

# Deterritorializing the Nation

Excerpt from *The Garden of Peculiarities*

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In order to deterritorialize the state it is imperative to oppose militarism and its ideological base, the idea of the nation state. If it were possible to suppress the imaginary of the imagined community, those which exist in the diverse nation-building projects, community would become a real group of people with faces and identifiable names.

Its daily interaction would be on a human scale, and the community would truly exist. In this way, the state would be deterritorialized.

The idea of the nation state is linked to the idea of race: the foundation of xenophobia and racism. The state has never stopped being a classist and racist instrument of control and oppression.

Its territorialization occurs through the movement and deployment of armed forces. In order to dissolve the state, it is necessary to dismantle militarism and the arms industry. The state operates as if it were a great national warehouse that invests in warlike exercises: wars.

With the dissolution of the state, the nation is deterritorialized, and borders lose their reality, becoming what they really are: artificial limits constructed by the high priests of all kinds of nationalisms and regionalisms. These limits are the political bonds imposed by the state on its subjects.

Nationalism continues to subjugate people through the sedentary practices derived as much through urban control as through the territorial economy of agriculture. The effect of these practices is domiciliation,\* which attaches itself to the domesticating action of the state.

Notwithstanding, when the apparatus that promotes the concept of national territory dissolves, one of the mechanisms of standardization also stops functioning. To move freely from one zone to another—from community to community—without being subject to customs or police controls, brings with it a freedom that is embodied in daily practice.

Constant movement is an uncontrollable force. Its libertarian character is found in its capacity to abolish sedentarianism and domiciliation, destroying all state control. To displace oneself is to undomesticate oneself. Going from one place to another, meeting people, learning their languages and understanding different visions of the world is a liberating praxis. This praxis sharpens peculiarity.

Fascism is fomented by nationalism: a feeling of national property exacerbated by the possessing and monied classes. This feeling is transferred to the dispossessed and poor of the cities through the mechanisms of civic, official and national propaganda and indoctrination. Some people, for example, repeat discourses that are spread by ideology in the first person plural.

The verb is conjugated as “we,” promoting an idiomatic control and reinforcing identifications between country, flag, government and people. To say “we have a park, a mountain range, a good sports team, or a stable economy,” implies a kind of linguistic acceptance of an imposed and/or assigned collective national identity. This is the royal we, adapted to modern times to make the people think that the government and its financial institutions represent the common individual.

People speak of the actions of the government as if they have had some participation in governmental decisions or in the use of military repression. This is the nationalist alienation that facilitates the appearance of fascism.

Indoctrination is reproduced through schools, sports, traditional values, rules, official narratives and other means of control. Propaganda is brought to life through luminous screens (television, movies, information technology, etc.), the press, radio, education, etc. Fascism is crystallized through the notion of nation.

Because of this, all assigned and/or imposed notions of community identity tend to reinforce these notions: nationality, regionalism, language, social role, professional relationships, religious beliefs, familial clans, brotherhoods and orders, work relationships, job or profession, etc.

Real community does not walk the path of these applied identities. Real community has to do with camaraderie and friendship.

And, it isn't difficult to imagine. Those who constitute it are those family and friends we see daily and with whom we prefer to relate and enjoy every day.

There, everyday solidarity is experienced and the presence of the state is negated. There, mutual recognition and true respect exist. There also, borders are deterritorialized, and the torpid banners of xenophobia are bravely repelled.

\* The word domiciliation comes from domicile—from Latin *domicilium*, a combination of *domus* (house) + *cola* (dweller).

So, domiciliation is a political mechanism used by the state to make people stay at home and not occupy public spaces. Under repressive regimes, this political practice is carried out by curfew and states of exceptions (state of siege, emergency, and war).

In representative democracies, fear, propaganda and electronic devices (TV, computers, video games, etc.) are used to reinforce the privacy of dwellings, in which everyone is treated as a recluse.

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*The Garden of Peculiarities* is online at the Anarchist Library.

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