

**THIS IS  
NOT A  
PROGRAM**

# An Admittedly Presumptuous Preface

We read in *Don Quixote* of the “misfortune incident to all those who presume to translate verses, since their utmost wit and industry can never enable them to preserve the native beauties and genius that shine in the original”. This being said and acknowledged concerning the translation, how much care must one take in attempting to write a brief preface to a work of such illustrious authors as those of *Tiqqun*. Some considerations may, perhaps, excuse this audacity. The first being that the authors are no doubt extremely occupied at the moment. Certainly they do not have any time, let alone any need, to respond to the various critiques, all motivated by envy or incomprehension, that this text in particular has gathered. Of course, it is not our intention either to stoop to argue with such a rabble, but only to highlight certain things we have found interesting, as the text is not only long, but intensely dense. Especially in light of the situation in Greece, this work which appeared in October 2001 proves itself to be “rigorously, catastrophically true and it does not cease to prove itself *true*, little by little, each day”.

Inversely, none of the contemporary analyses of what is happening in Greece from the various organizations of the “ultra-left” of the workers’ movement have the slightest relevance. They all run along much the same theme: a violent, lumpenized substrata of the working class has made a good start through its rejection of the logic of demands and its bravery against the police, but of course the general strike of the majority of the working class is still needed, and this is what is lacking. The scribblers of today, who arrogate to themselves the right to judge the insufficiency of the Greek events from the comfort of their armchairs, are still stuck viewing events through the lens of 1968, or 1936, or 1917, etc. One recalls Marx: “It is generally the fate of completely new historical creations to be mistaken for the counterpart of older and even defunct forms of social life, to which they may bear a certain likeness.” Because they lack the heuristic model of the Movement of 77, provided in this text, they are unable to grasp *the actual revolutionary fact that the Greek State is withering away from the blows of the diffuse guerrilla*. It is withering away because it has lost, and continues to lose, the support of a significant portion of the populace, and it is upon this which it rests. And yet there is no party, no class, no union, no homogeneous group that is driving the process of events. What appears is rather the insinuation of a new morality, a new way of living, into the world, by fits and starts, by a movement of affinitive groups whose existence is this morality, this way of living. “Here, therefore, consciousness - or the mode in which essence is for consciousness itself, i.e., its shape - is, in fact, identical with its self-consciousness. This shape is itself a self-consciousness; it is thus at the same time an object in the mode of immediate being, and this being, likewise immediately, has the significance of pure Thought, of absolute Being. The absolute Being which exists as an actual self-consciousness seems to have come down from its eternal simplicity, but by thus *coming down* it has in fact

attained for the first time to its own highest essence.”

It is a symptom of great times that things which were previously held to be theoretical, distant problems become practical, immediate issues. One of the most pressing technical issues is that of derailing the counterinsurgency doctrines in place worldwide to combat social subversion. The text provides an unparalleled contribution to this as well, and most clearly is in evidence in Greece. How else to connect the apparently disparate events such as the calling of new elections after the 2008 riots, the ongoing social-fascist PASOK repression, the international media blackout, a petit-bourgeois pacifist protest rally condemning violence from “left and right”, the massive arrests of “preventive detention” over the first anniversary of the Grigoriopoulos murder, Nazi groups being used to attack social centers, the legal witch hunt of the so-called members of the Conspiracy of Fire, the police state imposed for a few days in Exarcheia, efforts to legalize certain groups of illegal immigrants, and the emergence of an armed, state-controlled pseudo-guerrilla group that goes around shooting at cops? These are all parts of a plan of counter-insurgency, whose purpose is to isolate the “fish”, that is to say the insurrectionists, from the “sea” of popular support in which they swim. The text elaborates on how this is done, drawing from the entire wealth of counterinsurgency sources, to which we could add one that has appeared in the historical interim, that is to say the current U.S. Army Field Manual, the production of which was supervised by General Petraeus.

To close, the viewpoint of the *Tiqqun*, that is to say the millennialist certainty that we are at the dawn of really-existing-communism, provides for our time what historical materialism provided to another. It is a worldview, it is an ethics, it is an intellectual tool, it is in itself part of new forms-of-life. It also gives one a great hope, since, “If you know yourself, and know your enemy, you can fight a hundred battles and never once be in peril” (Sun Tzu). It is with this in mind that one should read the following text, and it is on this note that we close our preface.



# THIS IS NOT A PROGRAM

## REDEFINE HISTORICAL CONFLICTUALITY!

*"I do not believe that simple people think that there exists, in the short term, the risk of a rapid and violent dissociation of the state, and of an overt civil war. Rather what gains ground is the idea of a latent civil war, to employ a journalistic term, of a civil war of position that removes all legitimacy from the State."*

*-Terrorism and Democracy, 1978*

Once more experimentation, blind, without protocol, or almost. So little has been transmitted to us; this could be a chance. Once more direct action, destruction without phrases, raw confrontation, refusal of all mediation: those who do not want to understand will not obtain from us any explanation. Once more desire, the plan(e) of consistence\* of all that had been repressed by many decades of counter-revolution. Once more all that: autonomy, punk, the orgy, the riot, but under unprecedented circumstances, ripened, thought over, cleansed of the chicanery of the new.

Due to the force of its arrogance, of "international police" operations, of communiqués of permanent victory, a world presents itself as the only one possible, as the crowning of a civilization that knows how to make itself violently detestable. A world that thinks it created emptiness around itself finds evil in its entrails, among its infants. A world that celebrated the vulgar changing of a year as the changing of a millennium begins to fear for its millennium. A world that is durably placed under the sign of catastrophe realizes unwillingly that the collapse of the "socialist bloc" did not inaugurate its triumph, but the ineluctability of its own collapse. A world that has stuffed itself with the sound of the End of History, the American century, and the failure of communism will have to pay for its frivolity.

In this paradoxical conjuncture, this world, that is to say, at bottom, its police, recompose a folkloric enemy to its measure. They speak of the Black Bloc, of an "itinerant anarchist circus," of a vast conspiracy against civilization. IT thinks of Germany, where Von Salomon writes in *Les Reprouves*, haunted by the phantasm of a secret organization, the O.C. "that expands like a cloud

\* "Plane of consistence" is a Deleuzian term that can designate both a 'plane' in the geometric sense, and a 'plan' as a formulation of a set of actions. It accrues both a strategic understanding, as well as a sense of inhabitation or population. Philological questions aside, it will appear as "plan(e)" throughout the text to allow the presence of either meaning.

charged with gas" and to which THEY attribute all the dizziness of a reality abandoned to civil war. "A guilty conscience seeks to conjure the force that menaces it. It creates a strawman against which it can pester at its leisure and thus believes to have assured its security," no?

Outside of the agreed upon elucubrations of the imperial police, there is no strategic meaning to the events in progress. There is no strategic meaning to the events in progress because this supposes the constitution of a common, of a minimal common between us. And that, the common, scares the whole world, makes the Bloom recoil, provokes sweat and stupor because this leads to the univocity right in the heart of our suspended lives. In all things we have become used to the habit of contracts. We have fled all that resembled a *pact*, because a pact does not conceal itself: it respects or it betrays itself. And it's this, at heart, that is the hardest to understand: that it is the positivity of a common on which depends the impact of a negation, that it is our way of saying "I" that determines the force of our way of saying "no." One often marvels at the rupture of all historic transmission, of the fact that for well over fifty years no "parent" is capable of recounting their life to "their" children, to make an accounting that would not be a discontinuum pearled with leisurely anecdotes. What has been lost, in fact, is the capacity to establish a communicative rapport between our history and History. Under all of this, there is the belief that in renouncing all *singular* existence, in abdicating all destiny, one wins a little peace. The Blooms thought that it sufficed to desert the battlefield for the war to end. But nothing of the sort has happened. The war has not ceased and those who refuse to assume it find themselves only a little more disarmed, a little more disfigured, at present, than others. All the enormous magma of the resentment that seethes today in the entrails of the Bloom, and wells up in an ever unsatisfied desire to see heads fall, to find the guilty, to obtain a type of generalized repentance of all past history, comes from there. We have need of a redefinition of historical conflictuality, not intellectually: *vitally*.

I say redefinition because a definition of historical conflictuality precedes us, to which all destiny in the pre-imperial period related itself: *the class struggle*. This definition no longer works. It condemns one to impotence, to bad faith, and to chattering. No war can any longer be fought, no life can be lived in this corset of another age. To undertake the struggle today, it is necessary to get rid of the notion of class and with this its entire cortege of certified origins, reassuring sociologies, and prostheses of identity. The notion of class, at present, is only good for managing the kiddie pool of neurosis, of separation and of continual trial which THEY so morbidly enjoy in France, in all the milieus and for such a long time. Historical conflictuality no longer opposes two fat molar heaps, two classes, the exploited and the exploiters, the dominant and the dominated, the order-givers and the order-takers, between which, in each individual case, it would be possible to divide. The frontline that no longer passes through the middle of society now passes through the middle of everyone, between that which makes of them a citizen, their predicates, and the rest. As well it's *in each middle* that the war is fought between imperial socialization and what henceforth escapes it. A revolutionary process can be unleashed from any point of the biopolitical tissue, from any singular situation, in accusing until rupture the line of flight that traverses it. In the measure that such pro-

cesses, such ruptures survive, there is a plan(e) of consistence that is common to them, that of anti-imperial subversion. “That which makes the generality of the struggle is the system of power itself, all the forms of exercise and application of power.” This plan(e) of consistence, we have called it the Imaginary Party, so that in its name itself should be exposed that outline of its nominal and *a fortiori* political representation. Like all plan(e)s of consistence, the Imaginary Party is at once already there and to be built. To build the party, henceforth, does not mean to build the total organization in which all ethical differences could be put in parentheses, in light of the struggle; to build the party, henceforth must mean establishing forms of life in their difference, to intensify and complexify the relations between them, to elaborate as finely as possible civil war amongst ourselves. Because the most redoubtable ruse of Empire is to amalgamate all who are opposed to it as a large foil - that of “barbarism,” “sects,” “terrorism,” even “opposed extremisms” - fighting against it is distinguished by the fact of never confusing the conservative fractions of the Imaginary Party - libertarian militiamen, right anarchists, insurrectional fascists, Qutbist jihadists, partisans of peasant civilization - with its revolutionary-experimental fractions. Thus, building the party is no longer posed in terms of organization, but in terms of *circulation*. That is to say that if there is still “a problem of organization” it’s that of organizing the circulation within the party. Because only the intensification and elaboration of encounters among us can contribute to the process of ethical polarization, to the construction of the party.

It is certain that the passion of History is, in general, the sharing of bodies incapable of *living* in the present. For all that, I do not think it out of context to return to the apories of the cycle of struggle initiated at the start of the 60’s, now that another is opening. In the following pages, numerous references will be made to Italy in the 70’s; the choice is not arbitrary. If I have no fear of being a little long, I will without difficulty show how what was at stake in the most naked and brutal form there, remains for us in large part, although for the hour under latitudes less extreme. Guattari wrote in 1978 “Rather than consider Italy as a case apart, attached but all told aberrant, must we not, in effect, seek to illuminate other social, political, and economic situations more stable in appearance, proceeding from a better assured state power, through the lesson of the tensions that wreck this country today?” Italy in the 70’s is still, in all its aspects, the insurrectional moment the *closest to us*. It’s from there that we must depart, not to do the history of a past movement, but to sharpen the arms of the war underway.

EXTRACTION FROM FRENCH  
MACERATION!

We who provisionally operate in France, do not have an easy life. It would be absurd to deny that the conditions in which we lead our battle are determined and even vulgarly determined. Besides the fanaticism of separation that has imprinted on the body an education of the sovereign

state and which makes the school the unavowable utopia planted in all French skulls, there is this mistrust, this sticky mistrust in regard to life, in regard to all that exists without excusing itself. And the retreat of the world - in art, philosophy, eating well, feeling at home, spirituality or critique - an exclusive and impracticable line of flight on which nourishes the thickening of the flux of local maceration. An umbilical retreat that recalls the omnipresence of the French state, this despotic master that seems to govern here until its henceforth “citizen” contestation. In this manner goes the great sarabande of French brains, sensitive, impotent, and twisted, who finish by turning inside themselves, at each second more menaced than they are when something comes to bring them out of their complacent happiness.

Almost everywhere in the world, debilitated bodies have some historic icon of resentment to attach to, some proud fascist movement who will repaint in grand style the coat-of-arms of reaction. No such thing in France. French conservatism has never had style. It has never had it because it is a bourgeois conservatism, a conservatism *of the stomach*. That it will raise itself, if forced, to the rank of sickly reflexivity changes nothing. It’s not the love of a world in liquidation that animates it but the terror of experimentation, of life, of life-experimentation. This conservatism, in so much as ethical substrate of specifically French bodies, founds all types of political positions, all types of *discourse*. It’s this which establishes the existential continuity, secret as much as evident, that seals the membership of Bove, the bourgeois of the XVIIIe arrondissement, the scribbler of the Encyclopedie of Nuisances and the provincial notable in *the same party*. It matters little, then, whether the body in question finds fit or not to emit some reservations in regard to the existing order; we see that it’s the same passion for roots, trees, pigsties, and villages that today pronounces itself against global financial speculation. It’s everywhere the same odor of shit exhaled by mouths who only know to speak in the name of the stomach.

Certainly France would not be the fatherland of worldwide citizenism - it is to be feared that in a near future *Le Monde Diplomatique* will be translated in more languages than *Kapital* - the ridiculous epicenter of a public contestation that pretends to defy the Market in the name of the State, if THEY had not come to make themselves impermeable on this point to everything that we are politically contemporaneous with, and notable Italy in the 1970’s. From Paris to Porte Alegre, it’s this bloomesque craze to quit the historical world that evidences, country by country, the henceforth global expansion of ATTAC.

MAY RAMPANT AGAINST MAY  
TRIUMPHANT

*“77 was not like 68. 68 contested, 77 was radically alternative. For this reason the ‘official’ version presents 68 as good and 77 as bad: in fact, 68 was recuperated while 77 was destroyed. For this reason, 77 could never be, in difference to 68, the object of Facile celebration.”*

The news of an insurrectional situation in Italy, which lasted more than ten years and to which THEY could only end by arresting more than 4,000 people in a night, threatened to arrive in France many times in the 70's. There were first the wildcat strikes of the Hot Autumn (1969) that Empire vanquished by the massacre of Piazza Fontana bombing. The French, where "the working class [had not] seized from the fragile hands of the students the Red Flag of the proletarian revolution" save to sign the Grenelle accords, could thus not believe that a university movement could ripen until it had reached the factories. With all their bitterness of their abstract relation to the working class, they felt strongly piqued; their 'Mai' had been tarnished. Therefore they gave to the Italian situation the name of "May Rampant."

Ten years later, when THEY had already begun to celebrate the *memory* of the springtime event and their most determined elements were well integrated into republican institutions, new echoes came from Italy. It was more confused, both because pacified French brains did not already understand much of the war in which they were, however, engaged, and also because the contradictory rumors spoke now of prisoners in revolt, now of the armed counter-culture, now of the Red Brigades (BR), and other things a little too *physical* that THEY did not have the custom to understand. THEY lent an ear a little, out of curiosity, then THEY returned to their tiny insignificances in saying that, decidedly, these Italians were very naïve, who continued to revolt when we here have already passed to commemorations. THEY thus spent themselves in the denunciation of the gulag, the "crimes of communism," and other delights of the "new philosophy." THEY thus avoided seeing that they revolted this way in Italy *against what May 68 had, for example, become in France* - understanding that the Italian movement "put into question the professors who gloried in a 68 past because they were in reality the most ferocious champions of the social-democrat normalization" (Tutto Citta 77) - this would certainly have procured for the French a disagreeable sentiment of immediate history. Their honor satisfied, THEY confirmed thus the certitude of "May Rampant" thanks to which THEY presented, among the articles of another season, this movement of 77, from which everything was still to come.

Kojève, who had no equal for *seizing the heart of the matter*, buried the French Mai with a pretty formula. A few days before succumbing to a cardiac crisis in a reunion of the OECD, he had declared on the subject of the "events": "There was no death. Nothing happened." It would take a little more than that, naturally, to bury the Italian May Rampant. Another Hegelian thus appeared, who had acquired a credit no less than the first, but by other means. He said, "Listen, listen, nothing has happened in Italy. Just a few desperates manipulated by the State, who to terrorize the population have kidnapped some politicians and killed some judges. Nothing notable, you see." Thus, due to the wise intervention of Guy Debord, one never knew on this side of the Alps that something happened in Italy in the 70's. All the French intellectuals on this subject reduce themselves to platonic speculation on the manipulation of the BR by this or that State service and

the massacre of the Piazza Fontana. If Debord was an execrable conduit for what was explosive in the Italian situation, he introduced on the other hand the favorite sport of Italian journalism: *retrology*. By retrology, a discipline of which the primordial axiom could be "the truth is elsewhere" - the Italians designate this paranoiac game of mirrors to which those who no longer believe in any event, in any vital phenomena abandon themselves, and who thus constantly, from this fact, that is to say the fact of their malady, suppose someone behind what happens - P2, the CIA, the Mossad or themselves. The winner will be the one who will have furnished to his little comrades the most solid reasons to doubt reality.

One understands better in virtue of what the French speak of for Italy, of a "May Rampant." It's that they have the proud, public, May of the State.

May 68 in Paris could rest as the symbol of the global political antagonism of the 60s - 70s, in exact proportion as the *reality* of this antagonism was elsewhere.

However, no effort was made to transmit to the French a little of the Italian Insurrection; there was *A Thousand Plateaus* and the *Molecular Revolution*, there was Autonomy and the movement of squats, but nothing was well enough armed to piece the wall of lies of the French spirit. Nothing that THEY could feign not to have seen. In their place, THEY preferred to chatter about the republic, school and social security, culture, modernity and social ties, suburban angst, philosophy and public service. And that's still what THEY were chattering about when the imperial services revived the "Strategy of Tension" in Italy. Decidedly, there is a bull missing in this china shop. Someone who will level a little too roughly and one good time for all the evidences upon which all the world sits; at the risk of shattering a little bit of this ideal scaffolding.

I wish to speak here, among others, to "comrades," to those who I know share the party. I am a little tired of the comfortable theoretical retardation of the French ultra-left. I am tired of hearing for decades the same false debates of a rhetorical sub-marxism: spontaneity or organization, communism or anarchism, human community or individual rebellion. There are still Bordigists, Maoists and councilists in France. Without mentioning period revivals of Trotskyism and Situationist folklore.

## THE IMAGINARY PARTY AND THE WORKERS' MOVEMENT

*"What was happening at that moment was clear: the union and the PCI fell upon us like the police, like the fascists. At that moment it was clear that there was an irremediable rupture between them and us. It was clear from that instant that the PCI would no longer have the right*

to speak in the movement.”

-An eyewitness account of the clashes at the University of Rome on February 17, 1977, cited in *L'Orda D'oro*

In his last book, Mario Tronti noted that “The workers’ movement was not vanquished by capitalism; the workers’ movement was vanquished by democracy.” But democracy did not defeat the workers’ movement as an estranged creature to it: it defeated it *as its internal limit*. The working class was but passively the privileged seat of the proletariat, of the proletariat in so much as a “class of civil society that is not a class of civil society,” in so much as an “order that is the dissolution of all orders (Marx).”

**The Imaginary Party will be, from now on, the form of apparition of the proletariat.**

From the interwar period, the proletariat began to frankly overflow the working class, to the point where the most advanced fractions of the Imaginary Party began to recognize in it, in its fundamental workerism, in its supposed values, in its classist satisfaction of self, in brief: in its class being homologous to that of the bourgeoisie, its most redoubtable enemy, and the most powerful vector of integration into the society of Capital. The Imaginary Party will be, from now on, *the form of apparition* of the proletariat.

In all the occidental countries, 68 marks the encounter and the collision between the old workers’ movement, fundamentally socialist and senescent, and the first constituted fractions of the Imaginary Party. When two bodies collide, the resulting direction of their encounter depends on the inertia and the mass of each one. It happened in this manner in each country. Where the workers’ movement was still strong, like in Italy and France, the tiny detachments of the Imaginary Party slipped into moth-eaten forms, aping equally well the language and the methods of these forms. One witnessed in this manner the renaissance of militant practices of the “III international” type; this was the grouposcular hysteria and neutralization in political abstraction. It was thus the brief triumph of Maoism and Trotskyism in France (GP, PC-MLF, UJC-ML, JCR, PT) of partitini, (Lotta Continua, Aranguardia Operaia, MLS, Potere Operaio, Manifesto) and other extra parliamentary groups in Italy. Where the workers’ movement had been liquidated for a long time, as in the US or in Germany, there was an immediate passage from the student revolution to the armed struggle, a passage where the assumption of practices and tactics proper to the Imaginary Party were often masked by a varnish of Third-worldist socialist rhetoric. This was, in Germany, the June 2 movement, the RAF or the Rote Zellen, and in the U.S., the Black Panther Party, the Weathermen, the Diggers, and the Manson Family\*, emblems of a prodigious movement of internal desertion.

\* “A certain distance leads to a certain obscurity.” Readers must know that we feel the Manson Family was a ‘psuedo-gang’, to use Frank Kitson’s terminology, utilized by the American State to discredit the hippie lifestyle by associating it with senseless violence.

What belongs to Italy, in this context, is that the Imaginary Party, having massively flowed into the structures of socialist character of the partitini, still found the strength to explode them. Four years after 68 manifested the “crisis of hegemony of the workers’ movement” (R. Rossanda) the bullet that until then had gone a long way finished by leaving, around 1973, to give birth to the first large-scale uprising of the Imaginary Party in a key zone of Empire: the movement of 77.

The workers’ movement was vanquished by democracy, that is to say that nothing that issued from this tradition was up to the task of confronting the new configuration of hostilities. On the contrary. When the enemy is no longer a portion of society - the bourgeoisie - but the society as such, in so much as power, and that thus we find ourselves fighting not against classical tyrannies, but against biopolitical democracies, we know that all the weapons as with all the strategies are to be reinvented. The enemy is called Empire, and for it we are the Imaginary Party.

## CRUSH SOCIALISM!

“You are not at the Castle; you are not at the village; you are nowhere.”

-Kafka, *The Castle*

The Revolutionary element is the proletariat, the plebe. The proletariat is not a class. As the Germans of the last century still knew, *es gibt pobel in allen standen*, there are plebs in all classes. “Poverty in itself does not make someone plebian; this is only determined as such by their mentality towards poverty, by the internal revolt against the rich, the society, the government, etc. Related to this is the fact that the man dependent on chance becomes at the same time carefree and rebellious at work like, for example, the Lazzaroni at Naples” (Hegel, Principles of the Philosophy of Right). Each time that it has attempted to define itself as a class, the proletariat has emptied itself of itself, it has taken for model the dominant class, the bourgeoisie. In so much as a non-class, the proletariat does not oppose itself to the bourgeoisie, but to the petite-bourgeoisie. While the petite-bourgeoisie believes it can get out while the going is good, is persuaded that it will finish well by going it alone, the proletarian knows that his own destiny is suspended in his cooperation with others, that he has need of them to persist in being, in brief: that his individual existence is directly collective. In other terms: the proletarian *is that which feels itself as a form-of-life*. They are communist, or nothing.

In each epoch the form of appearance of the proletariat redefines itself, in function of the general configuration of hostilities. The most regrettable confusion on this subject concerns the “working class”. As such, the working class has always been hostile to the revolutionary movement, to communism. It was not socialist by accident, *but by essence*. If we except the plebian ele-

ments, that is to say precisely those who could not recognize themselves as workers, the workers' movement coincided all of its existence with the *progressive* fraction of capitalism. From February 1848 up to the self-management utopians of the 1970s in passing by the Commune, it only re-ventilated, for its most radical elements, the *right of proletarians to manage Capital themselves*. In the facts, it has only worked to enlarge and deepen the human base of Capital. The so-called "socialist" regimes truly realized its program: the integrations of *all* into the capital relation and the insertion of *everyone* into the process of valorization. As against this, their collapse could only attest to the impossibility of the total capitalist program. It's thus by *social struggles*, and not against them, that Capital installed itself in the heart of humanity, that this humanity was effectively *reappropriated* until it became, properly speaking, *the people of Capital*. The workers' movement was thus essentially a social movement, and it is as this that it has survived. In May 2001, a little boss of the Italian *Tute Bianche* explained to the stupefied youth of "Socialism from below" how to become a credible interlocutor of power, how to enter by the window into the dirty game of classical politics. He explained thus the conduct of *Tute Bianche*: "For us, *tute bianche* symbolizes all the absent subjects of institutional politics, all those who are not represented: illegals, youth, precarious workers, drug users, unemployed, the excluded. What we want is to give a representation to these people who have none."

The social movement today, with its neo-syndicalists, informal militants, spectacular spokespeople, nebulous Stalinism and its micro-politicians is in this the inheritor of the workers' movement: it bargains with the conservative organs of Capital for the integration of proletarians into the process of a reformed valorization. In exchange for an uncertain institutional recognition - uncertain in virtue of the logical impossibility of representing the non-representable, the proletariat - the workers' movement, now social, is engaged in guaranteeing social peace to Capital. When one of its barren nymphs after Goteburg denounced the "wreckers" of which the methods, "were as anti-democratic as the institutions that they pretend to contest," when at Genoa the *Tute Bianche* delivered to the cops the supposed elements of the unfindable "Black Bloc" - even if they were, paradoxically, slanderously, infiltrated by the same police - the representations of the social movement never fail to recall to my mind the reaction of Italian workers party confronted with the movement of 77. "The popular masses" we read in a rapport presented by Paolo Bufalini, April 18, 1978 to the CC of the PCI, "all citizens of civic democratic sentiment will continue their efforts to bring a precious contribution to the forces of order, to the agents and military engaged in the fight against terrorism. Their most important contribution is to politically and morally isolate the *brigatisti rossi* from their sympathizers and supporters, to remove from them all alibi, all exterior collaboration, all points of support. Against them, it is a question of making a void, to leave them like fish without water. It's no small job, if we think how numerous the participants must be in criminal enterprises." Because nothing has any interest for it save maintaining order, the social movement was, is, and will be in the avant-garde of the war fought against the proletariat. Henceforth against the Imaginary Party.

How the workers' movement was always the carrier of the Capital-Utopia, that of the "community of labor, where there will exist no more than producers, without idlers and unemployed, and which will manage without crisis and without inequality Capital, in this manner become Society" (Phillip Riviale, *La Ballade du Temps Passé*) nothing shows this better than the history of the Rampant May. Contrary to what the expression suggests, the Rampant May was not a continuous process spread out over ten years, it was rather an often cacophonous choir of local revolutionary processes, moving themselves, city by city, according to its own rhythm in light of suspensions and reprises, stasis and acceleration, and the ones responding to the others. However, a decisive rupture survives, in general opinion, with the adoption by the PCI, in 1973, of the line of historic compromise. The preceding period, 1968-1973, had been marked by the fight between the PCI and the extraparliamentary groups for the hegemony of the representation of the new social antagonism. Elsewhere this had been the ephemeral success of the "second" or "new" left. The stakes for this period were what THEY thus called the "political prospect," that is to say the translation of concrete struggles into an alternative management, an expansion of the capitalist state. The PCI regarded struggles approvingly at first, and even encouraged them here and there, because this contributed to their contractual power. But from 1972 on, the new cycle of struggle began to hasten at the global level. It became urgent for the PCI to profit as fast as possible from a social capacity for nuisances in free fall. Moreover, the Chilean lesson - a socialist party of which the accession to power ends in, after brief delay, an imperial telecommanded putsch - tended to dissuade them from attaining sole political hegemony. In this manner the PCI elaborated the line of historic compromise. With the rallying of the workers' party to the party of order and the subsequent closure of the sphere of representation, all political mediation gave way. The Movement found itself alone with itself, forced to elaborate its own position beyond the point of view of class; the extraparliamentary groups and their phraseology were brutally deserted; under the paradoxical effect of the watchword "des/agregazione" The Imaginary Party began to form itself as a plan(e) of consistence. Facing it, at each new step of the revolutionary process, was the PCI, which logically it would find as the most resolute of its adversaries. The hardest confrontations of the movement of 77, whether those of Bologna or those of the University of Rome with the Autonomes and Metropolitan Indians on one side, and the services of order of Luciano Lama, the leader of the CGIL, with the police on the other side, put the Imaginary Party in combat with the workers' Party; and later, it was naturally the "red judges" who started the judicial "anti-terrorist" offensive of 1979-1980 and its concordant round-ups. The origin of the citizen discourse which currently



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speaks in France must be looked for there, and its strategic offensive function must be appreciated in this context. “It is altogether clear,” wrote thus the members of the PCI, “that the terrorists and militants of subversion propose to counter the progressive march of workers towards the political direction of the country, to damage the strategy founded on the extension of democracy and on the participation of the popular masses, to again put into question the choice of the working class, to be able to carry it away to a direct confrontation, in a tragic laceration of the democratic tissue... If a great popular mobilization creates itself in the country, if the democratic forces accentuate their unitary action, if the government knows how to give firm directives to the apparatuses of the reformed State in an adequate and more efficacious manner, terrorism and subversion will be isolated and beaten and democracy can flourish in a profoundly renovated State (Terrorism and Democracy).” The injunction to denounce such and such a one as terrorist is thus the injunction to distinguish oneself from oneself inasmuch as capable of violence, to project far away from self one’s own latent warrior, to introduce in one’s self the economic rupture that will make us a political subject, a citizen. It’s thus in economic terms that Giorgio Amendola, then leading cadre of the PCI, attacked in his time the movement of 77: “Only those who aim for the destruction of the republican State have interest in sowing panic and preaching desertion.” It’s still the same.

## ARM THE IMAGINARY PARTY!

*“The points, the nodes, the foyers of resistance are disseminated with more or less density in time and space, sometimes making up groups or individuals in a definitive manner, illuminating certain points of bodies, certain moments of life, certain types of comportment. Great ruptures, massive and binary sharing? Sometimes. But we deal most often with the mobile and transitory points of resistance, introducing in a society cleavages that displace themselves, breaking unities and supporting regroupments, traversing individuals themselves, carving and remodeling them, tracing in them, in their body and spirit, irreducible regions. As the network of relations of power finish by forming a thick tissue that traverses apparatuses and institutions, without exactly localizing itself in them, in the same way the swarm of points of resistance traverse social stratifications and individual unities. And, it’s without doubt the strategic coding of these points of resistance that make possible a revolution.”*

-Michel Foucault, *Volonté De Savoir*

Empire is the sort of domination that does not recognize an Outside, that has come to sacrifice itself as Sameness in order to no longer have an Other. Empire excludes nothing, substantially, it excludes only whatever it is that presents itself as *other*, that shrinks from the generalized equivalency. The Imaginary Party is thus nothing, specifically, it is all that is an obstacle to, undermines, ruins, or maddens equivalence. Whether it speaks from the mouth of Putin, Bush, or Jian Xemin, Empire will qualify thus always its Hostis “criminal,” “terrorist,” “monster.” It will even go to the limit of itself organizing underhandedly, “monstrous” and “terrorist” actions that it

will then attribute to its Hostis - one remembers the edifying rhetorical flights of Boris Yeltsin after the attacks perpetrated in Moscow by his own special services, of the addresses to the Russian people where, notably, our buffoon called them to fight against Chechen terrorism, “against an internal enemy who has neither conscience, not pity not honor,” who “has no face, no nationality, no religion.” Conversely, the military actions proper to Empire will never be known as acts of war, but only as operations to “maintain peace,” as affairs of “international policing.”

Before the dialectic, *in so much as the thought of final reintegration* (became fashionable after 68), Marcuse had tried to think over this curious configuration of hostilities. In an intervention dated 1966 titled, *On the Concept of Negation in the Dialectic*, Marcuse took issue with the Hegelian-marxist reflex that made negation come from inside an antagonistic totality, whether it be of two classes, the socialist or capitalist camp or between Capital and Labor. To this he opposed a contradiction, a negation, that came from outside. He discerned that the putting into place of a social antagonism *in the midst* of a totality, which had been the property of the workers’ movement, was only a technique by which THEY froze all happening, preventing the coming of the veritable negation *from the exterior*. “The exterior of which I will speak,” he wrote, “must not be conceived in a mechanical manner, in terms of space, but as the qualitative difference that surpasses the oppositions present in the interior of all partial antagonisms and is not reducible to those oppositions. The force of negation, we know, does not concentrate itself today in any class. It is made up of a still chaotic and anarchic opposition; it is political and moral, rational and instinctive; it is the refusal to play the game, disgust for all prosperity, the obligation to protest. It’s a weak opposition, an inorganic opposition, but which in my mind, rests on resilience and leads to ends that find it in irreconcilable contradiction to the existing totality.” In between the two wars, the new configuration of hostilities came to light. On one side, there was the adhesion of the USSR to the League of Nations, the Stalin-Laval pact, the failed strategy of the Comintern, the rallying of the masses to Nazism, Fascism, and Francoism, in brief: the betrayal by the workers of their assignment to revolution. On the other, it was the overflowing of social subversion outside of the workers’ movement - in surrealism, Spanish Anarchism, or with the American hobos. All of a sudden, the identification of the revolutionary movement and the workers’ movement collapsed, exposing the Imaginary Party as excess in relation to the latter. The watchword of “class against class,” which from 1926 became hegemonic, does not reveal its latent content unless we observe that it dominated precisely the moment of disintegration of all classes under the effect of the crisis. “Class against class,” in truth would say, “class against non-class,” it betrays the determination to reabsorb, to liquidate this always more massive remainder, this floating element, socially inassignable, that menaced to take away all substantial interpretation of society, as much that of the bourgeoisie as that of the Marxists. *In fact, Stalinism reveals itself first of all as the stiffening of the workers movement before its effective overflowing by the Imaginary Party.*

One group, the Democratic Communist Circle, united around Souvarine in the France of the 30s, tried to redefine historical conflictuality. It only arrived there halfway, being all the

same identified with the two principle pillars of Marxism: economism and eschatology. The final number of its review, *La Critique Sociale*, noted this failure: “Neither the bourgeoisie nor the unconscious proletariat show themselves capable of absorbing in their political organization youthful forces and déclassé elements of which the more and more active intervention accelerates the course of events” (no 11, 1934). As one will hardly be stunned in a country where the custom is total disorder, in particular in politics and literature, it’s under the plume of Bataille that we will find, in the last number, the first sketch of a theory of the Imaginary Party. The article is titled *Psychologie de Masse du Fascisme*. According to Bataille, the Imaginary Party opposes *homogenous society*. “The base of the social *homogeneity* is production. The *homogenous* society is the productive society, that is to say, the society of utility. All non-useful elements are excluded not from the total society, but from its *homogenous* part. In this part, each element must be useful to another without the homogenous activity ever attaining the form of activity that is valuable in itself. A useful activity always has a common measure with another useful activity, but not with an activity for itself. The common measure, foundation of the social *homogeneity* and of the activity that supports it, is money, that is to say, quantitative equivalence of different products of collective activity.” Bataille seized here the contemporary constitution of the world as *continuous biopolitical tissue*, which alone takes account of the fundamental solidarity between democratic and totalitarian regimes, of their infinite reversibility of the one into the other. The Imaginary Party, since then, is that which manifests as *heterogeneous* to the biopolitical formation. “The term itself of *heterogeneous* indicates that it is a question of impossible-to-assimilate elements and this impossibility that touches at the base of social assimilation touches at the same time scientific assimilation. Violence, excess, delirium, and madness characterize in diverse degrees *heterogeneous* elements: active, as persons or crowds, they produce themselves in breaking the laws of social *homogeneity*... To resume, the *heterogeneous* existence may be represented by relation to everyday life as totally other, as incommensurable in charging these words with the positive value they have in the affective lived experience... The proletariat thus envisaged cannot moreover limit itself to itself: it is in fact but a point of concentration for all dissociated social elements rejected in heterogeneity.” The error of Bataille, and which would then mark all the enterprises of the College of Sociology and of Acéphale, is to still conceive of the Imaginary Party *as a part of society*, to still recognize this as a cosmos, as a totality representable above self, and to envisage it *from this point of view*, i.e. from the point of view of *representation*. All the ambiguity of the positions of Bataille in regards to fascism come from his attachment to dialectical archaisms, from all that prevents the understanding that, under Empire, *negation comes from outside*, that it intervenes not as heterogeneity *in relation to homogeneity*, but as heterogeneity *in itself*, as heterogeneity *in which* the forms-of-life play in their difference. the Imaginary Party can never be individuated as a subject, a body, a thing or a substance, nor even as an ensemble of subjects, bodies, things and substances, but only as the *occurrence* of all of that. The Imaginary Party is not substantially a remainder of the social totality but the *fact* of this remainder, the fact that *there is* a remainder, that the represented always exceeds its representation, that upon which power exercises itself forever escapes it. Here lies the dialectic. All our condolences.

There is no “revolutionary identity.” Under Empire, it is on the contrary non-identity, the fact of constantly betraying the predicates that THEY paste on us, that is revolution. Of “revolutionary subjects” there have not been any for a longtime except *for power*. To become commonplace, to become imperceptible, to conspire, that means to distinguish between our presence and what we are for representation in order to trick them. In the exact proportion as Empire unifies itself, where the new configuration of hostilities acquires an objective character, there is a strategic necessity to know what we are for representation, but to take ourselves for that, a “Black Bloc”, an “Imaginary Party,” or something else would be our defeat. *For Empire, the Imaginary Party is but the form of pure singularity*. From the point of view of representation, singularity is, as such, achieved abstraction, the empty identity of *hic et nunc*. Similarity, from the point of view of the homogenous, the Imaginary Party will be simply “the heterogeneous,” the pure irrepresentable. Under penalty of doing the work of the police, we must thus keep from believing ourselves able to do anything other than *indicate the Imaginary Party when it arrives*, like: describe it, identify it, localize it on territory or define it as a segment of “the society.”

**The Imaginary Party is not one of the terms of the social contradiction, but the fact that there is a contradiction, the unobservable otherness of the determined as against the omnivorous universality of Empire.**

And it’s only for Empire, *that is to say for representation*, that the Imaginary Party exists as such, *that is to say as negative*. To make what is hostile to it carry the habits of the “negative,” of “contestation” or of the “rebel” is but a tactic, be this at the price of confrontation, which the system of representation uses to bring into its plan(e) of inconsistency the positivity that escapes it. The cardinal error of all subversion concentrated itself in the fetishism of negativity, in the fact of attaching itself to its powers of negation as its most fitting attribute when this is precisely what is most tributary to Empire and its recognition. Militantism as well as militarism find here their only desirable result: to cease to apprehend our positivity, which is all of our force, which is all that we carry, from the point of view of representation, that is to say as derisory. And certainly, for Empire, *all determination is a negation*.

Foucault also delivered a determining contribution to the theory of the Imaginary Party: his views on the plebe. In his “debate with the Maos” in 1972 on the subject of “popular justice,” Foucault evoked for the first time the theme of the plebe. Criticizing the Maoist practice of popular tribunals, he recalled that all the popular revolts since the Middle Ages were anti-judiciary, that the constitution of tribunals for the people during the French Revolution corresponds precisely to the moment of its being taken in hand by the bourgeoisie, and finally that the tribunal-form, in reintroducing a *neutral* instance between the people and its enemies, reintroduced in the struggle against the State the principal of the State. “He who says tribunal says that the fight between

the forces in presence is, by will or force, suspended.” The function of justice since the Middle Ages was, after Foucault, to separate the proletarianized plebe, and thus integrated as proletariat, included in the mode of exclusion, from the non-proletarianized plebe, the plebe properly speaking. In isolating in the mass of the poor the “criminals,” “violent,” “insane,” “vagabonds,” “perverts,” “hooligans,” “the underworld,” THEY would take from the people their most dangerous fraction for power, those who were at any instant close to seditious, armed action, as well THEY offered themselves the possibility to turn against the people their most offensive elements. This will be the permanent chanting of “You can go to prison or you join the army,” “you go to prison or you go to the colonies,” “you go to prison or you join the police,” etc. All the travail of the workers’ movement to distinguish honest workers eventually on strike from “provocateurs,” “wreckers” and other “uncontrollables” prolonged this fashion of opposing the plebe to the proletariat. Today still, it’s according to the same logic that gangsters become vigilant: to neutralize the Imaginary Party in playing one of its fractions against the others. Foucault explained this four years later in another interview. “Without doubt, it is necessary not to conceive the ‘plebe’ as the permanent end of history, as the final objective of all the subjections, as the never totally extinguished firebrand of all revolts. There is no doubt no sociological reality to the ‘plebe.’ But there is always something, in the social body, in classes, in groups, in individuals themselves that escapes in a certain manner from relations of power; something that is not at all the first material more or less docile and restive, but that is the centrifugal moment, the inverse energy, the escaped. ‘The’ plebe without doubt does not exist, but there is ‘of the plebe.’ There is something of the plebe in bodies, and in spirits, in individuals, in the proletariat, in the bourgeoisie, but with an extension of forms, of energies, of diverse irreducibilities. This part of the plebe, it’s less the exterior in relation to the relations of power, than their limit, their opposite, their backlash; it is what responds to all advances of power by a movement to disengage itself; it’s thus what motivates all new development of the networks of power... To take the point of view of the plebe, which is that of the inverse and the limit in relation to power, is hence indispensable to make an analysis of its apparatuses.”

But it is neither a writer nor a French philosopher to whom we owe the most decisive contribution to the theory of the Imaginary Party: it’s to the militants of the Red Brigades, Renato Curcio and Alberto Francheschini. In 1982 appeared as supplement to the *Corrispondenza Internazionale* the little volume titled *Drops of sunlight in the city of specters*. As the disagreement between the BR of Moretti and their “historic imprisoned leaders” turned to open war, Francheschini and Curcio elaborated the program of the ephemeral party-guerrilla that was the third descendant of the implosion of the BR, beside the Walter Alasia column and the BR - Fighting Communist Party. Recognizing in the light of the movement of 77 how they were *talked* about by conventional rhetoric of the Third International and of the revolution, they broke with the classical paradigm of production, leaving that of the factory, encompassing the Total Factory of the Metropolis where semiotic production dominated, that is to say, a linguistic paradigm of production. “Rethought of as a totalizing system (differentiated into sub-systems of functional fields, interdependent and de-

prived of self-regulating and autonomous decision-making capacity) that is to say as a corporative-modular system, the computerized metropolis appears as a vast, hardly-disguised prison, in which each social system, like each individual, moves in hallways rigidly differentiated and regulated by the ensemble. A prison made transparent by the information networks that incessantly survey it. In this model, the social metropolitan space-time reproduces itself upon the schema of a foreseeable universe in precarious equilibrium, without uneasiness over its forced tranquility, subdivided in modular compartments inside which each performer works encapsulated - like a goldfish in its bowl - inside a precise collective role. A universe regulated by techniques of selective retroaction and affected by the neutralization of each perturbation of the system of programs decided by the executive... In this context of absurd and insupportable communication in which each is fatally held as in the trap of a paradoxical injunction - to “speak” one must renounce “communicating” to “communicate” one must renounce “speaking!” - it is not shocking that strategies of antagonistic communication, which refuse the authorized languages of power, affirm themselves; it is not stupefying that the significations produced by domination find themselves repulsed and combated by having opposed to them new decentralized production. Non-authorized productions, illegitimate but organically connected to life and that as consequence constellate and compose the clandestine *underground* network of the resistance and of self-defense against the computerized aggression of the demented idioms of the State... Here is situated the principle barricade that separates the camp of the social revolution from that of its enemies: it welcomes isolated resisters to the schizo-metropolitan flux in an antagonistic communicative territory as opposed to that which generates their devastation and revolt... For the ideology of control, an at-risk individual is already a synonym for “potentially insane terrorist,” a fragment of social matter at high probability of explosion. One sees why it is a matter of tracked, spied on, and trailed figures that the great eye and the great ear follow with the discretion and indefatigable continuity of the hunter. Figures who, for this same reason, find themselves placed in the center of an intense semiotic and intimidating bombardment tending to give support to the shreds of official ideology... It is in this manner that the metropolis fulfills its specific quality of a universe of concentration that, to turn away all incessantly generated social conflict, integrates and maneuvers simultaneously the artifices of seductions and phantoms of fear. Artifices and phantoms that assume the central function of the nervous system of the dominant culture and reconfigure the metropolis into an immense psychiatric *lager* - labyrinthine connections of High Security Quarters, sections of continuous control, cages for the “insane,” containers for the detained, reserves for voluntary metropolitan citizens, bunkerized zones for lunatic fetishes... Exercising violence against the necrotropic fetishes of Capital is the greatest possible act of conscious humanity in the metropolis, because it is through this social practice that the proletariat constructs - in appropriating its vital productive process - its knowledge and its memory, that is to say its social power... To produce in revolutionary transgression the destruction of the old world and to make come out of this destruction the surprising and multiple constellations of new social relations are simultaneous processes that all at once speak different languages... The attendants of imaginary creation make real life insane, prevent themselves from communicating; they create angels of seduction and little monsters of fear to the end of exhibiting

to the miserable partners through the networks and circuits that transmit authorized hallucination... To raise oneself out of the “numbered placement” to exit the scene and destroy the fetish representation, such is the choice practiced, since its origins, by the metropolitan guerilla of the new communication... In the complexity of the metropolitan revolutionary process, the party cannot have a form exclusively and eminently political... the party cannot take an exclusively fighting form. The “power of arms” does not evoke, as the militarists believe, absolute power, because absolute power is the knowledge-power that reunifies social-practices... Party-Guerilla means to say: Party Knowledge - Party Power... The Party-Guerilla is the maximal agent of the invisibility and of the exteriorization of the knowledge-power of the proletariat. This signifies that the more the party is invisible and manifests itself in relation to the global imperialist counter-revolution, the more it is visible and becomes internal to the proletariat, that is to say, the more it communicates with the proletariat. In this, the party-guerrilla is the party of the transgressive social communication.”

### AUTONOMY WILL CONQUER!

“And it is because of similar propensities, much more than because of their violence, that the youth of 77 were made indecipherable for the tradition of the workers’ movement.”

-Paolo Virno, *Do you remember counter-revolution?*

Genoa is ravaged by the crowds of masked bodies, a new squat opens, the workers of Cellatex threaten to blow up their factory, a banlieue burns and attacks the commissariats and the closest axes of communication, the end of a protest turns violent, a field of transgenic corn is cut in the night. Whatever by the discourse with which these acts are covered, Marxist-Leninist, revendicative, Islamist, anarchist, socialist, ecologist, or stupidly critical, these are the doings of the Imaginary Party. Little matter that these discourses remain molded from the first capital letter to the final period, in the signifying cordon of occidental metaphysics: because these acts speak right away *another language*.

The stake, for us, is of course to double the event, in the order of the act of the event, in the order of language. It is such a conjunction that Italian Autonomy had realized in the course of the 70's. Autonomy was never *a* movement, even if THEY designated it at the time as “the movement.” The zone of autonomy was the plan(e) of consistence where converged, crossed, aggregated and dis/aggregated a great number of singular becomings. The unification of these becomings under the term “Autonomy” is a pure signifying artifice, a foolish convention. The great misunderstanding, here, is that autonomy was not the attribute revendicated by subjects - what a dull and democratic bore that would have been, if it has been a question of revendicating one's

autonomy as a subject - *but by becomings*. Autonomy possessed thus innumerable dates of birth, was but a succession of birthdates, like so many *acts of secession*. It's thus the autonomy of the workers, the autonomy of the base in relation to the unions, *of the base* that in 1962 in Turin sacked the seat of a moderate union at Piazza Statuto. But it's also autonomy of workers in relation to their role as worker: refusal to work, sabotage, wildcat strike, abstenteeism, proclaimed estrangement in relation to the conditions of their exploitation, in relation to the capitalist totality. It's the autonomy of women: refusal of household work, refusal to reproduce in silence and submission the masculine work-force, self-conscious, speaking out, sabotage of failed affective commerce; autonomy, thus, of women in relation to their *role* as woman and in relation to patriarchal civilization. It's the autonomy of youth, of unemployed, and of marginals who refuse their role as excluded, no longer want to stay silent, invite themselves on the political scene, demand a guaranteed social salary, build a military force to be paid for doing absolutely nothing. But it's also the autonomy of militants in relation to the figure of the militant; in relation to the *partinini* and to the grouposcular logic, in relation to conception of action which is putting existence for later. Contrary to what sociological idiocy lets itself understand, always avid for profitable reductions, the remarkable fact here is not the affirmation as “new subjects,” political, social or productive, or youth, women, unemployed or homosexuals, but rather their violent de-subjectification, practical, in deed, the rejection and betrayal of the role that came back to them as *subjects*. What the different becomings of Autonomy have in common, is to revendicate a *movement of separation* in relation to society, to the totality. This secession is not the affirmation of a static difference, of an essential otherness, a new case in the scale of identification of which Empire assures the growth, but *flight*, line of flight. Separation was thus written *Separ/azione*.

This movement of internal desertion, of brutal subtraction, this ceaselessly renewed flight, this chronic irreducibility to the world of domination is all that Empire fears. “The sole manner to construct our culture and to live our life is to be absent,” announced the mao-dadaist fansine Zut in its October 76 issue. That we become absent to its provocations, indifferent to its values, that we leave its stimuli without response is the nightmare of cybernetic domination; “that to which power responds by the criminalization of all foreign compartments and refusal of capital” (Vagliamo Tutto, no. 10, summer 76). Autonomy means to say: desertion, desertion of the family, desertion of the office, desertion of school and all tutelage, desertion of the role of man, woman and citizen, desertion of all the *shit* relations that THEY believe us held by, desertion without end. The essential is, in each new direction that we give to our movement, to enlarge our power, to always follow the line of the enlargement of power, to the end of winning in force de-territorialization, to the end of being sure that THEY will not arrest us so soon. On this path, what we have to fear the most, what we have to *betray* the most, are all those who lie in wait for us, trace us, follow us from afar, thinking up one way or another to capitalize on the energetic expense of our flight: all the managers, all the maniacs of re-territorialization. There are on the side of Empire, of course, those who will make a fashion on the cadaver of our inventions, the hipster capitalists and other sinister shitheads. But there are also some on our side. In the Italy of the 70s, it was

the operaistes, the great unifiers of Organized Autonomy, who succeeded at “even bureaucratizing the concept of autonomy” (Neg/azione, 76). These try always to make of our movements A movement, to then speak in its name, to give themselves over to their favorite game: political ventriloquism. In the 60’s and 70’s, all the work of the operaistes was thus to repatriate in the terms and manners of the workers’ movement that which, in all places, overflowed it. Going from the ethical estrangement to work that massively manifested itself amongst the recently immigrated workers from the South of Italy, they theorized thus against the union and bureaucrats of the classical workers’ movement *workers’ autonomy* of which they hoped to become the spontaneous meta-bureaucrats; and this without having to have climbed the hierarchical echelons of a classical union: meta-syndicalism. From whence the treatment that they reserved for the plebian elements of the working class, their refusal to let the workers become *something other* than workers, their deafness to the fact that the autonomy that affirmed itself there was not *workers’* autonomy, but rather autonomy *in relation to* the workers’ identity. Treatment that they then made to suffer the “women,” “unemployed,” “youth,” “marginals,” in brief: the “autonomous.” Incapable of any intimacy with themselves as with anyone else, they desperately sought to make the plan(e) of consistence, the zone of Autonomy, an organization, if possible fighting, that would make of them the interlocutors of last resort for a power at bay. It’s to an operaist theoretician, Asor Rosa, to whom we naturally owe the most remarkable and the most popular travesty of the movement of 77: the theory of “two societies.” According to Asor Rosa, one witnessed the clash of two societies, that of guaranteed workers on one part, that of non-guaranteed on the other (youth, precarious, unemployed, marginals, etc.). Even if this theory has the merit to break with that of all the socialisms, and hence with all the lefts seeking to preserve, with massacres if necessary, the fiction of a final unity of society - she hid doubly that 1) the “first society” no longer existed, had entered into a continued processes of implosion, 2) what recomposes itself as ethical tissue beyond this implosion, the Imaginary Party, is in no way a *one*, in any case not unifiable in an isolatable new totality: the second society. It’s today exactly this operation that Negri atavistically reproduces in calling *multitude*, in the singular, something of which the essence is, properly speaking, to be a multiplicity. This type of theoretical swindle will never be as shabby as the end towards which it works: to unify *spectacularly* into one subject, then right away present oneself as the organic intellectual of this subject.

For the operaistes, autonomy was therefore from one end to the other autonomy of the class, autonomy of a new social subject. Throughout the twenty years of activity of operaisme, this axiom could be maintained thanks to an opportune notion, that of *class composition*. Depending on circumstance and short term political calculations, one could make enter into “class composition” this or that new sociological category and abandon oneself to a reasoned volte-face. When the workers became tired, one decrees the death of the “mass worker,” and its replacement in the role of global insurgent by the “social worker”, that is to say just about anyone. At the end, one will finish by finding revolutionary virtues in Benetton, Berlusconi little businessmen of the Italian North East (cf. *Business not like the others*) and even, when necessary, in the League of the North.

For the duration of the Rampant May, autonomy was only this incoercible movement of flight, this staccato of ruptures, notable with the workers’ movement. This, even Negri recognized: “The sharp polemic that opened in 68 between the revolutionary movement and the official workers’ movement turned 77 into an irreversible rupture,” he wrote in *L’orda d’oro*. Operaisme, as the retarded consciousness of the movement, *because of its avant-gardism*, never stopped trying to reabsorb this rupture, to interpret it in terms of the workers’ movement. What was at work in operaisme, as in the practice of the BR, was less an attack against capitalism than envious competition of which the stakes were for power OVER the workers. “We cannot speak of politics but through Leninism. As long as there is not a new class composition, we find ourselves in the situation where many innovators have found themselves: that of having to explain the new with an old language,” complained Negri in a 1980 interview. Thus it was under the cover of an Orthodox Marxism, in the shadow of a rhetorical fidelity to the workers’ movement that there grew the *false consciousness* of the movement. There were voices, like that of *Gatti Selvaggi* who rose up against this interloping: “We are against the ‘myth’ of the working class because it is harmful, and first of all to itself. Operaisme and populism are only dictated by the millenarian design to use the ‘masses’ as a pawn in the dirty games of power” (no. 1, 1974). But the fraud was too enormous not to work. And in fact, it did work.



Considering the cabbage junkerism of the French contestation, recalling what happened in Italy thirty years ago does not acquire the character of an historical anecdote, on the contrary: the problems posed by the Italian autonomes *have still not yet even been posed by us*. In these conditions, the passage of workplace struggles to territorial struggles, the recomposition of an ethical tissue upon the base of secession, the question of the reappropriation of the means of life, to fight and communicate amongst ourselves, forms an unattainable horizon as long as the existential preliminary of *Separ/azione* is not admitted. *Separ/Azione* signifies: we have nothing to do with this world. We have nothing to say to it, nothing to make it understand. Our acts of destruction, sabotage, we have no need to follow them with an explanation duly aiming at human Reason. We do not act in virtue of a better, alternative world to come, but in virtue of what we experiment with already, in virtue of the radical irreconcilability of Empire and this experimentation, of which war is a part. And henceforth when reasonable people, legislators, technocrats, governors demand of this type of massive critique, “But then what do you want?”, our reply is: “we are not citizens. We will never adapt your point of view of the totality, your point of view of *management*. We refuse to play the

game, that's all. It's not our job to tell you what sauce we would like to be eaten with." The principle source of our paralysis, that which we have to break, is the utopia of the human community, the perspective of final and universal conciliation. Even Negri, at the time of *Domination and Sabotage*, had made this step out of socialism. "I do not represent the history of class consciousness in the fashion of Lukacs as the destiny of an integral recomposition but contrarily as a moment of intensive implanting in my own separation. I am *other*, other is the collective moment of praxis into which I assert myself. What I participate in is an *other workers' movement*. Of course, I know how many critiques could rise up against this discourse from the point of view of Marxist tradition. I have the impression, in what concerns me, to hold myself at the extreme signifying limit of a political discourse of class... I therefore must assume radical difference as a methodological condition of the subversive path, of the project of proletarian self-valorization. And my relation to historic totality? With the totality of the system? We have arrived at the second consequence of this affirmation: my *relation with the totality* of capitalist development, with the totality of historical development is only assured by the *force of destructure* that the moment determines, by the total *sabotage* of the history of capital that the movement works... I define myself in separating myself from the totality, and I define totality as other than me, as a network that spreads out upon the continuity of the historic sabotage done by the class." Naturally, there is no more an "other workers' movement" that there is a "second society." What there are, to sum up, are the meticulous becomings of the Imaginary Party and their autonomy.

## LIVING-AND-FIGHTING

*"The most supple things in this world subjugate the most hard."*

-Lao Tse, *Tao Te Ching*

The first offensive campaign against Empire failed. The attack of the RAF against the "imperialist system," that of the BR against the SIM (Stato Imperialista delle Multinazionali) and so many other guerilla actions were easily repulsed. The failure was not that this or that fighting organization, of this or that "revolutionary subject," but of a *conception of war*; of a conception of war that could not be repeated beyond these organization *because it was in itself already a repeat*. With the exception of some RAF or 2 June Movement texts, there are still today very few documents issued from the "armed struggle" that are not edited in the borrowed, ossified, boilerplate language that, in one way or another, gives off the Third International kitsch. As if it were a matter of dissuading anyone from joining it.

It's at present, after twenty years of counter-revolution, that the second act of the anti-imperial struggle opens up. In the meantime, the collapse of the Socialist bloc and the social-democrat

conversion of the last debris of the workers' movement has definitively liberated our party from all that could still contain socialist inclinations. In fact, the peremption of all the ancient conceptions of struggle was first manifested as a disappearance of struggle. Then, currently, with the "anti-globalization movement," by the parody at a superior level of ancient militant practices. The return of war demands a new conception of war. **We have to invent a form of war such that the defeat of Empire will no longer be a duty that kills us, but one that lets us know how to live, how to be more and more alive.**

Fundamentally, our point of departure is not very different from that of the RAF when it noted: "The system has monopolized the totality of free time of the human being. From the physical exploitation in the factory comes to add itself the exploitation of thought and sentiments, of aspirations and utopias by the media and mass consumers... The system has succeeded, in the metropolis, in plunging the masses so profoundly in its shit that they have apparently lost the perception of themselves as exploited and oppressed; so much that for them, the car, life insurance, a mortgage make them accept all the crimes of the system and that, apart from the car, the vacations, the redecorated bathroom, they can neither represent themselves nor hope." The property of Empire is to have expanded its front of colonization over the totality of existence and existing. It's not only that Capital has enlarged its human base, it's that it has also deepened the anchorage of its mechanisms. Better still, upon the base of the final disintegration of society, similar to that of its subjects, Empire proposes to recreate in itself alone an ethical tissue; the hipsters, with their quarters, their press, their codes, their consumption, and their modular ideas are at the same time guinea pigs and the avant-garde. And it's why, from the East Village to Oberkampf in passing by Prenzhauer Berg, the hipster phenomenon is already at the level of a global scale. It's on a *total* terrain, the ethical terrain of forms-of-life, that the war against Empire plays itself out. This war is a war of annihilation. Empire, contrary to what the BR believed, for whom the stakes in the kidnapping of Moro was explicitly the recognition by the State of the armed party, is not the enemy. Empire is but the hostile milieu that, step by step, opposes our advances. We are engaged in a struggle in which the stake is the recomposition of an ethical terrain. This is visible on the territory, in the progressive process of gentrification of anciently secessionist places, in the uninterrupted extension of chains of apparatuses. Here, the classical, abstract conception of a war that will culminate in a total confrontation, where it will finally regain its essence, is obsolete. War will no longer let itself be an isolated moment of our existence, that of the decisive confrontation; *henceforth it is our existence itself, in all its aspects, that is the war*. This means to say that that the first movement of this war is *reappropriation*. Reappropriation of the means of living-and-fighting. Reappropriation, as well, of places: squat, occupation or putting in common private places. Reappropriation of the common: constitution of languages, syntaxes, means of communication, of autonomous cultures-to wrest the transmission of experience from the hands of the State. Reappropriation of violence: communization of combat technique, formation of self-defense forces, arming. Finally, reappro-

priation of elementary survival: diffusion of medical knowledge, of techniques of theft and expropriation, progressive organization of a network of autonomous procurement.

Empire is well armed to fight against the two types of secession that it recognizes: the secession “from above” of the *golden ghettos* - the secession for example of world finance in relation to the “real economy” or of the imperial hyper bourgeoisie in relation to the rest of the biopolitical tissue; and secession “from below” of “lawless zones”- cities, ghettos, and shanty towns. It suffices, each time one or the other menaces its meta-stable equilibrium, to play one off against the other: the civilized modernity of the hipsters against the retrograde barbarism of the poor, or the exigencies of social cohesion and equality against the incorrigible egoism of the rich. “It is a question of conferring a political coherence to a social and spatial entity to the end of avoiding all risk of secession by the territories habited, be it by the excluded of the socio-economic networks, or be it by the winners of the global economic dynamic... avoiding all forms of secession signifies finding the means to conciliate the demands of this new social class and those excluded from the economic networks, of which the spatial concentration is such that it induces deviant behaviors,” theorized one of the counselors of Empire, Cynthia Ghorra-Gobin in *The USA between local and global*. Equally well, the exodus, the secession that we prepare, in the exact measure as its territory is not uniquely physical, but *total*, Empire is powerless to stop it. The sharing of a technique, the turn of a phrase, a certain configuration of space suffices to activate our plan(e) of consistence. All our force resides there: in a secession that can not be registered on the maps of Empire because it is not secession from above or below, but *through the middle*.

What we speak of here is only the constitution of *machines of war*. By machine of war, one must comprehend a certain coincidence of living and fighting, a coincidence that never gives itself up without demanding at the same time to be built. Because each time one of these terms finds itself in whatever manner separated from the other, the machine of war degenerates, derails. If the moment of living is unilateralized, it becomes a *ghetto*. It is this which is evidenced by the sinister swamps of “the alternative,” of which the vocation unambiguously appears to be selling the Same under the envelope of the different. The great number of occupied social centers in Germany, Italy or Spain, painlessly show how simulated externality to Empire can constitute a precious asset in capitalist valorization. “The Ghetto, the apology of “difference,” the privilege accorded to all its introspective and moral aspects, the tendency to constitute itself as a separate society renouncing assault against the capitalist machine, the “social factory,” is all of this perhaps a result of the rhapsodic and approximative “theories” of Valcarengi [the director of the counter-cultural publication *ReNudo*] and friends? And is it not strange that they should call us a “sub-culture” now that all their flowery, non-violent shit that accompanied them is in crisis?” the autonomists of *Senza Tregua* already wrote in 1976. Inversely, if it is the moment of fighting that is singled out, the machine of war degenerates into an *army*. All the militant formations, all the terrible communities are machines of war that have survived their own extinction in this petrified form. It is this excess of the machine of war in relation to all its acts of war that was pointed to in an introduction to a col-

lection of texts of Autonomy under the title of *The Right to Hatred*: “To make thus a chronology of this hybrid and in many aspects contradictory subject that has materialized in the zone of Autonomy, I find myself returning to a process of reduction of the movement into a sum of events, while the reality of its becoming-a-machine-of-war affirms itself only through the transformation that the subject elaborates in a concentric manner *around* each moment of effective confrontation.”

There is no machine of war save in movement, even fettered, even imperceptible, in movement following its degree of growth of power. It is this movement that assures the relations of force that traverse it never fix themselves into relations of power. Our war can be victorious, that is to say can carry on, enlarge our power, on the condition that we always subordinate the confrontation to our positivity. *Never hit above one's positivity*, such is the vital principle of all machines of war. Each space conquered from Empire, on a hostile milieu, must correspond to our capacity to fill it, to configure it, to inhabit it. Nothing is worse than a victory that we don't know how to use. For the essential, our war will thus be mute; it will feint, flee direct confrontation, proclaim little. By that, it will impose its own temporality. Hardly have we begun to be identified when we sound the dispersion, never letting repression catch us, reforming already in some unsuspected place. What concern is it to us of such and such a locality at the moment when all local attacks are henceforth - and this is the only valuable lesson of the Zapatista farce - an attack against Empire? The important thing is to never lose the initiative, never let a hostile temporality impose itself. And above all: never to forget that our striking power is not tied to our level of armament, but to the virtue of the positivity that we constitute.

## THE UNHAPPINESS OF THE CIVILIZED WARRIOR

*“I distance myself from those who wait on chance, on a dream, on a riot for the possibility of escaping insufficiency. They resemble too much those who previously gave to God the worry of saving their missed existence.”*

-Georges Bataille

It is commonly admitted that the movement of 77 was defeated for being unable, outside of the notable encounters of Bologna, to establish a serious relation to its offensive power, to its “violence”. The entire imperial strategy in the fight against subversion consists, and this verifies itself anew each year, in isolating from the population its most “violent” elements - “wreckers”, “uncontrollable”, “autonomes”, “terrorists”, etc. As against the police vision of the world, it must be affirmed that there is *no problem* with armed struggle: no fight of any consequence was ever led without arms. There is only a problem of armed struggle for that which wants to conserve

its own monopoly of legitimized armament, the State. What there is, to resume, is effectively a question of the *usage* of arms. During March 77, one hundred thousand people demonstrated in Rome among which ten thousand were armed, and at the end of a day of clashes no policemen remained on the ground when they would have been so easy to massacre, helps one understand a little better the difference between armament and the usage of arms. To be armed is an element of the relation of force, the refusal to remain abjectly at the mercy of the police, a manner to arrogate to ourselves our legitimate impunity. This issue settled, there remains a question of relation to violence, a relation that the lack of elaboration everywhere harms the progress of anti-imperial subversion.

All machines of war are by nature a society, a society without a state; but under Empire, in light of its obsidional situation, a determination adds itself to this. It will be a society of a particular type: a society of *warriors*. If each existence is in its heart essentially a war and knows the moment has come to take part in the battle, a minority of beings must take war for the *exclusive* object of their existence. They will be the *warriors*. Henceforth, the machine of war must defend itself not only from hostile attacks, but also from the menace that its warrior minority does not separate from it, constitute a caste, a dominant class, that they not form the embryo of a state and turning their offensive means into means of oppression, that they do not take power. To establish a serious relation with violence only means, for us to establish a serious relation with the minority of warriors. Curiously, it is in a text of 77, the last of Clastres, The Unhappiness of the Civilized Warrior, that for the first time was sketched such a relation. Perhaps it was necessary that all propaganda of classical virility collapse so that such an enterprise could be lead to its end.

Contrary to what THEY have told us, the warrior is not a figure of plenitude, and above all not of virile plenitude. The warrior is a figure of amputation. The warrior is the being that accedes to a sentiment of existing only in combat, in the confrontation with the Other; a being who does not come to procure by himself the sentiment of existing. Nothing is more sad, at bottom, than the spectacle of this form-of-life that, in each situation, awaits for mano-a-mano to remedy its absence of self. But nothing is more moving, as well; because this absence of self is not a simple lack, a default of intimacy with oneself, but rather a positivity. The warrior is well and truly animated by one desire, and even by an exclusive desire: to disappear. The warrior wants to be no more, but that this disappearance have a certain style. He wants to *humanize* his vocation of death. This is why he never truly comes to mix with the rest of humanity, because they spontaneously guard themselves from his movement towards nothingness. In the admiration they dedicate to him is measured the distance that they put between themselves and him. The warrior is in this manner condemned to solitude. A great dissatisfaction in him is related to this, that he has not come to be a part of any community, if not the false community, the *terrible* community of warriors, who have nothing to share but their solitude. Prestige, Renown, and Glory are less the apanage of the warrior than the sole form compatible with this solitude. His wealth and his damnation are equally contained there.

The warrior is a figure of inquietude and of ravage. By force of not being *there*, to be only for-death, his immanence has become miserable and he knows it. *It is that he was never made for this world*. For this reason, he is not attached to it; he awaits the end. But there is also a tenderness, even a delicateness to the warrior, which is this silence, this half-presence. If he is not there, often, it is that he can only, in the contrary case, draw along those who surround him on his way to ruin. It's thus that the warrior loves: in preserving others from the death he has in his heart. To the company of men, the warrior prefers solitude. And this by good will rather than disgust. Or perhaps he will rejoin the sorrowful pack of warriors, who regard themselves slipping, one by one, towards death, since such is their penchant.

In a sense, his own society can only distrust the warrior. It does not exclude him, nor truly include him; it excludes him in its mode of inclusion and includes him in its mode of exclusion. Their terrain of understanding is that of *recognition*. It's by the prestige which it recognizes in him that society holds the warrior at a distance, it's by this that it attaches itself to him and by that which it condemns him. "For each feat of arms accomplished," writes Clastres, "the warrior and society produce the same judgment: 'It's good, but I can do more, and acquire a surplus of glory' says the warrior. 'It's good, but you must do more to obtain from us the recognition of a superior prestige' says society. In other words, as much by his personality (glory above all) as by his total dependence in relation to the tribe (who else can confer glory?) the warrior finds himself, *volens nolens*, prisoner of a logic that always pushes him to do a little more. Without which the society will quickly lose the memory of his past exploits and the glory they have given him. The warrior exists only in war, he is dedicated as such to "activism" and therefore, after a brief delay, to death. If the warrior is thus dominated, alienated from society, "the existence, in this or that society, of an organized group of 'professional' warriors tends to transform the *permanent state of war* (general situation of primitive society) to *permanent effective war* (situation peculiar to warrior societies). Now such a transformation, pushed to its end, is portentous of considerable sociological consequences, touching even the structure of society, altering the undivided being. The power of decision in regards to war and in regards to peace (absolutely essential power) no longer belongs, in effect, to the society as such, but to the confraternity of warriors, who place their private interest ahead of the collective interest of society, who make their particular point of view the general point of view of the tribe... At first a group for the acquisition of *prestige*, the warrior community then transforms itself into a *pressure* group in view of pushing society to accept intensifications of war."

The subversive counter-society *must*, we *must* recognize in each warrior, in each fighting organization the prestige tied to its exploits. We *must* admire the courage of this or that feat of arms, the technical perfection of this or that prowess, of a kidnapping, assassination, all successful armed action. We must appreciate the audacity of this or that attack on a prison to liberate comrades. We must, precisely to protect against the warriors, *to dedicate them to death*. "Such is the defense mechanism that primitive society puts into place to conjure away the risk that the warrior,



as such, carries: the life of the undivided social body against the death of the warrior. To clear up here the text of the tribal law: primitive society is, in its being, *society for war*; it is at the same time, and for the same reasons, *society against the warrior*.” But our mourning will be without equivocation.

The relation of the Italian movement to its armed minority was marked by this equivocation throughout the 70’s. The detachment of this minority into an autonomous military power never ceased to be feared. And it’s precisely what the State, with its “Strategy of Tension” sought after. In artificially elevating the military level of confrontation, in criminalizing political contestation, in forcing members of fighting organizations into total clandestinity, it wanted to sever them from the movement, and to make them hated as the State was hated. It was a question of liquidating the movement as a machine of war, in constraining it to take war with the State as its *exclusive* object. The watchword of Berlinguer, general secretary of the PCI in 1978: “Either with the State, or with the BR” which meant above all “Either with the Italian State or the BR State”- resumes the *technique* with which Empire would grind down the Movement; and that it exhumes at present to counter the return of the anti-capitalist struggle.

## *DIFFUSE GUERRILLA!*

*“But you are how many? I would like to say... us, the group. We don’t know. One day we are two, another twenty. And sometimes we are a hundred thousand.”*

-Cesare Battisti, *Dernière Cartouche*

In the 70’s in Italy two subversive strategies coexisted: that of the fighting organizations and that of Autonomy. This sharing was schematic. It is, for example, evident that in the single case of the BRs, it would be possible to distinguish between the “first BRs”, those of Curcio and Francheschini, who were, “invisible for power, but present in the movement”, who were implanted in the factories where they shut up the foremen, kneecapped cowards, burned their cars, kidnapped bosses, who only wished to be, according to their formula, “the highest point of the movement”; and those of Moretti, more clearly Stalinist, who plunged into a total professional clandestinity and who, becoming invisible for the Movement as much as for themselves, brought “the attack to the heart of the State” on the abstract scene of classical politics, and finished by being cut off from all ethical reality save this. It would be thus possible to submit that the most famous action of the BR, the kidnapping of Moro, his detention in a “people’s prison” where he was judged by a “proletarian justice”, too perfectly mimics the procedure of the State to not be the action of already degenerated, militarized BRs, no longer corresponding to themselves, to the first BRs. If we forget these possible quibbles, we will see that there is a strategic axiom common to the BR, RAF, NAP, Prima Linea (PL), and in fact to all the fighting organizations: and this is opposing Empire *in so*

*much as collective and revolutionary subject*. This implies not only revendicating acts of war, but above all reducing members, in the end, to plunge into clandestinity and from there to entrench oneself from the ethical tissue of the movement, from its life as a machine of war. An old Pler in 1980 delivered, in the midst of unacceptable calls for surrender, some observations worthy of interest: “The BR, during the movement of 77, understood nothing of what happened. Those who, for many years, did work as the moles of history saw all of a sudden thousands of multicolored youths doing it. PL had been traversed by the movement, but paradoxically, nothing remained of it whereas the BR recuperated the residues when the movement was dead. In fact, the armed organizations never knew how to synchronize themselves with the existing movements. They reproduced a sort of alternating mechanism of silent infiltration and then virulent critique. And when the movement disappeared, they welcomed the disillusioned cadres and launched them into the sky of politics... this was above all true after Moro. Before, the organization was on the contrary traversed by the slightly irrational spirit of transgression of the movement of 77. We were not the Don Juans of modern times, but ‘irregularity’ was the diffuse behavior. Little by little with the influence of the BR, this changed. They had their great model romance, the passion of Renato Curcio and Margherita Carol... Militarism is a certain conception of militantism, where life itself is organized like a regiment. An analogy with military service struck me, this formal camaraderie bathing in a reassuring optimism and



holding a certain type of competition: who could make the best joke and best maintain the morale of the troops. Like in the army with the progressive elimination of the timid and melancholic. There is no place for them, because they are immediately considered as a dead weight for the good morale of the regiment. It’s a typical militarist deformation that seeks in the existence of a noisy and exuberant band a form of security to substitute for an internal life. In this manner, unconsciously, those who weigh down the atmosphere to something perhaps more sad but doubtless more true, corresponding to what the noisiest must, at heart, feel, have to be marginalized.” (Liberation, 13-14 October 1980). If we pass by the ill wishing that animates this interview, this confirms two mechanisms that are attributes of all political groups that constitute themselves as subject, into an entity separated from the plan(e) of consistence on which it rests: 1) They take all the traits of a terrible community 2) They find themselves projected onto the terrain of representation, in the sky of classical politics, which alone shares their degree of separation and spectrality. The subject-to-subject confrontation with the State necessarily follows, as a rivalry on the terrain of abstraction, as the putting into place of an *in vitro* civil war; and finally they finish by lending to the

enemy a heart he does not have. They give him exactly the substance that they themselves are in the process of losing.

The other strategy, that no longer of war but of the diffuse guerrilla, belongs to Autonomy. It alone can defeat Empire. It is no longer a matter of assembling into a compact subject to defeat Empire, but to disseminate in a multiplicity of centers like so many fault lines in the capitalist totality. Autonomy will be less an ensemble of radios, groups, arms, festivals, riots, squats, than a certain intensity in the circulation of bodies between all its points. Thus Autonomy does not exclude the existence of organizations in its midst, even when these adhere to ridiculous neo-Leninist pretensions: all organizations find themselves brought back to the empty row of architecture that in various circumstances traverses the flux of the Movement. Now that the Imaginary Party constitutes itself as a secessionist ethical tissue, even the possibility of an instrumentalization of the movement by organizations, and *a fortiori* by an infiltration of these organizations, disappears: it is rather they who are bound to be subsumed by it, as simple *points* on its plan(e) of consistency. As opposed to fighting organizations, Autonomy relies on indistinction, informality, a semi-clandestinity adequate for conspiratorial practice. The actions of war are here anonymous, here signed under false names, different each time, unassignable in any case, soluble in the sea of Autonomy. These are so many scratches issued from the shadows, which form as such an alternative offensive far more dense and fearful than the armed propaganda campaigns of the fighting organizations. Each action signs itself, revindicates itself by *how it was done*, by its own signification in the situation, permitting to distinguish it at first glance from the assassination of the far-right, or the massacre of the State in subversive guise. This strategy rests on the intuition, never formulated by Autonomy, that not only is there no longer a revolutionary subject, but that the *non-subject itself* has become revolutionary, that is to say operating against Empire. In installing in the cybernetic machine this sort of endemic, quotidian, permanent conflictuality, Autonomy will make it ungovernable. Significantly, the reflex of Empire facing this *nondescript enemy* will always be to represent it as a structured, unitary organization, like a subject, and if possible to make it a subject: “I discuss with a leader of the Movement; he firstly rejects the term leader: among them there are no leaders... The Movement, he says, is an unseizable mobility, a seething of tendencies, of groups and sub-groups, an assemblage of autonomous molecules... for me, there does exist a directing group for the movement; it’s an ‘internal group’, inconsistent in appearance, but in reality perfectly structured. Rome, Bologna, Turin, Naples: it is a question here of a concerted strategy. The directing group rests invisible and even informed public opinion is not able to discern this.” (*The Paleo-Revolution of the Autonomes*, Corriere della Sera, May 21 1977). No surprise that Empire has recently tried the same operation against the resumption of the anti-capitalist offensive, this time apropos of the mysterious “Black Bloc”. While the Black Bloc was only a technique of demonstration invented by the German Autonomes in the 80s, then perfected by American anarchists at the start of the 90s, a technique, that is to say something reappropriable, contaminating; Empire does not arrange its effects for some time to make this up into a subject, to make of it a close, compact, strange entity. “According to the judges of Genoa, the Black Bloc constitutes an ‘armed

gang’ with a horizontal, non-hierarchical form, composed of independent groups without singular command as a way to solve the problem of the weight of centralized command but so dynamic that it is capable of ‘elaborating its own strategies’ and to take ‘rapid and collective decisions of great impact’ all in maintaining the autonomy of singular movements. This is why it has attained a ‘political maturity’ that makes the Black Bloc a real force” (*The Black Bloc is an armed gang*, Corriere della Sera, August 11 2001). Solving by its delirium its incapacity to understand all serious ethics, Empire constructs in this manner the phantom of the enemy it can defeat.

## AND THE STATE SINKS INTO THE IMAGINARY PARTY

*“Since we wish to counter subversion, we must take into account three distinct elements. The first two form the target, properly speaking, that is to say the Party or Front and its cells or committees on one side, and on the other the armed groups that support or are supported by them. We say that these are like the head and the body of a fish. The third element is the population. The population is the water in which the fish swim. According to the type of water that forms its natural habitat, the type of fish changes, and it goes the same for subversive organizations. If we need to catch a fish, we can go at it directly with a fishing rod or a net, given that it is in a situation that gives a chance to these methods. But if the rod and the net don’t suffice, it could be turn out to be necessary to do something to the water that will force the fish to place itself in a position where it can be caught. It is conceivable that the water must be polluted to kill the fish, as undesirable as the method may seem.”*

*-Frank Kitson, Low Intensity Operations: Subversion, Insurrection, Peacekeeping*

The imperial reconfiguration of hostilities has passed largely unperceived. It has passed unperceived because it first of all manifested itself far from the metropolises, in former colonies. Placing war outside the law, first simply proclamatory starting with the League of Nations then effective starting from the invention of the nuclear bomb, has produced a decisive mutation of war; a mutation that Schmitt tried to seize in his concept of “global civil war”. Since all war between States has become criminal in regards to world order, not only have we seen limited conflicts, but the nature of the enemy itself has changed: *the enemy has become internal*. Such is the roll back of the liberal State in Empire that even when the enemy is identified as a State, a “rogue state” in the cavalier terminology of imperial diplomats, the war that is lead against it from now on takes the aspect of a simple police operation, of an affair of internal management, of a peacekeeping initiative.

Imperial war has neither start nor finish, it is a process of permanent pacification. The essence of its methods and principles have been known for 50 years. They were elaborated during

the wars of decolonization. There, the statist apparatus of oppression underwent a decisive alteration. The enemy was no more an isolatable entity, a foreign nation or a determined class, it was somewhere lying in wait amongst the population, without visible attributes. At the limit, it was the population *itself* as insurrectional power. The proper configuration of hostilities for the Imaginary Party thus immediately manifests itself under the traits of the guerrilla, of partisan war. Ergo, not only does the army become police, but the enemy becomes a “terrorist” - “terrorist” resisters to German occupation, “terrorist” Algerian insurgents against French occupation, “terrorist” anti-imperialist militants of the 70’s, presently the “terrorist”, too-determined elements of the anti-globalization movement. Trinquier, one of the masters of the work, in so much as theoretician, of the Battle of Algiers: “The role of pacification given to the army comes to pose problems that the military is not normally habituated to resolve. The exercise of police powers in a large city was not well-known to them. The Algerian rebels used for the first time a new weapon: *urban terrorism*... It’s an incomparable advantage, but also a grave inconvenience: the population that shelters the terrorist also knows them. It can at any moment denounce them to the forces of order if we give them the possibility. It is possible to take from them this vital support by a strict control of the population.” (*Lost time*). Historical conflictuality, for more than a half-century, no longer responds to principles of classical war; for more than a half-century, there are no longer anything but special wars.

It is the special wars, the irregular forms without principle which, in part, have sunk the liberal State into the Imaginary Party. All the counter-insurrectional doctrines, those of Trinquier, Kitson, Beaufre, colonel Chateau Jobert, are formal on this point: the only way to fight against the guerrilla, against the Imaginary Party, is to employ its techniques. “One must operate as a partisan wherever there are partisans” Trinquier again: “But he must know that, when he [the insurgent] is captured, he will not be treated as an ordinary criminal, nor as a prisoner taken on the field of battle... For his interrogations, he will certainly not be given a lawyer. If he gives without difficulty the information demanded, the interrogation will be rapidly terminated; if not, specialists will have to, by all means, pry out his secrets. He will thus have to, like the soldier, confront the suffering and perhaps death that he knew how to evade until now. Now, this, the terrorist must know and accept as an inherent fact of his state and as the proceedings of the cause that he and his leaders have knowingly chosen.” (*Modern War*). The continuous surveilling of the population, the marking of at-risk individuals, wholesale torture, psychological war, police control of Publicity, the social manipulation of effects, the infiltration and exfiltration of “extremist groups”, the State massacre, as so many other aspects of massive deployment of imperial apparatuses, respond to the necessities of an uninterrupted war, most often led without noise. Because as Westmorland said, “A military operation is only one of diverse ways to combat communist insurrection” (*Counter-Insurrection*, *Tricontinental*, 1969).

At bottom, only the partisans of the urban guerrilla understood what was happening in the wars of decolonization. Those alone who took the Uruguayan Tupamaros as a model understood

what was *contemporary* in these conflicts presented as “national liberation”. They, and the imperial forces. The president of a colloquium on “the role of the armed forces in the maintenance of order in the 70’s”, organized in April 1973 in London by the Royal Institute for Defense Studies thus declared: “If we lose in Belfast, perhaps we will be beaten in Brixton or Birmingham. The same as Spain of the 30’s was a rehearsal for a generalized European conflict, so could what happens in North Ireland be a repetition for a generalized urban guerrilla war in Europe and more particularly in Great Britain.” All the pacification campaigns underway, all the activity of “international peacekeeping forces” currently deployed on the margins of Europe and the world, evidently announce other “pacification campaigns” on the territory of Europe this time. Only those who do not understand that their function is to *form men to fight against us* can search in some mysterious global plot for the reason for these interventions. No trajectory better resumes the prolonging of exterior pacification into interior pacification than that of the British officer Frank Kitson, the man who established the strategic doctrine thanks to which the British State conquered the Irish insurrection and NATO the Italian revolutionaries. Thus Kitson, before recording his counter-insurrectional doctrine in *Low Intensity Operations*, took part in the decolonization wars in Kenya against the Mau-Mau, in Malaysia against the Communists, in Cyprus against Grivas and finally in North Ireland. From his doctrine we will retain but a smattering of first hand information concerning imperial rationality. We will condense this into three postulates. The first is that there is an absolute continuity between the tiniest crimes and insurrection, which are the two terms of a process in three phases: “the preparatory”, “the non-violent”, and the insurrection proper. For Empire, war is a continuum - *warfare as a whole*, says Kitson - one must respond to the first “incivility” that menaces social order and tighten up to make an “integration of military, police, and civil activity on all levels”. Civil-military integration is the second imperial postulate. Because in the era of nuclear pacification, wars between States become more and more rare and the essential task of the army is no longer external but internal war, counter-insurrection, it is helpful to habituate the population to a permanent military presence in public places. An imaginary terrorist menace, Irish or Islamic, permits the justification of regular patrols of men in train stations, airports, subways, etc. In a general manner, the multiplication of points of indistinction between the civil and military will be sought. The informatization of the social, that is to say the fact that all acts tendentially produce information, forms the heart of this integration. The multiplication of apparatuses of diffuse surveillance, tracking, and recording has as its mission to generate a profusion of this *low grade intelligence* upon which the police can then rely on in their interventions. The third of these principles of imperial action, as soon as one has left the preparatory phase of the insurrection that is the normal political situation, concerns “peace movements”. When a violent opposition to the existing order appears, it is important to join together, if not create, pacifist movements in the population which will serve to isolate the rebels while one infiltrates them to get them to commit acts that discredit them - this strategy Kitson exposes under the poetic name of “drowning the baby in its own milk”. For the rest, it would not be bad to brandish an imaginary terrorist menace to the end of “making the conditions of life of the population sufficiently uncomfortable so that they constitute a stimulus towards a return to normal life.” If Trinquier had the honor of

counseling the American counter-insurrectional eminences, as he had already put into place a vast system of cordoning and of control of the Algiers population corresponding to the modernist name of the “Technique of Urban Protection”, Kitson saw his work go to the highest circles of NATO. And he joined without delay the Atlantist structures. Was it not his vocation, besides, had he not wished of his book that it “draw attention to the stages to cross from the present to defeat subversion, insurrection, and to lead operations in the second half of the 1970’s” and who concluded by insisting on the same point: “For the hour, it is permitted to hope that the content of this book will help, in one manner or another, the army to prepare itself for the storms that could well await in the second part of the 1970’s.”

Under Empire, even the persistence of the formal appearances of the State is part of strategic maneuvers that make it outdated. In proportion as Empire can not recognize an enemy, an alteriority, an ethical difference, it can no more recognize the situation of war that it creates. There will thus not be a state of exception, properly speaking, but a permanent state of emergency, indefinitely renewed. One will not officially suspend the legal regime for waging war against the internal enemy, insurgents or whoever else it may be, one will just add to the actual legal regime an ensemble of *ad hoc* laws, destined for the fight against the unavowable enemy. “Common Law will change itself into a proliferate and superfluous development of special rules: the rule becomes in this way a collection of exceptions.” (Luca Bresci, Oreste Scalzone, *The Exception is the Rule*). The sovereignty of the police, again become a machine of war, will no longer suffer contestation. THEY will recognize the right to shoot on sight, reestablishing in the facts the death penalty that no longer exists in the laws. THEY will lengthen the maximum duration of preventive detention in such a manner that inculcation now will be equal to condemnation. In certain cases, the “anti-terrorist” struggle will legitimate imprisonment without trial as well as search without warrant. In a general manner, THEY will no longer judge facts, but persons, a subjective conformity, a disposition to repent of; adequately vague criminal qualifications like “moral complicity”, “belonging to a criminal organization”, or “incitation to civil war” will be created to this effect. And when this no longer suffices, THEY will judge by theorem. To clearly show the difference between arrested citizens and “terrorists”, THEY will manage, using laws for the repented, the possibility for each to publicly dissociate themselves from themselves, to become infamous. Important reductions in sentence will then be accorded; in the contrary case the *Berufsverbot* will explicitly prevail, the interdiction to exercise certain sensitive professions that must be protected from all subversive contamination. But such types of laws, like the Reale Law in Italy or the German legislations of exception, only *respond* to a declared insurrectional situation. Far more treacherous are the laws which aim to arm the *preventative* struggle against the machines of war of the Imaginary Party. As complement to the “anti-terrorist” laws there will be voted quasi-unanimously, as was recently done in France, Spain, and Belgium, “anti-sect laws”; laws that pursue, without hiding it, the project of criminalizing all groupings autonomous from the false national community of citizens. It is to be feared, moreover, that it will be harder and harder to avoid local excesses of zeal like the “anti-extremism” laws adopted by Belgium in November 1998 and which repressed “all the racist,

xenophobic, anarchist, nationalist, authoritarian or totalitarian conceptions or aims, whether they be of a political, ideological, confessional or philosophical character, contrary... to the functioning of democratic institutions.”

It would be false to believe that in spite of all this, the State still survives. In the midst of the global civil war, its pretended ethical neutrality no longer succeeds as an illusion. The tribunal-form itself, whether it is a matter of TGI or TPI, is perceived as an explicit modality of war. It is the idea of the State as a mediation between parties that here goes to the abyss. The historic compromise, experimented with in Italy from the start the 70’s, but become a reality in all the biopolitical democracies with the disappearance of all effective opposition on the scene of classical politics, accomplishes the ruin of the principle of the State itself. In this way the Italian State did not survive the 70’s, the diffuse guerrilla, or at least did not survive it *as a State*, but only as a *party*, as a party of citizens, that is to say *the police and passivity*. And it was for this party that the renewal of the economic passion in the 80’s sanctioned an ephemeral victory. But the complete shipwreck of the State does not prove itself save at the moment what at its head a man seizes control of the theater of classical politics, of which his entire program is to reject this and to substitute for this theater a pure entrepreneurial management. At this point, the State overtly assumes its role as party. With Berlusconi, it’s not a singular individual who takes power, but a form-of-life: that of the narrow-minded arriviste and philo-fascist small businessman of the North of Italy. Power is ethically founded anew - founded on the business as the only form of socialization outside the family - and he who incarnates this *represents* no one, and above all not a majority, but *is* a perfectly discernable form-of-life, with whom only a very reduced fraction of the population can identify. Just as everyone recognizes in Berlusconi the clone of the idiot next door, the copy conforming to the worst parvenu in the quarter, everyone knows he was a member of the P2 lodge that made of the Italian State an instrument at its service. It is thus, bit by bit, that the State sinks into the Imaginary Party.

### THE FABRICATION OF THE CITIZEN

*“The repressive societies that are being set in place have two characteristics: the repression is softer, more diffuse, more general, and at the same time more violent. For all those who can submit, adapt, be canalized, there will be a decrease in police interventions. There will be more psychologists, as well as psychoanalysts, in the service of the police; there will be more and more group therapy; the problems of the individual and the couple will be universally discussed; repression will be more and more comprehensive, in psychological terms. The work of prostitutes will have to be recognized, there will be drug counselors on the radio - in brief: there will be a general climate of well-meaning comprehension. But if groups or individuals try to escape from this inclusion, if they try to put into question the system of general confinement, then they will be exterminated as were the Black Panthers in the U.S., or their personality will*

*be crushed as happened with the RAF in Germany.”*

*-Felix Guattari, Why Italy?*

*“You have divided into two parties the whole population of the Empire - and in saying that, I have designated the totality of the inhabited world - the most distinguished, most noble and most powerful party, you have made everywhere, in their entirety, citizen and even parent; the other, subject and administrated.”*

*-Aelius Aristide, In Honor of Rome*

If there is a heuristic privilege for Italy in political matters, it is as a general rule that its historic incandescence has the virtue of illuminating the strategic discernability of an epoch. Even today, the lines of force, the parties in presence, the tactical stakes and the general configuration of hostilities are far more difficult to divine in France than in Italy; because the counter-revolution that there was imposed with open force twenty years ago has hardly installed itself here. In France, the counter-insurrectional process has taken its time, and is offered the luxury of veiling its nature. Being made more indiscernible, it has also made less enemies than elsewhere, or deceived more allies.

The most troubling fact of the last twenty years is doubtless that Empire has formed itself a new humanity in the debris of civilization, organically linked to its cause: the citizens. The citizens are those who, even in the midst of a general conflagration of the social, persist in proclaiming their abstract participation in a society that only exists negatively, by the terror it exercises over all who menace desertion and in so doing survive this society. The hazards and the reasons that produce the citizen lead all the way back to the heart of the imperial enterprise: to attenuate forms-of-life and to neutralize the body; and it is this enterprise, to resume, that the citizen prolongs by the self-annulment of risk that he presents to the imperial milieu. This variable fraction of unconditional agents that Empire deducts from each population forms the human reality of the Spectacle and Biopower, the point of their absolute coincidence.

There is thus a fabrication of the citizen, of which the durable implantation is the principal victory for Empire; a victory that is not only social, or political, or economic, but *anthropologic*. Certainly, it had not been expected to win this victory with these means. The point of departure of this victory is the offensive restructuring of the capitalist mode of production that responded, from the start of the 70's, to the return of worker conflictuality in the factories and to the remarkable disinterest for work that manifested itself in the young generations after 68. Toyotism, automation, enrichment of tasks, flexibilization and individualization of work situations, delocalization of production, decentralization, sub-contracting, tight fluxes, project management, dismantling

of large productive factories, variabilization of hours, liquidation of heavy industry systems, of worker concentrations, all name so many aspects of a reform of the mode of production in which the object was centrally to restore capitalist power over production. This restructuring was everywhere initiated by the advanced fractions of the capitalists, theorized by enlightened unionists and put into place in accord with the principle workers' centers. Lama thus explained, in 1976 in *La Repubblica*, that “The Left must deliberately and without a bad conscience aid in the reconstruction of the margins of profit that are extremely diminished today, even if it is necessary to propose costly measures for the workers”; and Berlinguer, on his side, revealed at the same time that “the field of productivity is not a weapon of the bosses”, but “a weapon of the workers' movement for pushing ahead the politics of transformation.” The *effect* of this restructuring was only superficially its goal: “to separate in one act the contesting workers and abusive foremen” (Boltanski, *The New Spirit of Capitalism*). What was really at stake was rather to purge from the productive heart of a society where production militarizes itself all the “deviants”, all the at-risk individuals, all the agents of the Imaginary Party. Elsewhere, by the same methods, normalization operated inside and outside of the factory, in making its targets out to be “terrorists”. The arraignment of the “Fiat 61” in 1979, which announced the coming defeat of the workers' struggles in Italy, could not have had another motive. Be it understood that such maneuvers would have been impossible if the instances of the workers' movement had not given them such an active participation, having no less interest than the bosses in eradicating chronic insubordination, ungovernability, worker autonomy, “this entire continuous activity of sniper, saboteur, absenteeist, deviant, criminal” that the new generation of workers had brought into the factory. Assuredly, no one is better placed than the Left for profiling citizens. It alone can reproach this or that desertion; “At the moment when all are called to give a proof of civil courage, each one to the post they occupy,” intoned Amendola in 77, giving a lesson to Sciascia and Montale.

Thus there has been, for more than 20 years, an entire selection, a calibration of subjectivities, a mobilization of the “vigilance” of the workers, an appeal to self-control from one side to the other, to the subjective investment in the process of production, to the creativity that has allowed Empire to isolate the new *hard nucleus* of its society, the citizens. But this result could not have been obtained if the offensive in the field of work had not been at the same time supported by a second, more general, more *moral* offensive. Its pretext was “the crisis”. The crisis would not only consist in making merchandise artificially rare to make it once more desirable, its abundance having produced in 68 a too visible disgust. The crisis would above all permit anew the obtaining of the identification of the Blooms with the menaced social totality, of which the solution would depend on the good will of everyone. There was nothing else in the “politics of sacrifice”, in the call to “tighten the belt” and more generally, henceforth to comport oneself in a “responsible manner”. But responsible to what, exactly? To your society of shit? To contradictions that undermine *your* mode of production? To gaps in *your* totality? Tell me! It is in this, moreover, that we most surely recognize the citizen: he individually introjects himself into the contradictions, the aporias of the capitalist totality. Rather than fighting against the social relation that ravages the most el-

elementary conditions of existence, he will sort out his table scraps and donate them to a biodiesel company. Rather than contribute to the construction of another reality, he will go on Friday night after work to serve dinner to the homeless in a center run by slimy Catholics. And he will talk of it at dinner tomorrow.

The most foolish voluntarism and the most devouring bad conscience are the attributes of the citizen.

## THE BIOPOLITICAL TRADITION

Rarely was an intellectual operation more unwelcome, more stupid and more aborted than the attempt of the aspiring managers of socialized capital in the first number of the inaugural of idiocy, the dish-rag *Multitudes*. I would certainly not have arrived at the idea to evoke a publication whose entire reason for being is to serve the career of the most failed arriviste, Yann Moulier Boutang, if the thrust of this operation did not go far beyond the cenacle of micro-militants who abase themselves in reading *Multitudes*.

Always in tow of the latest buffooneries of their master, who in *Exile* preaches in favor of the “inflationist biopolitical entrepreneur”, the bureaucrats of Parisian Negriism try to introduce a positive distinction between Biopower and biopolitics. Advertising a non-existent Foucauldian orthodoxy, they courageously reject the category of Biopower - really too critical, too molar, too unifying. To this, they oppose biopolitics as that which “envelops power and resistance like a new language that invites them to confront everyday equality and difference, the two principles, political and biological, of our modernity”. Because someone more intelligent than they, Foucault, permitted himself the triism that “there is only power between free subjects”, these messieurs decree as excessive the notion of Biopower. How can a productive power, whose vocation is to maximize life, be altogether bad? And then, is it really democratic to speak of Biopower - and who knows of the Spectacle? Would this not be the first step towards some secession? A Lazzarato in a pink tutu prefers to think that “Biopolitics is thus the strategic coordination of the finalized relations of power in which the living produce more force”. And this imbecile concludes the program with enthusiasm for an “overturning of biopower into biopolitics, of the ‘art of governing’ in production and the government of new forms of life.”

Certainly, one cannot say that the Negriists are ever embarrassed by philological worries. And one always wishes a bit to recall to them that the project of a guaranteed salary was before them the work of a para-Nazi intellectual current animated by Georges Duboin, a current that inspired under the Occupation the “scientific” work of the group “Collaboration”. In the same fashion, one must very modestly recall to these retards the origins of the concept of *biopolitics*. Its first occurrence in the French domain was in 1960. *Biopolitics* was the title of a short brochure, the

work of a Genevan doctor drunk on peace, Dr. A Starobinski. “Biopolitics admits the existence of purely organic forces that manage human societies and civilizations. These forces are blind forces which push the human masses against one another and provoke bloody encounters of nations and civilizations, which results in their destruction and disappearance. But biopolitics also admits that there exists in the life of society and civilizations constructive and conscious forces that can safeguard humanity and open to it new and optimistic perspectives. The blind forces - Caesarism, brute force, the will to power, the destruction of the weakest by force or ruse, plunder and rapine... While admitting the reality of these facts across the history of civilizations, we go farther and affirm that there exists the reality of truth, justice, love of the divine and neighbors, mutual aid and human fraternity. These positive realities are the continuity of the same biological laws written into the structure of human nature. All those who share the ideal of human fraternity, who conserve in their heart the ideal of kindness and justice are those who work to safeguard the superior values of civilization. We must realize that all that we have, all that we are - our security, our instruction, our possibilities to exist - we owe to civilization. This is why our elementary duty is to do everything possible to protect and save it. Each one of us must do this in abandoning our personal preoccupations, in dedicating ourselves to a social activity, in developing the values of the State in the domain of justice, in deepening spiritual and religious values, in actively participating in cultural life. I do not think this is difficult, but above all is needed good will, because each one of us, the thought and the action of each one influences universal harmony. Thus all optimistic visions of the future become a duty and a necessity. We need not fear war and the calamities that are its consequence, because we are already there, we are in a state of war.” The attentive reader will remark that we have kept from citing the passages of the brochure that recommend “eliminating from the midst [of our civilization] all that which could favor its decline” before concluding that “at the current stage of civilization humanity must be unified.”

But the good Genevan doctor was but a sweet dreamer in regard to those who definitively sanctioned the entry of biopolitics into the French intellectual universe: the founders of the *Cahiers de la Biopolitique*, of which the first number appeared in the second semester of 1968. Its director, its key man, was none other than Andre Birre, a sinister past functionary of the League of the Rights of Man and of a large project of social revolution in the 30's until Collaboration. *Cahiers de la Biopolitique*, the emanation of the Organization in the Service of Life, also wanted to save civilization. “While the founding members of the ‘OSL’ consulted



one another in 1965 after 20 years of assiduous work to define their attitude before the present situation; their conclusion was that, if humanity wants to be able to continue its evolution and reach a more elevated plane, according to the principles of Alexis Carrel and even Albert Einstein, it must deliberately return to respecting the Laws of Life and to cooperate with Nature, instead of wanting to dominate and exploit it like is done today... This reflection, which will permit the establishment of order in an organic manner, and give to techniques their proportion and efficacy, we know it, it is *biopolitical reflection*. This knowledge that we lack is that which Biopolitics could give us, science and art at the same time, of the utilization of human knowledge according to the laws of nature and of ontology which govern our life and our destiny. We find thus, in the two numbers of *Cahiers*, logical digression on the “reconstruction of the human being”, the “indices of health and quality”, the “normal, the abnormal, the pathological” in the midst of considerations titled “when women govern the economy of the world, “when international organisms open paths for biopolitics”, or even, “our device and charter for the honor of being and serving”. We learn that “Biopolitics has always been defined as being the science of the conduct of States and human collectivities, taking account of the laws, natural milieus, and ontological givens that manage life and determine the activity of men”.

One understands better why, presently, the Negriists of *Vacarme* have for some time proclaimed a “minor biopolitics”: because major biopolitics, Nazism, does not seem to have given them satisfaction. From this as well comes the garrulous incoherence of the little Parisian Negriists: if they were coherent, they could very well shock themselves, finding themselves suddenly as the carriers of the imperial project itself, that of recomposing an integrally mechanized social tissue, finally pacified and fatally productive. But happily for us, these babblers don’t know what they are saying. They only recite in techno-fashion the old patristic doctrine of the *oikonomia*, a doctrine of which they ignore all and first of all that the Church of the first millennium elaborated it to found the unlimited scope of its temporal prerogatives. In patristic thought, the notion of *oikonomia*, which translates a hundred ways: incarnation, plan, design, administration, providence, charge, office, accommodation, lie or ruse - is that which permits the designation in a single concept of the relation of the divinity to the world, the historically deployed Eternal, from Father to Son, to the Church to its followers, and God to his icon. “It is a matter of the first organicist and functionalist concept that simultaneously concerns the flesh of the body, of discourse and the image... The notion of the divine plan in the goal of administering and managing fallen creation, and thus to save it, makes the economy interdependent with the totality of creation since the origin of time. The economy is thus from as much Nature as Providence. The divine economy oversees the harmonious conservation of the world and the maintenance of all its parties in an adapted and finalized unwinding. The incarnational economy is nothing else than the distribution of the image of the Father in its historic manifestation... The economic thought of the Church is a managerial and correctional thought. Managerial, in the measure that the *oikonomia* is one with an administrative organization, the management and development of all ministry. But to this must be added the corrective function, because human initiative not inspired by grace can only engender inequalities,

injustices or transgressions. It is necessary that the divine and ecclesiastical economy take charge of the miserable management of our history and operate there an enlightened and redemptive regulation.” (Marie-Jose Mondzain, *Image, Icon, Economy*). The doctrine of *oikonomia*, that of a final integration, because all things originate from it - even suffering, death, sin - in the plan of divine incarnation is the programmatic enunciation of the biopolitical project in proportion as this is first of all the project of universal inclusion, of the total subsumption of all things in the limitless *oikonomia* of a divinity become perfectly immanent, Empire. Thus when the magnum opus of Negriism, *Empire*, proudly proclaims an ontology of production, we can not prevent ourselves from understanding what our suit-wearing theologian means to say: everything is *produced* in the measure that it is the expression of an absent subject, of the absence of subject, the Father, in virtue of which all things are - even exploitation, counter-revolution, and the massacre of the State. *Empire* logically concludes with these sentences: “In postmodernity, we find ourselves in the situation of St. Francis, opposing to the misery of power the joy of being. It’s a revolution that no power can control - because biopower and communism, cooperation and revolution remain together, in all love, all simplicity and all innocence. Such is the irrepressible clarity and the irrepressible joy of being communist.

“Biopolitics might become the instrument of a revolt of the cadres.” regretted George Heinen in 1967.

## REFUTATION OF NEGRIISM

*“Never was society so absorbed by the ceremonial of the ‘problem’, and never was it so democratically uniform in each sphere of socially guaranteed survival. While the differences between classes tend gradually to blur, new generations ‘flourish’ on the same stem of sadness and stupor that is commented upon in the publicized and generalized eucharist of the ‘problem’. And while the ‘hardest’ leftism - under its most coherent form - demands a salary for all, Capital caresses with less and less modesty the dream of giving it satisfaction: to purify itself of the pollution of production to the point of abandoning men to the liberty of producing themselves simply as forms full of emptiness, as if they were containers, dynamized by the same enigma: why are they there?”*

-Giorgio Cesarano, *Survival Manual*, 1974

No one has to refute Negriism. The facts have. In sum, what is important to foil are the foreseeable uses of it that will be made against us. The vocation of Negriism, in the last instance, is to furnish the party of citizens its most sophisticated ideology. When the ambiguity on the subject of the evidently reactionary character of Bovism and ATTAC has been definitely lifted, it’s this that will come to light, as the last socialism possible, cybernetic socialism.

Certainly it's already stupefying that a movement that opposes "neo-liberal globalization" in the name of the "duty of civilization", which call against it the State and "citizen control", and complains of the "youth" held in a state of "infra-citizenship", to finally vomit that "to take on the double challenge of a social implosion and political despair demands a civic and military kickstart" could still pass for any contestation of the dominant order. And if it distinguishes itself effectively from this order it is only in the anachronism of its views and the foolishness of its analysis. The quasi-official coincidence between the citizen movement and the statist lobbies has to wait but a little while. The massive participation of deputies, judges, functionaries, cops, elected officials, as "representatives of civil society" which gave to ATTAC its initial fund of resonance is also that which, at the end, authorizes no more illusions on its account. And already, the vacuity of its first slogans, "Together, reappropriate the future of our world" or "Do politics differently" gives way to less ambiguous formulations. "One must henceforth think, then construct, a new world order, that integrates the difficult and necessary submission of all - individuals, businesses and States - to the general interests of humanity" (Jean De Maillard. *The market makes its law: of the usage of crime by globalization*).

No need to prophesize: the most ambitious fractions of the so-called "anti-globalization movement" are from now on Negriist. The three characteristic watchwords of political Negriism, as all its force resides in the fact of giving to informal neo-militants subjects of revendication, are the "revenue of the citizen"; the right to the free circulation of bodies, "Papers for all!"; and the right to creativity, above all if this is assisted by a computer. In this sense, the Negriist perspective is in no way distinct from the imperial perspective, but is a simple perfection of it. When Moulier-Boutang published in all the papers at his disposition a political manifesto titled *For a New New Deal*, hoping to convert to his project of society all the leftists of goodwill, he does but announce the truth of Negriism. Effectively, Negriism expresses an antagonism, *but an antagonism in the midst of the ruling class*, between its progressive and conservative fraction. From thence comes its curious relation to social war, practical subversion, its systematic recourse to revendication. The social war, from the Negriist point of view, is but a *means* to put pressure on the adverse fraction of power. As such, it is not assumable, even if it could prove to be useful. From this comes the incestuous relation of political Negriism with imperial pacification: it wants its reality but not its realism. It wants Biopower without the police, communication without the Spectacle, peace without having to make war for it.

Negriism does not coincide with imperial thought, properly speaking; it is only its *idealist* side. Until the facts invariably refute it, the job of Negriism is to produce the smokescreen behind which the imperial quotidian can produce itself in security. In this way, it is still the realization of Negriism that furnishes the best refutation. As the sans-papiers for whom one has obtained a work visa satisfy themselves with the most prosaic integration, as the *Tute Bianche* come to blows with an Italian policeman with whom, however, they thought they could reason, as Negri whines at the

end of a recent interview that in the 70's the Italian State did not know how to distinguish among its enemies "those who were recuperable from those who were not". Thus the citizen movement, in spite of its conversion to Negriism, is most surely dedicated to deceive. It is thus foreseeable that citizens' revenue will be inaugurated, and in a certain manner it already is, under the form of a social remuneration of political passivity and ethical conformity. Citizens, in the measure that they are destined to supply more and more for the breakdowns of the welfare state, will be more and more overtly remunerated for their function of co-management of social pacification. It will be thus under the form of a chanting of self-discipline, of the diffusion of a strange police of extreme proximity that the citizens' revenue will be inaugurated. This case failing, **THEY** could equally call it the "salary of existence" because it will be a question of sponsoring the forms-of-life most compatible with Empire. There will also be, as the Negriists prophesize, there is already a "putting to work of affects"; a growing proportion of surplus value is taken from forms of work that call on linguistic, relational, physical competences that are not acquired in the sphere of production but in the sphere of reproduction; the time of work and the time of life tend to effectively become indistinguishable, but all that only announces an enlarged submission of human existence to the process of cybernetic valorization. The immaterial labor that the Negriists present as a victory of the proletariat, a "victory over factory discipline", contributes also without contradiction to the imperial perspective, as the most duplicitous technique of domestication and immobilization of bodies. Proletarian self-valorization, theorized by Negri as the maximum of subversion, realizes itself, but as universal prostitution. Each one creates value in their own way, creates value in the maximum of sections of their existence, even with recourse to violence and sabotage for this, but self-valorization of each only measures the estrangement from self that the value-system has extorted, and only sanctions the massive victory of this system. All told, the citizen-Negriist ideology only serves to cover the Edenic finery of Universal Participation, the military exigency to "associate the maximum of important members of the population, particularly those who are engaged in non-violent action, on the side of the government," (Kitson), the exigence to *force* participation. That the repugnant Gaullists of the type of Yolande Bresson have militated for more than 20 years for the revenue of existence, putting there the hope of a "metamorphosis of the social being", must moreover suffice to inform on the veritable strategic function of political Negriism. A function that Trinquier, cited by Kitson, would not have denied: "The condition *sine qua non* of victory in modern war is the unconditional support of the population."

But the coincidence between Negriism and the citizens project of total control is tied up elsewhere, on a plane that is not ideological but *existential*. The Negriist, citizen in this, lives in the denegation of ethical evidences, in the conjuration of civil war. But while the citizen works to contain the expression of forms-of-life, to preserve normal situations, to normalize their milieu, the Negriist enthusiastically practices the most extreme ethical blindness. For them, everything is the same, outside of shabby little political calculations to which they transitorily abandon themselves. Those who speak of the Jesuitism of Negri in this manner miss the essential. It is a matter of a veritable infirmity, of a formidable human mutilation. Negri would really like to be "radical", but



he never arrives there. To what profoundness of the real, in effect, could a theoretician accede to who declares: “I consider Marxism as a science of which bosses and workers use in equal measure, even if it is from different, opposed positions,” a professor of philosophy who avows that: “Personally, I detest intellectuals. I only feel at home with proletarians (above all if they are manual workers: in fact I count my most dear friends and masters among the manual workers) and with businessmen (I also count among the capitalists and professionals some excellent friends)” ? Who could value the sententious opinion of someone who does not grasp the ethical difference between worker and boss? Who can write on the subject of the entrepreneurs of Sentier: “The new boss is an organic deviance, a mutant, an impossible to eliminate anomaly... the new unionist, that is to say the boss of a new type of enterprise, only worries about salary as a social salary” ? Someone who mixes up everything, declaring that, “Nothing so much reveals the enormous historical positivity of worker self-valorization than sabotage” and proposes for a revolutionary perspective “to accumulate another capital”? Whatever his pretensions at revealing the hidden strategy of the “People of Seattle”, a being who lacks the most elementary intimacy with himself and the world, the most miniscule ethical sensibility, can only produce disasters, reduce everything he touches to the state of undifferentiated flux, to shit. He loses all the wars into which his desire to flee propels him, loses the desires, and what is worse, can not even recognize his own defeat. “All the armed prophets have been conquered, and all the disarmed defeated. In the 70’s Negri could understand Machiavelli as a call to a frontal collision with the State. Some decades later, *Empire* was proof of an optimism of the will that could only be supported by a millennialist evasion of the distinction between those who are armed and those who are not, between the powerful and those who are abjectly deprived of power” (Gopal Balakrishnan, *Virgilian Visions*).

## AND WAR ON WORK!

*“From the month of February, something apparently inexplicable had begun to stir up the entrails of Milan. A boiling over, almost an awakening... The city seemed reborn. But with a curious life, too strong, too violent, and above all, too marginal. A new city then appeared to install itself in the metropolis. From the four corners of Milan, everywhere, it was the same scenario: groups of adolescents rushed to the assault of the city. First, they occupied empty houses, unused boutiques, that they baptized “circles of the young proletariat”. Then from there they spread out little by little and “took over the quarter”. This went for the theatrical animation of the “pirate market” without forgetting the “expropriations”. At its strongest the wave counted up to thirty of these circles. Be it understood that each of these possessed its own base and many edited little journals. The Milanese youth were impassioned by politics and the groups of the extreme-left profited, like the others, from this regaining of interest. More than politics, it was in fact a matter of culture, of a way of life, of a global refusal and the search for another way of living. The young Milanese in their quasi-totality ignored nothing more than the student revolt. But as opposed to their older siblings, they liked Marx and Rock and Roll and defined*

*themselves as freaks... Strong in their numbers and in their despair, the more-or-less politicized groups tried to live according to their needs. Cinemas were too expensive: certain Saturdays they imposed a reduction in the price of tickets with blows from iron bars. They had no more money: they launched the movement of “expropriations”, tragically simple, at the limit of pillage. It sufficed to be a dozen to participate in this sport, which consisted of entering en masse into a store, serving oneself and leaving without paying. They called the pillagers the “salami gang”, because at the start, they principally robbed butcher shops. Very quickly, jeans and disk stores were equally touched. At the end of 1976, expropriating had become a fashion, and rare were the students who had not at least tried it one time. All classes were mixed up: among the pillagers were equally the sons of workers as well as sons of the haute bourgeoisie, and all communed in a great festival that would not wait long to transform itself into tragedy.”*

-Fabrizio ‘Collabo’ Calvi, *Comrade*

With the exception of a feeble minority of simpletons, no one believes in work anymore. No one believes in work anymore, but from this fact the faith in its necessity has only become more ferocious. And with those for whom the achieved degradation of work into pure means of domestication is not repellant, this faith tends most often to turn to fanaticism. It is true that one is not a professor, social worker, customer service representative, or watchman without some side effects. What THEY today call work up until yesterday THEY qualified as leisure - “videogame testers” are paid for playing the whole day, “artists” for being public buffoons; a growing mass of impotents that THEY will call psychoanalysts, fortune tellers, coaches, or just psychologists will be heavily retributed for listening to others lament - this does not seem to have measurably corroded this stainless faith. It even appears that the more work empties itself of its ethical substance, the more the *idol* of work makes itself tyrannical. The more the value and necessity of work visibly cease to be self evident, the more its slaves feel the need to affirm it for eternity. Would one need to specify that “the sole real, true integration for the life of a man or a woman is that which passes through school, through the world of knowledge and, at the end of a satisfying and complete scholastic experience, to enter into the world of work” (*Against scholarly incivilities*), if this specification contained only the beginning of such evidence? Equally, when the law renounces defining work in terms of activity to redefine it in terms of availability it says the last word of the history: by work, THEY only understand the voluntary submission to a purely exterior “social” constraint for the maintenance of commodity domination.

As evidence of such a state of facts, the economist, even the Marxist, loses himself in university paralogisms, concluding with the definitive unreason of capitalist reason. It’s that the logic of such a situation is no longer of an economic order, but of an ethico-political order. *Work is the keystone for the fabrication of the citizen.* With this qualification, it is very necessary, as nuclear power plants, urbanism, police or television can be. One *must* work because one must feel one’s own ex-

istence, or at least a part, as alienation from oneself. And it is the same necessity that commands that **THEY** take “autonomy” to mean by that the fact of “supporting oneself financially”, that is to say *to sell oneself*, and by that to introject the required quantity of imperial norms. In truth, the unique rationality of present production *is to produce producers*, these bodies *who can not not work*. On its side, the inflation in all the sectors of cultural commodities, of all industry and imagination and even *sensations* corresponds to the same imperial function of neutralization of bodies, of depression of forms-of-life, of bloomification. In the proportion as alienation from self, and nothing else, is undertaken by *entertainment*, it constitutes a *moment* of social labor. But the tableau would not be complete if one forgot to say that work has also a more directly military function, which is to subsidize an entire ensemble of forms-of-life - managers, watchmen, cops, professors, hipsters, Jeune-Filles, etc. - of which the least one can say is that they are anti-ecstatic if not anti-insurrectional.

Of all the putrefacting legacies of the workers’ movement, nothing reeks so much as the culture, and now the cult, of work. It is that and that alone, with its unsupportable ethical blindness and its professional hatred of self, that one hears moaning at each new layoff, at each new proof *that work is finished*. What must be done, in truth, is to create a fanfare, so that we can event-



ually baptize “Chorus to the end of Work” (CFDT\*) and which the vocation would be to debark in each place of massive layoffs, parade around with perfectly ruinous, balkanizing and dissonant agreements, and to sing there of the end of work and all its prodigious extension of chaos that opens up to us today. Here, as elsewhere, to not reckon accounts with the workers’ movement costs dearly, and the diversionary power evidenced in France by a group like ATTAC has no other origin. After having seized the central position of work in the factory of the citizen, one will not be too surprised that the actual inheritor of the workers’ movement, the social movement, could so suddenly metamorphize into the citizens’ movement.

One would be wrong to neglect the character of pure scandal that is attached, from the viewpoint of the workers’ movement, to all the practices in which were manifested the overflowing of this movement by the Imaginary Party. First because the theater of these practices did not privilege the place of production but rather the totality of the territory, then because these prac-

\* The CFDT refers to a French trade union. The joke is lost in translation.

tices were not a means to an ulterior end - a better law, a higher purchasing power, less work or more liberty - but were immediately *sabotage and reappropriation*. There as well, there is no historical context that gives us more information on these practices, their nature and their limits, than Italy from the 60’s to the 70’s. The entire history of May Rampant is in effect the history of this overflowing, the history of the extinction of “worker centrality”. The incompatibility between the Imaginary Party and the workers’ movement appeared there for what it is: an *ethical* incompatibility. An incompatibility that burst forth, for example, in *the refusal of work* that the Southern workers posed, step-by-step, against factory discipline, in this manner exploding the Fordist compromise. It would be the merit of a group like Potere Operaio to have maniacally brought into the factories the “war against work”. “The refusal of work and the estrangement from this are not occasional” - observed the Gruppo Gramsci at the start of the 70’s - “but rooted in an objective class condition that the development of capitalism reproduces without stopping, and at an always higher level: the new force of the working class derives from its concentration and its homogeneity, from the fact that the capitalist relation spreads itself beyond the traditional factory (and in particular to that which we call “the tertiary”). Thus, it also produces there the struggles, objectives and behaviors tendentially based on the estrangement from capitalist labor, and expropriates workers and employees of their residual professionalism, destroying in this way their “affection” and all possible sorts of identification with the work that is imposed on them by Capital.” But it was only with the end of the cycle of worker struggles in 1973 that the effective overflowing of the Imaginary Party produced itself. At this point, in effect, those who wished to undertake the struggle had to take account of the end of worker centrality and take the war outside of the factory. For some, like the BR, who remained in the Leninist alternative between economic and political struggles, the exit from the factory meant the immediate projection into the sky of politics, the frontal attack of the power of the State. For others, notably the “autonomous”, this was the politicization of everything the workers’ movement had left at the door: the sphere of reproduction. Lotta Continua then launched the watchword: “Retake the city!”. Negri theorized “the social worker” - a category sufficiently elastic to permit entry to feminists, unemployed, precarious, artists, marginals and rebellious youth - and the “diffuse factory”, a concept that justified the exit from the factory in the name of the fact that everything, from consumption of cultural merchandise to domestic labor, from now on definitively contributed to the reproduction of capitalist society, and thus the factory was henceforth everywhere. This evolution contained in itself, in a more or less brief time, the rupture with socialism and with those who, like the BR and certain collectives of worker autonomy, wished to believe that “the working class remains at any rate the central and guiding nucleus of the communist revolution” (BR - Resolution on Strategic Direction, April 1975). The practices that corresponded to this ethical rupture right away divided those who thought they belonged to the same revolutionary movement: these were the auto-reductions - in 1974, 200,000 Italian households auto-reduced their electricity bill - proletarian expropriations, squats, free radios, armed protests, fights in neighborhoods, the diffuse guerrilla, counter-cultural parties, in brief: Autonomy. In the middle of so many paradoxical declarations - one must recall that Negri was the same schizophrenic who, at the end of twenty years of militantism around the “refusal of work”

ended by concluding: “Then, when we speak of refusal of work one must understand by that the refusal to work in a factory” - it even came to this disassociative from birth, from the fact of the radicality of the epoch, to produce some memorable lines, like these, taken from *Domination and Sabotage*, “The connection auto-valorization - sabotage, and its reciprocal, forbid us to have anything to do with ‘socialism’, with its tradition, as much as with reformism as with eurocommunism. It would be the case to say we are of another race. Anything that belongs to this cardboard project of reformism, its tradition, its infamous illusion, no longer touches us. We are in a materiality that has its own laws, discovered or to be spotted in the struggle, in any fashion other laws. The “new mode of exposition” of Marx has become the *new mode of being of the class*. We are here, unshakable, a majority. We possess a method to destroy work. *We have been put to the search of a positive measure of non-work*. From the liberation of this shitty servitude that the bosses enjoy, and that the official movement of socialism always imposes on us as a noble coat of arms. No, truly, we can no longer call ourselves “socialists”, we can no longer accept your infamy.” What confronted the Movement of 77 with such violence, this movement that was the scandalous assumption of forms-of-life, was the party of labor, the party of the *denegation* of all forms-of-life. And it is by the thousands of prisoners that we can measure the hostility of socialism to the Imaginary Party.

The entire error of those of organized Autonomy, these “repulsive fleas who hesitated between caressing the hair on the back of the social-democratic whale, or the movement” (*La Rivoluzione*, no. 2, 1977), was to think that the Imaginary Party could be *recognized*, that an institutional mediation could be possible. And today still, this is the error of their direct inheritors, the *Tute Bianche*, who thought at Genoa that it would suffice for them to behave like cops, to denounce the “violent” for the police to save them. On the contrary, one must start from the fact that our fight is *directly criminal*, and to behave oneself in consequence. Only the relation of force can guarantee us something, and first of all a certain impunity. The immediate affirmation of need or desire, as this implies intimacy with oneself, *ethically* contravenes imperial pacification; as well this no longer has the alibi of militantism. Militantism and its critique are both, in their divergent manner, compatible with Empire, the one as a form of work, the other as a form of impotence. But the practice that surpasses these, where a form-of-life imposes its way of saying “I”, is bound to be annihilated if it has not timed its blow. “The restoration of the paranoiac scene of politics, with all its paraphernalia of aggressivity, voluntarism and repression risks at each instant to crush and repress the reality, which exists, of the revolt that is birthed by the transformation of the everyday and of the rupture of mechanisms of constraint.” (*La Rivoluzione*).

It was Berlinguer, then head of the PCI, who a little before the Bologna Congress of September 77, had these historic words: “These are only some plague carriers (*untorelli*) who uproot Bologna.” He thus resumed the point of view of Empire on our account: we are *untorelli*, contagious agents, good only to be exterminated. And in this war of annihilation, it’s from the left that we have to fear the worst, because it is the official depository of the faith in work, of this special fanaticism that is the negation of all ethical difference in the name of the ethics of production.

“We want a society of work and not a society of welfare” was what Jospin, this lump of Calvino-Trotskyist unhappiness, opposed to the “movement of the unemployed”. This credo expresses the disarray of a being, the Worker, who does not know the beyond of production save as decay, leisure, consumption or self-destruction; a being who has at this point lost all contact with his own inclinations so that he cracks up if he is not driven by some external necessity, by some *finality*. One remembers for the occasion that merchant activity, when it appeared as such in societies of antiquity, could not be properly named, being itself not only deprived of ethical substance, but the privation of ethical substance was elevated to the rank of an autonomous activity. One could only define it negatively, as lack of *scholē* for the Greeks, *a-scholīa*, and lack of *otium*\* among the Latins, *neg-otium*. And it is still, with its parties, its demonstrations fine a se stesso†, with its armed humor, its science of drugs and its dissolving temporality, this old *art of non-work* that, in the movement of 77, made Empire tremble the most decisively.

Is the plan(e) of consistence on which we draw our lines of flight made of anything else? Is there another preliminary to the elaboration of play between forms-of-life, to communism?

\* Both *Scholē* and *Otium* refer to leisure, thus for the ancients commerce is defined as the absence of leisure.

† That something is an end unto itself.

