

Living and Fighting



This Is Not A Program

TIQQUN #2



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The most supple things in this world conquer the hardest.

- Lao Tzu

petrified form. It is this excess of the war machine—in relation to its acts of war—that *The Right to Hate* (an introduction to a collection of texts of *Autonomia*) was aimed: “In doing thus a chronology of this hybrid subject with many contradictory aspects which have materialized in the area of *Autonomy*, I found myself doing a process of reduction of the movement into a sum of events, yet the reality of its becoming-a-machine-of-war only affirmed through the transformation that the subject elaborates in a concentric manner around each moment of effective confrontation.”

There is no war machine but in movement, even shackled, even imperceptible, in movement following its path of increasing power. It is this movement that assures that the relations of force that traverse it never fix themselves into relations of power. Our war can be victorious, that is to say that it carries on, increases our power, on the condition of always making attack dependent upon our positivity. Never attack above positivity, is the vital principle of every war machine. Each space conquered from within empire, in the hostile milieu, should correspond to our capacity to reuse it, to shape it, to inhabit it. Nothing is worse than a victory in which one doesn't know what to do. Mostly thus does our war take shape. It dodges, flees from direct conflict, declaring little. From there it imposes its own temporality. Scarcely when we become to be identified than we call the retreat, never letting repression ensnare us, then we reform in some unsuspected place. Of what concern to us is this or that locality of the moment as long as every local attack is from now on an attack against empire? The important thing is never lose the initiative, don't let hostile temporality impose itself. And above all: don't forget that the strength of our attack is not tied to our level of arms but to the virtue of the positivity that we construct.

The sharing of a technique, the turn of a phrase, a certain configuring of space suffice to activate our plane of consistency. All of our strength lies here: in a secession which cannot be recorded on Empire's maps because it is neither secession from above nor from below, but secession from the milieu.

What we are talking about here is simply the constitution of war machines. By war machine, a certain coinciding of living and fighting should be understood, a certain coincidence that never gives itself up without at the same time being built. Because each time one of these terms finds itself in some way separated from the other, the war machine degenerates, goes off track. If it is the moment of living that is unilateralized, it becomes a ghetto. It is in here that we bear witness to the sinister quagmire of "the alternative," in which the vocation seems to be, without ambiguity, commodifying the Self under the cover of difference. The majority of occupied social centers in Germany, Italy or Spain, easily show how simulated exteriority to empire can be a precious resource in capitalist valorization.

"The Ghetto, the justifying of "difference," the privilege given to all introspective and moral aspects, the tendency to constitute oneself as a separate society renouncing all assault on the capitalist machine, on the "social factory," is all of this perhaps a result of the vague and gushing "theories" of Valcarenghi [the director of the counter-cultural publication ReNudo] and his consorts? Isn't it strange that they accuse of being a "sub-culture" precisely now when all of the flowery shit and non-violence that accompanies it is in crisis?" the autonomists of Senza Tregua already wrote in 1976.

On the other hand, if it is the moment of fighting that is singled out, the war machine degenerates into an army. All of the militant formations, all of the terrible communities are war machines that have survived their own extinction in this

The first offensive campaign against Empire failed. The RAF's attack against the "Imperialist System," that of the Red Brigades (RB) against the SIM (Imperialist State of the Multinationals) and many other guerilla actions were easily repelled. The failure was not that of this or that combatant organization or of this or that "revolutionary subject," but the failure of a conception of war, a conception of war that could not be repeated beyond these organizations because it was already a repeat itself. With the exception of some texts of the RAF or of the June 2nd Movement, there are still today very few documents issued from the "armed struggle" that were not written in this awkward, ossified, armored language, which falls, in one way or another, into Third International kitsch. It's as if they are trying to dissuade anyone from joining them.

It is now after twenty years of counter-revolution that the second act of anti-imperial struggle is opening. Meanwhile, the collapse of the Socialist bloc and the social-democratic conversion of the last debris of the workers' movement have definitively freed our party of everything that could still harbor socialist inclinations. In fact, the expiration of the old conceptions of struggle was first manifested by a disappearance of these struggles themselves. Then, today, with the "anti-globalization movement," through the parody of a higher order of the old 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 task that kills us, but that let's us know how to live, how to be more and more alive.

Fundamentally our point of departure is not that different from that of the RAF when it acknowledged: "The system has captured the totality of the human being's free time. To the physical exploitation in the factory has been added the exploitation of the thoughts and feelings, of the aspirations

and utopias by the media and mass consumption. [...] The system has succeeded, in the metropole, in plunging the masses so deeply in their own shit that they have apparently lost the perception of themselves as the exploited and oppressed; so for them, a car, life insurance, or a lease makes them accept all the crimes of the system, and excluding the car, vacation, or the redecorated bathroom, they can neither dream nor hope.” The characteristic feature of empire is its having expanded its frontline of colonization over the totality of existence and of the existent. It’s not just that capital has enlarged its human base, it’s that it has also deepened its penetration. On the basis of the final disintegration of society as well as its subjects, empire now intends to recreate an ethical tissue on its own; it’s from here the hipsters with their neighborhoods, their press, their codes, their food, and their standardized ideas are both the guinea pigs and the avant-garde. That is why, from the East Village to the Oberkampf by way of the Prenzlauer Berg, the hipster phenomenon has immediately had a global scope.

It is upon this total terrain, the ethical terrain of forms-of-life, that the war against empire is currently being played out. This war is a war of annihilation. Empire, contrary to what the RB believed, who staked the kidnapping of Moro on the recognition by the State of the armed party, is not the enemy. Empire is only the hostile milieu that opposes our schemes step-by-step. We are engaged in a struggle in which what is at issue is the recomposition of an ethical tissue. This is embedded in the progressive gentrification of previously secessionist places, in the uninterrupted extension of the network of apparatuses. Here the abstract, classical conception of war, which culminates in the total confrontation, where it ultimately regains its essence, is obsolete. War can’t be allowed to be but an isolated moment of our existence, as the decisive confrontation; from now on, it is our existence itself, in all aspects, that is war. That is to say that the first movement of

this war is re-appropriation. Re-appropriation of means to live-and-fight. Re-appropriation, then, of spaces: squat, occupation or collectivizing private spaces. Re-appropriation of what’s in common: constitution of languages, syntaxes, means of communication, of an autonomous culture – snatching the transmission of experience from the hands of the State. Re-appropriation of violence: communizing fighting techniques, forming self-defense forces, arms. Lastly, re-appropriation of basic survival: diffusion of medical knowledge-ability, progressive organization of a network of autonomous resupply.

Empire is well-armed for fighting against two types of secessions that it recognizes: secession “from above” of the golden ghettos – the secession for example of global finance in relation to the “real economy” or of the hyper-bourgeoisie from the rest of the biopolitical tissue—and the secession “from below” of the “no go zones”—that of the cities, ghettos, and slums. It is enough, each time one or the other threatens its meta-stable equilibrium, to play them against one another: the civilized modernity of the hipster against the reactionary barbarism of the poor or the demands of social cohesion and equality against the incorrigible selfishness of the rich. The advisors of empire have already theorized this, on the part of Cynthia Ghorra-Gobin in *The United States between Local and Global*: “It’s a matter of giving a political coherence to a social and spatial entity in order to avoid all risk of secession by territories inhabited either by those excluded from the socio-economic networks or the winners of the global economic dynamic. [...] Avoiding every form of secession means finding the means of reconciling the demands of this new social class and those of the economically excluded in which spatial concentration is that which induces deviant behaviors” As well, the exodus, the secession that we are preparing, which in its exact measure is not simply physical but total, empire is helpless to prevent.