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POPULAR DEFENSE &
ECOLOGICAL STRUGGLES

PAUL VIRILIO

Translated from the French by Mark Polizzotti

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CONTENTS

Part One: Pure Power	11
Notes to Part One	37
Part Two: Revolutionary Resistance	41
Notes to Part Two	107

POPULAR DEFENSE &
ECOLOGICAL STRUGGLES

I
Pure Power

*“In the social equation,
the army constitutes
an unknown quantity
which it is better
not to trust.”*

—General Cluseret

In Portugal, in 1975, counter-revolution was revolution, entrenched in the mere reproduction of its models. The lack of theoretical analysis by these militants-become-military once more caused them to replicate, with a curator’s scruples, the practical experiences of Lenin, Trotsky, and

less recently of Rossel and General Cluseret — men who, like them, were familiar with colonial warfare. In this context, Jean Daniel asks: “*What can this concept of an ‘avant-garde’ mean, cut off as it is from the masses, leaning only on a minority of the armed forces?*”

Patrick Kessel, in his short introduction to a collection of texts on *The Commune and the Military Question*,¹ states that it is primarily “a history of the confusion of powers and a lack of revolutionary military doctrine...” Indeed, this museographic jumble will be religiously preserved and the confusion will persist as long as military intelligence is denied its own conceptual autonomy. By separating the problems of foreign or civil war from those of the army as a social class, it was thought that the latter could be confined to acting in a purely instrumental capacity. The idea was to make it “a *passive* lever pulled by a national will” (Saint-Just) or a revolutionary will: “the ‘free creations’ of military genius are not what make a revolution” (Engels).² In either case, we constantly encounter the same old perspectives, given as justification for or as end of militarization: territorial gain, social or political advantage, economic or scientific progress, etc.

Ultimately, the military class’s ambitions are quite independent of all that, and in *Vom Kriege*, Karl von Clausewitz lets us glimpse this fact. At the end of an inventory of techniques, by simply pointing out that real war is spreading, that it is *a phenomenon moving toward the realization of its absolute essence*, he shows that History indeed contains the coherence of a dialectical advance (initially established between attack and defense) across a succession of military engagements and their preparation by the great warring States, in pursuit of the absolute essence of war.



ORIGINALLY, THE “ACT OF WAR” CAME FROM SPONTANEOUS hand-to-hand combat, in which the combatants had to demonstrate reflexes, physical force, agility and cunning in the open field...³ There was no *conduct of war* to speak of, in other words, *no scenario*, no theater prepared in advance. The act of violence really was part of the as-yet-badly circumscribed totality of social exchanges. It did not distinguish itself from the latter any more than men, living alone or in small ethnic groups, showed or indicated their presence in the environment.

These men employed no obstacles or artificial fortifications; they knew perfectly well how to use their surroundings to hide, move or escape—but *not to defend themselves*. Already in Livy, we find references to the difficulties occasioned by peoples who *appear* and *disappear*, “thumbing their noses at war... on whom it clearly cannot be imposed...” And until fairly recently, the need for general defense was not felt by rural populations. In Sweden, for example, this distrust persisted up until the last war. Thus, from the beginning, *military intelligence* has struggled against this badly-defined collection of freedoms, risks and uncertainties, the chaos of the natural environment and the spontaneous movements that can occur within it. This is its primary definition, which founds the coherence of the realization of the concept of war — its *conductibility* — in time and space.

If the ancients seem first and foremost to be builders of ramparts and fortifications, it is because the ambition of *conducting* a war begins with the planning of its theater, or the creation of *artificial environmental conditions* which will form the infrastructure, the stage on which the scenario should be played out — scenario prepared in ad-

vance by whichever adversary claims to dominate the other.⁴ The rudimentary hillock, the elevated observatory, already give the pastoral assembly quicker information on the surroundings, and thus the time to choose between the various military attitudes at their disposal. They avoid the uncalculated spontaneity of primitive struggle (a situation which would immediately be imposed upon them by the aggressor), and thus find themselves confronted with a *new freedom* since they can choose the solution they deem the most advantageous, depending on the size of the enemy group: i.e., either flee with all their goods and flocks, taking advantage of their head start; or face the enemy.

When the possibility of pastoral flight disappears with the advent of agricultural settlements and a change in the nature of wealth (non-transportable goods), it is no longer enough to be quickly educated about one’s surroundings; *one must also educate the surroundings*. In other words, one must try to preserve, *on that very spot*, one’s *head start* over the enemy. Whence the construction, around the hillock, of protected enclaves, enclosures and fences intended to *slow the aggressor down*. Attack and defense then split on

this terrain to form two elements of a single dialectic: the former becomes synonymous with speed, circulation, progression and change; and the latter with opposition to movement, tautological preservation, etc.

For both sides of the strategy, chance remains the project's drawback, since it implies for the adversary an opportunity for growth (and thus survival), and for oneself a serious danger of ruin, servitude or death. Because every military commander spends his time trying to eliminate such contingencies, the progress of strategy will aim toward an increasingly geometric preparation of the theater of war and its infrastructures, on which the operations' speed and scope depend.

These are the elementary principles which constitute the exponential function of the equation spoken of by General Cluseret.⁵ In fact, it certainly seems that the *advance* of the war phenomenon toward the realization of its absolute essence does not correspond to so limited a totality as that described by the partisans of the *strategic game*.

From the outset, the phenomenon has been linked to *information*.⁶ Not the immediate, available information that "breaks ground," but a "sci-

entific split,"⁷ the concept of a limited field within a given time, or the position in time and space of a reasoned knowledge. In a sense, this answers André Faussurier's remark: "I would readily say that only a scientific process which *does not totally lend itself* to the choice and reworking of hypotheses, is violent."

This is the very aim of strategic information: to morally and physically deny the adversary the chance to rework his hypotheses, by redefining the space he must cross or the time he has to live. Which in short would make of war's *conductibility* (the coherent plan devised in time and space that can, through repetition, be imposed upon the enemy) not the instrument but the origin of a totalitarian language of History. This language is the mutual effort of the European States, then of the world, toward the absolute essence of foreign or civil war, thus giving it the stature of an absolute takeover of world history by Western military intelligence.



IN GENERAL, THE STATE'S HISTORICAL IDEALISM emerges just when war itself is reborn in ideal

forms,⁸ when it is technically distinguished from a simple punitive expedition, torn from local compromises, to become pure and hard. Until the nineteenth century, military monasticism (backed by the legal and social monasticism of the Inquisition) was the a-national and democratic revolutionary avant-garde of the universal Roman State, the origin of the powerful Spanish military organization and, in direct succession, of the Prussian State itself.⁹



WESTERN MILITARY CULTURE ALWAYS STINKS OF coaches and army trains in which the treasures of defeated nations are hastily piled, to be carried to museums and art galleries. While Germany bridles at “Greek temples” made of brick, Hegel dusts off Heraclitus, seeking a new eschatology for the ancient Teutonic Order of Knights.

“In History, we must look for a general design, the ultimate end of the world, and not a particular end of the subjective spirit or mind. *The sole aim of philosophical enquiry is to eliminate chance...* Reason is self-sufficient and contains its end within itself; it brings itself into existence

and carries itself into effect... The World Spirit (*Weltgeist*) is the substance of history.”

In a short preface, Clausewitz, for his part, turns away from any meditation on war which is not connected to concrete fact. He has never, he says, avoided logical conclusions. But “whenever the thread became too thin, I have preferred to break it off and go back to the relevant phenomena of experience.... It would obviously be a mistake,” he adds, “to determine the form of an ear of wheat by analyzing the chemical elements of its kernel, since all one needs to do is go to a wheat field to see the grown ears.”

An indirect criticism of Hegel, who gets bored seeing Livy repeat *for the hundredth time* descriptions of battles against the Volscians, occasionally limiting his narrative to: “In this year, war was successfully waged against the Volscians.” Such historical writing is lifeless; such formulae and abstract representations make the content of the work dry. But here, the historical content is literally that of a communiqué.¹¹ It is *apractical* in a way that Hegel could not imagine. And if Livy endlessly resumes the litany of his commentary,¹² it is in order to link the corresponding phenomena directly to experience, to an un-

known, vaster organization, a work-in-progress.

The narrative material can only function by being repeated one hundred times. Through repetition, it eliminates chance and makes the Reason in these stories a war-machine that deploys its forces by multiplying them. Thus, pure history is only the translation of a pure strategic advance over terrain. Its power is to precede and be final, and the historian is but a “captain in the war of time.”¹³



TO CONDUCT A WAR IS TO EXECUTE A RATIONAL plan, in other words to launch an enterprise. In the West, this kind of expansion is the model for any monopoly, seeking less the accumulation of wealth than expediency.

The overall plan being clearly distinguished from its execution, the former could be confused with the uncertain and limited game of State politics, before the West offered the military enterprise — with History as general theory of information on the surroundings — the most independent space-time dimensions. The latter (execution), which Clausewitz qualifies as *a phenomenon with-*

out true intelligence, real war, became the trial run of the scientific theory of History, of the technical limits of the enterprise’s progress, its energy and uncertainty factors. Thus, to oversimplify, we could say that Cluseret and Clausewitz are operators and that Hegel is a conceptualizer, insofar as he is an initiator into a general philosophy of history.

Tracing the probable origins of strategic settlement (the Citadel-State being nothing more than an army which stops in enemy territory and sets up defensive positions), it is no longer the army that initiates war, but rather — through the perservation of conquest — all the inhabitants of the invested area. This is absolutely clear for the ancient *miles*: “The army sets itself up as citadel and the citadel only survives by remaining an army” (Isocrates, *Orations*, “Archidamus”). The soldier is the citizen who, within as well as without, must never know peace.

The democratic assembly (of Equals) is a military-political assembly, and not vice versa. The exercise of power by the State is a “permanent conspiracy”¹⁴ which marks the stages of the military revolution, the passage from the fragmentary and unsophisticated production of the war enter-

prise to its technological, industrial and scientific development. The historical effort of the West is thus the distribution and management of independent, increasingly numerous human groups by the State war enterprise.



HARMAND NOTES THAT “THE ABSENCE OF REFLECTION about the military object in Cicero’s *De Re Publica* and *De Legibus* is, *stricto sensu*, frightening.” War, *incessant and mysterious activity*,¹⁵ didn’t need to obtain conceptual autonomy in antiquity any more than in modern times, insofar as it is the fundamental concept of our civilization. This becomes particularly evident when reading Sun-Tzu¹⁶ side by side with Clausewitz. Sun-Tzu asks that we never confuse *Pure Power* (the military thing) with *Domination* (the State). What he means by pure power is equally clear, and he often comes back to it: the essential thing is to make the enemy submit without combat, “to avoid setting off the *mechanism*.” Open warfare must be a constant allusion to primordial camouflage, and its only consistency must be constant change, in which no one element takes precedence for too long.

This could not be the case in *war begun as a perpetual mechanism of pure power*. Thus, what Sun-Tzu designates as a “war-machine” (chapters II, V, XI) is not the “minimum potential” from which any military organization can exact enormous results, but the joint dialectic that contains all of the opposing parties’ operations. (Marx, in *Capital*, describes almost identically this potential mechanical growth, which occurs “as soon as isolated events function jointly and simultaneously,” and which was a permanent practical concern of Carnot, Napoleon, etc.¹⁷)



FOR THE WESTERN STATE — THE MILITARY INITIATOR which secures its position in enemy territory — survival depends entirely on the growth of this “pure power,” on its unlimited use. In Homeric Greece, for example, power was divided among the various ethnic communities, until the *notion of tyranny* — a purely military notion of the abuse of power based on armed force — appeared. The first tyrants came as usurpers, adventurers who had exploited an a-national military work force (the hoplites)¹⁸ and had thus passed beyond the

fluctuating situation previously instituted by limited pressure groups of the “tribal prytanea.” (The latter, furthermore, continued to take part in Athenian political life in the form of interest groups and coalitions.¹⁹)

We see these phenomena of social warfare faithfully reproduced each time the central strategic organizations are able to generalize their defense systems. At that point, research and concentration of mechanical energy become totally confused, in the Army-State, with the “pure power” exposed by Sun-Tzu. After the eclipse of siege warfare, and until the industrial revolution of armaments and means of transportation, this pure power (tyranny or dictatorship) was represented by the military-industrial proletariat, at a time when 94 percent of all the mechanical energy produced and consumed on the earth was obtained by the physical strength of men and animals.

With military proletarianization, we approach the “social unknown” of the army. “Free as the wind,” writes Engels about the English proletarian worker forced off his land by creditors, “the beginning of the moral freedom indispensable to historical evolution.” In this sense, the mercenaries, long before the proletariat, brought

together the class conditions necessary for “reasonable” historical revolution. Their schizophrenic groups, spread all over Europe, were the keepers of a new mode of production, exchange and distribution.

In the seventeenth century, their treatment by men such as Louvois was directly copied from that of the Roman military proletariat: pathetic, uncertain pay, strikes, and bloody repression. The abusive Boss-State finally addressed their demands regarding salary, health care, lodging, job security. But it was the last and most important demand — the social dignity of the military condition, a demand not met by the French monarchy — that finally became (as Vauban had predicted) one of the major causes of the 1789 revolution.

The *military social body*, the army of proletarianized masses “trailing its army-civilization all over Europe” (Balzac), replaced the body of the legitimate sovereign, before infiltrating the body politic of the State with Carnot and Napoleon.

It is precisely in this body that *civil thought* was engulfed in the nineteenth century, while military thought furthered its independence. Once the new social theories were forged, confusion became total: civil war merged with foreign war, the

military model was at the center of both reforms and revolutions, words and ideas took on multiple meanings. If Marx admires the joint maneuvers of the army-machine, General Cluseret dreams of “revolutionizing warfare along with the rest,” of “applying to destruction the principles of production” — such as the division of labor. He is also outraged by the bourgeois State’s timidly-waged *moderate war* and its opposition to the idea of total war, which Cluseret — an old colonial fire-brand — considers “the only truly revolutionary war.”



PRECISELY BECAUSE HE COULD NO LONGER DOUBT *the autonomy of military calculation*, Clausewitz, around 1816, noted in the margin of *Vom Kriege* — but only *after* having written the first six books: “no less practical is the importance of another point that must be made absolutely clear, namely that *war is nothing but the continuation of State politics by other means.*” This note is therefore faithful to the spirit of the Vienna Congress, which in its declaration of March 13, 1815, condemned “the enemy of world peace... Napoleon, the dis-

ruptor of civil and social relations.” The general’s oft-quoted statement is but a warning and a hope. Indeed, how could Clausewitz have really foreseen, in 1816, the irresistible expansion of the concept of pure war in Europe — he who in 1807 had been led, in his plans of attack, to choose *between the good of the State and that of his army?*

Furthermore, war between nations had already been total on the sea and overseas for several centuries — notably, mobilization on the French coast had been permanent since the seventeenth century. Finally, with the French Revolution of 1789, it was *social life* between the states that began to disappear, since the enemy’s *political identity* was no longer recognized. And, as we know, *that* is the primary condition for total war, whether foreign or civil.

Operational in 1794, the ocular telegraph allows, from the battlefield, for the quasi-instantaneous disruption of the political field of nations. The world-wide geostratic and statistical revolution — conceived of by Vauban and accomplished in the nineteenth century with the “peace of great works” and the new vertical capitalism — leads directly to the revolution in transportation, information and speed — a revolution which will bring

Europe to the brink of totalitarianism more surely than any battle, than any real and declared conflict.

In this context, Clausewitz also perceives the historical limitations of the new proletariat. For if, in the European war of movement (the specific form of domination of space by speed which henceforth characterizes inter-State conflicts), mass is still the major component of the machine of attack, the military proletarian nonetheless seems more and more a demanding and fragile transmission, a hazardous relay station which, for the war entrepreneur, poses the problem of its deterioration.

“Tools (soldiers) *are there to be used*, and use will naturally wear them out... The final product may indeed be compared to that of gold and silver mines: one looks only at the end result and forgets to ask about the cost of the labor that went into it.”

The dialectic of war, delivered from passivity, demands of the military engineer an increased effort in the technical domain, *an effort centered on the suppression or replacement of the human factor in the machine's overall workings*. In this, we could see the true origin of the whole

mythology of comfort, of a whole “technical sensibility” which claims to do away with effort, whereas in reality it only seeks to transgress the limits of human energy properly speaking.



THIS TRANSGRESSION WILL COME TO PASS, FURTHERMORE, since the laboring populations now produce only one percent of the energy consumed on earth. What developed on the battlefields of foreign and civil wars was not only the discipline of intelligences and bodies, the elimination of individual conduct, but also the entire ethic of the industrial world and of its pseudo-revolutions. Thus, we must never lose sight of the very reason for the historic rise of the military-industrial proletariat, the “trade union school of war”²⁰: the army-State’s search for pure power, for pure energy... In this sense, the proletariat’s determining role in history stopped with the bombing of Hiroshima.



ARMY-CIVILIZATION REMINDS US OF SCHLEGEL’S remark about “that mysterious aspiring towards

chaos that lies behind every ordered creation.” There is a distortion of suddenness between political activity painstakingly making its way toward reality, and the pure power of war, physical violence, which is immediately creative, always available.

History is the ordered creation of chaos through the realization of a theory of war as the geometric basis of all reality, the stabilization of all the variable magnitudes that founded and balanced the universe...



IF CERTAIN WESTERNERS TODAY SHOW LESS PRIDE in their energetic superiority, we should not forget that this attitude is quite recent, and perhaps temporary. In 1924, the monk Teilhard, for example, wrote in *Mon univers (My universe)*: “It would be premature to suppress the vigorous — albeit overly brutal — expressions of warring force. We still need mightier and mightier cannons, bigger and bigger battleships *to materialize our aggression on the world.*”

Forty years later, Marcuse still exults: “This economy, adapted as it is to military needs, fur-

thers man’s mastery over Nature.”

For these latter-day metaphysicians, there can be no doubt: the enemy is not only on the Eastern or Western front; it is in us and among us. It is our own nature exchanging with all of Nature (allusion to primordial camouflage). “Everything being exchanged for fire, and fire for everything; the same as merchandise for gold and gold for all kinds of merchandise” (according to Glucksmann, speaking of Polemos as “the thread that ties together all of *Capital*, from the first unwritten word to the last”).

No one here notices that war has completely absorbed its dialectic in an absolute defense which is simultaneously the administration of an absolute attack.

The two-in-one of historical totalitarianism is realized by nuclear deterrence, along with the “get out of Nature” of metaphysics, which from the outset was the foundation of colonial strategy. Such is the relatively long-term collapse of the multiplicity of exchange systems.

“No constant civilization should consist in colonies,” says Colbert about the “Colonial Pact.” Here, the degree of “civilization” is absolutely assimilated to the degree of military aptitude. The

“civilized” countries, in short, are those which, facing the multiplicity and unpredictability of violent attacks, mutually agreed to band together against risk.

A strict protocol exists in each civilization insofar as exchanges — especially violent exchanges — are concerned, an entire, intelligible reciprocity. Thus, from the sixteenth century on in Europe, when historical idealism is reborn, a new colonial adventure begins. Differences are drawn between those populations capable of providing war with the infrastructures of its conductivity (literally, its *media*); and the subjected, underdeveloped others, chosen for their inaptitude at maintaining this level of violent exchange. Placed “outside the laws of war,” they are considered all the more inapt at every other form of exchange (economic, cultural, political, etc.).

This is the first realized figure of pure violence: the protocol maintained by the UN after total war, the exponential development of military science and technique, which obviously aim not toward the multiplication of violent exchanges, but toward their disappearance — *a kind of absolute colonization*.

This is the limit of historical analysis: the

final image of the State is ideal, because autonomous; the cosmopolis is that which appropriates and consumes, while giving nothing back to its natural partner.

According to Sun-Tzu, the mechanism of war grows like the fire that devours while spreading, *its energy producing ever-increasing speed* — no longer the speed of armies which, “like stones rolling furiously down the mountainside,” are able to regain their balance once they have reached bottom. Energy is no longer subject simply to physical laws, but also to those of metaphysics. The City-State is reorganized around the cratos, the fire that must be constantly fed and revived.²¹

A new chasm opens between the military and professional elite able to create and use complex scientific weapons, and the mass of “ordinary citizens” assigned merely to maintain and protect the “nuclear environment.” The machine age naturally leads to the age of central nuclear systems, which can hit the most distant targets through an operation that “transforms every reality into diminishing energy.”



THE RUSSIAN-AMERICAN REALIZATION OF GLOBAL NUCLEAR DETERRENCE IS THUS, AT THE SAME TIME, A CATASTROPHIC PROCESS OF TOTAL COLONIZATION.

In Washington, at the height of the economic crisis, James Schlesinger demanded that defense budgets for NATO members be regularly increased from 3 to 5 percent per year. Beyond any consideration of a new strategy of deterrence, we have here a simple protection racket — safety blackmail — just as at the origin of any pact of colonial exhaustion. Elsewhere, the Portuguese military gradually brought the reality of revolutionary power to another level: that of *an army civilization*. Thus ship's captain, Correia Jesuino, Minister of *Social Communication*, depicts the "left-wing officers" as "ethnologists studying a primitive people." For, in his view, the Portuguese people is underdeveloped.

But the development in question here is not economic, and the captain's thought is clear: as we have seen, there is only a revolutionary historical realization for the Army-State when the concept of pure war is the basis of its organization, its own characteristics and knowledge.

Conversely, when this basic concept slackens, when the State system tries to make the mili-

tary enterprise into an "external affair," then it becomes simply a collection of "unimportant and trivial transactions" (Tacitus, *Annals*, IV, 32), "a narrow history, devoid of glory."

This sheds light not only on Western nations' violent annihilation of different cultures and economies, but also (with decolonization) on the latter's spontaneous disappearance, the voluntary renunciation of enormous bodies of knowledge and expression, which have become completely inoperative for the new individuals claiming a place in History.

Pure War is neither peace nor war; nor is it, as was believed, "absolute" or "total" war. Rather, it is the military procedure itself, in its ordinary durability. The balance of terror, the nuclear coalition, peaceful coexistence — in short, the dissolution of the state of war and the military's infiltration into the movements of daily life — reproduce the metamorphoses of the hunter: from direct confrontation of the wild animal; to progressive control over the movements of certain species; then, with the help of the dog, to guarding semi-wild flocks; and finally to reproduction, breeding.

Domestication is the logical outcome of

prey. Atrocities, blows, wounds and bloodshed, in the final account, run counter to the unlimited use of violence.

War is no longer directly identifiable with declared conflict, with battles. Since Maurice de Saxe, we know that we can wage war without fighting, through simple displacement of forces and swiftness of movement. Nonetheless, the old illusion still persists that a state of peace means the absence of open warfare, or that the military which no longer fights but “helps” society is peaceful, and that the military institution can even be beneficial, once it stops attacking.

Partly responsible for the failure of the Paris Commune, this illusion returned in Allende’s Chile and in Portugal. That is why it is so urgent to exhaustively analyze this institution, rather than hang around its outskirts, failing (voluntarily or not) to effect the most necessary de-institutionalization of all: that of the military.

That is, unless the latter, through an ultimate subterfuge, manages to simulate this very initiative. Peru or Cambodia, in this respect, constitutes a sinister forerunner: military socialism.

Notes to Part One

1. *Cluseret et Rossel (La commune et la question militaire)*. Paris, Editions 10/18.
2. Engels, *Théorie de la violence*.
3. Corbin, *Cours de fortification permanente*, 1888.
4. “True war first appears in siege warfare.” *On War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 133.
5. See the epigraph for this chapter.
6. “Give form to” and “communicate.”
7. The French word is *scinder*, from the Indo-European root *skei*: “to divide, to saw” [Translator’s note].
8. Paul Virilio, *Speed and Politics* (New York: Semiotexte Foreign Agents Series, 1985): “In a recent work (*L’idée de l’histoire parfaite*),

Georges Huppert attacks the common notion that the general and positive sense of history appeared in the nineteenth century. He cites the example of a group of erudites, mostly in the legal profession, who around 1560 proposed (in the words of one of them, La Popelinière) ‘an idea of perfect history.’ At the same time, the new European States were tending among themselves to reestablish the notion of legitimate war (or legalistic war), in the Roman manner (Livy, I, 32, 5-15).

9. The date 1525 marks the secularization of the Teutonic Order.
10. G.W.F. Hegel, “Introduction,” *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*.
11. First ephemeris of *projected societies*, comparable to what, in the nineteenth century, the monotonous detail of secret police reports represents for sociology. “Social — let’s even say sociological — analysis is made along with the narrative, by the narrative itself,” remarks Alain about Balzac.
12. Before history as poem or mythical canto (mythification or mystification?), there is the mechanism of the trance and the persistence of those short invocations which create una-

nimity: “We are not warriors. But suddenly we believe we are, and the war begins” (Leiris).

13. Lope de Vega.
 14. “Every visible power is threatened, especially when it rests on a *usurpation* that alienates both its victims and its accomplices. Thus the detective’s tactics are those of the minister and the Chief of State. Power will be shady or will not be at all...” (H. de Balzac, Introduction to *Une ténébreuse affaire*).
- Greek military power violates legality, for example, by repealing the “religious calendars” which, in all parts of the world, limited the seasonal duration of battle (generally to 24 hours in ancient China). It creates a “prytaneal calendar,” thus settling the war phenomenon into an independent, temporal continuum.
15. Livy.
 16. *The Art of War*.
 17. *Speed and Politics*.
 18. R. Drews, *The First Tyrants in Greece*.
 19. G. Daverio Rocchi, *Politica de famiglia e politica di tribune polis ateniese*.
 20. Engels, *Théorie de la violence*.
 21. “Thus it is on the political level of the public home, which is no longer a private home like

the other since its function is precisely to represent all homes while identifying with none” (Vernant, *Mythe et pensée chez les Grecs*).

The West’s amazing power of reproduction... Isn’t nuclear fire simultaneously military, political, and, before long, private, thanks to the building of new plants which will provide each home with its own “power of nuclear consumption”?

II Revolutionary Resistance

“The reasons of moving forces.”

— Salomon de Caus

MILITARY SOCIALISM, OR A NEW DETONATOR OF THE a-national military class? The Euro-terrorism of the Red Brigades confronted us with the question, as once more, instead of reviving revolutionary analysis, it claimed only to save the dialectic of war from passivity.

In the “practical-theoretical” manual that circulated in Rome under the significant title, “Resolutions for Strategic Direction, February 1978,” militants were invited to act militarily in

order to act politically against the “bunkers in which the agents of counter-revolution hide.” At each level, workers must form a “fighting party” and “get it out of their heads that the development of armed struggle toward a generalized civil war, toward a long-term popular war, can be a *spontaneous process*.”

At a time when the old Communist parties of southern Europe, in the middle of a nuclear deadlock, compromise themselves historically for the benefit of the political State, the “Brigadists” reaffirm the permanance, in History, of the concept of Pure War, the independence of that great Western current of nihilist thought. This thought aims, precisely, to disrupt the social and political field of nations by abusing the illegality of armed force, the exercise of pure power.

If popular defense, why not popular assault? This, then, is the heart of the problem.

The disagreements that have shaken the French leftist parties since their defeat in the 1978 legislative elections, the belated questioning of “the military aspect of the Communist Party” by people like Althusser,¹ are finally only another obscure inquiry into the politically endurable limits of the State’s power to absorb civilian societies.

In every domain, these States seek to base the mechanism of their power exclusively on the development of techniques of civil or foreign war. We must be careful, therefore, not to be too hasty in equating defense with popular war, or national mobilization with the defense of the population.

What is popular defense? From whom and against what do we have to defend ourselves? In what areas and from what perspectives?



I. ORIGINALLY, THE RIGHT TO ARMED DEFENSE WAS the necessary complement to the right to legal defense,² and was thus distinguished by its permanence: civilian populations must be able to defend themselves in times of *peace* as well as in times of *declared war*, of open conflict.

It is not without importance to recall the case of the Carolingian capitularies, where the central powers advised the feudatories to spare themselves an alliance between the small and middle-sized native landowners by granting them the right to on-the-spot military defense, the right to physical resistance, of which we find evidence in all parts of the world, from antiquity onward.

This economy of violence is the basis of the diverse relations that have been discovered between ethnic groups, between cities and States, between masters and slaves, between colonizers and colonized — even into the military democracies such as Sparta, with the system of the *helots*. Given the status of slaves by the Lacedaemonian colonizers, the *helots* were nonetheless *not transferable like merchandise, and could retain in reality their families, their hereditary possessions, and especially their right to armed defense*. One consequence of this is that, unlike *veritable slaves*, the *helots* revolted against the Lacedaemonian State.³

This was again the case with the ancient Chinese peasants and the European guilds, which managed for a long time to resist plunder and to preserve a good number of their privileges, because the military invader — often come from afar and wishing to pacify its conquest — recognized their legal right to armed defense. The ancient rites and mysteries of winter celebrations in the French provinces continued until the nineteenth century, perpetuating the scene of defending one's home and plot of land against any and all besiegers, soldiers, bandits and scoundrels.

“A mockery of theoreticians in general,” notes George Sand, “these rites are maintained by *country officials*. Hatred is directed not so much against landowners as against the surveyors who adjust the *cadastre* and apportion taxes, against the Public Works employees who convert the villages into roads.”

Unconsciously, these rites are still observed today by the Autonomists, who destroy the transmitters of State television networks, obstruct roads and railways, blow up tax offices and airports in Corsica, in Brittany...



II. IN FACT, IN EVERY CASE SINCE ANTIQUITY, *TENSION forms between two kinds of population, depending on how they occupy the land*. These struggles generally lead to a social deadlock, a *pact of semi-colonization*, entailing the payment of tributes and taxes in exchange for some kind of military protectorate. This pact is extorted from a native, laboring, productive population by the foreign occupants — a *luxury people* aptly described by Julien Gracq as “a lazy, violent military caste, relying on civilians for its daily bread...

Idlers of apocalypse living free of material cares at the edge of their domesticated abyss... having no trade save with a few great and catastrophic uncertainties.”

Indeed, the profits drawn by these military predators from the mutual service pacts are initially destined neither for the capitalization of land nor even of wealth, but for the ruinous and unending perfecting of their war-machine, for the development of arms and fortification systems, for the preparation of expeditions to faraway places.



IF WE JUMP THROUGH HISTORY, WE SEE THAT *THIS semi-colonial economy, this military protection racket, forms the constitutional basis of the great modern States.* The a-national monarchies that governed Western Europe until the nineteenth century have, in the final account, only perpetuated this process which originated in the strategic settlement of “luxury-people,” of horsemen come from the East and elsewhere at the fall of the Roman Empire.

With their continual migrations, inbreeding, elitist culture and constant choice of a non-

partisan military personnel, these more or less enlightened despots demonstrated a persistent independence from the ethnic groups and territories that only the *illegality* of force had given them.

In the nineteenth century, Clausewitz still saw in territorial invasion the desire “not to retain land, but to exact financial contributions,” and *especially to effect on this land what he calls a “negative aim,” to cause it general and lasting damage.*

We should not be surprised, then, that the inevitability of general military defense leaves the majority of popular masses indifferent well into the twentieth century. As we have seen, in neutral countries we encounter the same hostility toward the problem of permanent armies as toward diplomacy and State politics, its inevitable complements. In Sweden, for example, there was *forvarsnihilism*, “defense nihilism,” sponsored for the most part by the Federation of Socialist Youth, an anti-military radical group that asked, “Is the invasion of our territory by another civilized people really such a terrible thing?”⁴ In fact until the eve of the last war, there were still manifestations in Sweden of the more or less veiled persistence of a semi-colonial situation close to that of the *ancien*

regime or of antiquity. Hadn't the leaders of the military State always been "foreigners" in Sweden, from the Suiones to Charles XIV, alias Marshal Bernadotte of France! So what difference did a change of dominion make to the working people?



III. THE APPEARANCE OF FASCIST METHODS AFTER the First World War altered the splendid isolation of the "defense nihilists" by turning the Swedish question around: could they still speak of a "common civilization" to the military invaders and the native populations in the case of total war, when this type of conflict aimed at the destruction not only of the enemy army corps, but also of the social and territorial body, at the ruination of the civilian populations' surroundings, identity and honor?

We have not yet measured the considerable historical consequences of this extremism in industrial war, entailing the sudden breakdown of the social *status quo* between civilians and the military, replacing the thousand-year-old pact of semi-colonization with a tendency toward total colonization, with the *ostkolonisation* asserted by

the German National Socialists.

But this total war was conducted on both sides, and the Allies also had considerable experience in the field of economic and physiological violence, a past burdened with ethnocide, deportations, slavery and colonialism. From that point on, popular defense lost its military character, to become associated with a precarious state of survival in devastated surroundings.

It became a physiological defense more than a measure of insurrection. Later, the Vietnamese would return to this defensive procedure. But already new realities were coming into play, particularly the nature of the political and military limits of ecological defense, *vis-à-vis* the plethora of destructive means deployed by the military-industrial powers.



BUT HERE AGAIN, WE MUST GO BACK AND RETRACE the general tendency.

In the nineteenth century, the Spanish popular resistance led against Napoleon's military assault already showed several aspects of modern popular warfare. The *absolute shapelessness* of

the Spanish defense created conditions to which the heavy French war-machine succumbed, “in something fluid and vaporous which condensed *nowhere* into a solid body” (Clausewitz). The compact defense of an armed body is succeeded by a resistance without body.

This Clausewitzian *nowhere* is essential, for, going beyond a resistance without body, we can already conceive of a *resistance without territory*, on an earth made *uninhabitable* by the military predator. This is the end of on-the-spot civilian defense. The mechanical power of the new State armies forces the Spanish fighter to withdraw provisionally from the ground that he is supposed to be protecting.

The unity of time and space explodes; popular war is no more than a *war of time*, a war of scheduled encounters. Indeed, if the Spanish fighter is no longer master of the terrain, he is still master of time. The speed and ease of his movements allow him to choose his time, to avoid being cornered into desperate combat, to harass, to surprise and finally to conquer Napoleon’s army, a “gigantic automation” slowed down by its logistical heaviness in an inhospitable country.

Several hundred years later, the resistance

put up by the Vietnamese people against the American technological assault is still a war of time, but it can no longer be a war of military encounters. This time, the military prejudice toward aggression is equivalent to a pan-destruction; in order to survive, the entire social body is forced to disappear, to take refuge as a new, subterranean population.

This form of defense reveals the new and tragic powerlessness of civilian populations. Entrenched underground, they barely manage *to resurface, to repopulate* their territory in hopes of a victorious military outcome, as had been the case in May 1954 with Dien Bien Phu. In fact, the success of the Vietnamese now depended solely on the *duration* of the populations’ physiological resistance, their degree of adaptation to an environment which had suddenly become foreign and deadly, in which they needed daily ingenuity and patience more than heroics. Paradoxically, it was the American people, living comfortably away from immediate material dangers, who gave in first.

Whatever the case, it was necessary to return to the classic methods of warfare in order to end the conflict and to reach, step by step, a diffi-

cult peace. But the people's apparent political victory was in reality the cruelest of its military defeats. After several fruitless attempts, it was clear that popular defense was no longer succeeding in a final assault by the masses on the "field of honor," that this last and definitive assault was henceforth reserved exclusively for the military elite and their mechanized vehicles, as was shown by the last filmed images of the fall of Saigon, in which a North Vietnamese tank broke through the gates of the government palace, long since deserted.



ALTHOUGH IT HAS BEEN EXPLOITED AND OVER-EXPLOITED by the strategists since antiquity, popular defense thus reaffirmed its authority in Vietnam as a non-military entity, with specifically civilian and non-violent means and stakes. In the midst of an ecological war waged by the Americans like an extermination campaign, the survival of the people had held to *the absolute assimilation of its substance to its subsistence*.⁵ The civilians had seen their war as a kind of *agrarian revolution* whose goal was the topological conquest of their

subsoil. They had succeeded in appropriating increasingly large underground areas for their use. And by making this pioneer adventure their primary social practice, they could completely disappear from their own territory, only to save it in the end.

However, these forms of struggle already seem outmoded in the face of the new and fearsome implications for civilian rights posed by the world-wide resistance of the Palestinians. Up until then, defense of the group was indistinguishable from that of the legal settlement. Whether it was agricultural areas or the great industrial cities, the "arms of the people" were but the transgression of the ordinary use of tools and the environment. (For example: hatchets, sickles, mowers, hunting equipment, ambushes and various kinds of traps in the country; barricades, machine shut-downs, and strikes in the city).

Under these conditions, it is clear that, *for the civilian populations, any loss of territory represents the loss both of their transformed arms and their legal identity*. Indeed, deprived of their productive arsenal, they stop being privileged economic partners in the pact of military semi-colonization.



THE PRINCIPLE AIM OF ANY TRULY POPULAR RESISTANCE is thus to oppose the establishment of a social situation based solely on the illegality of armed force, which reduces a population to the status of a *movable slave*, a *commodity*.

This domestic condition is scarcely better than that of an animal herd, and in fact, the proletarianization of the military and working classes only reproduced the progressive reduction of the deterritorialized countryman *to the condition of movable or immovable*.

The trade unions knew what they were doing when they ordered the workers to carefully maintain their tools of production. It's as if, in their minds, these tools were the last representation of the original environment, the guarantee and mainstay of their entire legal existence.

It is again this feeling that lies behind struggles such as those of the workers at Lip, which won them the sarcastic comments of Raymond Barre, a member of the Trilateral Commission, about their "outmoded attachment to their way of life," their inability to adapt to change — that is, to the uprooting of immigration.⁶ The same eco-

logical attachment is what brought the left victory in the last French municipal elections. The native populations vaguely realized that, through the massive unemployment and lay-offs, the closing and bankruptcy of businesses, a tragedy of entirely different proportions was being played out; that an essential amalgamation was coming undone: a loss of the economic substance of the French hinterland, which for them would become a loss of their social identity.

At this moment in history, the Palestinian case takes on the shape of things to come for these populations: so here we are with them at the next step, one which already offers a glimpse of the Nazi work-houses and concentration camps. So here is *a whole nation as movable object*, violently uprooted from its soil and thrown into transit camps. For its instigators, the defense of the Palestinian people can only be a reflection on a *national delocalization*, a spatial schizophrenia that will soon replace the temporal schizophrenia of the enternal migrant.

We will witness unexpected forms of survival, since *the legal terrain, the political territory* have completely disappeared, to become the very stakes of the struggle. This combat aims not

to defend the boundaries of an area of life, but simply to trace boundaries somewhere around it, while we see the Palestinians fail time and again to conquer a territory, in Damascus, in Beirut... Where is the enemy? Who is the enemy? For the Palestinians, he is not national, but *world-wide*. In this case, the old political or ideological splits become meaningless. Russians and Americans, Germans, Arabs and Jews police together. In 1977, at the time of the Mogadishu incident, everyone finally agreed to strip the Palestinian commando of his last political territory, already so limited: *the runways of international airports*, the space of a migration gone airborne.

Those who claim that the Palestinian struggle is not a popular “defense” are right: it is *a popular assault*, turned suicidal because they have no choice. After their geographical disappearance, their last objective was to ensure that the Palestinian people would not disappear from memory as it had disappeared off the face of the map. If they had stopped being *legal* inhabitants of the Earth, as migrants, they still had one specific territory: the *media*. From airport runways to railroad tracks, from highways to television and the press, they could not afford to lose this last

advantage, they could not let the vectors remain neutral.

Ratzel had already said it in the nineteenth century: “War consists in extending one’s boundaries over the other’s territory.” In this case, we can say that the Palestinians extended theirs, in the form of news, over the entire world.

Whether they horrify or become exemplary, the Palestinians are now the masters of an audiovisual empire, of a State founded on roads, airways and images. They exist, somewhere, with a precarious and phantasmal identity, deep in the memories of 400 to 500 million television viewers. They hope that at the end of this conquest, they will be able to reclaim the right to legal defense at the bargaining table, to reclaim existence at the political level. We might think they are fooling themselves, and are only, like the Tupamaros of Uruguay, hastening in Europe and in the world the development of a *doctrine of security* — which is only a process of making peoples and nations disappear politically.

Whatever the case, the Palestinian tragedy — considered apart from the strange brew of somewhat dubious terrorist factions, in its form and in its profound reasons — is the way of the future. It

begins a time when on-the-spot defense will become extremely difficult for civilian populations. In fact — and this is a major development — *the defense of native populations no longer coincides with the defense of national territories*. Quite the opposite: with nuclear deterrence, civilians are already no more than the fragile hostages of arms systems (and not of armies).

Before deterrence, the logistical base was the earth. Now, it is in the sea (nuclear submarines) and in space (space shuttles). The continents are no more than brief stopovers, the apotheosis of the system of freedom from war and the ultimate failure of the military chiefs of staff before the technical consultant and the engineer.

If, for Vauban, we should be able *to superimpose war onto all the inhabitable parts of the universe*, today this has completely changed, since war is precisely the occupant of *all its uninhabitable parts*. The abandonment of advanced strategic bases, decolonization, the latinization of continents, the very style of the world-wide economic crisis are but epiphenomena of this new kind of “military retreat”: out of territories that have become unusable as carriers of state-of-the-art technology, far from laboring civilian populations

which have also been logistically devalued (they only produce one percent of energy consumed) and which are *about to lose their final identity as nuclear hostages*. This new universality is surely not the one expected by the civilian populations, nor even by the ancient conquerors. But by mid-century, it had already mapped out total war, both on the level of arms systems and on that of the *social* relations between armies and populations.

The Russian atomic satellite that crashed in northern Canada provides the best example of the new military-industrial elites’ indifference toward the overabundance of civilians: the governments did not even bother to warn the populations concerned about the imminent fall of a dangerous machine onto their territory.

Already in 1947, Henry Wallace claimed, about the American Navy’s stopovers in the Mediterranean, that the economic aid given by his country to the native populations “depended less on the hunger of Greek or Turkish children than on the U.S. fleet’s need for fuel.” Thirty years later, President Carter, launching his “Energy Plan” (April 1977), denounced “*The biggest profiteering operation in history, perpetrated against the American people by the oil companies.*”

At this point, every civilian population, *even those of the most powerful and highly developed nations in the world*, are helpless victims of the scam, of this ransacking of the world's resources.



IV. DURING THE LAST SEVERAL YEARS, WE HAVE seen politicians powerless to act against the suicidal nature of the nuclear coalition, that new technological oppression which (depending which way the arms race goes) reduces the power of governments and individuals to nothing or almost nothing, at the speed of the vectors' new capacities.

The rift is no longer between the Right and the Left, as the leaders of the major parties were still trying to convince us during the miserable French electoral campaign of March 1978, but world-wide, between civilian populations and representatives of the military techno-structure.

After the members of the Trilateral Commission, in 1975, preached the limitation of economic growth and of democratic rights, a group of American economists went still further by proposing the founding of a *Minimum State*. The au-

thors of this project called themselves "anarchistic capitalists, or "libertarians." Under their pseudo-revolutionary cast-offs, they only ratified an existing situation⁷: the maneuver which leads us to abandon territories and advanced bases, eventually to renounce the decision for humanity in favor of *the miniaturization of the political field, the automation of deterrence*.⁸ The *minimum subsistence level army* proposed by General Gallois will be replaced by a *Minimum Political State*; the two will blend together to provide a cursory resolution to the secondary problems of political and territorial law enforcement.

The latest German episodes already give us a very clear view of the new role accorded the National States and their petty military personnel. In the face of the unprecedented questions posed to democracies by the evolution of world-wide strategy, by the shortages and damage caused by unlimited plunder, they will try to institute a new unanimity of need, a permanent feeling of insecurity which will lead to a new kind of consumption: *the consumption of protection*. This *Minimum Economic State*, paradoxically, becomes the outcome of the whole system of exchanges and commodities.



IN APRIL 1976, PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING, IN a speech before the French Military Academy, clearly outlined his plan for French society:

“Alongside the supreme means of ensuring our security (the nuclear vectors), we need a presence of security. In other words, we need to have *a social body organized around this need for security.*”

In 1977, the terrorism which *providentially* sustained the international repression and systems of mass incrimination praised by the various media, already afforded a glimpse of this kind of asocial organization. On the government level, meanwhile, the “crisis headquarters” hastily set up in Germany, France and Italy became the first illustrations of the new *Minimum Political State*.

The *Minimum Armies* also kept busy: September 1977 saw “Operation Demeter,” the first military maneuvers conducted *in open ground*, away from roads and paths, in an area of 2,000 square kilometers *devoted to agriculture and prairies*, in the French regions of Beauce and Perche. “The creation of *a new kind of social relationship* between the army and civilians,” the specialists openly declared. It was, in any case, a spectacular

response by the army to the “Friends of the Earth”⁹ and to the militant tendencies of ecological movements, among others. We don’t shut armored tanks up in gulags and camps, not even in Larzac!¹⁰

But this new *armed liberation* is also the excursion of the German border police in Mogadishu or of the Israeli commandos in Entebbe, far from the walls of Berlin or Jerusalem, a military “right of pursuit” which is no more than a worldwide police chase, a fearsome blend of military and judicial violence. The deterritorialization and bewildered flight of civilian populations in the “territories” of the media, the ease with which they go from the “wildcat circuit” of the Rungis motorcycle gangs to Saturday-night pile-ups, from robbery to skyjackings or sordid political kidnappings — all these ultimate and depraved forms of *a popular opposition which is no longer located anywhere*, pull us irresistibly from loss of the ancient right to armed, on-the-spot resistance toward the annihilation of the contemporary right to legal defense. Pull us, in other words, toward the definitive reduction of the people to silence.

This is what Giscard d’Estaing reminded us of in December of 1977 at the Brussels Conference, by proposing the creation of a *European*

judiciary space. This new *Lebensraum* — which a German chancellor could not have decently suggested to his partners — can be considered an outline of the *Minimum Political Territory* of Europe. Indeed, what borders can the dissident reach, what refuge for social or union opposition, since the plan aims — as we saw with the extradition of Klaus Croissant¹¹ — at suppressing the last legal asylum?



THE SUPPRESSION OF NATIONAL BOUNDARIES AND the hyper-communicability of the world do not enlarge the space of freedom. They are, rather, a sign of its disappearance, its collapse, before the expansion of an all-too-tangible totalitarian power, a technological control over civilized societies that is growing ever more rapid and refined.

Thus, step by step, we see the realization of the plan elaborated in 1973 by NATO and its “Committee on the Challenge of Modern Society,” whose aim was to *universally map out the circulation of persons and commodities*. In March of 1978, that same NATO intervened directly in the Aldo Moro affair.

Meanwhile, the reinstatement of torture in South America, the furious multiplication of kidnappings, the scandalous exhibition of Red Brigade prisoners chained in a cage during their trial in Turin, are not by chance: they restore, in mid-twentieth century, the age-old image of the *human commodity*, degraded and reduced to helplessness by the military master.

But this social treatment corresponds to a territorial treatment: on French television, a Coast Guard officer spoke about the black tide that was ravaging the Brittany coast, remarking *how spectacularly beautiful it was*. Thus, just as during the reign of Fascism, “the disappearance of nature” becomes “an artistic experience” for the warrior elites, and the ecological catastrophe a simple work of pathos.

We must therefore get it out of our heads that the military rushes to the aid of civilians, sets up emergency medical units and encampments for disaster victims, runs airlifts and clearing operations on the sites of great natural or man-made cataclysms out of pure philanthropy.

Ecological catastrophes are only terrifying for civilians. For the military, they are but a simulation of chaos, and consequently a subject of study

and an opportunity for large-scale maneuvers in open terrain, beyond the constraints of national boundaries. Even better: in the state of undeclared war in which we live, this study is not only useful but indispensable, since the extreme rudimentaryness of the arms and destructive means currently deployed in local conflicts deprives the military cadres of the state-of-the-art experimentation that has always constituted the concrete basis of their knowledge and pushed Headquarters to send observers out onto the battlefield.

More than ever before, the experimental sciences are trying to justify an art of warfare which is becoming all the more autonomous as the political State dies out. Removed from the historical conceptualizer and from national and other ideologies, it becomes once more a pure operation, a phenomenon without true intelligence. And the haphazardness of great ecological catastrophes perfectly foreshadows what could result — on the social, economic, industrial or biological level — from a nuclear post-war which the technicians themselves qualify as unthinkable, but which they nonetheless refer to more and more frequently.

This was no doubt the most frightening

aspect of the American involvement in Vietnam, in which destruction stopped being simply urban or logistical, as it had been prior to this, but instead spread over the entire territory. Beyond the defoliation and relentless destruction of the agricultural environment, didn't one American general even recommend *covering the entire world with cement*, paving it over, to have done with popular resistance once and for all?

The natural or simulated cataclysm poses a series of disquieting riddles to the specialists, as they wholeheartedly join in regulating the physiological debacle. While the officials in Brittany suggest compacting the waste washed in by the black tide to be used as land-fill for future Breton highways, we again evacuate the inhabitants of the Bikini Islands, twenty-four years after "dusting the earth with radioactive strontium, cesium and plutonium from 23 atomic experiments. The atomic experts themselves feel that, in order to decontaminate the island, the best thing is to *completely replace the soil.*"

The relentless struggle of peasants and ecological groups against the building of the Tokyo Narita airport can justifiably be compared to a new Vietnam War, but this time the earth was

indeed paved over with the cement of the giant airport's runways. Nonetheless, it opened only recently, seven years after the first battles of 1971.

Thus Pure War, a perennial feature of the military effort, transforms the ancient metaphysical vision of the warrior into a terrifying re-ordering of the world. Renato Curcio, "historic leader of the Red Brigades," but also a former neo-Fascist in the *Ordre Nouveau* group, says nothing different when he states: "In this society, the only thing we can build is a machine of destruction." As if there weren't enough already!¹²



IN *BEYOND THE MEXIQUE BAY* (1934), ALDOUS HUXLEY makes this analysis: "The commonest, one might call it the natural, rhythm of human life is routine punctuated by orgies.... Orgies, whether sexual, religious, sporting or political, provide that periodical excitement which all of us crave, and which most of us are too insensitive to feel except under the most crudely violent stimulation." Only, "the orgies of *nationalism* are not platonic orgies-for-orgies' sake. *They lead to practical results* — to the piling up of armaments, to senseless eco-

nomic competition, to embargoes on foreign goods, and ultimately to war." And Huxley concludes that the important thing is not to create conferences on disarmament or world economy, but to convene a "World Psychological Conference" to "*decide upon the emotional cultures to be permitted and encouraged.*"

If we accept Huxley's excellent statement, and if we agree that war, by cooling off, has become something internally permanent proposed by the media as a new culture tangible to the citizenry, then the commonest rhythm of civilian life must be inverted. *It becomes orgy punctuated by routines*, an orgy of war leading to practical, tactical and strategic results.

The Aldo Moro affair is the best example of this. Here, the war dialectic between the Red Brigades and the international security forces was prolonged for an unprecedented amount of time, completely upsetting the ordinary rhythm of Italian life. Daily life was literally overshadowed by a permanent war orgy and each of its new developments.

War propaganda had already reached this kind of intoxication when the German masses demanded from their leaders, as they would a cele-

bration, “a total war, still more total war!” Meanwhile, Churchill promised English enthusiasm blood, sweat and tears, and everyone continued to demand more even under the bombardments, fires and phosphorus.¹³ This is because orgiastic participation is not the sole property of the uneducated masses hungering for violent stimulation. It is first and foremost the last grounds of understanding between the populace and the military elites hungering for pure power.

But today, in order to create a *totalitarian Lebensraum*, it is no longer necessary to resort to extraordinary invasions with the motorized vehicles, tanks and stukas of lightning warfare, since one can use the *ordinary penetration* of the new media, the information blitz. The abundance of surrounding dangers was formerly posed by belligerent factions armed with explosives, missiles and gas. Now it can be created in our own living rooms, thanks to appropriation of the audio-visual enclosure. Shut up at home, huddled behind his alarm systems and reinforced doors, the citizen is still never safe from a televised aggression that composes, condenses, and reproduces at will cataclysms, assassinations and murder; which stereophonically installs the settings of distant disaster

and foreign wars in peaceful homes. Thus it was that several years ago in Germany, they simulated a major alert of atmospheric pollution that terrorized the Ruhr Basin, while the television complacently broadcasted images of a fictional catastrophe and dispensed safety advice to the inhabitants, ordering them to seal their apartments, to stay indoors, to breathe with caution — thus managing to keep the residents of an entire region at home for several hours. This great artificial panic had already been forgotten by the time the very real disaster of Seveso, Italy, occurred.

On May 12, 1978, the Argentine army, for its part, staged a series of bogus assassinations in order to observe people’s reactions, while waiting for the sporting orgy of the World Soccer Cup.

If, at the right time, civilians could have resisted the assault of the war machine, gotten ahead of it, by creating a defense without body, condensed nowhere, it is quite evident that today they don’t even realize that technology has surpassed this kind of popular defense.

There is no more need for an armed *body* to attack civilians, so long as the latter have been properly trained to turn on their radios or plug in their television sets. No need for solid, labori-

ously-moved bodies when their spectral image can be projected anywhere at all in an instant. From now on, military assault is shapeless in time and space, absolutely vaporous. And the populations' orgiastic participation is no more than the irrational support of a *techno-logistical supra-nationality*, the final stage of delocalization, and thus of servitude.

During the Nuremberg Trials, Albert Speer, former minister in the Third Reich, concluded his defense by saying that "Hitler's dictatorship was the first dictatorship of an industrial State in the age of modern technology, a dictatorship which employed to perfection the instruments of technology to dominate its own people.... The criminal events of those years were not only an outgrowth of Hitler's personality. The extent of the crimes was also due to the fact that Hitler was the first to be able to employ the implements of technology to multiply crime."¹⁴

Even after Hitler's demise, the criminal nature of State technocracy has still not disappeared for the simple reason that, as Roszak says, it creates its own inevitability, thanks to the decisive measure which lets us think the unthinkable and tolerate the intolerable. Thus, after two centu-

ries of making *national defense* an inevitability for civilians, *techno-logistical supra-nationality* now designates these civilian populations as "a challenge to the military administration."

The danger is no longer described by the powers-that-be as external and distant: Prussian or Russian hordes always ready to flood our national borders. The excessively mediatized danger has become totalitarian. "Since there is Euro-terrorism," exclaimed Minister of Justice Alain Peyrefitte, "then let the struggle against terrorism know no borders!" The *doctrine of security* is instituted like that of *national defense*, as a survival reflex.

The new ideology of security is destined to fill the gap created by the disappearance of the populations' right to armed defense, and by the progressive loss of their legal and political identity. *It is tantamount to putting all of civilian society under a regime of military security, or, in other words, under a regime of so-called military justice.*



EVER SINCE ANTIQUITY, THE MILITARY STRUCTURE and the organization of outlaw bands have always been in an osmotic relationship, their different per-

sonnel passing easily from one group to the other. Later, the bourgeois democracies had to dissimulate the criminal nature of the military office — under “good reasons” which were but the unreason of might — by moralizing war, socializing it through revolutionary nationalism.

With the multiplication of military dictatorships in Latin America, Africa, Asia, and soon in Europe, we are naturally witnessing the end of these euphemisms; witnessing a spectacular rise in criminal solutions, which forces us to wonder about declarations such as those of Argentine General Iberico Saint-Jean in December 1976: “We’ll begin by killing all the subversives, then their collaborators, then their sympathizers, then the indifferent, and finally the timid.”

This equally clarified the kind of “revolutionary analysis” publicly made Curcio and the members of the Red Brigades in Italy. During the Turin trial, Curcio told the judge, “You are living outside of History....” And, about the assassination of Aldo Moro: “It was an act of *revolutionary justice*, the most humane act possible in a society divided into classes.” The court’s reaction was just as significant; after an hour of deliberation, it ordered the “arrest” of Curcio and Franc-

eschini, charging them with “incitement to violence.”



REVOLUTION OR MILITARY JUSTICE? MILITARY justice is in reality nothing other than one of the essential components of the war-machine, and it is thus totally illusory for the Turin judges, for example, to try to assimilate it in any way to “civil justice.” Despite its flaws, the latter always represents a politics, whereas the former proceeds from a logistics.

Despite history, or rather, because of history as the narrative of battles waged through the ages, discipline undergoes few significant variations and remains the principal strength of the warring body. *Its archetype is the cursory execution of every tenth man in line*, the famous *decimation*, an exterminating machine intended to offset any future weaknesses in the battle corps.

Just as much as any form of armament, armed justice is part of that logistics which Jomini, Clausewitz’s old theoretical adversary, presented as “the art of moving armies.” Thus, it is less a matter of “doing justice” to an individual or

to a group than of mobilizing the totality in a healthy fear, a fear even more terrible than that inspired by the enemy.

As Shakespeare said, "War is Death killing Death." War justice is only Fear killing Fear. In order to kill the death that the enemy represents for the soldier, it is first necessary to kill the fear that the enemy inspires, to kill that fear with an even greater fear: that of his fellows, of his officers.

In old-time naval combat, it was not uncommon, on the morning of a confrontation, to arbitrarily execute several sailors, in order to "bond" the crew before the cannon fire and bloody attack. And the only thing that can ensure an airtight "bonding" is terror. Discipline and military justice are thus, strictly speaking, *the administration of fear*.

For the warrior, the only "right" thing is the outcome, victory or death. This outcome both provokes and justifies the means, *every* means (technical, economic, psychological), including at times democratic means. For in the military arsenal, democratic practices can stand right alongside the worst cruelty and tyranny. Anything can be used: Evil, Good and the Beyond, including

the belief in a Valhalla for unknown soldiers and dead heroes.

Disciplinary logistics accomplishes the mixture, the abusive incorporation of the various parties into a Totality capable of common movement. Logistical justice allows for the projection of wills beyond the anxiety of dying. It corresponds in part to what the *agon* represented for ancient warriors: *an exulted acceptance of the end*. Before fighting, Greek warriors chanted the *agon*, with which they accepted their own deaths without reservation. To die for one's country was still not the best fate; you had to accept death in combat. To accede to this suicidal acceptance was quite enough: the living were dying on their feet, voluntarily. They already recognized themselves as dead, dead in the discipline of the warring body. These agonal practices were sufficient unto themselves, with no reference whatsoever to a patriotic goal or political perspective; it was the end for the end, the "art for art's sake" of death in combat.

None of this has really changed, as the principle of nuclear deterrence proves: it's still a matter of accepting sacrifice for the common good. The Greeks knew only through religious law that there was no salvation in violence for those who

committed it, and that human sacrifice was simply useless.

Athenaian democracy was rooted in this truth, unlike the bourgeois democracies. If, in our societies, three institutions directly or indirectly possess the right to put someone to death, by diagnosis, judgment or arms, the last one differs from the first two in that it contains all of them. Military justice or military medicine, the army institution capitalizes the duty of violence in all forms. But the most indicative for the future is not the *right to kill*, but rather the *duty to die*, to die on command, *at the signal*.

In fact, it is less a matter of dying for what one loves than of giving one's life for what one hates. This is the fascination of the duel, in which the protagonists are transformed into a single hybrid being: first, because of the discipline that unites the allied individuals, and second, because of the "courage in sacrifice" that equates ally and enemy in this bodily confrontation — not the physical contact of homosexual desire, but the antagonistic homogeneity of the death-wish.

Military justice is thus no more than a banal deterrence from common law as the right to live to one's advantage, not from a real absence

of rights, but rather from *a perversion of the right to live into a right to die*. This protohistoric form of euthanasia has, through the centuries, become a duty, the suicidal duty of one and all...

Just as, with military justice, it was necessary to transfer fear from the enemy to the partner in order to maintain discipline, so it was necessary to transfer the fear of external confrontations to one of internal confrontations — a fear even more terrifying than that of the declared enemy, friend or suspected parent. In fact, the doctrine of security extends *all-points strategy* to the totality of civilian objectives. In a veritable "beyond politics," this doctrine ably complements nuclear deterrence with a perverted popular deterrence.

The current uncertainties in the legal system are moving undeniably in this direction. Conflicts between the civilian, executive and legislative branches are multiplying; lawyers and judges have seen their roles put more and more into question these past years. The French State is already considering making the Public Prosecutor's office directly responsible to the Ministry of the Interior. It is also considering merging police information with military intelligence. They are stretching the repression of Euroterrorism to include the indus-

trial as well as the criminal. During the French electric company strikes of December 1977, the term “union terrorism” was frequently heard. But, in 1975, in Germany, they had already set up a crisis headquarters to deal with the strike in the Ford auto plants.

The reasons for alarm, furthermore, are not important. What *is* essential here is that, by turning first suspicion, then hatred, onto one’s neighbor, one’s comrade, they destroy any trace of social solidarity. They extend this destruction of the network of political or union solidarity to the essential social network: the family, libidinal power and non-conducting medium for the *agon*. A famous killer recently wrote: “Justice is afraid of women in love. True courage comes from women, true mind belongs to women, and these women are worth a hundred men.”

The old English colonizers knew it, they who began every repression — as recently in Ireland — by dislocating families, arbitrarily confining husbands, fathers, sons. Whence the resurgence of the crucial importance of women’s roles: these women are thrown with their children headlong into this war waged against civilians. In Latin America, they no longer attack an isolated indi-

vidual or his supporters, but his entire family. The wives and mothers of “missing prisoners” are in turn suppressed in Argentina.

As soon as he took power — literally in the few hours following — Mao Tse-tung attacked the *old family ecology* in China. Giscard d’Estaing himself showed great eagerness in this domain: voting rights and legal adulthood at a younger age, abortion, facilitated divorce, and now euthanasia. Under the guise of “liberalism,” these measures all move in the same direction, since *they allow families to exterminate themselves*, thus saving the State the exercise of a now-useless violence.

Already, numerous news briefs demonstrate that Senator Caillavet was heard,¹⁵ while the results of Mr. Aldo Moro’s autopsy revealed to public opinion that the President of the Christian Democrats was suffering from advanced cancer of the thyroid gland, and that he probably would have died anyway in the next two years. In this light, the *death-duty* of the Red Brigades’ hostage also becomes euthanasia, and the terrorists simply “helped the old guy out,” as the Gestapo killers used to joke.



IN THE CIVIL WAR BETWEEN THE SEXES, WE HAVE seen an increase in groups in which the women declared, “My body is mine!” — the male response being an increase in kidnappings and rape.

Here as elsewhere, the criminal “highway patrol” shows itself to be military. On the one hand, there is a woman who refuses the “Napoleonic” family code of the inseparable couple; and on the other, a man who refuses to have his home *deserted* by the woman who takes their progeny with her.

Whence the tragic reactions, best exemplified by the Fourquet case in 1968. Fourquet, abandoned by his wife, goes for *armed insurrection*. His children with him, he raises a black flag over his roof and fires on the forces of law and order. When they finally attack after a long siege, he kills his children and is killed in turn. What had he rebuilt there, but the fundamental family alliance? The pitiful defense of Fourquet and his children before the National Guard tanks was that of the original small *family commando group* which, having learned to live and defend itself together, knows it cannot survive separation, and prefers

instant death. It is again the logistical aspect of the family or ethnic cell that explains — in patriarchal societies, for example — the ruthless punishments inflicted on the adulterous wife: death in exchange for desertion, which itself is deadly for the group.

From this we get the Army-State’s constant interest in family and ethnic groups. In Sparta, the family function was absorbed by the system of Lycurgus simply because, as a military organization, Lacedaemonian democracy substituted its vast strategic totality for the small tactical family unit, and even for the ancient “state stock” of the tribes.

But here, as M. P. Nilsson has noted, “primitive institutions are transformed through the intervention of one or more conscious organizers working in the same direction, to make it the *agôgê* and the cosmos of the populations.” In short, the State is a large-scale reproduction of the family organization that, for each individual, was a system of *help and foresight* (social functions, marriages pre-arranged from birth, the child as common property, fate after death, etc., as we can still see in some agricultural areas, notably in Africa).

The important thing in such organizations

is that the individual not feel ostracized. On the other hand, he is totally paralyzed before the old models and signs, and at times even unable to resist extreme domination.

This is the entire history of colonialism. It is the fate of the Aztec and the African passing easily from the ethnic cosmos to the mercenary cosmos, and to the condition of slave: their entire education had prepared them for it. One only had to destroy their administrative and cultural framework in order to “equalize” them, thanks to “the peculiar moral malformation which causes a native, questioned by a colonial administrator, never to answer what he really thinks, but only what he imagines you want him to think. While you are struggling to know his thoughts, he is chasing after yours, often resulting in successive contradictions in the same interrogation.”¹⁶

“The sorry abdication of the right to be oneself, to maintain an opinion in the face of those stronger than one; the cerebral wrinkle that passes from one to the next like a hereditary disease, which can only be cured over several generations, through the teaching of true freedom...” The “teaching of true freedom” is every man’s *right to reason*, which spread in Europe and America in

the eighteenth century, with the rise of philosophical tourism.

Later, Stendhal would state that *the novel is a mirror traveling along the main road*. We could say the same of all cultural production in the contemporary Western world: *the Century of Lights is only that of the light of speed*,¹⁷ of the military-industrial revolution in transportation. What some have seen as an elitist culture was only the subject “getting under way,” the syndrome of his voyage — and of his deportation. The right to reason came only from the distance put between the traveler and his origins (parish, family, tribal mutual-protection system), from the needs of his situation. No longer able to count on his family or communicate with them, he is forced to invent an essentially cosmopolitan Western culture, always evolving because always on the move. Destitute Rastignacs fresh from their home towns, master thinkers of new social ideologies or working masses: for all of them the story became identical because the journey was the same.

Conversely, the prodigious technical acceleration of means of transportation and transmission disintegrated this social order and founded a new hierarchy between rulers and masses. This

was the hierarchy of high speeds of penetration, leading to the miniaturization of the space of decision (automation), and at the same time to the extermination of tangible culture in the West.

The rapidity of images and signs in the mirror of the journey, windshield, television or computer screen — after having excessively simplified and deformed the dromoscopic vision of the world at the turn of the century, today makes it *subliminal*.¹⁸

Every man's *freedom of reason*, philosophy, disappears as well in this negation of distance, and thus of the journey — this negation being the indefinite acceleration of movement from which distance and journey come. When, after the last war, an author wrote: "There are no more opposition parties in France," we didn't understand the ineluctable nature of the event. We thought it was a temporary slackening, a certain political or intellectual cowardice, while in fact it was a technological advance re-establishing the absurd dialogue between the deciders and their subjects who are *chasing frantically after the thoughts of their interrogators*. The all-powerful opinion poll, variously abused in all kinds of fields, is nothing other than the reintroduction of ancient

tribal passivity through this last mutation of the journey: fore-sight.

To govern is more than ever to fore-see, in other words to go faster, *to see before*. If Balzac, in his day, found energy only in those who lived apart from society, conversely populations lose all of their energy as soon as they get caught in a system of welfare, in other words of totalitarian foresight. Sparta had neither productive culture nor even History. The Russian artists and intellectuals escaped with great difficulty from the laws of the Marxist cosmogony. Meanwhile, the Western bloc creates a symmetrical passivity in its own subjects, thanks to the *doctrine of security* — which, as we have seen, is only an all-points prevention system.

The spheric and immanent nature of the ultimate State goes from the nuclear vector to the vertical vector over all planetary movement; the accumulation of foresight becomes the ultimate form of a single ethnic group. All this is only the end of the journey: last stop, everybody off. Freedom of reason founders, along with the commodity — man's freedom of movement.

Thus, when Curcio speaks of terrorism as a machine of destruction, he doesn't know what

he is talking about. The exterminating angel is only the exterminating engine, which now eludes everyone's control.

At this level, terrorism is only the last simulation of the revolutionary loading of the masses into the internal war-machine. It is a survival tactic comparable to the nostalgic taste that pushes more and more people, in the age of supersonic jets, to use old propeller-driven planes, model cars and steam-engine trains, to buy shut-down railroad stations in order to reconstruct the old transportation system of the voyeur-voyager and recapture the illusion of a certain individual power over the concept and control of slower, less-sophisticated vehicles.

The instantaneousness of explosions, the sudden flare of assassinations, appear to the individual as the paroxysm of speed; they allowed for the casualties of the media hierarchy, the shattering of the mirror of travel. But aren't criminal gangs the last representation of the family?

With the disappearance of territorial strategy, it is not surprising to see the return of the inseparable couple, as the last form of the original tactical unity, the little family commando group. "Held together by love and hate," Minister Streibel

said at the burial of Gudrun Ensslin and Andreas Baader, before their bodies were buried in the same grave at the request of the young woman's father. Minister Ensslin did not want them separated.



V. IT IS TIME WE REALIZED THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT ecological struggles in these last years have a common denominator: they have all taken place and been organized around the problem of speed and its vectors, of the expansion of its area. From the Larzac camp to the town of Malville,¹⁹ from Tokyo-Narita Airport to the black tide in Brittany, territory, in the final account, has always been defended — from the beginning of popular struggle — against the same enemy: *physical or mechanical acceleration*, the acceleration of particles, of vehicles.

Thus we can better understand the meaning of the French National Guard's new slogans, ceaselessly repeated to motorists: "Speed is outmoded!" Outmoded indeed, but only for civilians; and the "loading of masses" is really the breaking-point of our civilization, literally from *splitting cargo*.

The anarchist capitalists' *Minimum State* is indeed nothing other than the explosion of the hierarchy of speeds. Furthermore, this is the meaning of all the structural reforms recently imposed by President Giscard d'Estaing and Prime Minister Raymond Barre: *the notion of public service is disappearing from the media*. While industrial management is entrusted to arms engineers and the Ministry of Equipment is dismantled, the State, by refusing credit to national enterprises, imposes the idea of "profitability" onto what was formerly in the general interest and for the public good.

Thus they deliver national property into the hands of the banks and monopolies for matters of operation, and into the hands of the territorial army for matters of discipline and repression, following the Latin American model. All this, of course, is inspired in more-or-less hidden fashion by the singular coincidence of NATO's plans for universal circulation, and those of the Trilateral Commission for the political and economic concentration of power, all in the same year: 1973.

But beyond this, the NATO plan aims at making *entirely logistical* that which, in the spatial continuum, was still divided between the civilian and the military.



FROM THIS ANGLE, THEN, AN ECOLOGICAL DEFENSE worthy of the name becomes the last truly political stakes of civilian populations. Fundamental stakes for human rights, since it means the simple freedom to come and go, as well as the freedom to remain, to stay put.

If you want proof, you need only look at a map of the physical geography of France, and superimpose on it a transparent map representing the evolution of urban areas in the last two hundred years. You will notice that, on the whole, the territory has not been significantly modified by that city "pavement" so often reviled by the defenders of Nature. Now, let's try again with another transparent map, this one showing the totality — visible and invisible — of communication networks: canals, railways, airways, highways and, from the visual path of Claude Chappe's ocular telegraph to the electronic age, radar. We immediately realize that during the last two centuries of our history, the physical geography of France has completely disappeared under the inextricable tangle of the different media systems; that *not only does delocalization occupy more territory than does*

localization, but it occupies it in totalitarian fashion. If, furthermore, we recall that the notion of public service is not fundamental to the field of transmissions (the recent hubbub about local radio stations only echoes the succession of confrontations which from the outset have arisen around the circuits of control and diffusion of information);²⁰ if, as NATO wishes, we strip every communications system of that kind of neutrality conferred on it by the notion of public service and make the whole thing entirely techno-logistical; then you will have before your eyes *the true physical body of the modern totalitarian State, its speed-body.*

The tangle of networks blackening your map is only the triumph of the military population, the administration of a territory set up for the conductibility of war, “set off as the perpetual mechanism of pure power, by energies producing an ever-increased acceleration.” This is what the doctrine of security is founded on: the saturation of time and space by speed, making daily life the last theater of operations, the ultimate scene of strategic foresight.

Today, how can we still believe in imprisonment? If the prisoner was once able to declare,

like Roland Garros, that the best way to escape an enclosed space is simply to walk out the door (which in his day stood him in good stead), today it’s by fleeing through the door that we find ourselves imprisoned. Deportation has become our daily bread, since, from the weekend to the back-and-forth of work, we delocalize. And as soon as we delocalize, something or someone is there to arrange our mobility for us, to harness the movements of our *active* lives which — insofar as they necessarily take place in the zone of totalitarian mediation — never escape external control, very simply (as our map showed us) because there is no place left to stop, to park.

All mass must be permanently subject to the dictatorship of movement, as the latest plans of the French national train company prove. They want to do away with the Parisian train stations, because of the slow-downs they cause in the flow of traffic, by directly linking the Paris metro system to the railroads — thus destroying both the idea of urban centrality and the political notion of a national capital.



IN FACT, LIBERALISM HAS ALWAYS EQUATED THE ILLUSION of freedom with that of mobility. If, in his day, President Nixon readily declared that his country had no imperialist ambitions over neighboring territories, but *only wanted to offer the world a new way of life*, it was already a case of that kind of optical illusion that the freemarket economists' *Minimum State* already reproduces. For this State can only seem *minimum* insofar as its empire is not that of an inert territorial body, but rather of the centralized and miniaturized control of a constantly active, yet invisible and unknowable, body of communications.

It is the ignorance — deliberate or not — of these fundamental realities that gives ecological struggle the quaint, folksy aspect which hurt it so much in European (especially French) public opinion during the last legislative elections.

And in fact, ecological movements are often like Don Quixote, mistaking his targets in a combat that is both pathetic and deadly. They want to put Paris in the countryside. But where do you see Paris on our transparent map? Where do you see countryside? From now on, they no longer exist, any more than “inside” and “outside” exist for our prisoner. Indeed, what's the use of staging

confrontations to defend a locale, a localization, if one is not aware — like the Japanese in Tokyo–Narita — of the delocalization of power as narrative of the dromological invasion?

Meanwhile, damage and disaster occur just like the emergence of war populations, nihilistic spectre of the speed of those with no name, who cannot be named and who nonetheless arrive, those whom Chaucer in the fourteenth century already called “*builders of smoke jails... greenish men, couriers of the Great Fear...*” The modern myth of UFO's is mixed with that of the terrifying immanence of assassination attempts, cataclysms, crime, epidemics, enemy threats.



THE DEMOCRATIZATION OF TRANSPORTATION has led to that of crime; delocalization has led to desocialization. The fearsome word “absenteeism,” in the factories and workshops, is only the desertion of the work-place or place of habitation for the channels of transportation, a popular evaporation in the very speed of displacements. Must we recall that Italy was the country with the highest rate of work absenteeism in Europe, before top-

ping all other nations in the “state of insecurity”?

Do motorcycle gangs go to the “Rungis track”²¹ on Friday nights simply to ride their bikes? No, they go there to ride their bikes, as they say, in “wildcat” manner, in other words, away from the eyes of outsiders, the security checks of traffic cops — if only to kill or be killed freely.



WHEN THE EUROPEAN REVOLUTIONARIES IN THE nineteenth century claimed that *to control the streets is to control the State*, they had no idea of the technological way in which they would in fact lose both the streets and the State at the same time!

For the past several years, officials have been instituting an obligatory, peaceful and pleasant pedestrian traffic. But the *orange card* they are now talking about gives us a less museographic view of these pedestrian urban centers. In fact, the orange card takes up and amplifies the various government projects which the municipalities and the suburban populations have been fiercely battling: they had first thought to keep the masses of automobiles from collecting in ur-

ban centers by building parking lots on the outskirts. Then, of course, they suggested a *toll booth* located quite literally at the city’s entrance points; even now, traffic lights regulate the highway traffic on the access roads.

The orange card takes it even further: it concerns travelers from both the suburbs and the center, without distinction. For a relatively modest sum, it *permits* you access to the street, roads and public transport. Thus, this plan absolutely completes the measures that have been taken since 1973 in the field of traffic. The suppression, in 1974, of the ticket taker in the French metro and train stations does not indicate a relaxation in the supervision of travelers, but rather a reinforcement. In fact, the ticket taker — whose job was simply related to metro *service* — is now replaced by the ambiguous personnel of the Central Agency for Metro Security (CCSM), whose function is more to police than to serve. Turnstile-hopping is now likened to much more serious crimes, such as assault and vandalism — not to mention the pure and simple identity checks made with the help of police patrols, closed-circuit cameras, etc. The orange card, which would be “personalized,” and for which the Paris transit authority (RATP)

would like to deduct the price automatically from the rider's bank account, would thus be exactly like one of those *Ausweiss* so dear to the occupation forces.

We find here, completely normalized, the conditions of the state of siege of military security. The orange card would be nothing other than a permit to circulate which, if denied you, would block your access to the streets, highways and public transport.

Sooner or later, the plan will be adopted. It completes quite well the train company's plan to do away with the stations. And indeed, what an advantage it would be for them to establish this uninterrupted control of the traffic flow, the necessities of transit replacing the unforeseeable reactions and desires of the travelers, the waiting room. After the kidnapping of Baron Empain,²² the policeman's union brought up the fact that current methods allowed for *an increase in illegal acts, notably in the practice of car searches*, which Parliament refused to legalize in January 1978.

Planning led less to economic reorganization than to techno-logistical progress, a fearsome concentration on executive power exercised with no effective parliamentary control.

The inhabitants of the Parisian outskirts will thus be able to converge under high surveillance toward the historic center of their museum-city, capital of a vanished national State. This is made particularly clear by the decision to make the old Les Halles market area into an international cultural center. The area was sterilized, traffic jams and communities disappeared into thin air, the original working-class inhabitants were evacuated like those of old Marseilles or of the Warsaw ghetto, once upon a time. The passers-by that one sees in this repainted decor have all become foreigners in their own country, tourists in their own city, strangers to each other. They are, nonetheless, all well-known to the police.

Airport-style commerce and art are no longer reserved for the shop windows of international terminals: the historic center of cities also offers the tired pedestrians "airport architecture," the works and imbecilic games of these false natives.



AND WHAT IF THE PRIMARY GOAL OF TRAVEL WAS NOT to "go" somewhere, but simply to no longer be

where one is? What if the aim of movement has become like that of military invasions or sports records: to go faster while going nowhere, in other words to disappear? Drop-outs, beat generation, migrants, motorists: *the unknown soldiers of the order of speeds.*

When I wrote this sentence, I didn't quite realize how far it went. The order of speeds not only makes enemies of everyone, it also makes them strangers — before turning them into the missing. And what if the extraordinary sophistication of the media, of all the media, the accelerated transportation of beings, signs and things, had in the final account only composed, on each level, the weapons of a single arsenal? What if they had only transmitted the will-to-invasion of deflagration/disappearance, of which the shock of highway accidents — the end of the journey — would be a primary representation?

The fascinating image of the vehicle's implosion under the impact of velocity, an object of visual delight filmed in slow or fast motion, could even be simulated with the help of real corpses or stunt drivers.... But there are also concealed threats in those faceless masses who crowd around television stars during outdoor filmings,

and who wave their arms like drowning men to be noticed for an instant; in the way TV viewers approach current celebrities in the street: "You don't know me, but I know you... You've never seen me, but I've seen you!" These demands aim at breaking less the *unilateralness* of the image (as they want us to believe with that business of independent transmitters) than its *immaterialness* — that new form of social extermination which bears the media's de-synchronizing power, when these media serve a power that now seeks to govern more by the administration of time than of territory.

From the instant replay in sports broadcasts; to Art Buchwald's fable about a television viewer who doesn't feel himself age because the old series are re-run year in and year out, at the same time and in the same season; to the progressive disappearance of "live" shows and programs filmed outdoors, while variety shows latch onto the cult of vanished idols, making contemporary stars of Elvis and Mistinguett. The number of "major attractions" can thus diminish by the day, while, paradoxically, radio and television programs become permanent.

Even more fearsome than the ecological

damage created by the war of planned obsolescence, the new totalitarian empire of communications creates temporal ruins, a simulation of eternity that presupposes the disappearance of any kind of hideout — spatial or otherwise. Taken to extremes, as in Richard Matheson's marvelous novel, *I Am Legend*, the last survivor of the slow-motion cataclysm now devastating the universe, the proverbial last man on Earth, could still believe he was living on an overpopulated planet, thanks to his video recorder.

Pure War is speed and military population. It is thus the population of time, the ultimate metaphysical figure of "projected" societies. "Such historical writing is *lifeless*; such formulas and *abstract representations* make the content of the work dry through too much *repetition*." In the final account, Hegel, in this criticism of Livy, dismisses the essential aspect of the phenomenology of History: the quasi-retinal persistence of movement, of all movement, born of the dromoscopic illusion of the conqueror's assault, which is the optical illusion of both speed and reasonable discourse.

Let's see how the old partisans of evolutionism made out with their ostensibly cinematic

theory. They simply explained the missing links in the species chain, those "irrefutable" proofs of a great continuous development of life, by their temporary disappearance from the field of investigation. From that point on, their primary concern was to find the fossilized image of these missing links, literally their "negative" — in short, to splice together the cuts in the film of metamorphosis.

Their adventure was very much like that of Georges Méliès, who unwittingly invented cinematic special effects. "I was filming the Place de l'Opéra," he recounts, "when suddenly my camera stopped working. In the time it took me to examine the rollers, you can imagine how much the people in the street had changed! At the time I didn't think about it, and I finished shooting the roll. But when I developed it! . . . I had begun filming a bus coming from the Boulevard des Capucines, and by the time it crossed the square it had turned into a hearse!"

Livy and Méliès were precursors. They knew that before acting in History, it was necessary to see how History acted.



MORE THAN ON REASON, WESTERN HISTORY HAS been built on the reasons of moving forces — in other words, on the power of what animates, activates or carries, at the expense of the reality principle or even of simple realism. Likewise, Méliès suddenly privileged his roll of film as an autonomous producer of cinematic movement, with respect to the verisimilitude of the vehicular movement it was supposedly showing us — the vehicle turning before our eyes from a bus into a hearse.... In short, the film substituted the illusion of its continuous speed for a discontinuous objective reality. It made two vehicles into one, a kind of vehicle-synthesis, by spiriting away the real time of movement in a fictional speed.

In the same way, the historic synthesis (narrative of battle) appeared to be laden with metamorphosis (revolution), insofar as it was able to surpass, even to interrupt, the movements taking place, all the while remaining continuous itself.

Thus, as Kipling stated, the first casualty of war is always Truth. Let us look, for example, at the tenure of the economic war waged against the world by the West. By the end of the nineteenth century, M.I.S. Bloch and other enlight-

ened men were already able to announce where the tendency was leading: it would all depend on the fate reserved for what would become the Third World — that is, on the price of raw materials. The matter would be resolved by violence.

And so the furious acceleration of exchanges announced by the New Deal, a veritable chrono-politics of consumption, could develop with impunity. This led from the monetary standard to the military standard, then to the nuclear standard, in an absolute assimilation of the depletion of resources to that of exchange. By promoting the freeing of prices, through the nihilism of consumption (consumption of nothing, security and services), the members of the Trilateral Commission or the anarchistic capitalists only saved face — the face of a reality of exchanges which has vanished in the autonomous speed of their movement.

For Western economy, then, the only thing still evolving is, as Gary Becker writes, the price of time. Time has become the essential finality of production (J. Attali), both the countdown of History and the last trick of the economy.

Notes to Part Two

- ¹. In a series of articles published in *Le Monde* in April 1978, Louis Althusser questioned the “military aspect” of the French Communist Party — their strategy of secrecy, likening politics to poliorcetics — and thus taking up rather faithfully the theses of my book *Speed and Politics*: “The State’s political power, therefore, is only secondarily ‘power organized by one class to oppress another.’ More materially, it is *the polis, the police, in other words, the highway patrol*, insofar as, since the dawn of the bourgeois revolution, the political discourse has been no more than *a series of more-or-less conscious repetitions of the old communal poliorcetics,*” etc....
- ². The “legal duel” combined this essential pas-

- sage from the right to speak to the right to act.
3. Moses Finley, *Studies in Land and Credit in Ancient Athens*, Chapter 3.
 4. Mousson-Lestang, in *Revue historique*, 1974.
 5. From the Latin *substare*, “to stand under,” and *subsistare*, “to continue being, to last.”
 6. When the owners of the Lip watch factory declared bankruptcy and began to liquidate their holdings, the workers, in an attempt to save their jobs, seized the factory’s stock and tried to sell it directly to the public. For more on the Lip strike in French political and labor history, see A. Belden Fields, *Trotskyism and Maoism: Theory and Practice in France and the United States* (New York: Autonomedia, 1988). [Translator’s note.]
 7. See Henri Lepage, *Demain le capitalisme*, 1978: “Certain regrettable facts weigh heavily against the image that ‘Friedman’s boys’ want to give of themselves, inviting us to a ‘social convivialization’ in the best tradition of Monk Illich, and lending a hand to General Pinochet to help him define and apply a political economy, whose disastrous results for civilian populations everyone knows....”
 8. See Paul Virilio, *Speed and Politics*, Part IV,

- “The State of Emergency,” (New York: Semiotext(e), 1985).
9. Provocation by the military is deliberate. Is there any need to recall that Demeter was the name of the Greek earth-goddess of fertility and the harvest?
 10. Larzac, in a pastoral area of the French countryside, was the site proposed by the army for the implantation of nuclear warhead silos, provoking heavy protest by pacifist groups. For a more detailed discussion of this event, see Paul Virilio’s *Speed and Politics*, Part III, “The End of the Proletariat,” (New York: Semiotext(e), 1985). [Translator’s note.]
 11. Klaus Croissant was the defense attorney for the Red Army Fraktion. After the abduction and subsequent death of industrialist Hans Martin Schleyer in late 1977, Croissant was in turn accused of terrorist activities and extradited from France to Germany [Translator’s note].
 12. Unlike the ancient believer in metempsychosis, the metaphysician, intelligence in transit, is welcome nowhere, is nowhere in his element. He is a *projectile* in the heart of the great All of conscious matter. This is Empedocles’ *Frag-*

ments, 115, so often quoted by the Mediterranean authors, from Plutarch to the Fascist Futurists: the “terrible word of Fate, an old decree... that whosoever of those far spirits do foul their limbs with slaughter in offense shall wander thrice ten thousand weary years, and be born through time in various shapes of mortal kind... For now Air hunts them onward to the Sea; the wild Sea disgorges them on Land; now Earth will spew toward fire of burning Sun; whence he will toss them back to whirling Air — each gets from other what they all abhor. And in that brood I too am numbered now....”

13. Albert Speer, *Inside the Third Reich*.
14. Worrisome complicity being established between the members of the Board of Inquiry of Economic Welfare and the technocrats of total war. Cf. Paul Virilio, *Bunker archéologie*, 1975.
15. Henri Caillavet (1914–), lawyer, author, and French senator prominent as a member of commissions on government controls on information, the press and television. [Translator’s note.]
16. Henry Messéant, *Souvenirs vécus et choses vues*

de la grande île, 1936.

17. “Movement controls the event. By making transparency active, speed metamorphosized appearances.” Paul Virilio, “Dromoscopy,” in *Critique*, 1978.
18. See the “transit of art” at the turn of the century. Russian nihilism goes from Berlin to Paris, then to New York, this communication existing between Malevitch, Einstein or Marinetti, between the gulags and Hiroshima.... From Dada to the subliminal message broadcast in the form of brief flashes of light, addressed solely to the television viewers’ subconscious.
19. The site of large pacifist demonstrations. For a more detailed discussion of this event, see Paul Virilio’s *Speed and Politics*, Part III, “The End of the Proletariat,” (New York: Semiotext(e), 1985). [Translator’s note].
20. When, in 1829, Baron de Villeneuve, Director of the Postal Services, suggested merging his department with the telegraph, the Minister of the Interior refused: “The telegraphic service is too strictly linked to the interests of the Royal Police to let it be removed from the Ministry department (the Interior) under whose

jurisdiction it now falls." And, in 1868, Gambetta was already denouncing Louis-Napoleon's *coup d'état* as having depended on "the new means of communication that science has placed in the hands of men: the telegraph and the steam engine."

21. The alleyways of the Rungis marketplace, in Paris' industrial suburbs, were transformed into improvised race tracks.
22. Baron Edouard-Jean Empain, a prominent Belgian industrialist, was kidnapped near his Paris home at the end of January, 1978, and released in March of that year after police prevented his family from paying a ransom of \$8.6 million. [Translator's note.]

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