Felix Closter
DEPOSE
The Insurrection of the Survivors
11/12/2024

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ceive it. In this sense, no life, as exiles and bandits know well, is more "political" than his».

The killer of Brian Thompson did not become a bandit when he killed. It's true, rather, that his gesture has peacefully put things back in the right perspective. We have always been bandits; our life has always been survival. All that is left is to acknowledge this and draw the necessary consequences. It is not class consciousness that we lack. What remains to be understood is simply the fact that «there is nothing else to understand, other than that this is how one dies». With the simplicity of his gesture, the bandit breaks through the illusionary game of the *arcana imperii*. Behind the management, we clearly see that the king is naked - and that his body is disgusting. It is the pure mechanism of a deadly, demonic, miserable power. An infernal machine that *keeps itself alive while letting us die*. By sabotaging it, the revolutionary gesture only *brings at the highest intensity* the conditions of our survival: where the unlivability of life becomes the starting point for a new art of war.

Here is the evidence, the revolutionary glow. All that remains for us is to blow it up. Today, everyone knows that the extreme threshold of unlivability is also the open-air hiding place of every bandit. Today, everyone knows that non-life is also the condition for a terrible revolt, irrecoverable because, finally, *destituent* (DEPOSE!): the insurrection of the survivors.

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6. WILD BUNCH (DEPOSE!)

Whether they want it or not, every policyholder, every insured subject, is already a bandit. Three gunshots and a bit of hype, and what could still have seemed like some armchair theory has become an undeniable fact. Today, we are not banned from our cities with an order of expulsion; we are not exiled from our communities by being locked in a cell; we are not banned from politics by losing our voting rights. Under the ban of biopolitical capital and spectacle, *anyone is already banned from the outset*. Anyone who has left their country under the bombs of a proxy war, the pressure of induced poverty, or the illusion of some artificial paradise knows this. Anyone who has seen their friends sell out at the police station or in companies, the parks where they played as children paved over, the places where they loved and fought either destroyed or, worse, integrated into metropolitan administrations. Anyone who knows what dissociation is: asking yourself if you are still alive, and answering that even ghosts are alive.

Our life is *already* survival. Banishment today is not an act of power but a condition of existence. And it is good that it is so. Not so much because there's nothing to lose – and it doesn't really matter if it keeps piling on. The bandit is not just the one who has been deprived of everything. He is also the lawless, the anarchist, the outlaw. As Walter Benjamin said, «The ability to do much with little is the hallmark of a new barbarism». True hope is known only to the desperate. True politics is known only by those who have stared into the demonic and mortifying face of power with no veils left. «Precisely insofar as he is at every instant exposed to an unconditioned threat of death,» writes Giorgio Agamben, «the *homo sacer* is a continuous relationship with the power that banished him. He is pure *zoē*, but his *zoē* is as such caught in the sovereign ban and must reckon with it at every moment, finding the best way to elude or de-

a year». You can see proof of this sharp diagnosis right on the streets of New York which, after December 4, were covered in wanted posters: under the word «WANTED», above the photo of dozens of CEOs.

Here is where we start again. From our non-life, from our everyday survival. Those who have been reduced to mere survivors, in fact, have nothing to lose *and everything to gain.* «It's not about revoking the sense of horror – a friend wrote fifty years ago – evoked by "survival" as the non-lived, the organization of appearances, the unreality of everyday life. It is, on the contrary, about assuming this knowledge of horror as *the starting point for the real war*». The idea that stakes in the struggle of mere survival constitute the real war has, after the execution of Brian Thompson, become common currency. Even the widow of the former CEO, when asked by the police if her husband had any particular enemies, found herself answering: «Yes, whoever».

And she was absolutely right. The enemy of the empire is not this or that vigilante, but precisely whoever, the whatever singularity, the non-subject. Under an Instagram post, one reads: «The Adjuster is bigger than Luigi Mangione / The Adjuster is bigger than any one being / Don't let the rich and powerful trick you / This is far from over / DENY-DEFEND-DEPOSE!». And it's not the first time, in recent times, that the myriad of whoever-enemies suddenly materializes in the same gesture. Each person, hearing George Floyd's last words, felt suffocated with him. Each person, seeing Aaron Bushnell set himself on fire protesting the genocide of Palestinians, was consumed by the same flames. What makes us gasp for air is the open-air prison they've taught us to call society. What burns, in every protest and urban guerrilla, is the shell they've enclosed our power in: the Self.

I know I live in a world where the bigger our ideals are, the bigger insurance companies will become.

Ivan Illich

It's not since today that the revolution is biological - it has always been. We are living through the catastrophic moment of the final solution. [...]. Precisely because we are so close to the end, the liberation of the human species seems like a desperate undertaking, but what despairs within us is death, the impossibility of survival: the strength of the revolt passes through the utmost weakness; it is at the threshold of extreme unlivability that the necessity of life erupts with the power of an unpostponable aut-aut.

Giorgio Cesarano

1. SHIT SHOW! SHIT STORM!

Worse than a cop, there's only a journalist. After fifty years of a spectacular counterrevolution, the slogan from the Italian Seventies «GIORNALISTA TERRORISTA! » («JOURNALIST, TERRORIST! ») now seems like a trivial truth. The same applies to the second lesson we've had the chance to review these past few days: the true ambition of the cop is that of the *maître à penser* – to teach you how to think. The cybernetic utopists of neoliberal fascism knew this quite well already in the 1950s. Communication is *already* control; the spectacular power is *already* disciplinary – and vice versa. The nameless multitudes, who were pierced on December 4th by a genuine political thrill, know this even better.

In Manhattan, a guy shoots the CEO of an insurance company. The media and the cops throw out the usual, worn-out buzzword: IDENTIFICATION. Who did it? A mad loner, a school shooter who's a bit over the hill, a hysterical woman,

a ghetto black, an Islamic terrorist? Or a young, white, privileged hetero-cis male with an enviable *résumé* behind him? What could such an individual read? What does he think? Political opinions? Medical history? His health care provider must have refused him treatment, of course. Otherwise, *why would anyone shoot at the symbol of an insurance company?*

Intellectuals, politicians, opinion-makers, and all sorts of media-clowns have followed in lockstep, either out of stupidity or bad faith, throwing more fuel onto the flames of the Spectacle. Fortunately, only a few, in the mediasphere of Reddit, Instagram, Telegram, Facebook, X, Threads, or Signal, have intellectual ambitions. For tens of thousands of us, this was enough to shake off the police-driven imperative to gossip. Within hours, the awareness that *biography is a matter for the police stations* became a glaring truth. Under a Reddit thread, we read: «For the record I believe everything and anything. That he did it, that he didn't do it, that he did it and cops planted evidence, that he didn't do it and was fully framed. I have love in my heart for enemies of the state whether self-made or unwillingly thrust into glory».

2. «ONCE AGAIN, THE WORLD STAGE IS LIT!»

Today, the fact that the thinking style of the cop is nothing more than the epistemology of who has lost all capacity to understand their own time is no longer a secret to anyone. Flourishing on the ground of biopolitics, modern criminal justice, predatory capitalism, surveillance technology, hygienist doctrines, psychoanalysis, and narratology, the epistemology of the cop aligns point by point with that of the journalist. It's the method, the *principium individuationis* of the «five Ws»: *Who? What? When? Where? Why?*. The guiding questions of journalistic investigation are indistinguishable from the prin-

all too well, and regarding the medicalization of life, he wrote: «The more persuasive the diagnosis, the more valuable the therapy seems, the easier it is to convince people that they need both, and *the less likely they are to revolt against industrial society*». Even more so, this can be said about the insurance management of life. In the era of the monopoly of health by insurance companies, the health care system is merely «a means to convince those who are tired and disgusted with society that it is actually they who are sick, powerless, and in need of technical repair».

No less than the hypothesis of the Self, the hypothesis of Society is also leaking from all sides today. No surprise, then, that the disciplinary power – which gave rise to the first – and biopower – responsible for the second – have felt the need to merge into a new configuration. Security biopolitics, cannibal capitalism, genocidal and suicidal capitalism, authoritarian neoliberalism, crack capitalism, debt economy, necrocapitalism – call it whatever you like. The result is always the same: when the monuments collapse, our enemies will try to hold them up with all sorts of crutches. That's the point where life becomes difficult, it becomes mere survival: artificial scarcity starves us, bureaucracy drains our energies, the spectacular media sphere messes with our minds, perpetual civil war becomes genocidal, and the police, to dismantle our ways of life, kill our friends. «Stop calling it "BURNOUT" – it's capitalism exploiting you until there's nothing left. Stop calling it "SELF-CARE" – it's survival under oppression,» comments a psychologist on Instagram.

Life becomes difficult for us, sure – *but not less for them.* It's not easy to hold together the ruins of an empire with duct tape. And it can always happen that some random guy, blowing in the wind, messes everything up. A X-user said it best: «The social fabric is broken. Someone smoked a CEO and people are cheering for it. The politicians can't even moralize with a straight face because they've been supporting a genocide for

knells for youth and health clearly ring». Paranoid insurance, bureaucratic subjectivation, algebrization of life, with the head perpetually under the insurance guillotine. The etiology of our chronic migraine, «brain fog», «intermittent numbness», high blood pressure, heart attacks, or panic attacks, *we can guess for ourselves.*

In this sense, to the biopolitical eye of the health care provider, your life is purely killable. A Brian Johnson can «make you live», can push you to live in a certain way, within the boundaries of a precise form of life: medicalized life, paranoid life, insured life, condemned to work in the full era of the Great Resignation (as the Obama administration knew well when it took on the task of completing the Social Security Act program by imposing a legal obligation on citizens to purchase health insurance), and so on. Or he can simply «let you die», depriving you of care that wouldn't have cured you anyway (but would certainly have increased your insurance premium), or letting you die on the street after you've paid an unaffordable hospital bill. And yet, upon closer inspection, «to make live» and «to let die» are not so easily distinguishable, when the management of life coincides point by point with the organization of the conditions of mere survival.

5. «THERE'S A WAR IN THE STREETS TONIGHT / AND NOBODY'S REALLY FEELING ALRIGHT» (DEFEND!)

Let's say it once again. The stakes, in the biopolitical, insurance-based, and security regime, have never been the care of health, but rather the permanent production of the conditions for incessant intervention in the social body. The aim of the biopolitical game has always been *the production and defense of society*: establishing and protecting the unbearable conditions of social life (DEFEND!). Ivan Illich knew this

ciples of judicial inquiry. Both speak the well-worn language of Western juridical ontology: the ontology of the responsible, imputable, guilty subject.

Let's put it better: they *perform* it. In fact, the machine of ontology always needs maintenance: to work, it must be well-oiled. The strategic lines running through it must remain shoveled, because ontology, after all, is nothing but crystallized strategy. *Ontology of the subject as a strategy of subjugation.* A subjection to a power that, while judging you, tells you *who you are*, produces you as a subject, and forces you to say «I». In the case of a murder, one can always say the killer was on drugs, psychotic, hysterical, or acting in self-defense. Manslaughter. At worst, it'll be claimed that the shooter was driven by a motive: economic interest, jealousy, revenge, envy—everything in the theater of intimacy: the murder will be nailed to an «I». Intentional homicide.

In both cases, an «I» will be fabricated and, at the same time, a *gesture* – singular, inderivable, political, existential – will be chained to a biography. Police grid, cop-*quadrillage*. The gesture, translated into an imputable action, will become a link in the miserable chain of causes and effects to which they would like to reduce our lives and our worlds. *The rose is without a why*, someone once said. So does a gift, a kiss, a murder. As long as we remain trapped in the fence of «whys», reasons, or motives, we do not escape the infamous pastures of law. And they had a good reason to keep us there. Otherwise, we might have taken the bad habit of grazing in the fields of the true politics: where life is not a problem to be managed, but the always interrupted flow of our forms of life; where things belong to those who know how to use them; where *our* potentiality doesn't crystallize in *their* power. Where politics, in other words, is fully aligned with the discontinuous textures of gestures, of everyday life.

Suddenly, after December 4th, the American underground mediasphere broke a metaphysical, linguistic, psychic, and po-

litical cage that was at least two millennia old, without nostalgia. The psychopolice of *The Guardian* noticed it immediately, signaling danger: «In all the hoo-ha […] – and, potentially, the way such stories often get rewritten and recreated by history – what gets lost is the violence, as well as the victims […]. The problem is, as each new story is added to the tradition, it loses some of its real horror, and takes on more of the *glow*». Fair enough. They are right about *almost* everything. In the smiling face of the popular hero, reflected countless times in the mirror game of the not-anymore-spectacular mediasphere, we forget victims and executioners, dismantle the guilt dispositif, and finally let fall to the ground, like a broken toy, the epistemological arsenal of the cops. However, the *Guardian* made a small mistake in bad faith. Nothing that can't be corrected. Our «glow» cannot be mistaken for fascination. Fascination is something we leave to sorcerers, the bewitched, and fascists. *Our* «glow» is clarity. And in this way, we take back *our* violence.

To avoid falling into the Rabbit Hole, it would be enough not to jump into it – someone would say. Too easy. When you are pulling the ground from under your feet, you must know where to jump. Beyond good and evil? Action and guilt? Out of the subject? In revolutionary tradition, there's an elegant, somewhat old-fashioned expression for such cases: beyond any class consciousness, there is the *objectively revolutionary character* of a gesture. The murder of Brian Thompson is such a clearly revolutionary gesture that, in its face, every question immediately appeared inadequate. Olly olly oxen free! Suddenly freed from the sinister prison where they had confined us, we settled elsewhere: on the consistency plane of the Imaginary Party.

From here, at the level of true politics, the revolutionary character of that gesture can be easily verified. If Thompson's murder was able to resonate so intensely across all the echo chambers of the mediasphere, it's only because it was situated

«were not exterminated in a mad and giant holocaust but exactly as Hitler had announced, "like lice", which is to say, as bare life».

In today's USA, where the doctor has been entirely replaced by the health care provider, and where the management of non-life has been extended to the entirety of the population, the securing of society is no longer distinguishable from the perpetual production of conditions of insecurity, and every citizen carries the face of *homo sacer*.

The health care provider is not just the entity that provides healthcare: it is the instance that, while trying by every means to delay it, effectively reproducing the denial (DENY!) of your biological life, carries out the actual denial of your everyday life. It is the complete expropriation of the portion of salary that your employer could not steal from you. It is, thus, the expropriation of any chance to conquer free time, liberated time, the minimum possible residue of life beyond the totalitarian work of the workaholic. But it is also the concrete appropriation of life and the production of non-life for those who, «as soon as they have a moment», are obliged to occupy themselves with when, how, and why they will die, to pre-occupy themselves with their own death, to wonder if their death will be worth something to anyone, to measure it and to measure themselves.

«In the sterile filigree of the questionnaires and health forms,» writes a friend who could be you, «explodes the horrific truth of a disease that had never before been so thoroughly repressed in human history. Looking at that questionnaire, I felt how my youth and "good health" were included and captured by it simply by being excluded, granted to me on loan by Someone as a resource to be managed for the limited days – no matter how many, as far as they are numbered – that separate me from the moment I will grow old and fall ill». With the insurance codification of life, «the lost objective support in which youth and health appear as correlates of an entire taxonomy of aging and illness, the death

oriented toward the «defense of society», that is, the incessant production of the conditions for general survival.

It is a singular circumstance, the key to which has long been in the hands of those who can read history with a political eye. *Signatura rerum.* The downgrading of the doctor (or the «physician») to health care provider, integrated (not by chance) by the vocabulary introduced by the amendments to the Social Security Act of 1965, which aimed to extend the insurance management of non-life to all of American society, finds, as is often the case when in comes to neoliberal governmentality, its illustrious predecessor in Nazi Germany. Within a couple of years of the 1935 decree *zum Schutze des deutschen Blutes und der deutschen Ehre* («for the defense of German blood and honor»), in fact, the licenses of Jewish doctors were revoked by the Nazi regime, and Jewish doctors were downgraded to *Behandler* (from «behandeln», meaning «to treat or provide») – *provider*, indeed (cf. Paul Saenger). The prohibition of medical professionalism that defined the Jewish *Behandler*, however, had an important limitation: it only prohibited treating patients of German descent, while leaving Jewish doctors free to practice their profession for other Jews.

The Jewish doctor, forbidden to threat, to take care of the health of the German population, was, however, allowed to *provide for* the health and life of the Jew. While the qualified life of the German had to be threated and cared for, the dequalified and increasingly mortified life of the Jew had to be simply provided for, or managed. In this sense, the management of dequalified life – that is, the management of bare life, as the management of survival – is nothing but the flip side of managing its death. The fact that «the Jew living under Nazism» is «the privileged negative referent of the new biopolitical sovereignty and, as such, a flagrant case of *homo sacer*» means nothing more than that his life, completely stripped of any qualification and political significance, is reduced to mere matter of provision and menagement. «The Jews,» writes Giorgio Agamben,

at the exact core of today's domination: where the tangency point of biopower, capital, and spectacle intersects with the line of everyday life. From the analysis of the revolutionary gesture of December 4th, we don't expect any program. And that's how it should be. Instead, we expect the sharpening of what is already clear. Literally. Increasing the degree of clarity – GLOW UP! – of an event, until it detonates – BLOW UP!

Here's why we decided to pick up the pen. Not to distill theory from the gesture, or consciousness from the unconscious – *fulgor ex fumo* («glow from smoke»). The only evaluation that matters to us is *strategic*: measuring the battlefield that this gesture, once again, has brought to light – the expropriation of everyday life, reduced to insured life. And from there, moving toward sabotage, toward the rebellion of survival: *fulgor ex luce* («lightning from light»).

3. «IT FEEL LIKE MY LIFE AIN'T MINE» (DELAY!)

Today, it is life itself that is unlivable. The U.S. healthcare system deserves credit for making this clear to everyone. When the insurance company mediates the relationship between doctor and patient, in fact, the care is always worse than the illness. Under a post on X dedicated to the *affaire*, we read: «I remember a woman who survived being mauled by a bear (it RIPPED HER FACE OFF) did an ama about her experience and said the worst part of the whole thing, attack, rescue, recovery, years of healing, many surgeries, was dealing with the health insurance company».

Once, and it is still the case in some dark corners of the Old Continent, between the myriad of diseases that infest us and a «decent life», there stood the more or less obscure figure of the doctor. The fact that, in the last two centuries, the medical management of health had the dual role of devastating each individ-

ual's body, while elaborating a theological-initiatory vocabulary useful for hiding the structurally political nature of health, is now well known. In the accomplished age of biopolitics, even the almost banal idea formulated by Ivan Illich fifty years ago, according to which the relentless deepening and multiplication of medical interventionism in Western societies clearly testifies against medicine's good intentions, is considered bizarre.

If the doctor had truly cured you, there would be no reason to keep putting you through constant new check-ups and therapies, all while presenting you with ever more bills. After all, it's no secret that, when the existence of a profession is tied to the economic *ratio*, it will do everything to convince you that it is indispensable. Over time (and two centuries is quite a lot), we end up with, on one side, a sect that manages the «monopoly on health methodology and technology», and, on the other, a medicalized human mass, reduced to a condition of total health dependency. «The real miracle of modern medicine,» Illich concluded, «is of a diabolical nature. It consists in keeping not just individuals alive, but entire populations at unnaturally low levels of personal health».The more or less paradoxical result of the «medicalization of life» is precisely to reduce life to generalized survival.

With some hermeneutic charity, one could conclude that the doctor's job is a «bullshit job» – a self-referential, recursive task capable of solving only the problems that it itself, by its very existence, creates. Let's leave such trivialities to the naïveté of David Graeber, or the lack of imagination of third-rate conspiracy theorists. The fact that medicine does not *cure* life, in fact, does not mean that it does not *take care of it*. Paraphrasing Foucault, we could say that, while preclassical medicine took on death and disease, since the late 18th century a new form of medicine has taken on life and health. And with them, the management of populations, or even, if we push a little further, *the production of society*.
Here's where its political nature lies. The «medical arts» of the

preclassical era aimed primarily at curing *disease*: their epistemic and technical object was, in other words, *death*. When, on the other hand, what is at stake is primarily the formulation of methods for administering *health*, medicine becomes an enterprise of *life* management. But administered life is also crippled life, lack-of-life, life that begs to be managed, calling out for a manager. As Foucault said, with the advent of biopolitics, disease and death are no longer «accidents», but «structural factors» of life. The era of biopolitical medicine is also the era of «permanent death, which infiltrates and penetrates life, eroding it continuously, shortening and weakening it».

Just as health management is nothing but the management of its interminable **DELAY**, so life management is, without residue, the administration of its lack. The decisive function of the biopolitical apparatus is, therefore, the care of non-life, the reproduction of survival and the conditions that make it possible.

4. «EVERYBODY DIES IN THEIR NIGHTMARES» (DENY!)

The biopolitical assumption of modern medicine comes into full view when the monopoly on the techniques of reproducing non-life passes from the hands of the doctor to the much dirtier hands of the insurer. Today, the official nomenclature of the U.S. bureaucracy calls both of them by the same name: *health care provider*. And indeed, who provides—who administers, who manages—the health of the American population? It is clear that the indistinction in language, against which many doctors, wounded in their pride, complain, is nothing but the acknowledgment that, in today's USA, the insurance business and the medical profession now stand on the same plane: biopolitics as a complex of devices