.) In today's highly dynamic global economy, the math is simple: as productivity grows its 'official' rank and file workforce shrinks; as this 'official' workforce shrinks, an even more dynamic, quasi-spontaneous system of self-employment prevails, a cut and paste economy whose ranks are swelling as we speak. Moreover, its self-generating rate of job creation puts any government to shame; no Wal-Mart or Microsoft, no multinational or supra-international can compete, no private or public agent. By 2020, the OECD reckons two-thirds of workers of the world will be employed in this planetary system now generically known as '*Système D*'.[18]

'Système D' is the slang term used in the French Caribbean and Africa for so-called *débrouillards* (from *débrouiller*: to sort out, to manage, to figure out), those resourceful peddlers and hustlers, hawkers and street vendors who figure out their own lives for themselves, who pit their will and wits at street markets and unlicensed bazaars around the globe. Here self-reliance means self-reproduction and survival, and, for a few others, it announces 'Defiance'. 'System D' has come to replace what everybody used to call the 'informal' sector, with its connotations of clandestinity, of shady underworld wheeling and dealing, off the map of respectable economic gain, frequently taken as a problem and brake for a poor nation's rocky road toward 'development'. But, suggests Robert Neuwirth, an almost-resident expert on System D, a lot of people erroneously see the system as 'a kind of bastard ward of the state—a zone that is kept around because it ensures that people will have the minimum income required to survive, and thus will not revolt against the

existing order'.[19] Because System D is so widespread, so tied to the 'formal sector', so First World as well as Third (and Second) World, so crucial as an earner for most nations, so underground as to be positively above ground, that Neuwirth takes it all differently. System D is not only a respectable and honest form of employment for billions of people, he says, it can also be scaled up, is scaling itself up, is spreading its low-tech basis everywhere, providing jobs and bringing commerce and entrepreneurialism to neighborhoods that are off the standard economic and political radar. To take it as *only* self-reproduction, as self-exploitation, Neuwirth argues, as *only* letting governments of the world off their neoliberal hook, is an absurd denial of human ingenuity and will power.

Thus, from Los Angeles to Lagos, Guangzhou to Guadalupe, Accra to Akron, from Maxwell Street, Chicago to rua 25 de Março, Sao Paulo, from Canal Street to Clignancourt, a hyper-kinetic, DIY, open-air economy flourishes, repairing, recycling and selling, creating an urban space somewhere in-between yet in-between everywhere. Improvised yet organized in its improvisation, it's an economy populated by workers without any specific nation, 'strikingly independent, yet deeply enmeshed in the legal world'. Sometimes System D even provides public services, like transportation and refuse collection (as in parts of Mexico City).[20] 'It involves small-scale entrepreneurs but links them to global trading circuits. It is the economic way of the global majority, guided not by corporations or politicians or economists, but by ordinary citizens.'[21]

Mike Davis isn't mentioned by name, but we might read all this as Neuwirth's rejoinder to *Planet of Slums*, with its dystopian denunciation of the 'illusion of self-help'. Davis pretty much dismisses everything Neuwirth affirms; self-help is really petty-bourgeois claptrap, says Davis, an International Monetary Fund and World Bank ruse, an excuse for the withdrawal of the public sector from its obligations toward citizens. You now have

the 'right' to be a self-managed entrepreneur; you now have the 'right to the city', Davis implies, though not to a city 'made of glass and steel as envisioned by earlier generations of urbanists', but to one 'largely constructed out of crude brick, straw, recycled plastic, cement blocks and scrap wood. Instead of soaring toward heaven, much of the twenty-first-century urban world squats in squalor, surrounded by pollution, excrement and decay'.[22]

All of this, for Davis, is counter-revolutionary, not countervailing; System D merchants shape up as the veritable inert sack of potatoes that Marx, in *The Eighteen Brumaire*, ascribed to the French peasantry of his day, to *lumpenproletarian* vagabonds and mountebanks, pickpockets and tricksters, tinkers and beggars, knife-grinders and porters—'in short the whole indefinite, disintegrated mass, thrown hither and thither', onto the world market. But Neuwirth sees it otherwise, making a spirited defense of a demographic constituency that today asserts itself as an economic constituency; and, perhaps one day quite soon, might equally assert itself as Fanonesque revolutionary constituency. One day, in other words, political power might catch up with global demographics; a latent, lagging political force, a Here Comes Everybody, *waits* in the wings on world market street, is waiting to see itself as a global family of eyes. 'So here we are in this goddamned Troy without jobs', Sucus tells father Clement in Berger's *Lilac and Flag*, an old wives' tale of the megacity. 'That's history, son', says Clement. 'I don't know. It's not history', his son says. 'It's a kind of waiting.' 'There aren't regular jobs anymore. They've gone. There's no way …'.[23]

In 'advanced' countries like the USA, System D continues to gain ground, 'boosted by economic refugees—not foreigners but people pushed out of the legal economy after the downturn of 2008 and 2009'.[24] Yet a 'post-salaried-work' society needs to be kept in check politically; how to preserve the stability and legitimacy

of a system of work without workers, ensuring that workers (and ex-workers) remain consumers and somehow 'embrace' the world of immaterial labor? How to resist the legitimacy of that system? (The Occupy movement has begun to express clues, if not offered a few tentative answers.) Therein reside the threats, the threats that the desire for free time, the yearning to work less (a yearning a lot of the active workforce now seem to share in both the USA and Europe), isn't thrown back in people's faces, isn't used as a pretext for the neoliberal state to disengage, isn't, as Mike Davis spells out for the Majority World, used to promote 'self-help' strategies as self-reproduction, as self-exploitation, as a form of social control. The other threat is that joblessness, insecurity around work, part-time jobs, McJobs, temporary contracts and piecework tasks, performed casually and for little pay, translate into a never-ending, highly flexible pool of workers that enterprises can tap and turn away at the whim of their business cycles. Here the menace of Marx's 'industrial reserve army' looms: precariousness becomes the watchword for the 'relative surplus population' of our day, for the continent worker progressively produced by the immaterial valorization of capital.[25]

This relative surplus population boils down to the huge mass of under-employed and sub-employed workers likely to be part-time, on-call, self-employed, on temporary contracts or workfare recruits or interns, and who all succeed in making the official unemployment statistics look less dire than they actually are. These people are absorbed into an ever-expanding 'personal services industry', rendered even more ruthless and competitive by the burgeoning of temporary help agencies and contracting firms, coordinating the distribution of contingent labor-power whose supply and demand dances to the behest of outsourcing, cost-cutting companies. Temp agencies enable formerly displaced workers to assume new careers quite literally floating between jobs. In addition, not only have the numbers of people

temping grown enormously over past decades; the temporary help business is itself a booming industry.

Yet amongst these threats reside certain possibilities, even revolutionary potentialities. Maybe crises might be blessings rather than calamities? Maybe in times of crises, like the crisis that appears to be forever here nowadays, we can relearn to do without work, or really learn how to work the system for ourselves. In the USA, twenty-something NINJAs (No Income, No Jobs, No Assets) are learning how to reevaluate their 'career' choices, together with the whole notion of career itself; they're intelligent enough to know that they might not have anything deemed 'career' anymore. Since joblessness has lost a lot of its stigma in America, given there are so many people jobless, being in and out of work is no longer seen simply as a personal failing, and it may even be the cue to getting politically active. In fact, there is an entire generation of twenty-somethings almost everywhere, especially young men, often young men of color, often young men who live in specific neighborhoods with specific postal codes, who know they'll never work a salaried job. They know they can never count on either a pension or the 'right to work' because they know all that is an illusion that's real.

Maybe, during crises, we can hatch alternative programs for survival, other methods through which we cannot so much 'earn a living' as live a living. Maybe we can self-downsize or even refrain from work itself, and at the same time address the paradox of work that goes back at least to Max Weber: work is revered in our culture, yet at the same time workers are becoming superfluous; you hate your job, your boss, hate the servility of what you do and how you do it, the pettiness of the tasks involved, yet want to keep your job at all costs. Maybe there's a point at which we can all be pushed over the edge, 'set-free' as Marx said, or voluntarily take the jump ourselves, only to discover other aspects of ourselves, other ways to fill in the hole, to make a little money, to

maintain our dignity and pride, to survive off what André Gorz calls a 'frugal abundance'. *Voici* the economic 'rationality' of *Système D*, a streetwise rationality that isn't taught at any Harvard Business School.

We still hear voices on the Left bawling for full employment, still battling for a return to decent jobs for decent pay and decent benefits. Fredric Jameson makes it clear that Marx never advocated any full employment policy.[26] Nowadays, decent jobs are the rare exception, the very rare exception, so exceptional that it's safer to bet that there is no such thing as decent jobs anymore. If the Left thinks otherwise then it's backing the wrong horse, channeling its energies in the wrong direction, one that's going backwards not forwards. In a certain sense, the politicization of post-work society is already apace, receiving wider acknowledgment. If capitalists can do without workers, it's high time for workers to realize that they can do without capitalists, that they can devise work without capitalists, even work without the state. Moreover, that they can even build urban spaces for themselves, too, 'occupy' urban spaces, construct and reconstruct not only a post-salaried-work culture, but a 'post-city' as well. This, perhaps, is Henri Lefebvre's most brilliant and enduring insight, seemingly overlooked by all latter-day interpreters and critics: 'Work doesn't end in leisure', he says at the climatic point of *La pensée marxiste et la ville*, maybe at the climatic point even of Marxist thinking about the city, 'but in non-work. The city doesn't end up in the countryside but in the simultaneous supersession of the countryside and the city, which leaves a void that the imagination fills, with its theoretical projections and predictions.' 'What', Lefebvre asks, 'constitutes non-work and the non-city?' 'The urban', he tells us, defined by 'encounters, gatherings, centerings and de-centerings.' The supersession of work and the city has absolutely 'nothing in common with what has been formerly voiced'.[27]

* * *

There's something daringly radical about this vision, something daringly futuristic, adapted from Marx, from his journeyman postulations with Frederick Engels in *The German Ideology*, and brought to maturity in his thoughts on the supersession of capitalism in the *Grundrisse*. Whatever way you looks at things, there's no looking back now, no turning back, even if, glancing over your shoulder, you feel the tug of what came before trying to harness you, trying to lull you backwards, trying to entice your return through nostalgia. The supersession of capitalism, Marx insists, comes about *through* capitalism, by running through its corridor of flames; any post-capitalist society has to mobilize the heat and energy of capitalism, has to maximize and muster up all the generalized possibility of its development of science and technology. Post-capitalist society will somehow resemble, in form and content, what capitalism has bequeathed us, what remains solid in the transition, even if all aspects of ownership, control and functioning would be different after the transition. Those gigantic urban forms we have today would still be ours in the future; and here, again, there's no turning back, no breaking anything down, no reversion to quaint, archaic times, when cities were villagey and less intimidating—both conceptually and existentially. The same leap of the imagination Marx makes with technology and generalized fixed capital, outlined in a dozen-or-so pages of the *Grundrisse* (699–713), becomes grist to Lefebvre in a daring leap of his urban imagination. The same forces that generalize the intellect also generalize the city; generalize it so much, in fact, that the city is transformed into something post-city, just as the development of the productive forces is destined to eventually see off the concept of work itself. If *Capital*, as Jameson suggests, is really Marx's manifesto of unemployment, then it's also a manifesto of a society of unemployment that generalizes urbanization. To clarify the stake, we can again paraphrase Jameson: to think of all of this in terms of a kind of

global unemployment and urbanization rather than of this or that tragic pathos is, I believe, to be recommitted to the invention of a new kind of transformatory politics on a global scale.

4. Non-work and the post-city: encounters on world market street

Mike Davis is right about one thing: a good deal of the urbanization of the future will be constructed out of crude brick, straw, recycled plastic, cement blocks and scrap wood; and, for the moment at least, will continue to coexist alongside glass and steel and spectacular architectural forms. The latter, if not physically flimsy, are just as figuratively flimsy, especially when they have to withstand the economic tsunamis periodically sweeping through the global economy. Together, glass and steel, as well as prefabricated breeze block, comprise the secondary circuit of capital; urbanization flows with the charged energy of System D workers and their burgeoning habitats.

While it would be dangerously irresponsible to push too far the limits of System D at work, and *bidonvilles* at home, makeshift work and makeshift homes nonetheless have a handy habit of becoming more solid communities; lacking services one day only to find adaptive and inventive ways to install services another day; creating from a 'slum' life form a 'normal' everyday life form. Out of an ostensible disorderly 'rabble' emerges an orderly neighborhood that somehow works for its denizens. The same vitality at work is translated into the vitality of non-work, of neighborhood building, of vernacular knowledge in the face of general intellectual knowledge. The seemingly most 'primitive' pre-capitalist construction techniques reside within an over-abundance of the most advanced capitalist construction and work techniques; never, apparently, does the twain meet. Should it ever meet, should the fault line ever get reconciled between the internationalization of the

economy, on the one hand, and the marginalization of everyday life tearing apart the urban fabric, on the other, we'll know that some sort of *political encounter* has occurred, that some seismic tremor or volcanic eruption has 'taken hold'. The terrain of its taking hold, of its taking shape, will be the urban scale; all 'swerving' will doubtless *depend*, depend on numerous factors and conjunctures, on affections finding affinities, on a Here Comes Everybody congealing and gelling at a felicitous moment, on bodies coming together *here* as well *there* simultaneously, or almost simultaneously. At that imaginary point, economic self-empowerment would encounter political collective empowerment, and the favelas as well as Wall Street, the malls as well as main streets, will all get occupied and democratized by an inexorable and an insatiable *swarming*, by a sheer numbers game asserting the generalized force of a political subjects game, channeling itself virtually, connecting itself really, a giant planetary web of communication and just-in-time self-organization.

In *Magical Marxism*, near the end, I suggested this swarming, this Here Comes Everybody (HCE), would be an encounter *in* the city, a collective spirit expressive of the Right to the City (RTTC). I thought the formula might be thus: HCE = RTTC; a global protest movement of the future would fight for its Right to the City, do so as a 'cry and demand', exactly as Lefebvre identified. Now, I no longer think the Right to the City is, or should be, the banner under which a universal dreaming collective might assemble. Now, I think its unfolding, its coming together, its expressive collective desire, needs to be more open and expansive, reclaiming nothing other than its own impulse toward *democracy*, pushing outward onto the world, into a world without nation, and without borders; another way of seeing, of perceiving a mongrel world with a mongrel politics. One of the many interesting things that emerges from Neuwirth's *Stealth of Nations* is how

this mongrel quality marks today's workers of the world. Even in China, *pace* Mike Davis, a mongrelization is in motion; three-hundred-odd thousand Africans now live full-time in Guangzhou alone. Near its central station, in the Sanyuanli neighborhood, there are so many Africans that the district has become known as 'Chocolate City'; elsewhere in Guangzhou, Arabs, Argentinians, Turks and Filipinos have all come to hustle as System D workers; a bottom-up globalization that's never included in official statistics because it all takes places off record.

The cross-border global flows of System D migrants and immigrants is now a 'global back channel' (Neuwirth's term), meaning urban streets are, by definition, world market streets, streets that open themselves onto the world and along which the world comes to them. Down these streets, at these global bazaars, 'the world' and 'the city' meet one another in a passionate embrace; where 'the city' ends and 'the world' begins is anybody's guess. Everything is so integrated that what is the world and the city no longer makes any definitional sense: there's no 'in' and 'out' anymore. *New York Times* flatearther columnist, Thomas Friedman, recently wrote about the mismatch between a CEO's vision of the world and a politician's; the article is surprisingly suggestive for leftists. 'Politicians see the world as blocs of voters living in specific geographies', says Friedman,

> 'and they see their jobs as maximizing the economic voters in their geography. Many CEOs, though, see the world as a place where their products can be made anywhere and sold everywhere … In their businesses, every product and many services now are imagined, designed, marketed and built through global supply chains that seek to access the best quality at the lowest cost, wherever it exists. They see more and more their products today as "Made in the World" not "Made in America". Therein lies the tension. So many of "our" companies actually see themselves now as citizens of the world. But Obama is president of the United States.'[28]

Can people on world market street adopt the same kind of global perspective as a CEO, as a citizen of the world rather than, say, a Chinese worker? Can they, we, develop common notions based upon a shared global existence? To see oneself as a little cog in a great big expansive universe, yet see this great big expansive universe as clearly as the little cogs? To imagine oneself in the whole world, not just in one biddy corner of the world? (Thomas Friedman says that one day there'll be no more 'developed' and 'developing' countries, only HIES—High-Imagination-Enabling Countries—and LIES—Low-Imagination-Enabling Countries. Maybe this vision might one day work for people rather than just for capital?) To encounter others doing likewise, seeing oneself likewise, seeing the world likewise? To literally 'make' oneself as the world? From such a standpoint, the terrain for any post-work politics, or even for any global citizenship, would be somewhere beyond the factory gates, beyond the old city limits, somewhere *within* global everyday life, inevitably along world market street, in urban society. To be sure, the 'cry and demand' of a post-work, post-city politics won't likely be any cry and demand at all, since 'words' as such are unlikely to be expressed. Rather than words giving rise to any encounter, what would get expressed would depend on the encounter itself.

Lefebvre says capitalism, from its very inception, 'announced the complete urbanization of society'.[29] It was, still is, a revolutionary process, expelling from the immediate activity of production millions and millions of people, transforming the countryside, disrupting agrarian life, forcing people to flood into cities. But that is history—the use and abuse of history. Now, not only those involved in immediate production have been 'set free' from capitalist work; white-collar service workers, too, have been set free, former salaried workers. Now everybody has somehow been set free from the city: they've been 'liberated', as it

were, *by* urban society. The meeting of downsized workers and upsizing cities has fueled itself, fed off itself. The conjoining of both has resulted in the creation of a thoroughly urban society: a non-work and post-city society. Now a contingent, itinerant, surplus population, a 'butterfly' population, a 'floating' population (after Marx), flits between work, flits between places, floats in and out of spaces of marginality, avoiding clear flight paths and steady linear movement. Indeed, the whole trajectory of this butterfly population can't be accounted for within conventional steady-state aerodynamics, let alone within conventional steady-state economics.

With planetary urbanization, a planet full of people can no longer find steady work or steady homes, and a huge unwieldy inertia persists, an inertia based on a sort of *hypertrophy*. It's not that urban regions are too big, or that there's too many people; more that within current modes of societal organization we have a society that overreaches itself; not so much through technology as technocracy, not so much through over-population as *over-bureaucratization*, a 'double dependence', we've heard Lefebvre call it,[30] between *technocracy* and *bureaucracy*, between corporate and financial monopolization of bureaucratic techniques and bureaucratic monopolization of financial and corporate techniques. For society to change, a collective force possessing a similar inertia must be mustered up: either huge numbers of people have to be concerned; or, if the numbers are relatively small, enormous time for incremental change must be allowed.

5. Mob analysis and the fused group

In Isaac Asimov's sci-fi imaginary *Foundation*, there's a back flow in the historical-geography of his galactic urban empire, Trantor; Lefebvre hints at it in *The Right to the City* but doesn't elaborate.[31] So here's my take on it: the back flow for Asimov,

the necessary inertia, comes with so-called 'psychohistory', the brainchild of his central protagonist, mathematician Hari Seldon; Asimov's Seldon suggests psychohistory is 'mob analysis', operative like the kinetic theory of gases, implying that any densifying of human behavior, any human agglomeration (like urbanization), will create at a certain time and in a certain space a gathering of people that resembles a gathering of gases, a certain coming together of movement and stasis, of particles and waves. Moreover, this encounter will possess its own conditioned *kinetic energy*; sometimes negative energy, like indiscriminate rioting (British urban areas witnessed this not so long ago), but also positive energy, its own Brownian motion, perhaps generating an energy that's enough to alter the course of history (and geography).

'There were two conditions', Asimov says, 'that I had to set up in order to make psychohistory work, and they were not chosen carelessly. I picked them in order to make it more like kinetic theory.'[32] 'First', he says, 'I had to deal with a large number of human beings, as kinetic theory worked with a large number of molecules.' It had to be a Galactic Empire, a big, complex world, a huge world, with a huge population, like a universe in which planetary urbanization has taken shape. Second, 'I had to retain the "randomness" factor. I couldn't expect human beings to behave as randomly as molecules', Asimov says, 'but they might approach such behavior if they had no idea as to what was expected of them.'[33]

If he'd ever read Asimov, Jean-Paul Sartre would have probably called 'mobs' 'gatherings', or 'groups in series', the not-yet-consummated 'fused group'. The notion of the 'fused group' lies at the heart of *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, Sartre's magisterial work, his own favorite, which tried to critique dialectical reason in the name of a better dialectical reason, one that better informed and explained revolutionary practice. It's one, too, that worked out a constituted dialectic in which *individuals become*

the living temporalizations and spatializations of the group. Thus the constituted dialectic represents Sartrean dialectical reason, a dialectical intelligibility that 'explains the practical relations of individual functions within an organized group'.[34] In this dialectic, the individual becomes a willingly conscious component of not simply the mob but of the *revolutionary crowd*; people collectively constitute the dialectic itself, encounter one another as individuals within this dialectic, within its fused group, within its group in fusion.

For Sartre, the becoming of this dialectic—a 'psychohistorical' dialectic—follows distinctive steps: from alienated individuals to a 'series' of individuals, from mobs and 'serial gatherings' to groups, from groups that encounter each another, that bond with one another, to the elusive fused group and a so-termed 'third party'. The passage from one phase to another marks, for Sartre, the passage from revolutionary rehearsals to the real thing—to the veritable storming of the Bastille. This key moment of the 1789 French Revolution is fleshed out by Sartre to shed light on what constitutes revolutionary success and failure, and why. On 14 July 1789, insurgents blasted into the Bastille in an explosive assault that had been gurgling within Parisian everyday life. People's serial behavior had slowly been replaced by a new dimension of collective praxis. In seriality, individuals relate to one another *inertly*, passively, like the way individuals relate to one another in a line, in a queue, unified yet divided. In the seriality of 1789, the city of Paris was the field of the practico-inert, the passive staging of a puppet theater in which ordinary Parisians were the puppets. But as the people started to arm themselves against Louis XIV and his monarchy, a spate of violence and looting was unleashed, a spate of defensive violence; common action without either common organization or active totalization. Still, ever so steadily, the people got *active*, negated their own inertia and became conscious of themselves against an enemy, matching a group interiorization with an

exteriorization. From initial passive seriality, when people allowed themselves to be represented by a crooked and corrupt assembly, a collectivity began to organize itself, began to recognize itself in its actions and violence, in its contestation and spontaneity *against* that assembly. 'The gathering', says Sartre, 'perceived its reality as an organized being.'[35]

As such, the fused group began to emerge, founded upon the dissolution of serial gathering; first, the group melded as a collective process of negation; soon a 'positive determination of praxis' (357) really fused it, gelled it as well as ignited it. Typically complexly, Sartre says that 'a fused group is in fact still a series, negating itself in re-interiorizing exterior negations; in other words, in this moment there is no distinction between the positive itself (the group in formation) and this self-negation (the series in dissolution)' (356). All actions thereafter represented 'a constituted praxis, in and against the passive field'. The culmination of the fused group, says Sartre, is when the unity of its participants creates a new combination, an inventive fusion of people who represent themselves both as an 'I' and a 'we', a unity of me and you, of you and me—especially of you and me *against* them. The net product is a distinctively new synthesis, a Sartrean 'third party', in which 'I, myself' become at the same time 'we, the people'.

Again, Sartre puts it smartly yet intricately, also rather beautifully:

> 'through the third party, in effect, practical unity, as the negation of a threatening organized praxis, reveals itself *through* the constellation of reciprocities. From a structural point of view, the third party is the human mediation through which the multiplicity of epicenters and ends (identical and separate) organizes itself directly, as determined by a synthetic objective.'[36]

At such point, the people are a short step from being capable of blasting into the Bastille, that black, threatening fortress in Paris's Saint-Antoine district, the symbol of repressive power, not only a prison with

local inmates but a bastion with cannons that needed seizing. With the storming of the Bastille, this fabled, fused, third party 'interiorized as a phantom possibility of producing itself in the field of freedom'.[37]

There is much that's brilliant and suggestive in Sartre's account of the fused group from *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, of 'phantom possibilities' in the field of freedom; there's much that equips any latter-day freedom fighter urbanist and occupier, much that can inform our social media-organized praxis, and how we can reveal ourselves, express ourselves, through a 'constellation of reciprocities'. Maybe, unsurprisingly, there are also a few things that need updating in Sartre's thesis, because somehow they don't quite go anymore. The major qualm is the idea of a fused group smashing the state, breaking into it like 18th-century insurgents raiding the Bastille, dismantling it and then taking things over. Any post-capitalist experiment will always be in the course of transition, always in the course of adaptation, always resisting something in order to affirm itself, always negotiating its own internal power play alongside its will to empower itself. The act is rarely ever finished. In its search for autonomous self-affirmation and self-organization of everyday life, any fused group must wedge itself into state power, must create a *breach* within the interior of the neoliberal state's integration of political and economic life. Head-on confrontation, the sense of *smashing* something, probably won't create this breach, nor will the state be broken in any hammer blow.

Marx himself spoke of 'breaking state power', of 'smashing the state', when, in the autumn of 1870, Parisian workers tried to break French state power. Marx was skeptical about whether they'd succeed in this desire; he said any attempt to smash the state was the 'folly of despair'. Yet the following spring, during the Commune, a worker and citizen uprising became a vivid reality, and Marx changed his tune, greeting this spontaneous proletarian revolt with generosity, despite its unfavorable auguries. As Lenin put it in *State and Revolution*, Marx wasn't only enthusiastic about the heroism of the Communards, who, he'd said, had 'stormed heaven'; he equally regarded the event as a historic landmark in revolutionary practice, as a key experiment in advancing world proletarian revolution everywhere. It was a lesson to analyze and from which tactical lessons could be gleaned. Moreover, around the time of the Paris Commune, Marx wrote a letter to Kugelmann (12 April 1871), in which he claimed:

> 'If you look up the last chapter of my *Eighteen Brumaire*, you will find that I declare that the next attempt of the French Revolution will be no longer, as before, to transfer the bureaucratic-military machine from one hand to another, but to *smash* it, and this is the precondition for every real people's revolution on the Continent. And this is what our heroic Party comrades in Paris are attempting.' (Marx's italics)

Lenin drew a similar conclusion: 'To smash the bureaucratic machine', he said, 'briefly expresses the principal lesson of Marxism regarding the task of the proletariat during a revolution in relation to the state.' Still, despite Lenin and Marx's noble analytical intentions, *smashing* the bureaucratic state-financial machine is something no social movement is ever likely to achieve these days. The Communards discovered as much the hard way; they were, according to Lenin, working their way towards this goal, this goal of smashing the state, but they never quite reached that end. Maybe Lenin was asking too much—or too little—of the proletarian revolution? Because *smashing* doesn't seem quite right anymore: it's too impossible a practice and too simple an analysis. Not so much smashing the state as making a breach within it, as subverting it, as decoupling from the state's 'official' domain, as weakening its grip on civil society, loosening its political and bureaucratic straitjacket; that seems to me much more the order of the day, much more fruitful vocabulary in the contemporary age.

A liberated, autonomous realm is one in which new communes bloom, one in which the realm of the possible—another possible world—might be glimpsed. But it's a zone that must somehow be enlarged, must spread itself out, *horizontally*, made bigger and stronger on all sides and more resistant in its own self-affirmation at the core.

The Sartrean passage from serial mobs to third parties, from gatherings *encountering* one another to create a new heightened sense of unity and fusion—all of this continues to speak bundles about what needs to be done. Sartre says a 'gathering' [*rassemblement*] is some form of collectivity, a series of people, that's capable of constituting a group. 'Groups', accordingly, aren't so much people standing behind each other in a cinema line as 'an ensemble each of whose members is determined by the others in reciprocity'.[38] Sartre doesn't say it but what makes fusion happen within a group is when something 'takes hold', and here the idea of the *encounter* intervenes, and creates this swerving of history and geography. Its temporality is a shifting non-linear timeframe, a mix of real time and eternal time, a praxis taking hold synchronically and diachronically. Otherwise put, it takes time for self-awareness and common notions to emerge, for adequate ideas to develop, for constellations of people to invent and discover reciprocities. The gathering gathers momentum, digitally connects, forms mobs and crowds on the street, smart mobs and flash crowds, and the encounter begins and leads to new encounters, to new acts of fusion, to new speeds and tactics.

Around that point, the *geography* of the fused group becomes transformed, too, in special and important ways. Before the encounter, before the fused group took hold, 'the city', we might say, and its spaces, were just there, just latent, passive terrains of the *practico-inert*. I say 'city' because these spaces existed like dead labor in redundant fixed capital, objectified in the landscape, smacking of alienation, of non-life, of plain-old bricks and mortar, of concrete and steel. As Sartre says, the free group organizes to combat the 'passive action of the practico-inert' (556), of the city as alienating objectification. For urban spaces to come alive, they need to be occupied, taken over by dynamic social relations between people, by people there and elsewhere, elsewhere in other urban spaces, bringing those to life as well, creating a living, organic spatiality which isn't so much a 'constituent objectification' as a 'constituted subjectivation', the 'opposition and identity of the individual and the common'.[39] 'The crowd', John Berger says, 'sees the city around them with different eyes', sees itself in urban space, making this space, a de-centered yet fused urban realm, in which, finally, they are participants not pawns—citizens yearning to breath free.

Notes

1 Fredric Jameson, *Representing Capital: A Reading of Volume One* (London: Verso, 2011), 149.
2 Lefebvre, *La pensée marxiste et la ville* (Paris: Casterman, 1972), 7.
3 Lefebvre, *La pensée marxiste et la ville*, 45.
4 Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1969), 68–69.
5 Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*, 69.
6 Lefebvre, *La pensée marxiste et la ville*, 30–31.
7 Lefebvre, *La pensée marxiste et la ville*, 59 (emphasis in original).
8 Cf. André Gorz, *Métamorphoses du travail: la critique de la raison économique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1988); the text was translated into English as *Critique of Economic Reason* (London: Verso, 1989); see, also, Gorz's *Farewell to the Working Class* (London: Pluto Press, 1982) and *The Immaterial* (London: Seagull Books, 2010).
9 In *Megalopolis*, Gottmann, from a non-Marxist standpoint, had already begun hinting at such a correlation. In many ways, he was much more up to speed then (1961) than Lefebvre himself. In *Introduction to Modernity*, published the same year as Gottmann's masterpiece, Lefebvre was still only testing the water with his explorations into capitalist modernity and urbanization. In 'Notes on a New Town', he's preoccupied with French New Town development, which now seems like an archaic historical curiosity relative to the prevalence of megalopolitan development everywhere around the

world. Gottmann identified a 'quaternary family of economic activities', something different from simple 'tertiary' service activity, because the quaternary sector involves 'transactions, analysis, research, or decision-making, and also education and government'. Older 'city' divisions of labor were getting phased out, replaced by the rise of jobs requiring more intellectual training and responsibility, and these, said Gottmann, were the driving force of megalopolitan expansion (see Jean Gottmann, *Megalopolis* [Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1961], 576–577).

10 Marx, *Grundrisse* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), 700.
11 Marx, *Grundrisse*, 704–705
12 Marx, *Grundrisse*, 705 (emphasis added).
13 Marx, *Grundrisse*, 705–706.
14 Needless to say, the social threats and political prospects of so-called 'immaterial labor' and 'cognitive capitalism' have prompted lively debate amongst Marxists and post-Marxists. All more or less agree, however, that cognitive capitalism marks the crisis of capitalism, not the resolution of its dilemmas. For more details, see my *Magical Marxism* (London: Pluto Press, 2011), especially Chapter 5.
15 Apple made $13 billion in profits and $46 billion in sales during the final quarter of 2011 alone. Its iPads are made in Chengdu, China, by the Chinese company Foxconn whose starting pay for menial workers is $2 an hour who live in crammed dormitories for which they are charged $16 a month (see John Lanchester, 'Marx at 193', *London Review of Books*, April 5, 2012).
16 Marx, *Grundrisse*, 705.
17 Cited in Robert Neuwirth, *Stealth of Nations: The Global Rise of the Informal Economy* (New York: Pantheon, 2011), 18.
18 Neuwirth, *Stealth of Nations*, 19.
19 Neuwirth, *Stealth of Nations*, 179.
20 I've seen this one for myself, close-up, at Coalcalco rubbish dump, in the northernmost reaches of Mexico City, in an urban milieu that's more *Mad Max* than anything else. Puny little donkeys are everywhere in Coalcalco, clip-clopping along stoically, pulling rusty carts laden with bags of trash piled up high, sometimes bulging over the sides. They come by the dozen, in rapid succession, and donkey owners dispatch sacks of detritus into a deep crater in the earth. The carts come and go each weekday, off-loading 20 tons of trash a day, thanks to some 350 donkeys and as many horses who act as an ad hoc refuse collection service, a stand-in for the formal one the municipality doesn't have. Residents in surrounding neighborhoods leave the family garbage in sacks outside their front doors and before long donkeys pass by to whisk them

away. For their services, donkey proprietors receive a tip of several pesos and when the carts are full they deposit their loads at the town dump. A lot of these men were once farmers who worked the land, frequently their own land; yet now there's no rural land left, nothing green that hasn't been devoured by inexorable grey, by metropolitan expansion, by speculative metropolitan development.

21 Neuwirth, *Stealth of Nations*, 28.
22 Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums* (London: Verso, 2006), 19. More recently, Davis, with considerable hubris, has laid into what he takes to be 'post-Marxist' camps, into those theorists who live in countries 'where the absolute or relative size of the manufacturing workforce has shrunk dramatically' and who 'lazily ruminate on whether or not "proletarian agency" is now obsolete, obliging us to think in terms of "multitudes", horizontal spontaneities, whatever'. 'But this is not a debate', Davis says, 'in the great industrializing society that *Das Kapital* describes even more accurately than Victorian Britain or New Deal America. Two hundred million Chinese factory workers, miners and construction laborers are the most dangerous class on the planet. Their full awakening from the bubble may yet determine whether or not a socialist Earth is still possible' (Mike Davis, 'Spring Confronts Winter', *New Left Review* 72 (November/December 2011): 15). Chinese workers and ex-workers will doubtless play their relative part in pushing towards a post-capitalist politics; but to posit them as 'the most dangerous class' seems politically rhetorical as well as analytically dubious.
23 John Berger, *Lilac and Flag* (London: Granta, 1990), 49, 114.
24 Neuwirth, *Stealth of Nations*, 151–152.
25 Cf. Marx, *Capital Volume One* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), 794–802.
26 Fredric Jameson, *Representing Capital*, 149. 'Marx does not call for the correction of this terrible situation', Jameson says, 'by a policy of full employment; rather, he shows that unemployment is structurally inseparable from the dynamic of accumulation and expansion [149] … To think of all of this in terms of a kind of global unemployment rather than of this or that tragic pathos is, I believe, to be recommitted to the invention of a new kind of transformatory politics on a global scale' (151).
27 Lefebvre, *La pensée marxiste et la ville*, 68.
28 Thomas Friedman, 'Made in the World', *New York Times*, January 28, 2012.
29 Lefebvre, *La pensée marxiste et la ville*, 137.
30 See Andy Merrifield, 'The Politics of the Encounter and the Urbanization of the World', *City* 16 (3) (June 2012): 282.

31 Lefebvre, *Le droit à la ville* (Paris: Anthropos, 1968), 123–124.
32 Isaac Asimov, *Gold: The Final Science Fiction Collection* (New York: HarperPrism, 1995), 224.
33 Asimov, *Gold*, 224.
34 Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (London: Verso, 1976), 505.
35 Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, 356.
36 Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, 367 (emphases in original).
37 Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, 363.
38 Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, 828.
39 Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, 559.

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