When we recognize the power of these modern figures of armed popular struggle, from the people's army to guerrilla organizations, it becomes clear how mistaken are the various theories that attempt to make *the political autonomous from the social*. Consider, for example, Hannah Arendt's distinction between political revolution and social revolution, which she illustrates with reference to the American Revolution (political) and the French (social).[94] Arendt's conception tends to separate the drive for political liberation and democracy from the demands of social justice and class conflict. Even for the eighteenth-century revolutions, however, and increasingly as modernity progresses, this distinction is difficult to maintain: the pressures of economic, social, and political factors are articulated in each of the revolutionary figures, and sorting them into separate boxes only mystifies the real concrete processes of popular armed struggle and guerrilla movements. In fact, one common strategy of counterinsurgency and state repression is to pit the one against the other, the social against the political, justice against freedom. On the contrary, in the long seasons of armed resistance and liberation movements—especially in the twentieth-century antifascist resistances and the anticolonial national liberation struggles—guerrilla forces continually create tighter articulations between the political and the social, between anticolonial wars of liberation, for example, and anticapitalist class wars.[95] As we move into postmodernity this articulation between the social and the political becomes even more intense. The genealogy of resistances and struggles in postmodernity, as we will see shortly, presupposes *the political nature of social life* and adopts it as an internal key to all the movements. This presupposition is basic, in fact, to the concept of biopolitics and the biopolitical production of subjectivity. Here economic, social, and political questions are inextricably intertwined. Any theoretical effort in this context to pose the autonomy of the political, separate from the social and the economic, no longer makes any sense.

INVENTING NETWORK STRUGGLES

Looking back at the genealogy of modern revolutions and resistance movements, the idea of "the people" has played a fundamental role, in both the people's army and the guerrilla models, in establishing the authority of the organization and legitimating its use of violence. "The people" is a form of sovereignty contending to replace the ruling state authority and take power. This modern legitimation of sovereignty, even in the case of revolutionary movements, is really the product of a usurpation. *The people* often serves as a middle term between the consent given by the population and the command exerted by the sovereign power, but generally the phrase serves merely as a pretense to validate a ruling authority. The modern legitimation of power and sovereignty, even in cases of resistance and rebellion, is always grounded in a transcendent element, whether this authority be (in Max Weber's terms) traditional, rational, or charismatic. The ambiguity of the notion of the sovereign people turns out to be a kind of duplicity, since the legitimating relationship always tends to privilege authority and not the population as a whole. This ambiguous relationship between the people and sovereignty accounts for the continuing dissatisfaction we have noted with the undemocratic character of the modern forms of revolutionary organization, the recognition that the forms of domination and authority we are fighting against continually reappear in the resistance movements themselves. Furthermore, increasingly today the modern arguments for the legitimation of the violence exercised by the people suffer the same crisis that we spoke of earlier in terms of the legitimation of state violence. Here too the traditional legal and moral arguments no longer hold.

Is it possible today to imagine a new process of legitimation that does not rely on the sovereignty of the people but is based instead in the biopolitical productivity of the multitude? Can new organizational forms of resistance and revolt finally satisfy the desire for democracy implicit in the entire modern genealogy of struggles? Is there an immanent mechanism that does not appeal to any transcendent authority that is capable of

legitimating the use of force in the multitude's struggle to create a new society based on democracy, equality, and freedom? Does it even make sense to talk about a war of the multitude?

One model of legitimation we find in modernity that might help us address these questions is the one that animates class struggle. We are not thinking so much of the projects of Socialist states and parties, which certainly constructed their own modern forms of sovereignty, but the daily struggles of the workers themselves, their coordinated acts of resistance, insubordination, and subversion of the relations of domination in the workplace and in society at large. The subordinate classes organized in revolt never entertained any illusions about the legitimacy of state violence, even when they adopted reformist strategies that engaged with the state, forcing it to deliver social welfare and asking it for legal sanction, such as the right to strike. They never forgot that the laws that legitimate state violence are transcendental norms that maintain the privileges of the dominant class (in particular, the rights of property owners) and the subordination of the rest of the population. They knew that whereas the violence of capital and the state rests on transcendent authority, the legitimation of their class struggle was based solely on their own interests and desires.[96] Class struggle was thus a modern model of the immanent basis of legitimation in the sense that it appealed to no sovereign authority for its justification.

We do not think, however, that the question of the legitimation of the struggles of the multitude can be resolved simply by studying the archaeology of class warfare or by trying to establish any fixed continuity with the past. Past struggles can provide some important examples, but new dimensions of power demand new dimensions of resistance. Such questions furthermore cannot be resolved merely through theoretical reflection but must also be addressed in practice. We need to take up our genealogy where we left off and see how the political struggles themselves responded.

After 1968, the year in which a long cycle of struggles culminated in both the dominant and subordinated parts of the world, the form of resistance and liberation movements began to change radically—a change that corresponded with the changes in the labor force and the forms of social production. We can recognize this shift first of all in the transformations of the nature of guerrilla warfare. The most obvious change was that

guerrilla movements began to shift from the countryside to the city, from open spaces to closed ones. The techniques of guerrilla warfare began to be adapted to the new conditions of post-Fordist production, in line with information systems and network structures. Finally, as guerrilla warfare increasingly adopted the characteristics of biopolitical production and spread throughout the entire fabric of society, it more directly posed as its goal the production of subjectivity—economic and cultural subjectivity, both material and immaterial. It was not just a matter of "winning hearts and minds," in other words, but rather of creating new hearts and minds through the construction of new circuits of communication, new forms of social collaboration, and new modes of interaction. In this process we can discern a tendency toward moving beyond the modern guerrilla model toward more democratic network forms of organization.

One of the maxims of guerrilla warfare common to both the Maoist and Cuban models was the privileging of the rural over the urban. At the end of the 1960s and into the 1970s guerrilla struggles became increasingly metropolitan, particularly in the Americas and Europe.[97] The revolts of the African American U.S. ghettos of the 1960s were perhaps the prologue to the urbanization of political struggle and armed conflict in the 1970s. Many of the urban movements in this period, of course, did not adopt the polycentric organizational model typical of guerrilla movements but instead followed in large part the older centralized, hierarchical model of traditional military structures. The Black Panther Party and the Front du Libération du Québec in North America, the Uruguayan Tupamaros and the Brazilian Acçâo Libertadora Nacional in South America, and the German Red Army Faction and the Italian Red Brigades in Europe were all examples of that backward-looking, centralized military structure. In this period there also emerged decentered or polycentric urban movements whose organizations resembled the modern guerrilla model. To some extent in these cases the tactics of guerrilla warfare were simply transposed from the country to the city. The city is a jungle. The urban guerrillas know its terrain in a capillary way so that they can at any time come together and attack and then disperse and disappear into its recesses. The focus, however, was increasingly not on attacking the ruling powers but rather on transforming the city itself. In metropolitan struggles the close

relationship between disobedience and resistance, between sabotage and desertion, counterpower and constituent projects became increasingly intense. The great struggles of Autonomia in Italy in the 1970s, for example, succeeded temporarily in redesigning the landscape of the major cities, liberating entire zones where new cultures and new forms of life were created.[98]

The real transformation of guerrilla movements during this period, however, has little to do with urban or rural terrain—or, rather, the apparent shift to urban spaces is a symptom of a more important transformation. *The more profound transformation takes place in the relationship between the organization of the movements and the organization of economic and social production.*[99] As we have already seen, the mass armies of regimented industrial factory workers correspond to centralized military formations of the people's army, whereas guerrilla forms of rebellion are linked to peasant production, in its relative isolation dispersed across the countryside. Beginning in the 1970s, however, the techniques and organizational forms of industrial production shifted toward smaller and more mobile labor units and more flexible structures of production, a shift often labeled as a move from Fordist to post-Fordist production. The small mobile units and flexible structures of post-Fordist production correspond to a certain degree to the polycentric guerrilla model, but the guerrilla model is immediately transformed by the technologies of post-Fordism. The networks of information, communication, and cooperation—the primary axes of post-Fordist production—begin to define the new guerrilla movements. Not only do the movements employ technologies such as the Internet as organizing tools, they also begin to adopt these technologies as models for their own organizational structures.

To a certain extent these postmodern, post-Fordist movements complete and solidify the polycentric tendency of earlier guerrilla models. According to the classic Cuban formulation of *foquismo* or *guevarismo* the guerrilla forces are polycentric, composed of numerous relatively independent *focos*, but that plurality must eventually be reduced to a unity and the guerrilla forces must become an army. Network organization, by contrast, is based on the *continuing* plurality of its elements and its networks of

communication in such a way that reduction to a centralized and unified command structure is impossible. The polycentric form of the guerrilla model thus evolves into a network form in which there is no center, only an irreducible plurality of nodes in communication with each other.

One distinctive feature of the network struggle of the multitude, like post-Fordist economic production, is that it takes place on the biopolitical terrain—in other words, it directly produces new subjectivities and new forms of life. It is true that military organizations have always involved the production of subjectivity. The modern army produced the disciplined soldier who could follow orders, like the disciplined worker of the Fordist factory, and the production of the disciplined subject in the modern guerrilla forces was very similar. Network struggle, again, like post-Fordist production, does not rely on discipline in the same way: creativity, communication, and self-organized cooperation are its primary values. This new kind of force, of course, resists and attacks the enemy as military forces always have, but increasingly its focus is internal—producing new subjectivities and new expansive forms of life within the organization itself. No longer is "the people" assumed as basis and no longer is taking power of the sovereign state structure the goal. The democratic elements of the guerrilla structure are pushed further in the network form, and the organization becomes less a means and more an end in itself.

Of the numerous examples of civil war in the final decades of the twentieth century, the vast majority were still organized according to outdated models, either the old modern guerrilla model or the traditional centralized military structure, including the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, the mujahideen in Afghanistan, Hamas in Lebanon and Palestine, the New People's Army in the Philippines, Sendero Luminoso in Peru, and the FARC and the ELN in Colombia. Many of these movements, especially when they are defeated, begin to transform and take on network characteristics. One of the rebellions that looks forward and illustrates the transition from traditional guerrilla organization toward network forms is the Palestinian Intifada, which first began in 1987 and erupted again in 2000. Reliable information about the organization of the Intifada is scarce, but it seems that two models coexist in the uprising.[100] On one

hand, the revolt is organized internally by poor young men on a very local level around neighborhood leaders and popular committees. The stone throwing and direct conflict with Israeli police and authorities that initiated the first Intifada spread quickly through much of Gaza and the West Bank. On the other hand, the revolt is organized externally by the various established Palestinian political organizations, most of which were in exile at the beginning of the first Intifada and controlled by men of an older generation. Throughout its different phases, the Intifada seems to have been defined by different proportions of these two organizational forms, one internal and the other external, one horizontal, autonomous, and distributed and the other vertical and centralized. The Intifada is thus an ambivalent organization that points backward toward older centralized forms and forward to new distributed forms of organization.

That anti-Apartheid struggles in South Africa similarly illustrate this transition and the copresence of two basic organizational forms over a much longer period. The internal composition of the forces that challenged and eventually overthrew the Apartheid regime was extremely complex and changed over time, but one can clearly recognize, beginning at least in the mid-1970s with the Soweto revolt and continuing throughout the 1980s, a vast proliferation of horizontal struggles.[101] Black anger against white domination certainly was common to the various movements, but they were organized in relatively autonomous forms across different sectors of society. Student groups were important actors and labor unions, which have a long history of militancy in South Africa, played a central role. Throughout this period these horizontal struggles also had a dynamic relationship with the vertical axis of older, traditional leadership organizations, such as the African National Congress (ANC), which remained clandestine and in exile until 1990. One can pose this contrast between autonomous, horizontal organization and centralized leadership as a tension between the organized struggles (of workers, students, and others) and the ANC, but it might be more illuminating to recognize it also as a tension within the ANC, a tension that has remained and developed in some senses since the ANC's election to power in 1994.[102] Like the Intifada, then, the anti-Apartheid struggles straddled two different organizational forms, marking in our genealogy a point of transition.

The Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN), which first appeared in Chiapas in the 1990s, offers an even clearer example of this transformation: the Zapatistas are the hinge between the old guerrilla model and the new model of biopolitical network structures. The Zapatistas also demonstrate wonderfully how the economic transition of post-Fordism can function equally in urban and rural territories, linking local experiences with global struggles.[103] The Zapatistas, which were born and primarily remain a peasant and indigenous movement, use the Internet and communications technologies not only as a means of distributing their communiqués to the outside world but also, at least to some extent, as a structural element inside their organization, especially as it extends beyond southern Mexico to the national and global levels. Communication is central to the Zapatistas' notion of revolution, and they continually emphasize the need to create horizontal network organizations rather than vertical centralized structures.[104] One should point out, of course, that this decentered organizational model stands at odds with the traditional military nomenclature of the EZLN. The Zapatistas, after all, call themselves an army and are organized in an array of military titles and ranks. When one looks more closely, however, one can see that although the Zapatistas adopt a traditional version of the Latin American guerrilla model, including its tendencies toward centralized military hierarchy, they continually in practice undercut those hierarchies and decenter authority with the elegant inversions and irony typical of their rhetoric. (In fact, they make irony itself into a political strategy.[105]) The paradoxical Zapatista motto "command obeying," for example, is aimed at inverting the traditional relationships of hierarchy within the organization. Leadership positions are rotated, and there seems to be a vacuum of authority at the center. Marcos, the primary spokesperson and quasi-mythical icon of the Zapatistas, has the rank of subcomandante to emphasize his relative subordination. Furthermore, their goal has never been to defeat the state and claim sovereign authority but rather to change the world without taking power.[106] The Zapatistas, in other words, adopt all the elements of the traditional structure and transform them, demonstrating in the clearest possible terms the nature and direction of the postmodern transition of organizational forms.

In the final decades of the twentieth century there also emerged, particularly in the United States, numerous movements that are often grouped under the rubric of "identity politics," which were born primarily of feminist struggles, gay and lesbian struggles, and race-based struggles.[107] The most important organizational characteristic of these various movements is their insistence on autonomy and their refusal of any centralized hierarchy, leaders, or spokespeople. The party, the people's army, the modern guerrilla force all appear bankrupt from their perspective because of the tendency of these structures to impose unity, to deny their differences and subordinate them to the interests of others. If there is no democratic form of political aggregation possible that allows us to retain our autonomy and affirm our differences, they announce, then we will remain separate, on our own. This emphasis on democratic organization and independence is also borne out in the internal structures of the movements, where we can see a variety of important experiments in collaborative decision-making, coordinated affinity groups, and so forth. In this regard, the resurgence of anarchist movements, especially in North America and Europe, has been very important for their emphasis on the need for freedom and democratic organization.[108] All of these experiences of democracy and autonomy, even at the smallest levels, provide an enormous wealth for the future development of movements.[109]

Finally, the globalization movements that have extended from Seattle to Genoa and the World Social Forums in Porto Alegre and Mumbai and have animated the movements against war are the clearest example to date of distributed network organizations. One of the most surprising elements of the events in Seattle in November 1999 and in each of the major such events since then is that groups we had previously assumed to have different and even contradictory interests managed to act in common—environmentalists with trade unionists, anarchists with church groups, gays and lesbians with those protesting the prison-industrial complex. The groups are not unified under any single authority but rather relate to each other in a network structure. Social forums, affinity groups, and other forms of democratic decision-making are the basis of the movements, and they manage to act together based on what they have in common. That is

why they call themselves a "movement of movements." The full expression of autonomy and difference of each here coincides with the powerful articulation of all. Democracy defines both the goal of the movements and its constant activity. These globalization protest movements are obviously limited in many regards. First of all, although their vision and desire is global in scope, they have thus far only involved significant numbers in North America and Europe. Second, so long as they remain merely protest movements, traveling from one summit meeting to the next, they will be incapable of becoming a foundational struggle and of articulating an alternative social organization. These limitations may only be temporary obstacles, and the movements may discover ways to overcome them. What is most important for our argument here, however, is the form of the movements. These movements constitute the most developed example to date of the network model of organization.

This completes our genealogy of modern forms of resistance and civil war, which moved first from disparate guerrilla revolts and rebellions toward a unified model of people's army; second, from a centralized military structure to a polycentric guerrilla army; and finally from the polycentric model toward the distributed, or full-matrix, network structure. *This is the history at our backs.* It is in many respects a tragic history, full of brutal defeats, but it is also an extraordinarily rich legacy that pushes the desire for liberation into the future and bears crucially on the means for realizing it.

From our genealogy of modern resistance have emerged the three guiding principles or criteria that we mentioned at the beginning. The first guiding principal is the simple measure of efficacy in the specific historical situation. Each form of organization must grasp the opportunity and the historical occasion offered by the current arrangement of forces in order to maximize its ability to resist, contest, and/or overthrow the ruling forms of power. The second principle is the need for the form of political and military organization to correspond to the current forms of economic and social production. The forms of movements evolve in coordination with the evolution of economic forms. Finally and most important, democracy and freedom constantly act as guiding principles in the development of organizational forms of resistance. At various points in our history these

three principles have conflicted with each other, in cases when, for example, it appeared that the internal democracy and independence of movements had to be sacrificed in order to maximize their efficacy or in others when efficacy had to be sacrificed in the interest of the democracy or autonomy of the movement. Today we have arrived at a point when the three principles coincide. The distributed network structure provides the model for an absolutely democratic organization that corresponds to the dominant forms of economic and social production and is also the most powerful weapon against the ruling power structure.[110]

In this network context legality itself becomes a less effective and less important criterion for distinguishing among resistance movements. Traditionally we have conceived separately those forms of resistance that acted "inside" and "outside" the law. *Within* the established legal norms, resistance served to neutralize the repressive effects of the law: labor strikes, active civil disobedience, and various other activities that contest economic and political authority constitute a first level of insubordination. At a second level, parties, trade unions, and other movements and representative bodies that straddle the present legal order, acting simultaneously *inside and outside* the law, created counterpowers that constantly challenged the ruling authorities. At a third level, *outside* of legality, organized resistances, including various people's armies and guerrilla movements, tried to break with and subvert the present order, opening spaces for the construction of a new society. Whereas these three levels of resistance required different organizations in the past, today network movements are able to address all of them simultaneously. Furthermore, in the network context the question of legality becomes increasingly undecidable. It may be impossible to say, for instance, whether a network of protesters at a summit meeting is acting legally or illegally when there is no central authority leading the protest and when protest actions are so varied and changing. In fact, and this is our main point, the most important differences among network resistances is not simply a question of legality. The best criteria for distinguishing among network movements, in fact, are the three principles we detailed above, particularly the demand for democracy. This gives us the means to differentiate clearly, for instance, among the

groups that the current counterinsurgency theorists mistakenly group together. The counterinsurgency theorists of netwar link together the Zapatistas, the Intifada, the globalization protest movements, the Colombian drug cartels, and al-Qaeda. These diverse organizations are grouped together because they appear to be similarly immune to traditional counterinsurgency tactics. When we look at such contemporary forms of organization in the context of the criteria we have established, however, we can clearly recognize important distinctions. (There are many other important differences, of course, such as their use of violence, but these are the distinctions highlighted by our analysis in this section.) The Colombian drug cartels and al-Qaeda, for example, may look like networks from the perspective of counterinsurgency, but in fact they are highly centralized, with traditional vertical chains of command. Their organizational structures are not democratic at all. The Intifada and the Zapatistas, in contrast, as we have seen, do in some respects tend toward distributed network structures with no center of command and maximum autonomy of all the participating elements. Their center rather is their resistance to domination and their protest against poverty or, in positive terms, their struggle for a democratic organization of the biopolitical commons.

Now we need to return to the question of legitimation we raised earlier. It should be clear at this point that reproposing today the problem of how the needs of the proletariat can legitimate new forms of power or, to translate the question into a slightly different idiom, asking how class struggle can be transformed into social war or, rather still, translating again, asking how the interimperialist war can become the occasion for a revolutionary war—all these questions are old, tired, and faded. We believe that the multitude poses the problem of social resistance and the question of the legitimation of its own power and violence in terms that are completely different. Even the most advanced forms of resistance and civil war in modernity do not seem to offer us adequate elements for the solution of our problem. The Intifada, for example, is a form of struggle that corresponds at least superficially with some powerful characteristics of the movement of the multitude, such as mobility, flexibility, and the capacity to adapt to and challenge changing forms of repression in a radical

way. The Intifada, however, can only allude to the form we are seeking, the strategic passage that leads the proletariat to take the form of the multitude, that is, a network body. The form of organization needed must deploy the full power of today's biopolitical production and also fully realize the promise of a democratic society.

Here we find ourselves in front of a sort of abyss, a strategic unknown. Every spatial, temporal, and political parameter of revolutionary decision-making à la Lenin has been destabilized, and the corresponding strategies have become completely impractical. Even the concept of "counterpower," which was so important for the strategies of resistance and revolution in the period around 1968, loses its force. All notions that pose the power of resistance as homologous or even similar to the power that oppresses us are of no more use. Here we should take a lesson from Pierre Clastres, who, while investigating the nature of war from an anthropological perspective, argues that we should never view the wars of the oppressors as the same as the wars of the oppressed. The wars of the oppressed, he explains, represent constituent movements aimed at defending society against those in power. The history of peoples with a history is, as they say, the history of class struggle; the history of peoples without a history is, we should say with at least as much conviction, the history of their struggle against the state.[111] We need to grasp the kind of struggles that Clastres sees and recognize their adequate form in our present age.

And yet we do already know some things that can help us orient our passion for resistance. In the first place, we know that today the legitimation of the global order is based fundamentally on war. Resisting war, and thus resisting the legitimation of this global order, therefore becomes a common ethical task. In the second place, we know that capitalist production and the life (and production) of the multitude are tied together increasingly intimately and are mutually determining. Capital depends on the multitude and yet is constantly thrown into crisis by the multitude's resistance to capital's command and authority. (This will be a central theme of part 2.) In the hand-to-hand combat of the multitude and Empire on the biopolitical field that pulls them together, when Empire calls on war for its legitimation, the multitude calls on democracy as its political foundation. This democracy that opposes war is an "absolute democ-

racy." We can also call this democratic movement a process of "exodus," insofar as it involves the multitude breaking the ties that link imperial sovereign authority to the consent of the subordinated. (Absolute democracy and exodus will be central themes of chapter 3.)

SWARM INTELLIGENCE

When a distributed network attacks, it swarms its enemy: innumerable independent forces seem to strike from all directions at a particular point and then disappear back into the environment.[112] From an external perspective, the network attack is described as a swarm because it appears formless. Since the network has no center that dictates order, those who can only think in terms of traditional models may assume it has no organization whatsoever—they see mere spontaneity and anarchy. The network attack appears as something like a swarm of birds or insects in a horror film, a multitude of mindless assailants, unknown, uncertain, unseen, and unexpected. If one looks inside a network, however, one can see that it is indeed organized, rational, and creative. It has swarm intelligence.

Recent researchers in artificial intelligence and computational methods use the term swarm intelligence *to name collective and distributed techniques of problem solving without centralized control or the provision of a global model.[113] Part of the problem with much of the previous artificial intelligence research, they claim, is that it assumes intelligence to be based in an individual mind, whereas they assert that intelligence is fundamentally social. These researchers thus derive the notion of the swarm from the collective behavior of social animals, such as ants, bees, and termites, to investigate multi-agent-distributed systems of intelligence. Common animal behavior can give an initial approximation of this idea. Consider, for example, how tropical termites build magnificent, elaborate domed structures by communicating with each other; researchers hypothesize that each termite follows the pheromone concentration left by other termites in the swarm.[114] Although none of the individual termites has a high intelligence, the swarm of termites forms an intelligent system with no central control.* The intelligence of the swarm is based fundamentally on communication. *For researchers in artificial intelligence and*