

○ VOLUME 11 NUMBER 2, 2012

SPECIAL ISSUE: COMMONS, CLASS STRUGGLE AND THE WORLD

Radiation and Revolution

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While we are observing a new cycle of global uprising against capitalism and the state, a catastrophic situation is unfolding in post-3/11 Japan. Two kinds of upheaval appear to be mirroring each other, shaking both capital's business as usual and the everyday life of the people in positive and negative manners. The earthquake and tsunami of maximal scale devastated the northeastern part of Honshu, with an increasing number of losses and refugees and a worsening and long-lasting nuclear disaster. The activity of the planet has shown not only the magnitude of its nonhuman force but also the degree to which our society and its infrastructural system forged by capitalism are relying on, merging with, implicated in and expanding over the planet in an ominous manner. The event that is unfolding in Japan will inexorably have significant impact over the entire human society ecologically, economically, and socially. The new situation forces us to re-conceptualize the crucial notions of 'class struggle' and 'commons'. This presents us with two unprecedented conditions: that the survival of the people is becoming more and more synonymous with the class struggle against the projects of the state and capital; and that 'commons' entails two extreme poles in its spectrum: while common resources provided by mother earth continue to be our lifeline upon which to build our mutuality (commune), as the apparatus that capitalist civilization has built expands on the planet and becomes deeper and larger, its fissures caused by the wrath of the same source of commons, namely, of mother earth, human society is affected at a deeper and larger scale. But international politics, the divided interests of the nation-states which are epitomized by the concept of 'the world', cannot confront these dichotomous poles of commonality at once. It is now necessary to re-introduce the concept of 'the earth' as the critical/dialectic counterpart to the world, in order to fully approach the commons. It goes without saying that this earth cannot be reduced to the issue of environmental protection; rather it is the planetary machine with which our class struggle for survival has to

synchronize itself. In other words, anti-capitalism is possible today only as a movement to decompose and recompose the apparatus in which our beings on the planet are almost completely implicated.

Complexity has become a matter of life and death, rather than a concept for cherishing the beauty and mystery of nature.

(Yabu 2012, p. 90)

XXX Plus Nuclear

While we have been observing a new cycle of global uprisings beginning with the Arab Spring in December 2010, a catastrophic situation has been unfolding in Japan. At a glance one is a process of mass subjectivation, while the other is a process of mass suffering. These seemingly irrelevant situations—are they mirroring each other? Opposing each other? Or reinforcing each other? Perhaps all on some levels, but on the base level, at least, they are part of one and the same crisis of the global order and must contain possibilities toward its total transformation.

The global uprising consists of waves of life-affirming struggles against multifaceted injustice, oppression, and expropriation, first and foremost for survival and the search for a new status of hope. Following the global south, and then the Middle East and North Africa, the global north began to be devastated, being affected by the financial meltdown; now the crises have directly hit home; no place is free from the devastation of living conditions. The northern struggles have seen a dramatic development. Thus insurgency is propagating itself across the planet, connecting in various forms and in mutual recognition.

Meanwhile the situation in Japan is an ongoing disaster and at the same time a revelation of the state of the world in which we have been living. The disaster is unprecedented in terms of both scale and nature: it marks an intensifying tendency of a global experience in which man-made apparatuses that have been expanding over the planetary body can now exist only as potential *accidents* or *wars against itself* in the socio-environmental context. Here, a distinction between the natural and the man-made is diminishing, or rather an interconnectivity of everything determines the course of all activities and events. The dynamic flow of the planetary movement is running fissures all over the construction of the apparatus, which however cannot stop itself due to its automatist nature.

Fukushima disaster is the worst possible case due to its content: radioactivity. In this case, facing the worst nuclear accident to date triggered by planetary activities articulated as earthquake and tsunami, state policy and capitalist operations cannot give up their

modus operandi toward their own indefinite survival and endless expansion, transferring, intensifying and expanding the disaster in consequence. Radiation is gradually and steadily permeating every corner of the social space via metropolitan functions such as circulation, exchange, and transportation at the same time as it is being carried around by all atmospheric activities, including wind, rain and oceanic currents. What seems to have been an event centered on Eastern Honshu has become a disaster in a *generic sense* that everything is made part of, every factor multiplying and reinforcing each other toward unlimited devastation.

Aileen Mioko Smith asks a deadly question on the worsening situation:

[...] when a frog is dumped into hot water, it jumps out instantaneously from the shock. But when the frog is placed in water that is heated up gradually, it gets thoroughly heated through. I doubt if this is due to the frog's insensitivity. I rather think about our present situation. The hot water of the nuclear accident has shocked the world, and we have sought to jump out from it. But now, entrapped within the government policy to restart nuclear reactors, we could be boiled. Can we stop this course of events before we face the catastrophic situation of us all being cooked? (2012, p. 172)

Facing the expectation of slow death, the people in Japan are fighting for their lives. They refuse to remain victimized. They have no other choice but to oppose pro-nuclear policies and businesses: by freeing themselves from the political, social and economic chains tying them to the radioactive zones; by independently conducting scientific research on the present levels of radiation; by protesting the imposition of radioactive debris and the distribution of radioactive food products; and by terminating all nuclear reactors and the domination by nuclear weaponry. In this sense, their struggles can be bundled up as the 'anti-nuke movement'. This does not mean, however, that other problems have disappeared; neither are they putting aside other crises. Rather it is that all other crises and problems—jobs, education, reproduction, information, discrimination, class, etc.—are layered with, intensified, doubled, transformed, congealed by and thus seen through the expansion of radiation, which is driven steadily by the lingering interests of nuclear capitalism and the surviving sovereignty of the nuclear state. Such is the crux of the situation in Japan. The movements there are trying to tackle xxx problems plus Nuclear (with a capital N). In this situation the N-issues embody the negative end of the horizon that a capitalist society stretches and imposes upon the people. What has become more and more clear is that nuclear power (both civilian and military), due to its very uncontrollability and interminability, takes hostage of all of the populace and as such assumes the last resort for the survival and maintenance of the existing order. Nuclear power is not just a bad choice of energy/weaponry but the most powerful, effective and broad way of controlling and ruling. In this respect the ongoing struggles in Japan

shed light on the ultimate hindrance to and target of anti-capitalist and anti-statist objectives.

The people have succeeded—though only temporarily—in stopping all nuclear reactors and are continuously fighting against the scheme of the state to restart them. Their direct target is a power stretching across the country consisting of the electric companies, the government (pro-nuclear bureaucrats), financial circles, enterprises, scholars and media under the thumb of energy industries in the country (aka the Nuclear Village).¹ But the network of the interests the struggles are making visible with their opposition extends far beyond the territory of Japan. The network of power might be called the 'global nuclear regime', consisting of military and industrial forces promoting and relying on the entire process and expanse of 'nuclearity', in Gabrielle Hecht's term (2012), from uranium mining to energy production to weaponry distribution, and much more.

In this manner the struggles are part of the global uprising—and, yet again, loaded with the extra fetters of the ongoing nuclear disaster, one that is unfortunately expanding far beyond the territory of the Far Eastern archipelago. Radioactive substances are still being released from the wrecked reactors. Further damage to Reactor 4 by a probable future earthquake or typhoon or by its own collapse is said to invite planetary catastrophe. According to such assumptions, Japan's present could be the future of the world. And all the future struggles on the planet may have to share in the heavy-loaded implications (of N-issues) of their struggles.

Direct confrontation with this nuclearity announces the advent of a new age; an age of new forms of power, struggle and life. It is the age of a fatal bond between the state and capitalism. Procuring sources of energy—from coal to fossil fuel to nuclear—is the sector where state power has always been most desperately in support of capitalist interest. This has been particularly symptomatic in nuclear power and its dreadful transferability between civilian and military uses. In the wake of the accident, it has become known that nuclear power is always already based upon a catastrophe (inherent in the process of nuclear fission or fusion and radiation) and its shaky and tricky control. There is a mechanism to encase it. But once the case is broken, *as it has been*, the catastrophe comes out and begins to cover the entire environment. Since then, everything has been affected. Not to mention life itself being endangered, social bonds on various levels are in the process of decomposition, and all the social institutions have been shaken by their own incapability and irresponsibility and in consequence are losing their popular ground. There are company heads and politicians who give orders and are thus considered responsible, but none of them actually takes responsibility. What they do is underestimate the problem or pretend as if it has already been solved. Under this frustrating political theater seems to lie a mechanism that automatically runs the apparatus driving toward the goals of protecting and increasing the same sets of

interest. For such an automatic form of power, managing and controlling a nuclear disaster that knows no end is the new way of rule.

This is a new age for life itself. Simple acts of being—breathing, touching, drinking, eating, walking—can no longer be performed innocently, without considering radioactivity. Living itself is a struggle; and the people fight against power. Imposed upon the life of the people confronting power are a new spatiality and temporality: the spatiality of radioactivity that is forming a constantly changing and expanding complexity of mosaic patterns; and the temporality of the half-lives of radioactive substances, which vary yet last a much longer time than any of us can deal with. These confrontations necessitate a new science and a new philosophy that we have never seen before. The bottom line of these confrontations is a protection of life and prevention of and/or survival with illnesses. The starting and ending points are simply and essentially the fact that we are living. This is telling of the nature of the struggles today and in the future.

The Global Nuclear Regime

The devastating situation in Japan notwithstanding, the annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank will take place nowhere else but in Tokyo in October 2012. In fact this is a calculated relocation from the originally designated city, Cairo. Evidently the IMF and the WB prefer *radiation to revolution*.

All in all it was the struggle of the Egyptian people that ousted the hotbeds of global finance manipulators. Meanwhile Japan is one of the main economic forces for promoting global financial operations. And one of their schemes in choosing Tokyo seems to be to fog up the severity of the present devastation by staging praise for the nonexistent success of recovery from the disaster.² By blindfolding themselves to the deadly situation, the IMF and the WB assume their roles as the worldwide pusher of the most *outrageous and impossible* project to reconstruct the radioactive zones for the benefit of US/Japan business interests, and, at the bottom line, they underline the desperate need for sustaining the metropolitan function of Tokyo and its neighboring areas as long as it can. From Cairo to Tokyo—they shifted their priority from the oppression of the Egyptian revolution to their new need for reorganizing investment in reconstructing the land of post-nuclear disaster and managing a population living under radiation.

The first annual meeting took place in Tokyo in 1964, the year of the Tokyo Olympics. The slogan was 'to promote Japan to the world and become one of the driving forces behind Japan's postwar new beginning'. This time around, it is to show the world Japan's strong recovery following the devastating earthquake. In both times, the rhetoric emphasizes successful recovery and its underlying economic and technological power of the nation. Omitted completely are the real

sufferings and struggles of the people. Recovery in a proper sense is questionable in both cases: not to mention the worsening nuclear devastation from which no recovery is in sight, the wounds from WWII have never been healed without an acknowledgement of the war crimes committed by the Japanese Government and full compensation for all the victims. Lurking behind here is a serious need for 'reconstruction' for the global enterprises and financial order's profit making. It is this drive for reconstruction that is ultimately responsible for letting a multitude be exposed to radiation.

The IMF urges Japan to conduct structural reforms in this state of exception: to handle the radioactive debris from Fukushima; to raise taxes for reconstruction, i.e., a consumption tax; to lower corporate taxes; to freeze the central government contributions to the public pension system (2012b, 2012a). Meanwhile a joint team for the reconstruction planning centered on Miyagi Prefecture (neighboring Fukushima) has been underway in a collaboration between the ruling powers of the US and Japan (Hirano 2012). It is a post-3/11 Japanese shock doctrine aimed at resuming the neoliberal reforms on the one hand and blocking Japan's detachment from the US on the other, bringing back the projects and the long-term alliance that were about to be severed, after the administration changed from the Liberal Democratic Party to the Democratic Party in 2009 (Kinoshita 2011).

The collaborative bodies for reconstruction, though involving conflicting business interests, share some basic goals: Japan's participation in the free trade agreement Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP); instead of having a central and powerful headquarters to command, giving more initiatives to the private sector; and emphasis on (voluntary-based) soft power instead of (coercive) hard power, even when the military is involved, including rescue missions, medical support, research projects, etc. Its intention is construction of a power network through a mishmash of governments, NGOs, enterprises, academia, local communities and the military. The multinational network power in which the place of command and responsibility is relatively diffused like a nerve system, while keeping a top-down authoritarian structure, has already been an ongoing tendency and deemed ideal for the management and control of the disaster, in order to make sure that everyone is a part of it and nobody is free from it.

Finally, they all agree on the continuation of nuclear operations in Japan. This is, on the one hand, to maintain Japan's corporate society in a business-as-usual manner, with the interventions of general contractors and continuous business for the electric companies. On the other hand, for the US it is also a matter of security and global military strategy. Throughout post-WWII history, during and after the Cold War, Japan has always been under the rule/protection of the US military. The outrageous project of introducing nuclear power into the civilian life of a country, which had already experienced nuclear atrocities, was largely due to the intention of the ruling powers of the US and Japan to naturalize nuclear power among the people. Thanks

to bombastic media campaigns and shrewd information manipulation taking advantage of the social atmosphere during a time of economic growth (Ikegami 2011), their intention was realized and there are nuclear power plants as well as nuclear warheads (in US military bases) across the archipelago. Nuclear power is always and essentially Janus-headed: military and civilian. It offers capitalism a utopian dream for sublime energy and the state a utopian dream of sublime weaponry, assuming the strongest bond between capitalism and state sovereignty.

Generally speaking, even when nuclear energy generation is privately funded,

[...] the state protect[s] investors in nuclear power plants with a crazy law that put[s] a limit on the insurance costs of these plants in case of accidents and disasters. Nuclear reactors [are] government funded in the final instance, since this private liability limit [is] a small fraction of the eventual damage claims a serious accident at a nuclear plant would generate. (Gambino 2011)

In Japan it is *virtually* tax money earned by the people that will have to pay off the ever-increasing costs of the disaster. Now the people in Japan are coerced into shouldering two kinds of evils that are *nationally commonized*: radiation and debt. They are taken hostage by the failed utopian projects motivated by the postwar global nuclear regime.

Thus nuclear power is the most concentrated and dreadful form of *capture*. It is a new form of ‘mega-machine’—as it was conceptualized by Lewis Mumford (1967)—that it creates, regulates and controls the entire social body and space by over-coding the land and populace by imposing an insanely megalomaniac project. It is, as it were, an invisible and expansive pyramid of the new age on a global scale.

Forces that both promote and rely on nuclear power are global in nature. As the state has come into existence and continued to exist—not in and of itself but—only in mutual power relationship with other states, first a world empire and then neighboring ones, nuclear power that guarantees its might has been expanding accordingly since its inception. Capturing this might involve uranium mining, global trade, concentration of capital, state intervention, international politics, scientific research, energy production, weaponry production and distribution, military intervention, decommissioning plants, waste reprocessing and waste storing or shipping. Gabrielle Hecht calls ‘nuclearity’ all phases and aspects of nuclear productions and seeks to grasp the global network of operations, its driving forces and its effects upon the peoples in different localities, by the concept of ‘nuclear ontologies’ (2012, 2006). They involve global relations among varied powers and interests, with divergent interpretations in terms of marketing, health and weaponry from different and often conflicting standpoints. Certainly it is these operations that cause health hazards and atrocities in innumerable mining sites in Africa, Australia and

elsewhere, war zones bombed by depleted uranium warheads, and radioactive pollution from power plants, factories and dumpsites across the globe.

The history of nuclearity follows the history of colonialism, imperialism, postcolonial power contestation, Cold War power relations and empire. Here we see layers of power dynamics in which nothing has disappeared through synthesis into a higher or more developed entity, but rather all are layered like stratification—every layer remains and expresses itself in its own way. Undoubtedly its biggest leading player is the US, which has been building a network empire based upon island territories across the planet, unlike the continental territories of the British Empire from the past (Hecht 2011). The international politics that is centered on the UN, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) et al. is a place for negotiations among pro-nuclear power/weaponry states.

These powers' way of rule is based upon what Hecht calls 'nuclear exceptionalism' over which they contest amongst themselves (Hecht 2012). In other words, they employ all their economic, scientific, political and military might to achieve and monopolize the *sublime power* of destruction and energy production. The global nuclear regime is an assemblage of the powers—nuclear states and nuclear capitals forming military/industrial complex—based upon their hold of nuclear exceptionalism. The world as we know it seems to be totally dominated by it and there is no way out of it.

Seen from the viewpoint of the global tract of nuclearity, Fukushima 3/11 is not a single, exceptional case, but it is the biggest *and* worst embodiment of the disasters that the nuclearity has caused. It is a revelation for us all, of the real existence of the global nuclear regime feeding itself from globally distributing nuclearity, and of the fact that it would not only dare persist in nuclear power even after the imaginably worst disaster but also even utilize the catastrophic situation in order to maintain its rule. Furthermore, it has revealed the consequence of the expansion of nuclear exceptionalism or the expansion of techno-politics based upon nuclearity over the planetary body, that more radioactive contamination and more potential nuclear accidents will be shared by all planetary lives.

In different terms, it announces the advent of an age when commodification of everything by capitalism has reached the point where *general equivalence* of value is increasingly approaching the proximity of *general catastrophe* of living. This shift—from disaster capitalism to catastrophic capitalism—has to do with a deep crisis of the commons.

Eco-class Struggles against the Negative Commonization

From the vantage point of the global uprisings today, the global nuclear regime *is* the last obstacle and the ultimate target of decomposition. For it is the darkest and strongest stem of the global capitalism/states joint force.

The global uprising has been largely derivative of life crises across the planet, which have a lot to do with an extreme deprivation of the commons—from environment and natural resources such as land, air, water and food to information and intelligence to our own body, labor and affects—but, for that matter, all the revolutionary impetus in the past has always been rooted in its attempts to nurture *and* (re)capture the commons on communal basis. The commons in a broad sense means all of our mutually shared resources for survival and at the same time the basis for community building. Meanwhile every kind of sovereignty and capitalism has been—both historically and presently—based upon expropriation, exploitation, privatization and commodification of the commons, and in turn they have socialized all excesses and wastes and impose them over members of society. In this sense, the commons is the horizon for all the struggles of the people for their survival, justice and hope.

Yet what are imposed as negative byproducts of the de-commonization have been increasingly vicious and overloaded in recent years (Mies & Bennholdt-Thomsen 1999; Gambino 2011; Hardt 2010). They could be called ‘the negative commons’ that the people are forced to share—whose socioeconomic epitome is debt, whose material epitome is pollution. As private and national debts are imposed as burden on people living now and in the future, all sorts of pollution are likewise imposed as deadly biohazards. Radiation is certainly one and the worst of all pollutions, and the tax money to pay off the unending nuclear disaster will weigh on the people for years to come. The so-called environmental crises, the impoverishment and the immiseration of all kinds are due to the de- and negative commonizations. On top of that, privatization of information, including the areas of intelligence in general to affective production to genetics, has been creating new species of negative commons that metamorphose both our bodies and minds in a monstrous manner. So the areas of information *in both material and immaterial senses* are the frontline of the struggles over the commons.

In post-3/11 Japan, while radioactive substances are affecting every molecular information (i.e., of air, water, food, etc.) in the atmosphere and attacking the genetic information of living bodies, the pro-radioactive ruling powers are waging information warfare by monopolizing, lying, hiding, blurring, and distorting basic facts and data. Corrupt scholars and media play an important role in this campaign. Doubled by the corporatization of higher education, peoples’ distrust in disciplines and specialists has only deepened. Due to some scientists’ totally irresponsible testimony, the authority of

academia has crumbled. Meanwhile, peoples' science (Ikegami 2011)—i.e., the radiation-monitoring movement and other independent research projects on nuclearity and medicine—has been rising, both as a necessary means for survival *and* an important form of re-commonization. The information war is also a psychological and affective war. It involves people's anxiety, fear, anger, despair, sadness, trust, hope, love, etc., those affects that compose and decompose both individual beings and social relations, in confrontation with necro-politics and catastrophic capitalism. Therefore the informational front over the commons involves not only the environment but also social formation and mental composition (Guattari 2000).

It is necessary at this point to clarify two key concepts that we rely on constantly: environment and ecology. In its most basic definition, environment is a thin layer of planetary atmosphere where life forms reside in absolute interconnectivity with other forms of existence, including not only minerals but also man-made substances: hence it has been transforming drastically in recent years. There are two things that require attention: first, environment provides us with the basis of the commons and for commonization; second, however, it is not something that exists outside us, for instance, as pure nature with its permanent harmony. It includes us and exists even inside us. We too are environment. Our society and minds too are environment. What does this mean? We have always been existentially implicated in both commonization and de-commonization. With the new situation of the material and immaterial information war, our bodies too are a battleground over the commons. And now the map of these two tendencies forms an intertwining complexity—from atmosphere to social space to our mind and body—that requires a highly tactical approach to read and interact with it.

Here the question of ecology intervenes. If the concept of ecology is still functional today, its task is certainly not to regain permanent natural harmony by ignoring the man-made world. The absolute interconnectivity within the environment does not allow us to pursue such a dream any longer. Its task should be a tactization of the politics of the commons in the constantly transforming environment. Ecology can no longer be a fixed ideal model, but should be a methodology for the constant interaction with the transforming complexity, namely, a *modulation* between commonization and de-commonization toward re-commonization, between the commons and the negative commons for survival. In other words, it should provide us with a *cartography* intervening in the situation of this absolute interconnectivity, involving all sorts of positivity and negativity that we now have to live with, so that it can be a tool for forecasting our next action. The commons in crisis is thus the stage for a new ecological struggle that inexorably overlaps with a new class struggle in the post-nuclear disaster world.

The eco-class struggle is the struggle of life forms against the automatist operations of power that cannot stop its pursuit of interests (de-commonization) and dares to seek to manage and control catastrophe (negative commonization) for its own continuation. In this struggle, the object of decomposition is the diffused network power of the global military/industrial complex, centered on the global nuclear regime. The tactic is a constantly shifting modulation in confrontation with the diffused yet authoritarian power, in order to fight the information warfare over the planetary commons. The struggle stretches its expanse of confrontation over all domains of life activity, wherein the notion of traditional politics finds itself too narrow and obsolete. The enemies are omnipresent in varied forms and ontologies. The agents of the struggles cannot be reduced to a class as a homogeneous group. Since an agent already exists in multiple categories and fights in multiple domains, if we call a bunch a class, it contains ontological multiplicity. It has to do primarily with economic class, which however contains other heterogeneous categories: kinds of labor, ways of life, living places, age, gender, race, ethnicity, affective engagement, body condition. All of these categories are varied ways by which our existences are commonizing and being de-commonized, and are the battleground of varied fronts for re-commonization.

We know how carefully people in Japan, now under radiation, have to act in every movement of their living—breathing, drinking, eating, outing, working, in their living places and conditions—in spite of and against all the policies, demands and conduct of the authorities. The all-front war internalizes fissures within the traditional category of a class. One example is widely observed in general households in which wives and mothers or more broadly caretakers (reproductive workers) are more enraged by and militantly opposing the pro-nuclear policies and are for radically changing their lives (i.e., moving away from the contaminated areas and choosing diet carefully to avoid internal radiation), while husbands and fathers or more broadly breadwinners (productive workers) have to persist in the same residence, working and eating conditions.

This situation is based upon the historical relationship between productive and reproductive workers: within a household the former is relying on the tacit subservient labor of the latter, but through this exploitation capital—less individual capitals than total social capital—is, though indirectly, exploiting the reproductive workers. That is to say, capitalism is ultimately living off of expropriating the practices of reproduction and care for life. In the post-3/11 situation, the formerly indirect relationship is made a direct one at once, because the interests of capital and the state—to maintain nuclear operations at the risk of massive populace being internally irradiated—are directly attacking reproduction that grounds all productions. This is a psychosomatic war waged by *necro-politics and catastrophic capitalism* against life and the basis for commonization.

The second example of class complexity is in techno-politics based upon the uneven development between metropolis and countryside. That is evident in the relationship between Tokyo and the northeastern region of Honshu, where Fukushima is located. The countryside has been made to support Tokyo not only with its agricultural and marine products for food, but also by offering cheap labor power for construction and finally electricity for lifeline. For instance, the land around the particular townships (such as Futaba-cho and Okuma-cho) near the Fukushima Daiichi Plants is not suitable for agriculture, and men of adult age living there had had to go to cities, especially Tokyo, as migrant workers, before the plants began their operations: they lived in the day-workers' ghettos and worked at construction sites on day-to-day contracts, or were sometimes recruited by subcontractors to be sent to nuclear power plants in different parts of Japan as radiation-exposed workers. But the Fukushima Daiichi plants made it possible for them to remain with their families by working there, if and only if they choose to do radiation-exposed works. That is to say, the condition of being located in a remote area that is yet unsuitable for agricultural production—or the production being weak in the market even if the land is productive—is commonly shared among the sites for nuclear power plants, and also the area where many day-workers come from.

Here exist two interacting and merging class denominators: one is regionality and the other is the amount of radiation exposure. Who tends to be more exposed to radiation than others? Aside from the people living in the vicinity of the reactors, radiation-exposed workers at the plant, farmers in the radiation-contaminated zones, sanitation workers in various parts of Japan, all other outdoor workers, homeless people (who are often day-workers without a job). This is a radioactive war waged against the land losing its people, and against the people losing their land. The land is cracked open from which flow both fanatic nationalism and an exodus (as I shall return to later)—not to mention the radiation gushing out and expanding all over the Pacific Ocean.

Meanwhile the young in the cities have been doubly hit by the new situation: on top of the informalization of jobs and education reform, which had been hard enough for them to take, their hope for a long future has been severed by their susceptibility to radiation and the social atmosphere coercing them toward self-responsibility and sacrifice. This is creating tendencies toward both total inertia and insurrection. This is a socio-psycho-somatic war waged against the future and hope in a broad sense. Infants who are not aware of the situation are said to be most vulnerable to radioactivity. Considering what this world of ours will have thrust onto the future generations—a mountain of the negative commons as well as the global nuclear regime—we know we have created a generation who will have to fight against this world *most militantly* for their survival.

Life vis-à-vis the Nation, the Earth vis-à-vis the World

On the horizon of the eco-class struggles in Japan, there are two ultimate directions: total exodus and total abolition of the radiation-exposed labor. Although they might be thought of as ‘unrealistic’, they are rather a *sine qua non*, and together form a front that will inexorably involve a transformation of our existence from the national to the planetary. It would be a revolution—in both epistemological and ontological senses—that shifts our engagement in *this world* to the engagement in *this earth*.

Some have already pioneered voluntary evacuation from the contaminated zones. The government has been preventing this by mainly looking the other way and not providing much support, while fanatic nationalism and regionalism, encouraged by the pro-nuke powers and media, have been attacking this crucial act by spreading the term ‘betrayal’, in order to immobilize the people. Yet this movement could increase and become a big impetus. Finally a mass exodus, especially from the Eastern part of Japan, is not only a possibility and option but also an inevitability from a longer perspective. Let us remember one of the most powerful and effective exoduses performed in history: the Underground Railroad in North America, which destroyed the economic ground of the South by organizing the flight of multitude of slaves from plantations to the Northern cities. This action required coordinated efforts among various participants in different sectors and localities: those who take flight, transportation, a network of hideouts, receiving communities, political campaigns, legal support, financial support. In the post-3/11 context, the exodus would involve much bigger numbers and have to be a global network. This would terminate the already severed bond between the people and the land that grounds the national unit called Japan. The age has come when the principle of affirming life goes beyond the bond to a nation. In human history, various peoples have already engaged in mass exodus, resulting in creating new people, first nomadic and then sedentary. The present context of both immiseration and global uprising is tacitly creating a people who no longer belong to a nation-state, a people who have no place to belong to except for planet Earth.

Nobody should be performing radiation-exposed labor, especially under conditions wherein innumerable workers informally hired by subcontractors are made to work in a highly radioactive environment (i.e., the core shroud replacement) without sufficient information and protection. To abolish this wretched labor should be a determinant objective for human liberation and life protection. Technically no nuclear reactors can operate without radiation-exposed labor, and nuclear plants will stop if and only if the workers refuse to do the job. However, there are a couple of sinister obstacles to this. The nuclear industry is an apparatus shrouded in extreme secrecy, surveillance, and control that make workers’ subjective actions such as strikes impossible. Workers who desperately need jobs are paid much better

than at any other workplace. Another persuasion is the threat that the disaster will spread, should nobody take care of the reactors. This captures working people's feeling of *indebtedness* to their communities and nation. We stumble on this, but this is precisely because the nuclear apparatus takes us hostage in at least triple layers: environmentally by radiation, socially by economic and regional conditions and mentally by nationalism and regionalism.

To tackle this, it is necessary to have a layered scope and strategy, which must be based upon the new planetary subjectivation of workers and people. We must destroy the present socioeconomic conditions that produce the underclass workers doubly bound by underdevelopment and radiation-exposed labor. It is necessary to undo all the binds that the nuclear apparatus employs for its survival. In this process, we should gradually isolate the nuclear apparatus from the people who have been taken hostage in terms of their labor, living, and mind. Though it will take a long, long time, we must refuse, step-by-step, the way the nuclear apparatus is controlling and managing the disaster and catastrophe. Meanwhile it is of the most fundamental necessity to consistently develop ways to protect our lives by ourselves, and this attempt, as we have seen, has already been initiated by people in Japan. Shiro Yabu calls the front being formed in combination between the exodus and the refusal of work at the damaged plant the 'Eastern Japan General Strike' (2012, p. 159).

Life-affirming struggles of people across the globe are the present form of eco-class struggle. But what is the Life we are talking about? Radiation knows no discrimination, since it affects all life forms. It is a universal life that is at stake. Or the simple fact that our living is under direct assault. It is not a life that we think of commonly in the individualist and competitive commodity society. The devastating situation after 3/11 has surpassed far beyond the stage in which everyone is encouraged to think of just his/her own success in life. Rather what has been increasingly crucial in recent years and especially after 3/11 is life as the most basic and ephemeral phenomenon: just living. To be affirmed today in our struggles is a Life that is pre-personal, pre-individual, and yet singular.

The philosopher Gilles Deleuze said in his final essay on life:

For example, very small children all resemble one another and have hardly any individuality, but they have singularities: a smile, a gesture, a funny face—not subjective qualities. Small children, through all their sufferings and weaknesses, are infused with an immanent life that is pure power and even bliss. (2001, p. 30)

All of us consist of varied ontological layers, at the bottom of which exists an immanent life, upon which we accumulate layers of subjectivity. There is no life that lasts forever; there is no life that expands indefinitely. But in capitalist society, we too are implicated in capital's reproduction and expansion and made to perform an indefinitely expansive life. The notions of a successful life do not

originate in us but are constantly transferred to us from the capitalist drive. Our everyday anxiety and depression come from the essential impossibility of performing these tasks. Every life gets wounded, gets sick and dies and yet knows passion in its singularity. Precisely because of its being vulnerable and ephemeral and yet eventful, a life has pure power and bliss that is essentially impersonal *and* universal. It is this Life that we seek to nurture and protect in our efforts toward a full-hearted re-commonization.

At the same time, however, it is becoming increasingly difficult for us—the struggles of the people or the global uprising—to have a faith in *this world*, because of what the world in human history is made of, namely, the international politics that has been increasingly groundless, in contrast to the time when it was in the process of formation and a faith in human synthesis was still at work. The world, as we know it now, is becoming just a stage for war and negotiation among the divided interests of nation-states to share the planetary commons by making it into natural resources and then commodities; and today the stem of the world is nothing but the global nuclear regime. In other words, the world has established itself by pushing its material base, the earth, into the subconscious precisely by de-commonizing it. Since then, only on the occasions of disaster or insurrection, the earth wakes up the world through the devastation or elation of our material existence: the Life or just living. Thus the languages of the world cannot solve the deep crisis of the commons whose cause is articulated, in the first place, by themselves. Fukushima 3/11 announces the end of this world articulated by capitalist/nation/state. The world is no longer a total horizon upon which the struggles can project their possibilities and limits, a goal.

It is now necessary to reintroduce the concept of the earth as the critical/dialectic counterpart to the world, in order to fully approach the commons. It goes without saying that this earth cannot be reduced to the issue of environmental protection; rather it is the complexity of the planetary movement with which our eco-class struggles are in the process of synchronizing themselves. In other words, revolution today is nothing but our Copernican turn to shift our tactical and strategic attention from the world to the earth. We know that the earth exists as an autonomous entity that has its own dynamic process and movement or, if I may say so, a subjectivity. Though we cannot touch its whole, we are part of it. We too are the earth. And now for waging the final and endless battle against the global nuclear regime, fangs of the earth are rising.

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Notes

¹ The power network that promotes nuclear power in Japan is called 'Nuclear Village'. See <http://www.japansubculture.com/ex-prime-minister-blames-meltdown-on-nuclear-village-inadequate-laws-and-tepconisa-incompetence>

² International Monetary Fund World Bank Group, 2012 Tokyo Annual Meetings, <http://www.imf-wb.2012tokyo.mof.go.jp/english>

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