

The day after the insurrection

On First Revolutionary Measures

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It's been seven years since the cratering of the global economy began in late 2007. While the concerted efforts of the dominant classes and their various client states have enabled, for the time being, the blowing of more bubbles on financial and other markets, a real recovery remains elusive: considerably more than half of Spanish and Greek youth remain unemployed, to cite just one symptom of the predicament into which contemporary capitalism has drifted. This same period has been marked, predictably, by wave after wave of social unrest and riots, whether they took the form of food riots across the world in 2007–08, the conflagrations of Athens and Thessaloniki in late 2008 and after, or indeed the properly 'historical' riots – to cite Alain Badiou's useful formulation – of Tunis and Cairo in early 2011, in which for the first time since the late 1970s mass mobilizations deposed Western-backed, doddering autocrats with relatively surprising if deceptive swiftness.

The initial breakthroughs of the Arab Spring appeared to give rise as much to the worldwide movement of the 'squares', be they in Madrid, New York, Athens or Oakland, as they did to revolts across the Middle East, including those taking ferocious turns in Libya and Syria. In the meantime, Italy, France and the UK, largely untouched by the Occupy movement, experienced at times robust anti-austerity movements, with those in the UK punctuated by the massive anti-police rioting and looting of August 2011. After an uncertain lull, the pace of these revolts picked up again, seeming to ping back and forth between Brazil and Turkey, then to Bosnia and Herzegovina, and pausing for some time in the particular violent and in some ways unsettling Maidan square occupation in Kiev. The economic crisis beginning in late 2007 seemed to set large portions of the earth ablaze, some areas burning slower, some hotter, than others, but all of them sparks thrown off by a single event, and colluding obscurely together in the formation of a singular time: a time of riots, the likes of which echo the virulence of the machine-wrecking

temps des émeutes of the 1830s and 1840s, the eve of the organized workers' movement of Western Europe.

Most analysts of this accumulation of revolts have explained their concatenation and seeming consistency – shaping the present as a time of struggles – through reference to the economic crisis, if not as their cause, then as their objective correlate. The exact relation between these two phenomena remains, with the exception of the anti-austerity movements cited above, obscure. It is the great interest of a book like *The Coming Insurrection*, published in 2007 by a mysterious 'Invisible Committee' some six months before the unravelling later that year, to have anticipated certain aspects of the period I've just described. In a certain sense, the insurrection the book projects into the imminent future is keyed to a certain figure of crisis or collapse. But the crisis diagnosed there is less the punctual and objective buckling of the global economy than a set of interlocking devolutions, a longer-term structural decomposition of a world whose various components or devices (work, the economy, the city, the self) can no longer effectively mediate and manage the polarizations and antagonisms that structure what an earlier iteration of the 'Invisible Committee' (in Tiqqun's 2001 *Introduction to Civil War*) dubbed, Negri-like, 'Empire', and which here was dubbed simply 'civilization'.

The corpse autopsied in *The Coming Insurrection* was largely a French one, with the 2005 *banlieue* riots and the most radical tendencies within the 2006 anti-CPE movement placed centre stage. The book is all the same shaped by the violence of the anti-globalization mobilizations in Genoa in 2001, and by the more distant experiences of the *piqueteros* movement in Argentina in 2001 and even the 'Black Spring' autonomy riots of the Kabylie region of Algeria of the same year. *The Coming Insurrection* paid special heed to the emergence of a tactical innovation that seemed to link the *piqueteros* movement and the advanced fractions of the anti-CPE movement: the tendency, at a distance from the workplace and

without recourse to the classical strike, to *block* or blockade the flows of the economy and the circuitry of capitalist valorization. What defined this analysis as properly ‘insurrectionary’, however, was the coupling of this tactical thrust with a strategic initiative: the necessity to build what the authors call communes or, better, *territories*. A coordinated struggle on two fronts: attack the economy by means of the blockade while building spaces or sites at a remove, if not necessarily at a distance, from metropolitan concentrations or networks.

Premières mesures révolutionnaires (*First Revolutionary Measures*), a short book or pamphlet published by La Fabrique in 2013, has been called a successor or sequel to *The Coming Insurrection* (also published by La Fabrique), despite its predecessor being mentioned in passing just once. The book is signed not by the Invisible Committee but by the publisher of La Fabrique himself, writer, historian and former surgeon Éric Hazan, and someone using the handle ‘Kamo’ (the *nom de guerre*, not incidentally, of an Armenian Bolshevik particularly close to Joseph Stalin, who spent his pre-October days conducting revolutionary expropriations of banks and escaping from prisons, stories of whose ruthlessness are legion). If *First Revolutionary Measures* is indeed a follow-up to the 2007 book, the emphasis is not on verifying that earlier text’s hypothesis or wager; nor is it an attempt to come to terms with the origins and recent impasses of the global movement of the squares, a movement that found no purchase in France. The global economic crisis is rarely invoked, save to underline the way that the rhetoric of ‘crisis’ – the term almost always appears between inverted commas – has become a weapon of the neoliberal state, a disciplinary device more than a set of material pressures that constrain and determine both class activity and the range of options available to states themselves. Egypt is mentioned only four times, and in passing. If the *banlieue* riots of 2005 were a crucial figure in *The Coming Insurrection*, the riots of London in 2011 appear nowhere on the book’s radar.

The story that is told is once again a largely French one, even more so than was the case with its reputed precursor, with constant invocations of the French Revolution, the Paris Commune, and even the fate of the ‘commune’ as an administrative unit of the French state. Strangely, even the mobilizations against a proposed change in retirement age in the autumn of 2010, which brought onto the streets as many as 3 million people, are not mentioned. This same movement witnessed a particularly formidable

renewal of the blockade tactic invoked so centrally in *The Coming Insurrection*; blockades that, often involving interventions by militants not tied to a specific worksite, were particularly effective in choking off fuel supplies. More than a third of the petrol stations in France ran dry before the Sarkozy government decided to break the blockades with riot police (‘The right to strike does not give anyone the right to block things’, pleaded the minister of the interior). What *First Revolutionary Measures* invokes instead are a handful of less visible and less ‘metropolitan’ struggles or sites, but ones which nevertheless echo some of twin axes of *The Coming Insurrection*: the blockage of capitalist flows and the formation of collective islands or oases in the imperial desert. First, there is the two-decade struggle of the ‘inhabitants of Susa Valley’ in the Piedmont region of north-west Italy against the drilling of a massive tunnel for a high-speed train line connecting Lyon and Turin, and a similar campaign, said to be carried out by the ‘peasants of Nantes’, against the building of an airport near Nantes in the town of Notre-Dames-landes. (Anti-capitalist militants of all stripes, among others, have also played a significant role in these struggles.) Then there are two small but relatively well-known villages: the notorious, tiny, Tarnac in remote central France, long associated with the reputed authors of *The Coming Insurrection* and the subject of a ruthless ‘anti-terrorism’ campaign on the part of the French Ministry of the Interior, and then what a recent, sympathetic book by Dan Hancox called the ‘village against the world’, the Andalusian town called Marinaleda and its worker co-operative.¹

If *The Coming Insurrection* set out to demonstrate both the imminence of an insurrection that would quickly overtake today’s parties of order and to describe how such a post-’68 insurrection might – or perhaps should – look, the refrain that echoes throughout *First Revolutionary Measures* is ‘the day after [*le lendemain*] the [victorious] insurrection’ (a phrase appearing no fewer than five times in this slender volume). In a certain sense, the insurrectionary scenario is not drawn at all in *First Revolutionary Measures*; we are, to the contrary, suspended between the contemporary struggles of the sort I’ve already invoked, on the one hand, and a kind of fiction or even myth of the revolutionary aftermath, on the other hand: the measures to be taken in order to create, as the central section of the book’s title has it, an ‘irreversible’ situation. How do we ensure that a revolutionary situation prolongs itself – that it *takes* – rather than becoming prey, as has invariably been the

case historically, to counter-revolutionary pressures, to relapses, and to a restoration of the old order?

In a certain sense it is precisely this question that does not get formulated by Hazan and Kamo. *First Revolutionary Measures* starts out from the assumption that an insurrectionary situation ('In a country like France', at least) would take the form of a pure and simple 'evaporation of power' – that is, the dissolution of state power into what the text calls on several occasions a 'void': 'the state apparatus has dissolved, its remnants twisting in the void.' What is more, 'power' is often here associated with the governing elites, the personnel who administer the state, and the offices and buildings they occupy in doing so. Such elites will be, according to the authors, 'dispersed' in the void created by the evaporation of power; what is decisive is to keep them dispersed, prevent them from gathering, meeting up, forming a new government, kick-starting the machinery of the state. This rather limited conception of power gives rise to some powerful pages on the theme of revolutionary vengeance in the latter half of the book. And the historical record is clear on the matter: the need to run a state or an economy after a revolution often requires the reinstallation of those same *ancien régime* technocrats and administrative personnel initially sent running in the first phases of the insurrection. This perspective, all the same, remains wedded to a vision of revolution – and power – dating from the period of the French Revolution. The image of power proposed in these pages tends to lessen the impact of the great revolutionary failures of the past century, the lessons that they gave: that power is also a matter of impersonal forms of domination, whether they be various form-determinations of the capitalist order (value-form, commodity-form and so on) or the diagrams of discipline and control we associate with the analyses of Foucault – and Tiqqun.

In another sense, however, Hazan and Kamo do pose the question of the irreversible. The key to avoiding the return of the old order is, paradoxically, to avoid consolidating, securing or otherwise *protecting* the gains of the revolution. To create the irreversible, then, we must do away with what the revolutionary tradition has called the *transition* period: a precarious phase of uncertain duration that inevitably comes between the conclusion of a tentatively victorious insurrection and the construction of a new society or the emergence of an array of new forms of life. Transition in this tradition is a particularly troubled or tricky notion, involving a conceptual and practical torsion so arduous as to have never been successfully

pulled off. It involves the commandeering of the machines, devices and categories of the older order, put in the service of the defeat of that same order. This has typically entailed first and foremost a restoration of the functions of the state, and particularly its repressive apparatuses, invariably mobilized in order to meet the very real threat posed by regrouping remnants of the former dominant class. Such a transitional state, consolidating and protecting fragile or larval forms of proletarian power, would have as its task both the stamping out of these threats – which, as threats, can remain virtual and therefore can never be fully eradicated – and, even more improbably, the organization of its own disappearance in some indeterminate future. *First Revolutionary Measures* can be said, in a certain sense, to undersell the threat posed by the very governing elites they suspect will simply disperse in the void of a dissolved or evaporated state power. It is this threat that has justified, historically, the retention of the most repressive dimension of state power, armed force. Revolutions are almost always also wars, civil wars.

These mandates are further compromised with the introduction of matters of material life, and of the capture and reworking of the productive apparatus. After an insurrection, transitional states have historically felt compelled to relaunch production after an intense period of work stoppages, with capital fleeing to safer shores. This turnabout, in which a full-scale assault on the economy must be undone at the prodding of the state and under the sign of a new 'battle for production' (to use a phrase that has appeared more than once in such situations), has generally required the threat of force, including a sudden banning of strikes. If we add to this a need for a new technocratic layer or class to manage an 'economy', to coordinate work and consumption, activity and survival, in the absence of markets – though black markets do tend to operate in the shadows, and must be reckoned with – we see how open-ended and horizonless the transition period can look, confronted with this unnavigable terrain.

Much of the analysis of the long central section of the *First Revolutionary Measures* is concerned with preventing a return not of *ancien régime* personnel, but of the basic categories organizing the imperial order: work, the economy, money, and the configuration of territory and the built environment. And yet the contradictions structuring the transitional period linger, even within the title itself. For the notion of revolutionary 'measures' has a long and at times admirable history, but one invariably tied to the

durational figure of an in-between phase and what the old workers' movement called transitional *programmes* (of which the Gotha and Erfurt programmes of German social democracy are, perhaps, the best known). Such a programme is generally structured around a series of problems or questions – whether they be those of gender, housing or the place of the peasantry and the countryside – and a set of corresponding measures meant to address them. The taking of revolutionary measures is first and foremost the issuing of decrees and their implementation, generally under the threat of force. They have largely presupposed the persistence of a form of state power, and have targeted certain aspects of the capitalist economy. First revolutionary measures have taken aim at the legal form of property ownership, and the existence of commodity markets. Such measures entail a confiscation of private property and capital by collective or state powers, and the abolition of markets and commodities in favour of a planned production oriented towards meeting needs.

A planned economy of this sort would take aim in turn at labour markets, at the selling of labour-power in exchange for a wage. A dramatic transformation of work is at stake: the elimination of a vast array of unproductive labour that emerges in the interstices of advanced capitalist economies, a corresponding elimination of the total amount of work necessary for a society to meet its basic needs, a redistribution of this same aggregate of socially necessary labour across society, bringing into the workforce both the formerly unemployed and those who were, in the old order, as owners of capital, immune from the compulsion to work. Paired with this redistribution of necessary labour there would also be a regular rotation of tasks, both to prevent too rigid a division of labour and to compel all social fractions and layers to address and participate in the most arduous or least pleasant forms of work, be they the management of garbage and socially produced waste, the picking of fruit, or the caring for the young, old or infirm.

The measures proposed by Hazan and Kamo are in this regard largely classical. The first reality to be confronted the day after the insurrection is the fact that millions of people will be out of work: not simply on strike, but without jobs, whether because production is still paralysed, or because the vast majority of jobs in high-income countries will indeed evaporate overnight. *First Revolutionary Measures* rightly emphasizes that what is stake in such a vast liquidation of unnecessary labour is not creating work for the unemployed but using such an occasion to sever the

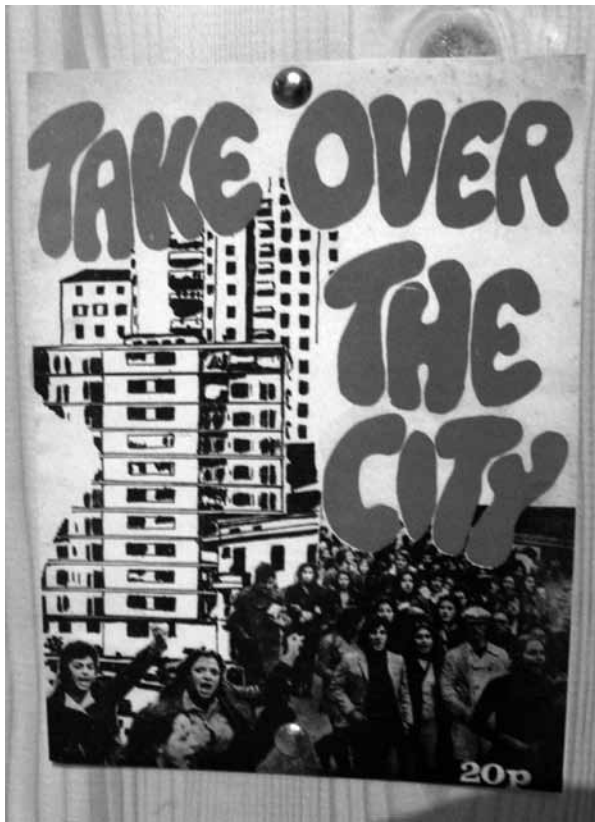
link between work – or labour time – and the 'right to existence': 'What can, what should be done on the day after the insurrection is to disconnect work and the right to existence, to abolish the individual necessity to 'earn a living'. Hazan and Kamo are well aware that such language has been used in innumerable reformist programmes of the Left, and resounds today across the European Left among those who organize around the idea of a universal basic income. Despite the critique they offer of these schemes, the measures they propose to snip the ligature between 'work and the right to existence' remain ambiguous. For if what *FRM* proposes reproduces, in its basic scheme, the core of the classical worker's movement programme, the reduction of '*necessary labour*' (Hazan and Kamo's italics) would entail not only the elimination of many forms of employment and the rotation of tasks across a given society or part of society; it would entail the entry of all into social activity to make these measures possible to begin with: *work will be compulsory for all*.

The approach of *First Revolutionary Measures* to this thorny matter is to restrict the scale at which the matter of onerous necessary labour and task rotation is to be addressed, either within the single unit of production or collective – a hospital, for example – or at the local, village, commune or even neighbourhood level. The example of the hospital is particularly exemplary and powerful, given the role health and health care play in the contemporary capitalist world (huge concentrations of capital in medical equipment and medicines, extreme specialization of capacities and knowledges). Hazan, the former surgeon, and Kamo propose the liquidation of many useless activities within the hospital, as well as the formation of constantly changing management teams composed of medical personal, orderlies and patients. Surgeons would find themselves compelled to perform some of the duties of orderlies (the reverse, we presume, would not occur). And the hospital, in turn, would no longer be an isolated 'stronghold' within which the 'medicalization of populations' occurs, but would turn towards diffusing throughout a given territory a 'disposition to care', forms of affective and medical knowledge.

But the appeal to the commune or neighbourhood – to the local, to the 'small' or intimate – is no doubt meant to marshal or mobilize the forms of attachments and obligations to family, friends and comrades, obviating the need for any external compulsion to work. Indeed, the compulsory nature of those tasks now experienced as onerous or abject,

in so far as they would be distributed equally at a local level, would not only be undertaken 'freely' or 'voluntarily', indeed, with pleasure [*volontiers*]. They would, to the extent that responsibility for them would be shared out equally, no longer be abject to begin with:

Gladly [*Volontiers*], for in my neighbourhood, in my commune, each will freely accept one of these essential tasks because its sense will be obvious [*s'imposera*] to everyone.... The crew of a garbage truck can be a small, joyous and tight-knit group if it is made up of volunteers who will perhaps do something else the next month. The attachment to comrades at work, as one sees all the time in the sad enterprises of capitalism, has the power to push the painful nature of the task into the background.



Reduction of the time of work, liquidation of unnecessary forms of work, the bringing of the unemployed and the leisured classes back into production, the rotation of tasks, particularly those dealing with the onerous or abject: such would be the Transitional Programme in its distilled, classical form. With slightly unnerving assuredness, the authors contend that 'necessary labour will continue to decrease as it has continually done since the end of Fordism and the electronic revolution.' Similar formulations have been produced for the last half a century. What has this automation produced? The reduction of necessary labour-time *and* an increase

in the rate of relative surplus-value extraction, not to mention the idling of much of the working population in the service sector, rather than a pure and simple reduction of time-at-work. What is more, such scenarios – that automated production processes, stripped of the fetters of capitalist property relations, will simply free humanity from the servility of work – leave intact the immediate production process or more generally the nature of work more generally in its most industrialized formatting. It is the very classicism of this account of the 'abolition' of work that leaves to the side a great weakness of these programmatic schemes: in almost every scenario thrown up by the organized workers' movement, the reduction in necessary labour-time does little to affect the nature of work itself, or that of the immediate production process.

As *First Revolutionary Measures'* constant reference to the scale of the neighbourhood, village or commune makes clear, the end of work as we know it – its reduction if not abolition, at least – will depend on the suppression of another classical antinomy, the opposition between city and countryside: an opposition both exacerbated and scrambled by contemporary metropolitan proliferations. The example of garbage collection is telling. The transformation of abject and compulsory tasks into joyous, or at least less demoralizing work, requires the pressures, obligations and affective ties found among those who are near, be they comrades, friends or neighbours. This is why the key operation or process emphasized by the authors is the reversal of tendencies towards breakneck urbanization, a dispersion of metropolitan concentrations, indeed a repopulation – if not re-peasantization – of the countryside. On page after page, what is invoked is the appropriate *scale* for collective life. The right measure is, with a few exceptions (transportation, energy production, the dismantling of nuclear plants), always found at the 'local' level. How this is to be done is not clear; some better understanding of the perhaps irreversible processes that, over the past half-century, have produced our 'planet of slums' (Mike Davis) in the first place would no doubt be a first step.² The core intuition is hard to contest: people live in cities primarily 'because in the countryside there is no work to be found', rather than out of any affection for the life of cities. The choice, for vast swathes of humanity, is simple if also grim: 'better to remain a temporary security guard or clean subway cars, better to spend four hours a day going to and from work, than to die of hunger.' The contention is that not only do former peasants move

to cities in search of work; they remain there only because work is compulsory, even if the work found is the most menial of 'immaterial' labour, the very form of work that will be immediately eliminated or done collectively 'the day after the insurrection'. That most of those forced to migrate to cities in low-income countries do not find properly waged work at all, but will disappear into a shadowy informal sector in the favelas and slums, is not frontally addressed here. What underpins the argument of Hazan and Kamo, however, is that it is the need for work that keeps most of humanity in these miserable concentrations, and that 'the end of obligatory work' will occasion a massive exodus from the cities.

There is no doubt that a radical overturning of capitalist societies will require an equally radical redistribution of people in space, moving them closer to sites of production, and especially to the growing and harvesting of food. But a repopulation of the countryside – itself by now totally ravaged and reshaped by the 'Green Revolution' – would require, in its turn, a radical transformation of the material landscape itself, a reworking and partial dismantling of the productive infrastructure altogether. It is one thing to imagine the circulation of goods across vast spaces, or to imagine populations becoming nomadic, circulating between territories and activities; it is another to envision a relocalization of production. The material obdurateness of the built environment – cities, roads, ports, factories – will mount a resistance far greater than any political enemy.

The current system of production is not only concentrated in factories that are located oceans and continents away from those who will eventually consume what they cheaply pump out; it is part and parcel of a global spatial circuitry bridging chains of real separations, all ultimately founded on the isolation of work as activity unto itself, posited over and against 'life'. This separation is literalized spatially in an apparatus dependent upon locating productive activity thousands of miles from high-income countries and their service-sector cities. What the material heaviness of these infrastructures resists is the phantasm of the political or what the Hazan and Kamo call 'popular will [*volonté*]',

the decisiveness of the pure decree. 'First' revolutionary measures generally take the form of decrees – the abolition of private property, for example – backed by the threat of force. But the world these measures act upon is quite unlike what the authors claim, for example, money to be: 'no longer a palpable matter, no longer even dispersed piles of pieces of paper, but now merely a sum of bits stored in secured computer networks'. If the wealth held by banks might, on the day after the insurrection, be redistributed in a 'perfectly equitable' manner 'through a few clicks on the central servers of the large banks of a country', the relocalization of production and the end of the opposition between city and country will not. Which does not change the fact that the authors are perfectly lucid when it comes to identifying this antinomy as among the most crucial to be attacked the day after the insurrection. What remains to be seen, and for the moment to be contemplated with a great deal of scepticism, is that an exodus towards the countryside – and not just a 'back to the land movement' such as the authors invoke at one point – will be undertaken by billions willingly, gladly: *volontiers*. Such a scenario, even were it plausible, nevertheless raises thorny and historically tested questions regarding the form relations between communes and productive centres would take, or what kinds of mediations would arise that would replace both the unconscious logic of the law of value and the state-mandated machinery of economic planning.

When *First Revolutionary Measures* invokes as exemplary – over and against, implicitly, the metropolitan movements unfolding in the current crisis – the remote struggles of the 'inhabitants' of the Susa



Valley and that of the 'peasants' of Notre-Dame-des-Landes against an airport, it is because, as the authors write, these conflicts are only the 'tip of an enormous iceberg', those attracting the most media attention. The submerged part of the iceberg is associated with the loss of 'cultivable land' to cities – almost 400 acres a day, according to a French ministry that *First Revolutionary Measures* cites – and the transformation of uprooted peasants into 'miserable migrants' by the proliferation of Chinese megalopolises. The struggles against these processes, while widespread in low-income countries, are only obliquely or implicitly invoked. The authors turn instead to the small villages of Tarnac and Marinaleda, in France and Spain respectively. A look at the history and activity of the latter – the goings-on in Tarnac remain relatively obscure – is instructive.

To be sure, the history of this community is remarkable, with a profile rare enough in Europe since the 1970s. Recently drawing headlines for its mayor's having spearheaded the looting of a supermarket and redistributed the takings to 'the poor' (a distant, softer echo of the *anarquismo expropiador* of the pre-Civil War years), the co-operative the village is best known for was set up after villagers squatted on the nearby uncultivated land of a fabulously wealthy noble family. However admirable, advanced and indeed exemplary these actions remain, it is telling to find a book proposing the end of obligatory work, as *First Revolutionary Measures* does, extolling the village's 'zero percent unemployment', or the fact that all workers in the co-operative receive equal wages. It goes without saying that the items produced by the collective are sold on markets, subject to the pressure of capitalist competition. If the struggles in Notre-Dame-des-Landes and the Susa Valley are praised for their consistency in the absence of 'leaders [*chefs*]', Marinaleda is lauded for having re-elected its mayor – the mediagenic 'Robin Hood', Juan Manuel Sánchez Gordillo – continuously for three decades. The collectively owned houses built by individual workers or groups of workers, a truly admirable arrangement, are constructed from materials supplied for free by a sympathetic centre-left regional government of Andalusia.³ Hazan and Kamo mention that the co-operative 'produces artichokes, peppers, olives...' It is not mentioned that after the seizure of the Duke of Infantado's fields, some 3,000 acres, in 1991 – after a decade of courageous direct action⁴ – the primary product to be cultivated, olives, was chosen because their harvesting and processing is particularly labour-intensive, thus ensuring the most

work for the most villagers. The collective was originally formed in view of offering stable employment to the under- or seasonally employed poor day-labourers typical of Andalusia – meeting a need the centre-left post-Franco political coalitions were unable to accomplish through the worn channels of reform.

These wary observations are in no way meant to cast aspersions on the real achievements of the village of Marinaleda, or on the importance of those hardly visible struggles indexed by the conflicts in the Susa Valley or Notre-Dame-des-Landes, those taking place under the radar in China, India, Brazil and elsewhere. I want merely to point to some of the stubborn, material limits that would be confronted 'the day after the insurrection'. Maurice Brinton notes that after the insurrection in Portugal in 1974, workers had to respond to capital flight by taking over factories and farms and running themselves, only to have to compete on capitalist markets in order to *pay themselves wages*: 'In Portugal the price paid for the enhanced internal democracy of certain workshops or farms was often a lengthening of the working day, or an intensification of the labour process to "allow" the self-managed unit to remain economically "viable"'. The collapse in Argentina in 2001 also witnessed such scenarios, despite or in tandem with the intensity and innovations in struggles there.

The experiments in Marinaleda hardly rival the collectivizations in Spain of 1936–37, undertaken of course under the watch of anarchist militias, and in the midst of an anti-fascist war carried out by a Popular Front government. Marinaleda emerged in the shadow of the unravelling of Spanish fascism, but not in the midst of an insurrectionary situation. In any case, the analyses of *First Revolutionary Measures* implicitly invite us to oppose the initiatives in Andalusia, the Susa Valley and Notre-Dames-des-Landes – indeed struggles across the world against the imposition of metropolitan forms of life – to the more metropolitan mass movements of the crisis period. When Hazan and Kamo do mention this unrest unfolding in the crisis, particularly 'in Spain, Greece and Portugal', they refer not to the mass democracy of the squares but to 'the strange idea of *integral co-operatives*', in which 'not only production, but life as a whole is organized'. Hazan and Kamo differentiate these co-operatives from the classical figure of the workers' council, of the sort that emerged after all in the Portuguese experience of 1974–75, and encountered the limits Brinton describes. It is not clear that the idea of an 'integral co-operative' of the sort referenced – the best-known and most

savvy is probably the *Cooperativa Integral Catalana*⁵ – is a true successor to such councils, however: the reactivation of the nineteenth-century form of the co-operative is one symptom of its limits. Their use of alternative, local currencies is another, but one that in a certain sense would not trouble a book like *First Revolutionary Measures*, which makes a point of excluding the abolition of *money* from the revolutionary programme, on the bizarre premiss that it is an error to be associated with Bolshevik war communism and even the dictates of the Khmer Rouge. But money ineluctably tends to accumulate and is thereby typically transformed into capital – that is, command over labour. For a book that rightly projects the horizon of revolutionary process as nothing less than the abolition of the *economy* – the end of production as an isolated activity, of work as measurable human activity exchanged against a wage – this is a curious concession.

First Revolutionary Measures ends on a cautious note, with a coda devoted to ‘observing how our enemies are already arming themselves against the upheaval threatening them’. Hazan and Kamo propose two potentially incompatible scenarios: a return of ‘fascism’, on the one hand, and an ‘infinite degradation’ of the figure of the state, on the other. They are quick to dissociate the return of fascism from the mass movement forms of the 1930s – speaking instead of a ‘fascistic permeation’ of the ideological and political climate – in a way that does not adequately address or anticipate the revolt in the Ukraine and subsequent civil war, the emergence of Golden Dawn in Greece, or the role the crisis has had in giving rise to these movements. The second horizon projected by the authors seems, in any case, more pertinent: ‘a sort of endless end ... a dissolution of the current order without any explosion’. The dramatic example of Somalia is invoked in sketching out a kind of worst-case scenario: a withering away of the form and function of the state, replaced by warlords and webs of communication technology (as everyone knows, the only things that continue to work in places like Somalia and Haiti are mobile phones), and even the implementation of a ‘new cybernetic control of populations’. What is key to this vision is a new geopolitical division of the planet into zones, and in particular the production of ‘increasingly nightmarish zones of abandonment [*relégation*]’ that would not only witness an implosion of the state as a form of governance, but would be more or less definitively locked out of the global economy. These zones would be shaped not

only by a withering of the state as a form of power, but by an equal attenuation of the wage-form itself, as a key figure of social mediation and coercion. It is already the case, in fact, that large numbers of immigrants to metastasizing urban centres have little chance of entering the formal economy: they will, at best, be forced into a labyrinth of odd jobs and services, entailing in turn forms of servitude and domination that were to have been eradicated by the proletarianization of these populations.

Such a scenario, finally, suggests that the slow, irreversible degradation of the current order might entail an erosion of the figure of insurrection itself, the insurrection this short book on the ‘day after’ otherwise takes for granted, the insurrection that, whether it ‘starts from Spain, Greece, France or Italy, will not fail to take over the whole of a reeling Europe’. The sacking of government buildings, the looting of warehouses and depots, the occupation and shutting down of workplaces, the squatting of vacant or poorly used buildings, housing or land, the routing of police forces loyal to the regime, and the peeling off of a significant portion of the armed forces combined with the arming of the population itself, in the form of militias. All of this might belong to our recent past, our antiquity: the worker’s movement, with its transitions and its programmes. What might emerge in these abandoned zones, caught up in a kind of para- or post-capitalist drift, are forms of domination mimicking social relations of the past, property forms and ‘production’ processes thought to have been relegated to historical dustbins by a once triumphant capitalist order. It might, in turn, be in these places alone – these wageless zones, areas or worlds – where the day after the insurrection can finally arrive, albeit at a moment when the figure or myth of the punctual insurrection has become, definitively, our classicism.

Notes

1. Dan Hancox, *The Village against the World*, Verso, London, 2013.
2. See Aaron Benanav and Endnotes, ‘Misery and Debt’, *Endnotes* 2, 2010, pp. 21–50.
3. It has been noted, moreover, that ‘the village may face problems in the future since it relies on agricultural subsidies from the EU (as do the large-scale landowners in the region)’; see www.transition-europe.org/?p=164.
4. Hancox: ‘occupied airports, train stations, government buildings, farms and palaces; went on hunger strike, blocked roads, marched, picketed, went on hunger strike again; were beaten, arrested and tried countless times for their pains.’
5. See its website, <http://cooperativa.cat/en>, where it describes itself as a ‘transitional initiative for social transformation from below, through self-management, self-organization and networking’.