



How is it to be done?



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*Tiqqun*

*On November 11th 2008, French Anti-Terrorism Police arrested around twenty people in connection with five incidents of sabotage in the preceding weeks, in which electric train lines were shut down, causing delays. Nine of these were subsequently accused of “criminal association for the purposes of terrorist activity.” Because many of the accused were arrested in Tarnac, a small village in the Corrèze region of central France, they have become known in the press as the “Tarnac 9.” They have been associated with certain political texts, including the journal Tiquun and the bestselling book The Coming Insurrection. The press has dubbed them “anarcho-autonomous” following the Ministry of Justice which has been conducting a crusade against this supposed movement for some time.*

*We are reprinting this text from the journal Tiquun in solidarity with them.*

**TOTAL SOLIDARITY WITH THE ACCUSED!**

*for more information:  
[www.tarnac9.wordpress.com](http://www.tarnac9.wordpress.com)*

November 2008



**ZONE D'OPACITÉ OFFENSIVE**

*don't know what I want,  
but I know how to get it.*

Sex Pistols  
*Anarchy in the UK*

I

TWENTY YEARS. Twenty years of *counter-revolution*. Of *preventive* counter-revolution.

In Italy.

And elsewhere.

Twenty years of a sleep behind security gates, haunted with security guards. A sleep of *bodies*, imposed by curfew.

Twenty years. The past does not pass. Because war continues.

Ramifies. Extends.

In a global networking of local assemblages [*dispositifs*]. In an original calibration of subjectivities. In a new superficial peace.

An *armed* peace

well made to cover the course of an imperceptible civil war.

Twenty years ago, there was

punk, the movement of '77, Autonomy,

the metropolitan Indians and the diffuse guerrilla.

All at once,

as if born of some underground region of civilization,

appeared a whole counter-world of subjectivities

that no longer wanted to consume, that no longer wanted to produce,  
*that no longer even wanted to be subjectivities.*

The revolution was molecular, the counter-revolution was too.

It saw first the offensive,

then durable,

arrangement of a whole complex machine to neutralize all that carries intensity.

A machine to defuse all that *could* explode.

All the dangerous individuals,  
all the indocile bodies,  
all the autonomous human hosts.  
Then came twenty years of foolishness, vulgarity, isolation and  
desolation.  
How is it to be done ?

Standing up again. Lifting *the head* up. By choice or by necessity.  
Whatever, really, now. Looking at each other in the eyes and saying  
“let’s start again”. Let everybody know it, as soon as possible.  
We are starting again.  
Done with passive resistance, inner exile, conflict by subtraction,  
survival. We are starting again. In twenty years, we have had enough  
time to see. We have understood. Democracy for all, “anti-terrorist”  
struggle, state massacres, capitalist restructuring and the Great Work  
of the social purge,  
by selection,  
by casualisation,  
by normalisation,  
by “modernisation”.  
We have seen, we have understood. The means and the ends. The  
future that is reserved for us. The one we are denied. The state  
of exception. The laws that put the police, the administration,  
the judicial authorities above the laws. The judiciarisation, the  
psychiatrisation, the medicalisation of everything that escapes the  
frame. Of everything that *flees*.  
We have seen, we have understood. The means and the ends.

When power establishes in real time its own legitimacy,  
when its violence becomes preventive  
and its right is a “right to interfere”,  
then it is useless to be right. To be right *against it*.  
One has to be stronger, or slier. That is also why  
we are starting again.

To start again is never to start *something* again. Nor to pick up things  
where they had been left off. What you start again is always *something*

That when we are told it is either this or dying, it is always  
in reality  
this *and* dying.

Thus,  
human strike  
after human strike, to reach  
the insurrection,  
where there is nothing but,  
where we are all,  
*whatever*  
*singularities.*

*else.* Is always unheard of. Because it is not the past that drives us to it,  
but precisely what in it

*has not*  
happened.

And because it is also *ourselves*, then, who are starting again.  
To start again means: to get out of suspension. To restore the contact  
between our becomings.

Moving,  
again,  
from where we are,  
now.

For instance there are tricks  
we will no longer fall for.

The trick of “society”. To be transformed. To be destroyed. To be  
bettered.

The trick of the social bond. That some would break while others  
can pretend to “restore” it.

We will no longer fall for these tricks.

One would have to be a militant element of the planetary-petty-  
bourgeoisie,

a *citizen* really,

not to see that society no longer exists.

That it has imploded. That it is only an argument for the terror of  
those who claim to re/present it.

That which has absented.

All that is social has become alien to us.

We consider ourselves as absolutely free of any obligation, of any  
prerogative, of any affiliation

that is *social*.

“Society”

is the name that the Irreparable has often received  
among those who also wanted to turn it into  
the Un-Assumable.

He who refuses this delusion will have to take  
a step to the side

to make  
a slight displacement  
from the common logic  
of Empire and its protest,  
the logic of *mobilization*,  
from their common temporality,  
that of *emergency*.

To start again means: to inhabit this displacement. To face capitalist  
schizophrenia in the sense of a growing capacity of *desubjectivisation*.  
To desert *without abandoning the weapons*.  
To flee, imperceptibly.  
To start again means: to marshal social secession, opacity, to join the  
*demobilization*,  
draining from one or other imperial production-consumption  
network the means to live and fight  
in order, at the chosen time,  
to scuttle it.

What we are talking about is a new war,  
a new *partisan war*. Without front nor uniform, without army nor  
decisive battle.  
A guerilla whose *focos* unfold away from the commercial flows  
although plugged into them.  
We're talking about a war full of latency. That's got time.  
A war of *position*.  
Which is waged where we are.  
In the name of no one.  
In the name of our own existence,  
which has no name.

Making this slight displacement.  
No longer fearing our time.  
"Not to fear one's time is a matter of space".  
In a squat. In an orgy. In a riot. In an occupied train or village. In  
search, among strangers, of a *free party* that is nowhere to be found. I  
make the experience of this slight displacement. The experience

The Stalinists, back then, used to talk of "diffuse irrationality".

There are also writers  
who are doing nothing else but  
human strike.  
Kafka, Walser,  
or Michaux,  
for instance.

To *collectively* acquire this ability to shake off  
familiarities,  
this art of dealing, within oneself,  
with the most disturbing of all guests.

In the present war,  
where the emergency reformism of Capital has to dress up as a  
revolutionary to be heard,  
where the most democratic fights, those of the counter-summits,  
practice direct action,  
a role is prepared for us.  
The role of the martyrs of the democratic order  
that preventively hits every body that *could* hit.  
I should let myself be immobilized in front of a computer while  
nuclear plants explode, while one plays with my hormones or poisons  
me.  
I should start singing the victim's rhetoric. As is well-known,  
everyone is a victim, even the oppressors.  
And savour the discreet circulation of masochism  
which re-enchants the situation.

Today human strike means  
refusing to play the role of the victim.  
Attacking it.  
Taking back violence.  
Imposing impunity.  
Making the paralyzed citizens understand  
*that if they do not join the war they are part of it anyway*.

such or such contrite or indignant tone,  
the human strike is that strike which  
PREFERS NOT TO.

That slips away from the assemblage. That saturates it or explodes it.  
Pulls itself together, preferring  
*something else*.

Something else that does not belong to the authorized possibilities of  
the assemblage.

At the counter of such and such government office, at the check  
out of such and such supermarket, in a polite conversation, during a  
police raid,  
according to the balance of power,  
human strike gives consistency to the spaces between bodies,  
pulverizes the *double bind* in which they are caught,  
*forces them into presence*.

There is a whole new Luddism to be invented, a Luddism of the  
human machinery  
that feeds Capital.

In Italy, radical feminism was an embryonic form of human strike.  
“No more mothers, women and girls, let’s destroy the families!” was an  
invitation to the gesture of breaking the expected chain of events,  
to release the compacted potentialities.

It was a blow to fucked up love affairs, to ordinary prostitution.

It was a call to the overcoming of the couple as elementary unit in  
the management of alienation.

A call for complicity, then.

Such a practice required circulation, contagion.

The women’s strike implicitly called for the strike of men and  
children, summoned them to run from factories, schools, offices and  
prisons,

to reinvent for each situation another way to be, another *how*.

Italy in the seventies was an enormous area of human strike.

“Self-reductions”, hold-ups, squatted neighbourhoods, armed  
demonstrations, pirate radios, countless cases of “Stockholm  
syndrome”, even the famous letters sent by Moro towards the end of  
his detention, were forms of human strike.

Of my own desubjectivisation. I *become*  
a *whatever singularity*. My presence starts overflowing the whole  
apparatus of qualities that are usually associated with me.

In the eyes of someone who would like to consider me *for what I am*,  
I savour the disappointment, *his* disappointment to see me becoming  
*so common*, so perfectly accessible. In the gestures of someone else, I  
find an unexpected complicity.

Everything that isolates me as a *subject*, as a body provided with a  
public configuration of attributes, I feel melting.

The bodies fray at their limit. At their limit, become indistinct.  
Block by block, the *whatever* ruins the equivalence. And I reach a new  
nudity,

an *improper* nudity, as if dressed with love.

Does one ever escape from the prison of the Self alone?

In a squat. In an orgy. In a riot. In an occupied train or village. We get  
together again.

We get together again

*as whatever singularities*. That is to say

not on the basis of a common affiliation,

but of a *common presence*.

This is our

*need for communism*. The need for nocturnal spaces, where we can  
get together

beyond

our predicates.

Beyond the *tyranny* of recognition Which imposes recognition as a  
final distance between bodies.

As an ineluctable separation.

Everything through which ONE - my boyfriend, my family, my  
environment, my company, the state, the opinion – recognizes me is  
just that through which ONE takes me to be constrained.

By constantly reminding me of what I am, of my *qualities*, ONE  
wants to extract me from each situation. ONE wants to extort from  
me, in every circumstance, a fidelity to myself which is but a fidelity  
*to my predicates*.

I am expected to behave as a man, as an employee, as an unemployed,

as a mother, as a militant, as a philosopher.  
ONE wants to contain within the bounds of an identity the  
unpredictable course of my becomings.  
ONE wants to convert me to the religion of a coherence  
that was chosen for me.

The more I am *recognized*, the more my gestures are hindered, *internally*  
hindered. Here I am, caught in the super-tight meshwork of the new  
power. In the impalpable net of the new police:  
THE IMPERIAL POLICE OF QUALITIES.  
There is a whole network of assemblages through which I “*integrate*”  
myself, and that incorporates these qualities in me.  
A whole petty system of filing, identification and mutual surveillance.  
A whole diffuse prescription of absence.  
A whole machinery of comporte/mental control, which aims at  
panopticism, at privatized transparency, at atomization.  
And in which I struggle.

I need to become anonymous. In order to be present.  
*The more anonymous I am, the more present I am.*  
I need zones of indistinction  
to reach the Common.  
To no longer *recognize* myself in my name. To no longer hear in my  
name anything but the voice that calls it.  
To give substance to the *how* of beings, not *what* they are but *how* they  
are what they are. Their life-form.  
I need zones of opacity where the attributes,  
even criminal, even brilliant,  
no longer separate bodies.

*Becoming* whatever. Becoming a whatever *singularity*, is not given.  
Always possible, but never given.  
There is a *politics* of the *whatever singularity*.  
Which consists in snatching from Empire  
the often interstitial conditions and means  
to experience yourself as such.  
This is political, because it implies a capacity of confrontation,

general strike.  
What answers the question *How to do?* is the *practice* of the HUMAN  
STRIKE.  
The general strike meant that exploitation was limited  
in time and space,  
that alienation was partial, due to a recognizable enemy, and thus  
beatable.  
Human strike replies to an age in which the limits between work and  
life are fading away.  
In which consuming and surviving,  
producing “subversive texts” and dealing with the most toxic effects  
of industrial civilization,  
doing sports, making love, being a parent or taking Prozac  
*Everything is work.*  
Because Empire manages and digests, absorbs and reintegrates  
all that lives.  
Even “what I am”, the subjectivisation that I do not deny *hic et nunc*,  
everything is productive.  
Empire has put everything to work.  
Ideally, my professional profile will coincide with my own face.  
Even if it does not smile.  
For in any case, the grimaces of the rebel sell nicely.

Empire is when the means of production have become means of  
control  
at the very same time that the opposite revealed itself to be the case.  
Empire means that in all things the political moment *dominates*  
the economic one.  
A general strike is helpless against this.  
What must be opposed to Empire is a human strike.  
Which never attacks relations of production without attacking at the  
same time  
the affective knots which sustain them.  
Which undermines the shameful libidinal economy of Empire,  
Which restores the ethical element – the *how* – repressed in every  
contact between neutralised bodies.  
Where one would expect such or such predictable reaction,



Empire is afraid that we might become *whatever*.  
A delimited circle, an armed organization. It does not scare them.  
But an expansionary constellation of squats, self-managed farms,  
collective homes, *fine a se stesso* meetings, radios, skills and ideas. The  
whole linked by an intense circulation of bodies, and of the affects  
between those bodies. That is quite another matter.

The *conspiracy of the bodies*. Not of the critical minds, but of the *critical corporeities*.

This is what Empire fears. This is what is slowly rising,  
with the increase of the flows  
of social defection.

There is an opacity inherent to the *contact* of bodies. Which is not  
compatible with the imperial reign of a light that shines on things  
*only to disintegrate them*.

Offensive Opacity Zones are not  
*to be created*.

They are already there, in all the relations in which a true  
communication occurs between bodies.

All we must do is accept that we are part of this opacity. And provide  
ourselves with the means to extend it,  
to defend it.

Wherever we manage to thwart imperial assemblages, to ruin all the  
perpetual work of Biopower and Spectacle, to extricate a fraction of  
the *citizens*. To isolate new *untorelli*. In this recovered indistinction  
an autonomous ethical fabric

will spontaneously form  
a plan of secessionist consistency.

Bodies aggregate. Breathe again. Conspire.

Whether such zones are condemned to be suppressed militarily really  
does not matter. What matters, each time, is to preserve a sure escape  
route.

And then re-aggregate

Elsewhere.

Later.

Underlying the problem of *What is to be done?* was the *myth* of the

and it corresponds to a new human aggregation.

The politics of the *whatever singularity*: opening those spaces where no  
act is assignable to any given body.

Where the bodies recover their ability of *gesture* which the so clever  
distribution of metropolitan devices – computers, cars, schools,  
cameras, cell-phones, gyms, hospitals, televisions, cinemas, etc. – had  
stolen from them.

By recognising them.

By immobilising them.

By making them spin uselessly.

By making the head exist separately from the body.

The politics of the *whatever singularity*.

Becoming *whatever* is more revolutionary than any *whatever-being*.

Liberating spaces sets us free a hundred times more than any  
“liberated space”.

More than putting any power into action, I enjoy the circulation of  
my potentialities. The politics of the *whatever singularity* lies in the  
offensive. In the circumstances, the moments and the places where  
we seize the circumstances,

the moments and the places

of such an anonymity,

of a momentary halt in a state of simplicity,

the opportunity to extract from all our forms *the pure adequation to the  
presence*,

the opportunity, at last, to be  
*here*.

## II

How is it to be done? Not *what is to be done? How to do?* The question  
of the means.

Not of the goals, the *objectives*,

what *there is* to be done, strategically, in the absolute.

The question of what we *can* do, tactically, *from* the situation, and of the *acquisition* of this ability.

How to? How to desert? How does it work? How to make a fit between my wounds and communism? How to stay at war without losing tenderness?

The question is technical. Not a problem. Problems are profitable. They feed experts.

A question.

A question of techniques. Which reduplicates itself in the question of the techniques of *transmission* of those techniques.

How to do? The result always contradicts the goal. Because setting an end is still a means.

*another* means.

*What is to be done?* Babeuf, Chernychevsky, Lenin. Classical virility needs an analgesic, a mirage, something. A *means* to ignore yourself a bit more. As a presence.

As a life-form. As a *situated* being, endowed with inclinations.

*Determined* inclinations.

What is to be done? Voluntarism as the ultimate nihilism. As the nihilism peculiar to *classical virility*.

*What to do?* The answer is simple: submit once again to the logic of mobilization, to the temporality of emergency. On the pretext of rebellion. Set down ends, *words*. Tend towards their accomplishment. Towards the accomplishment *of words*. In the meantime, postpone existence. Put yourself into brackets. Live in the exception of yourself. Well away from time. That passes. That does not pass. That stops.

Until... Until the next end.

What to do? In other words: life is futile. All that you have not lived, History will return to you.

What to do? It is the ignorance of oneself cast onto the world.

As ignorance of the world.

How to do? We need maps. Not maps of what is off the map. But navigating maps. *Maritime* maps. *Orientation* tools. That do not try to explain or represent what lies inside of the different archipelagos of desertion, but indicate how to join them.

*Portulans*.

### III

This is Tuesday, September the 17<sup>th</sup> 1996, just before dawn. The ROS (Special Operational Group) coordinates the arrest of some 70 Italian anarchists throughout the country.

The goal is to put an end to fifteen years of fruitless investigations of insurrectionalist anarchists.

The technique is well-known: fabricate a “turncoat”, make him denounce the existence of a wide subversive hierarchical organization.

Then on the basis of this chimerical creation, accuse all those to be neutralized of being part of it.

Once again, “drain the sea to catch the fish”.

Even though it is only a tiny pond.

And a few roaches.

An “informative service note” was leaked from the ROS on this case. It explains its strategy.

Based on the principles of General Dalla Chiesa, the ROS is the classic example of imperial counter-insurrection service.

It works on the population.

Where an intensity has occurred, where something *happened*, it is the *French doctor* of the situation. The one that sets, under cover of prophylaxis, the lines of quarantine aimed at isolating the contagion.

What it fears is written in this document. What it fears is “*the swamp of political anonymity*”.

Empire is afraid.

Process. To the new, cybernetic Process of social valorisation.  
In 1978, it was in the name of the workers' movement that the Italian Communist Party, the so-called "party with clean hands" launched its witch-hunt against Autonomy.

In the name of its classist conception of the proletariat, of its mystique of society, of respect for work, utility and decency.

In the name of "democracy" and legality.

The workers' movement which managed to survive through "operaismo".

The only existing critique of capitalism *from the point of view of Total Mobilization*.

A formidable and paradoxical doctrine, that will have saved Marxist objectivism by only talking about subjectivity.

That will have brought the denial of the *how* to an unprecedented sophistication.

That achieved the ultimate reduction of the gesture to its result.

The wheels of the *future anterior*.

Of what each thing *will have been*.

Critique has become vain. Critique has become vain because it amounts to an absence. Everyone knows where the ruling order stands. We no longer need *critical* theory. We no longer need teachers. Henceforth, *critique* is allied to domination. *Even the critique of domination*.

It reproduces absence. It speaks to us from where we are not. It propels us elsewhere. It consumes us. It is craven. And stays cautiously sheltered when it sends us to the slaughter.

Secretly in love with its object, it continually lies to us.

Hence the brief romances between proletarians and 'engaged' intellectuals.

Those rational marriages in which neither has the same idea of pleasure or of freedom.

Rather than new critiques, it is new cartographies that we need.

Not cartographies of Empire, but of the lines that flee out of it.

*How to do?* The question of *how*. Not of *what* a being, a gesture, a thing *is* but of *how* it is what it is. The question of how its predicates relate to it.

And it to them.

Let be. Let be the gap between the subject and its predicates. The *abyss* of the presence.

A man is not "a man". A "white horse" is not a "horse".

The question of *how*. The *attention* to the *how*. The attention to the way "a woman" is, and is not

a woman – it takes many assemblages [*dispositifs*] to turn a female being into "a woman",

or a black-skinned man into "a Black".

The attention to the *ethical difference*. To the ethical *element*. To the irreducibilities that run through it.

What goes on between bodies in an occupation is more interesting than the occupation itself.

*How to do?* means that the military confrontation with Empire has to be subordinated to the intensification of the relationships inside our Party. It means the political is just a certain degree of intensity *within* the ethical element. That revolutionary war must not be confused with its representation: the raw fact of the struggle.

The question of *how?* To pay attention to the happening of things, of beings. To their event. To the tenacious and silent saliency of their own temporality under the planetary crushing of all temporalities by the one of emergency.

The *What to do?* as the programmatic denial of this. As the inaugural formula of a busy lack of love.

The *What to do?* is coming back. It has been coming back for a few years. Since the mid-nineties more than since Seattle. A revival of the *critique* is pretending to challenge Empire.

With the slogans and tricks of the sixties. Except that this time it is faked.

Innocence, indignation, good intentions and the need for society are faked. The whole range of old social-democratic affects are put back into circulation. Of *Christian* affects.

And again, here come the demonstrations. The desire-killing demonstrations. Where nothing happens. And which no longer demonstrate anything but a collective absence. Now and forever.

For those who feel nostalgic about Woodstock, pot, May 68 and militancy, there are the counter-summits. The setting has been set again, *minus the possible*.

Here is today's command of the *What to do?*: to travel to the other side of the world in order to contest the global commodity, And then come back, after a big bath of unanimity and mediatised separation, to submit yourself to the local commodity.

Back home, you've got your picture in the newspaper... All alone together!... Once upon a time... Good old youth!...

Too bad for the few living bodies lost there, looking in vain for some room for their desires.

They will return a bit more bored. A bit more tired. Weakened. From counter-summit to counter-summit, they will eventually understand. Or not.

One doesn't contest Empire over its management. One doesn't *critique* Empire.

You *oppose* its forces.

From where you are.

To give your opinion about such or such alternative, to go where you are called, makes no sense. There is no global alternative project to the global project of Empire. Because there's no global project of Empire. There is an *imperial management*. Any management is bad. Those who demand another society should better start to realize that there is none left. And maybe they would then stop being wannabe-managers. Citizens. *Indignant* citizens.

The global order cannot be taken as an enemy. Directly.

Because the global order does not *take place*. On the contrary. It is the order of the non-places.

Its perfection is not to be global, but to be *globally local*. The global order is the exclusion of any event because it is the utmost, authoritarian occupation of the local. The global order can only be opposed *locally*. Through the extension of opaque zones over Empire's maps. Through their growing contiguity. Underground.

The coming politics. Politics of local insurrection against global management. Of presence won over the absence to oneself. Over the citizen, the imperial estrangement.

Won through theft, fraud, crime, friendship, enmity, conspiracy.

Through the elaboration of ways of living that are also ways of fighting.

The politics of the event.

*Empire is everywhere nothing is happening*. It administers absence by waving the palpable threat of police intervention in any place.

Whoever regards Empire as an opponent to confront will meet preventive annihilation.

From now on, to be perceived means to be defeated.

Learning how to become imperceptible. To merge. To regain the taste for anonymity

for promiscuity.

To renounce distinction,

To elude the clampdown:

setting the most favourable conditions for confrontation.

Becoming sly. Becoming merciless. And for that purpose

becoming *whatever*.

*How to do?* is the question of the lost children. Those who were not told. Those with the clumsy gestures. To whom nothing was *given*.

Whose creature-ality, whose wandering, always betrays itself.

The coming revolt is the revolt of the lost children.

The thread of historical transmission has been broken. Even the revolutionary tradition

leaves us orphaned. Especially the workers' movement. The workers' movement that's turned into a tool for higher integration to the