

37. See Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore with Jerome Agel, *The Medium Is the Massage: An Inventory of Effects* (1967; rpt. Berkeley, 2001); and Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore with Jerome Agel, *War and Peace in the Global Village* (1968; rpt. Berkeley, 2001).
38. Morrow, '1968 Like a Knife Blade, the Year Severed Past from Future'.
39. Michael Walzer, 'Symposium: 1968: Lessons Learned', *Dissent*, Spring 2008, p. 25.
40. Mitchell Cohen, 'Symposium: 1968: Lessons Learned', *Dissent*, Spring 2008, p. 10.
41. Halliday, '1968: The Global Legacy.'

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Making Other Worlds Possible? Riots, Movement and Counter-Globalisation

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pp. 239-255 in Davies, M. (ed.)
2015 *Disturbing the Peace: Collective Action in Britain & France, 1381 to the Present*.
Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

A long day of carnival and peaceful protest...timed to coincide with the start of the G8 world leaders' conference in Cologne...turned into a riot yesterday afternoon as demonstrators trashed a McDonald's, wrecked part of the Futures Exchange, set fire to a bank, and destroyed cars and empty flats in the City of London.... many people were injured as the police used water cannon and baton-charged up to 2,000 mostly peaceful demonstrators on horseback. By early evening, there were running battles in side streets with a hard core of protesters hurling stones and bottles, breaking into buildings, throwing out files, setting fire to papers and breaking ground floor windows.¹

London, 1999

Riot police launched canisters of tear gas [on] Saturday at about 2,000 protesters trying to breach a safety perimeter a day after one man was killed during demonstrations outside the Group of Eight summit in Genoa, Italy....Ninety-three people were wounded Saturday, including eight police. Police arrested 36 demonstrators....As they marched, hundreds of extremists broke off from the larger group and set fires in plastic garbage cans, overturned cars, broke shop windows and hurled stones at police. Some called the police assassins.²

Genoa, 2001

Police have used rubber bullets, tear gas and water cannons against anti-globalization protesters in Swiss and French cities near Evian where the Group of Eight (G8) summit is being held....In the Swiss city of Geneva authorities spent more than nine hours battling with demonstrators as they rampaged through the city centre....Shop windows were smashed and stores looted, leaving the city streets awash with broken glass and choking fumes from tear gas canisters.

After protesters began to hurl rocks and petrol bombs, the German police were brought in for reinforcements, storming the front line to scatter the rioters and chasing ringleaders all over the city. ... In Lausanne demonstrators wearing black face masks blocked roads with burning barricades and attacked the hotel area where some summit delegates were staying before being driven away by riot police with tear gas. Several demonstrators were injured, one seriously.³

Evian, 2003

There were fresh clashes between police and anti-G8 protestors early Wednesday ahead of the official opening of a gathering of world leaders from the Group of Eight (G8) nations at Gleneagles in Scotland. ... Police had been attacked with bottles and other missiles, the BBC said. Late on Monday, riot police clashed with anti-G8 protestors in Edinburgh, the Scottish capital, leading to up to 100 arrests. ... Police said [on] Tuesday that demonstrators bent on violence would meet a 'robust response' from the authorities.⁴

Gleneagles, 2005

Germany was shocked this weekend by images of violence in the Baltic port city of Rostock, where violent anti-G-8 protestors clashed with police just days before the start of the G-8 summit in Germany. Around 1,000 police and demonstrators were injured in violent clashes which followed an otherwise peaceful demonstration, with anarchists throwing stones at police and setting cars on fire.⁵

Heiligendamm, 2007

'I predict a riot!'⁶ Globalization and its malcontents⁷

A Utopian dream is etched into the modern militant imaginary. A dream of revolution as rupture. An ecstatic storming of the Bastille, of the Winter Palace. Animated by a longing for something different, by fear in the face of repression, and by the (im)possibility of victory. 'Under the cobblestones, the beach' – the revolutionaries of 1968 wrote on the walls of Paris, articulating their realistic demand for the impossible. Their dream remains with us, returning as a global social movement once again picks up the cobblestones both to reveal and to make the worlds that might be possible in the absence of neoliberalism's enclosures and apparent certainties.

In this chapter, we trace the emergence of this complex and diverse global social movement: a movement that has become variously celebrated and vilified for its association with violence in the key public events of the street protests accompanying the meetings of world leaders promoting the neoliberal cause.

We attempt a summary of political, economic and cultural tendencies that in the last few decades have produced a dissenting, and sometimes rioting global movement with significant events and actors located in Western Europe. And we continue with some theoretical reflections regarding the nature and utility of 'the riot act' in this context. We do not see this as writing a history of riots, in the sense that a historian might be able to present a relatively detached history of the modern bread riots in England. We are writing the present, as people who were at and involved with producing the events we write about, and who share at least some of the dreams and affects of others who were there.⁸

Emergence 1: Seattle and the time when we were winning

In tracing the history and emergence of a social movement, an impossible question arises: when and where does it start? In the case of the 'counterglobalisation' movement – also constructed as the 'alterglobalisation movement', the 'antiglobalisation movement', the global justice movement and even the 'movement of movements'⁹ – we are drawn to what would later become known as the movement's 'coming-out party':¹⁰ the spectacular protests in Seattle against the November 1999 'Ministerial' of the World Trade Organization (WTO). This event drew together an unlikely coalition of comrades – anarchists and communists, environmentalists and trade unionists, catholic nuns and queer activists – who defied the cold, rain and scores of well-armed riot police to shut down the summit, preventing the opening ceremony from taking place and arguably contributing to the collapse of the trade negotiations conducted there. It was with Seattle and accompanying solidarity events elsewhere¹¹ that a diverse yet powerful global movement appeared, seemingly out of nowhere. From the depths of a history that was supposed to have ended with neoliberalism, a multiplicity of voices suddenly were loudly proclaiming that 'other worlds are possible!' That perhaps there might be alternatives to the liberalization of trade and capital markets, and to the privatization and enclosure of common lands and resources: to a world safe for capital but not necessarily for life.

Since then, an array of major protest events associated with the counterglobalisation movement have occurred in northern Europe, with many key moments taking place in both Britain and France. As the vignettes above indicate, the escape of these events from permissible civil society strategies of contestation into 'uncivil' provocative engagements, including both defensive confrontations with police and physical damage to the property and symbols of capital,¹² has been a key element of their impact. Two tendencies, in particular, have been noticed for their embrace of proactively confrontational tactics. These are the black bloc, stereotyped as the black-clad, masked and hooded youths who violently pierce capital's apparent peacefulness through

the smashing of its symbols and windows whilst maintaining a confrontational stance towards police; and the Italian-inspired *tute bianche*, dressed in white overalls and everyday materials that serve as protective padding, in order to approach and break through police lines – a consciously bio-political practice¹³ intended to draw out the tendency for violence towards protestors by police as always constitutive of the state's biopower.¹⁴

Naming the enemy: neoliberal globalisation and *The End of History*

Seattle was the moment when the global left regained a sense that it might be 'winning'. But in order to understand the emergence of the movement that 'came out' in Seattle, we need to dig deeper, to go further back into history, to understand *who* it was that protested, blockaded and rioted on the streets of Seattle and in other cities across the globe, and *why* they were doing so. To begin to make sense of the counterglobalisation movement, we need to understand the process of neoliberal globalization that had been restructuring the world since its emergence in the 1970s. And in turn, the neoliberal project can only be explained by considering the crisis of 'Fordism', the supposedly 'golden' period of relatively steady post-war capitalist growth that came to its end in the early 1970s.

From a class perspective, Fordism was based on a compromise between largely nationally organized productive capital and a (largely male and white) industrial working class organized in trade unions, the relationship between the two stabilised by a Keynesian welfare state. In terms of production and consumption, it relied on productivity growth and the development of internal markets for mass consumption. Comparatively well-paid factory workers were able, both in the global north and the so-called developmentalist states of the global south, to buy an ever-increasing number of products, thereby generating social peace. Towards the late 1960s, however, productivity increases began to slow down, and the model entered a crisis.¹⁵ In 1971, the president of the United States, Richard Nixon, responded to the crisis of the international economic system by abandoning the gold-dollar-standard, thus ending the Bretton Woods system that was one of the pillars of the Keynesian mode of regulation. The crisis of the international currency regime was part of the fundamental crisis of Fordist capitalism in the 1960s and 1970s. During this time, an escalation of global struggles combined with international instabilities, as well as fiscal and legitimisation crises experienced by many states,¹⁶ to produce an extended period of global social upheaval.

But far from leading to emancipation, the outcome of this 'crisis of Fordism' was a further entrenching of capitalist structures through the emergence and subsequent victory of the neoliberal project. Dumenil and Levy¹⁷ define

neoliberalism as 'the expression of the desire of a class of capitalist owners and the institutions in which their power is concentrated, which we collectively call 'finance', to restore – in the context of a general decline in popular struggles – the class's revenues and power'. This reassertion of power occurred *vis-à-vis* labour (for example, in the battles that Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher fought and won against the air traffic controllers and miners, respectively, in the 1980s), as well as other factions of capital, such as industrial/productive capital.¹⁸ One of the central characteristics of the regime of accumulation underpinning and emerging from this new class project are the 'new enclosures',¹⁹ or 'accumulation by dispossession':²⁰ a frequently violent, *political* (qua state), 'liberation' of new resources for productive investment accompanied by the creation of a globally mobile and increasingly precarious proletariat (or what some are terming the 'precariat').²¹

In June 1989, as the Eastern Bloc was crumbling, political scientist Francis Fukuyama published an article declaring that *history* had come to an end:²² '[t]oday... we have trouble imagining a world that is radically better than our own, or a future that is not essentially democratic and capitalist'.²³ The global neoliberal offensive seemed to have consigned every potential challenge to the scrap yard of history. The so-called post-1960s 'new social movements' still existed, but appeared incapable or unwilling to issue a direct challenge to the power of capital through what came to be derisively called their 'single-issue politics'.²⁴ With the collapse of the Berlin Wall, there appeared to be no force that could constitute an 'anticapitalist' project. And yet, to take up a somewhat tired metaphor, neoliberalism, at the same time as it was wiping out its remaining enemies, was busily creating its own gravediggers or, at least, its next challengers. Key strategies of the neoliberal offensive were 'accumulation by dispossession' through privatization and commodification; accompanied by a rearticulation of states into agents of upward redistribution of wealth, and of international economic institutions into agencies of structural adjustment. It was at these frontlines that new networks and forms of resistance began to grow and coalesce.

Emergence 2: The end of *The End of History*

In the first half of the 1990s, diverse social movements worldwide existed relatively independently of each other: by and large, they were not perceived, nor did they generally perceive themselves, as being linked in a 'glocal'²⁵ movement against neoliberalism. For that, the end of history had to end, and come to an end it did. If there is a date that heralded the birth of current global post-capitalist politics and consciousness – whereby the 'nodes' of these localities and concerns became 'networked' in a globalizing awareness of 'a common enemy' – it is New Year's Day, 1994. On this date, Mexico entered NAFTA²⁶ and the Zapatista National Liberation Army²⁷ emerged from its mountain refuges

in the state of Chiapas, southeast Mexico, to seize the city of San Cristobal de las Casas and several other towns.²⁸ Under the declaration of 'Ya Basta!' – 'Enough!' – their campaign was against the president, the army, 500 years of oppression since the 'discovery' of the Americas and 40 years of 'development'; and for free elections, land rights, self-governance and the autonomy to live and die with dignity according to established cultural practices.²⁹ Tanks, Swiss aeroplanes, US helicopters and 15,000 troops were employed by the government to counter the rebellion, and a heavy military presence still remains in Chiapas. Three distinctive elements have constructed 'Zapatismo' as a cogent symbol of contemporary glocal self-determination politics, embodying the style and content, as well as the state's response, of counterglobalisation politics today. First is the powerful imaginary of the metaphorical David challenging the Goliath of neoliberal modernity and its protective and well-armed state forces. Second is the mystique conferred by the masking of participants. Pragmatically, this affords some protection of identity. Symbolically it also becomes a conscious statement of antipathy towards the cult of individualism associated with modernity, as well as representing the structural silence and invisibility of those rendered voiceless and faceless by colonialism and neoliberalism. And finally, there is the paradoxical intermingling of an affirmation of tradition with a looking to the future and the new – represented by skilful use of the emerging internet to popularize the Zapatista struggle and concerns,³⁰ as well as by a committed challenge by both women and men against the 'macho society' of their traditional past.³¹

In combination with the brilliant and poetic Zapatista uptake of globalisation technologies in their use of an emerging internet to publicize concerns and desires, the 1 January 1994 acted as a catalyst that pulled together seemingly disparate struggles in a consciousness of sharing a common enemy: namely, the alienations and dispossessions normalized by the conceptual and material enclosures demanded by neoliberalism. It is this contemporary history that made possible the heroic moment of Seattle 1999, as movements worldwide became entrained through the 1990s into the riotous and mutinous energy of a global counterglobalisation movement.

Reading the riot act: will the destruction be constructive?

But what is it about the riot act that fascinates so many of us, political radicals, commentators and spectators alike? While mainstream pundits usually focus on the seemingly mindless smashing of material property as well as confrontational attitudes towards police, arguably it is precisely the rupturing of 'normal' political space and time – the transgression of civility that occurs in riots – that is able to achieve something that everyday political practice cannot. As we write, activists throughout Europe and beyond are beginning

to pour their energies into mobilizing for the international climate change summit in Copenhagen in December 2009. And once again, the question has erupted: what is the political point of this kind of confrontational politics? Given this live debate, we seek now to offer some reflections on the riotous summit protest as an enactment of the dream of revolution as rupture, asking: what are the possibilities and limits of such an event-focused political practice? We start with an example to set the scene:

The Annemasse blockade, G8 Evian 2003

Without any warning, the police attacked our totally peaceful demonstration with massive volleys of teargas. ... Even though for most of us this was the first time in such a situation, we never panicked. ... Soon one felt how fear was overcome and washed away by courage. ... While in the front some people held the police at bay by throwing stones and others extinguished the gas grenades right in front of the police lines, the Attac-campus groups supplied the barricade with wood for protection from gas. In the midst of all this, a large group of 'Pink & Silver' danced and sang carnival-rhythms.³²

Nothing was *supposed* to happen at the blockade in Annemasse in 2003, making what did happen that much more significant. The attempt to blockade one of the highways leading to the conference centre hosting the 2003 G8-summit in Evian, France, had been organized largely by groups within the moderate counterglobalist ATTAC network,³³ not known for 'kicking off' against the police. We were both at the G8 protests in Evian/Annemasse in 2003, and one of us (Tazio) joined this blockade, not expecting any confrontation with the police. At least, not the type of confrontation where the protesters fight back.

Tazio recalls:

On the march to the planned blockading point, I talked to several activists, most of whom had never been in potentially confrontational situations, and were anxious about the possibility of a police attack. After walking for some hours, we arrived at a line of police reinforced by water cannons – and were attacked with tear gas within thirty seconds. What seemed surprising in this situation was not the tactics of the police, but the way the crowd responded: after initially retreating about fifty to one hundred metres and recovering from the initial shock of the attack, a number of masked protestors began building a barricade and setting it alight, while others threw stones at the police. Very soon, almost the whole march participated. This 'stand-off' continued for several hours, after which the march returned to the camp. Intriguingly, although we had not achieved our goal to block the road we had

planned to, the general feeling was one of victory. At an evaluation meeting in Berlin some days after the action, several of the speakers invoked what had become known among the march's participants as 'the spirit of Evian'. In spite of criticism for breaking the ATTAC-network's line or discrediting the movement in the eyes of the 'wider public', many of those who participated in the blockade that became a riot felt that something had changed: for them, the riot transformed what they could think and do politically.

How are we to understand the transformative effect of this mini-riot in Annemasse? We recognize that it is impossible to generalize from one riotous event to the 'nature' of riots in the counterglobalisation movement. One riot is not like another: they vary both in their impacts and acceptability across time and space,³⁴ and a riot in a society where no one ever throws stones at the police is likely to have a very different meaning to one where this happens all the time. In what follows, we draw on some key theorists of the riotous event to elucidate the varied occurrence and manifestations of riots associated with the counterglobalisation movement in Europe, and to contribute to current debate regarding the meaning and effect(s) of these events and practices.

Effervescent crowds

We draw first on the work of Emile Durkheim to explicate a sense that – as with the riot in Annemasse described above – there indeed have been riots in this movement that have opened up political space; that have changed what can be thought and done and thereby displaced the limits of the socially and politically possible. Durkheim³⁵ suggests that '[i]n the midst of an assembly that becomes worked up, we become capable of feelings and conduct of which we are incapable when left to our individual resources'. Sometimes this means that mass gatherings merely reaffirm a social collective's underlying principles as transcending each single individual. But sometimes it can mean that the very principles of a collective are transformed: that new social and political spaces are opened, in a moment of what Durkheim called creative or 'collective effervescence'.

The starting point of Durkheim's analysis is the potentially ecstatic nature of mass events. The coming together of a normally dispersed group of people, a description that clearly applies to contemporary European counterglobalist protestors (though he was drawing on research regarding Australian indigenous people), disrupts the monotony of everyday life, producing events where 'a sort of electricity is generated, [which] quickly launches [the participants] to an extraordinary height of exaltation'. This effervescence – also associated with a carnivalesque reversal of social norms³⁶ and the transgressive noise of the potentially revolutionary Festival³⁷ – produces 'passions so heated and so free from control' that they can lead to generally 'outlandish behaviour'. Durkheim

argues that it is in such riotous moments and epochs – producing an intense 'world of sacred things' – that societies (or movements) are born:³⁸

Under the influence of some great collective shock in certain historical periods, social interactions become much more frequent and active... The result is the general effervescence that is characteristic of revolutionary or creative epochs... People live differently and more intensely than in normal times. The changes are not simply of nuance and degree; man [*sic*] becomes something other than what he was.³⁹

But how do riots actually produce the changes in established subjectivities that can open new political spaces? First, they encourage participants to stretch the boundaries of 'normal' social morality. As Farge and Revel note in their study of a set of riots in mid-eighteenth century Paris, the bourgeois involved in the street fighting temporarily broke the boundaries of their class and their morality.⁴⁰ Second, these changes in subjectivity induced by riots might last beyond the riotous event itself. Here, an elaboration of Durkheim's original concept of effervescence is useful. Durkheim, in fact, describes two different categories of effervescent events without properly distinguishing them. These are those that produce a certain intensity of feelings, which in turn reconstitutes and reiterates group cohesion, such that no lasting transformation of participants' sense of the possible occurs. Alternatively, there are those that constitute genuinely creative events, where, 'for some reason, these collective interactions become extraordinarily powerful and intense';⁴¹ permitting some transformation of norms and values, and thereby shifting the individual and social identities that otherwise reconstitute and reproduce those norms and values. The positive feedback generated in such events induces lasting transformations in a way that everyday, 'run-of-the-mill' riotous 'rituals' do not.

For such effervescent riots to be further effective, however, requires that their political energy diffuse and take hold beyond a circle of immediate participants. Aristide Zolberg's analysis of riots and other collective effervescent events as 'moments of madness' illustrates some ways in which this might occur. He argues that moments of madness are intensive learning processes, where new ideas spread to larger publics; that these ideas become institutionally located in the networks of social relations established during the moments; and that the aggregate experiences of individuals does indeed matter in producing possible transformation.⁴²

Moments of madness: transgression produces transformation?

The practical question now becomes: do riots in counterglobalisation politics constructively open and reorganize political space in ways that survive the

event and produce emancipatory social change? There are many ways in which we might engage with this question. Recall the account of the Annemasse protest given above. Contrary to behaviour expected from ATTAC activists, the participants of the march responded to the police's assault by drawing on a repertoire of protest – the burning of a barricade, the throwing of stones at the police – which by and large was new and alien to them. Although it was the non-ATTAC protesters at the front who started building the barricade and throwing stones at the police from the front lines, others quickly became caught up in the dynamic of the event and felt empowered to confront the police. This confrontation contributed to a transformation of protestor subjectivities by opening up new political spaces of contestation, and changing a sense of what is politically possible.⁴³ It was this changed sense of the limits of the possible that became the basis for post-summit evocations of 'the spirit of Evian'; and that allowed participants to break the long-established non-confrontational guidelines of ATTAC and to form linkages with other militant anti-capitalists in Berlin, thereby creating networks that subsequently were very active in the mobilization for the G8 summit in Heiligendamm in 2007. ATTAC activists from Leipzig felt similarly empowered by the event, and afterwards were more inclined to confront the police as well as engage in other forms of direct action.

If the Annemasse blockade described above was only a little mad, the riotous carnival planned in the city of London's square mile to coincide with the G8 summit in Köln, Germany, on 18 June 1999 could be construed as bordering on 'insanity'. In this event, 10,000 protestors wearing carnival masks and accompanied by driving samba rhythms, a punk band, and sound-systems, noisily and unexpectedly took over the disciplined space of the city. Its effects penetrated right to the heart of the city's sacred cow of speculative finance: the London International Financial Futures Exchange (LIFFE).⁴⁴ Over £10 million of damage was caused, the basement of the LIFFE building was flooded through 'release' of one of London's 75 buried rivers, and 16 people were arrested on the day with around 50 more arrested in connection with the event up to a year later. Among many counter-globalisation protesters, this event consolidated distrust of the state and its institutions. At the same time, within the United Kingdom, it generated a plethora of questions regarding the utility of all the time, energy and resources devoted to the staging of one-off spectacular events and the socio-political validity of a secretive vanguard of activist organizers orchestrating events requiring participation of broader publics.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, it could be argued that this 'carnival against capitalism' that became a riot was effective in wreaking havoc on a key stronghold of capital, and thereby creating a symbolic challenge that went beyond the state's monopoly of violence, attacking the sanctity of private (commercial) property, as well as capital's contemporary enclosure of public space.⁴⁶ It fed into and spawned an array

of similar carnivalesque approaches to summit protests, contributing to a common strand in counter-globalisation tactics of identifying potent buildings and symbols of neoliberal capitalism as targets for attack.

But in what way does this 'symbolic' challenge really matter? Ernesto Laclau⁴⁷ suggests that the normalization of every social relation of domination requires an accompanying act of forgetting its origins in *political* operations of power and violence: effecting a silencing and closure of discursive, political and epistemological alternatives. One reading of the spectacular protest events mentioned is that they challenge this social forgetfulness, bringing to the fore the antagonisms and struggles that infuse normalized social relations. They demonstrate that the police's monopoly on violence and the sanctity of private property are not in the natural scheme of things, but are politically constituted and policed. In this reading, riots are events that can create a space of intensity where such social myths are more easily revealed and challenged than in relatively routine moments of everyday interaction.

Although perhaps, we should not over-value the smashing tactics of confrontational engagements with police and property in counter-globalisation politics? While the immediacy of an event might contribute to possibly transformative effects on the political subjectivities of those involved – feeding desire for other possible worlds⁴⁸ – at broader scales inciting the violence of the state might indeed do exactly that; so as to reinforce and justify violence at repressive intensities that become more of the same rather than generating something other. If 'transgression does not deny the taboo but transcends it and completes it',⁴⁹ then in this reading a transgressive politics that bubbles over into riotous violence might reinforce rather than smash the taboo of the state's monopoly on violence. This, then, invites greater thought and reflexivity so as to amplify subjectivities that refract, rather than reproduce, the violences underpinning capitalism's enclosures.

Running riot with Deleuze and Guattari

A further reading of the possibility for transformative excess in the production and experience of riotous counter-globalisation events might come from the poststructuralist philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. The quasi-religious concept of revolution invoked at the beginning of this section (of revolution as total, immediate rupture), and which underpins Durkheim's notion of effervescence, has been problematized and, to some extent, replaced in today's counter-globalisation movement with the idea and necessity of building 'other worlds' through long, drawn-out processes of social change that nonetheless do not abandon an accompanying promise of the 'radical' and 'ruptural'. How, then, can we theoretically conceive of this type of social change? Here we use some of the tools provided by Deleuze and Guattari, who combine a subtle

understanding of social change both as ruptural *and* as gradually constructed through time and space, with that rarest of academic qualities: revolutionary optimism.

The basis for their optimism lies in the world that Deleuze and Guattari encounter. It is in principle disorderly, a world of becoming, not of being, of nomadic movement through relatively undisciplined and bounded spaces. It is a world of multiplicity and difference, irreducible and indivisible. Here, unity and stability can only ever result from the operations of power, capture and *territorialization*,⁵⁰ such that order is not the almost unchangeable status quo, but rather a tenuous construct, which at all points has to be re-established by the state and other 'apparatuses of capture'.⁵¹ The target of these constant attempts at capture is 'a pure and immeasurable multiplicity, the pack, and irruption of the ephemeral and the power of metamorphosis'. This is what they refer to (perhaps problematically) as the *war machine*, which 'brings a *furor* to bear against sovereignty, a celerity against gravity, secrecy against the public, a power (*puissance*) against sovereignty, a machine against the apparatus'.⁵² The war machine – akin also to Hakim Bey's *Temporary Autonomous Zone*⁵³ – thus is not a tangible institution, but the irrepressible desire for nomadic transformation, for becoming. It is present only in its metamorphoses,⁵⁴ in moments of invention and creation:

[a]nd each time there is an operation against the State – insubordination, rioting, guerrilla warfare, or revolution as act – it can be said that a war machine has revived, that a new nomadic potential has appeared, accompanied by the reconstitution of a smooth space or a manner of being in space as though it were smooth.⁵⁵

Of course, not each and every riot generates creative flashes of the war machine; 'smooth' space is not generated every time a roving band of (mostly) guys in hooded sweaters lobs some rocks at the police. And presumably, Deleuze and Guattari would not think so either, for the destruction and 'violence' they advocate is not simply a 'nihilistic form... of physical destruction', but rather a creative, generative (Nietzschean) form of constructive destruction.⁵⁶

In this reading, then, an imputed act of political radicalism is transformative to the extent that it escapes as a *line of flight*, drawing into the world – manifesting – *other* subjectivities, spaces and possibilities. Imagine the striated space of the state, where all movement is relative to, and overcoded by, the centre – then an instance where the 'war machine' flashes up, where there is an escape from the regularized lines of stasis and movement of the state effecting 'a deterritorialization, through a movement which interrupts or suspends familiar, confining, formal possibilities... a movement out of which the participating bodies are drawn along new vectors in experimental ways'.⁵⁷

The riotous drawing of a line of flight creates new possibilities, opens up new political spaces and produces other worlds – both through, and in contexts beyond, the 'riot act'. It occurs in the moments where creative violence and excess is not subordinated to conventional political reason; where risk and chance have outcomes which cannot be predicted, and where connections are created between elements hitherto unconnected.

Open ends

We have come a long way. In the course of this political and reflective journey, we have ripped up the pavements of Annemasse and London, seen barricades burn and celebrated the creative excess of contemporary confrontations between the counterglobalisation movement and the institutions of global capital. Having arrived where we are now – what, finally, of that famous beach? The answer must remain open: it is as if we have ripped up the cobblestones to find sand – and then realized that we still do not know whether it really is the beach, or just another desert. It is ultimately only in the processes within which spectacular events are embedded that their political meaning is constituted.

The dream of revolution as a singular, one-off rupture has been discarded by most within the counterglobalist movement. But the desire for ruptural politics has not, and for good reason. We have suggested here that riots can be events that rupture 'normal' political time and space, that speed up history and open new political spaces for contesting otherwise normalized, 'sedimented' social relations of domination. They can generate an effervescence that might create new collective solidarities: in other words, they can create 'movements' where before there was only relatively isolated groups – this much we learn from Durkheim. They can create 'militants' where before there were protestors unable to challenge the power of the police. Speaking strategically, then: there is good reason to be critical of an exclusive focus on organizing protests, and every reason to attempt to build movement links beyond a one-off event. But there are no reasons to stop organizing altogether for moments of excess, of madness, of effervescence. Radical politics cannot live without the intensity created in such moments: it is those moments that make other worlds possible.

Notes

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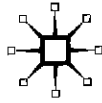
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Crowd Actions in Britain and France from the Middle Ages to the Modern World

Edited by

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Riots, rampaging mobs and looting are not mere curiosities of the past; nor are they events confined to the fringes of the modern world, only breaking out in less-developed and distant nations that continue to bear the strain and duress of tyranny. On the contrary, rioting and resistance to the various powers that be is very much with us in the West at this moment in time. The general aim of this collection is to compare, contrast and juxtapose some of the more notable riots and rebellions in Britain and France, from the English Peasants' Revolt of 1381 through to the most recent race and student riots in Paris in 2005 and 2006. Drawing on world-leading authorities from across the globe this volume of original essays endeavours to analyse and unpack the circumstances, constructions and outcomes of these history-making incidents and episodes of rioting, rebellion and general resistance.

Michael T. Davis is Lecturer in the School of Humanities, Griffith University, Australia. His publications include *Radicalism and Revolution in Britain, 1775–1848* (2000); *London Corresponding Society* (2002); *Newgate in Revolution: An Anthology of Radical Prison Literature in the Age of Revolution* (ed. with I. McCalman and C. Parolin, 2005); *Unrespectable Radicals? Popular Politics in the Age of Reform* (ed. with P. A. Pickering, 2008); *Terror: From Tyrannicide to Terrorism in Europe, 1605 to the Future* (ed. with B. Bowden, 2008) and *Liberty, Property and Popular Politics: England and Scotland, 1688–1815* (ed. with Gordon Pentland, 2015).

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