

**DESTROYING
CIVILISATION**



*Nothing that matters is necessary,
but it is always necessary for something to matter.*

Note about the translation

This text was originally written in French. The translation hasn't been made by professionals but by partisans, with the precious help of English-speaking friends.

Some translation choices might sound strange for an English speaker. We try in both languages to make a use of our political theory, wich means experimenting new ways of expressing our concepts, logic, expressions and images. This is because we believe in the intrication between the form and the content. We want our language to reflect what we politically believe in: revolutionary thought has to get out of its comforting automatisms and find the potent words to connect with another thinking of the fight.

INTRODUCTION:

A PARTY FOR THE REVOLUTION

One has the instinct for revolution. By misfortune or by luck, one is a revolutionary. But how do we keep on becoming one with ever more potency*? How do we open a breach within the times, *large enough* to ignore the differences that don't matter, *narrow enough* to avoid creating a new market, *deep enough* to raise the longest standing issues? How do we truly scar the present and what kind of social wound *doesn't close up*? How do we increase the odds of revolution?

We know what the revolutionary is not: a reformist. But what are they then? Four people at least. First, they are an ethical being, since they accede to a different logic than the institutional one. Second, they are a political being, since they tackle issues that go beyond their own little scope. Third, they are a partisan, since they belong to something and do not excuse themselves from existing. Fourth, they are an insurgent, since they physically go into battle. These four, we run into them separately in the world, but they inevitably come together in the revolutionary. If you relate to at least one of them, then what we are talking about is for you. But seeing as you can always exit institutions in a selfish way; seeing as it's always possible to engage in politics forgetting the meaning that once guided you; seeing as you can belong to everything and anything; seeing as you can fight for bullshit; for all these reasons, our ultimate goal is to clear up the conditions for these four to meet. For all together, they spell: decivilisation.

* Unsurprisingly, translating the French term "puissance" is a complex task. "Power" is often used but it fails to distinguish two forces: the one that confines (power), and the one that liberates. Such a distinction is central to our proposition. "Possibility" or "potentiality" have the advantage of giving space to what has not yet occurred, thereby opening up the horizon to what currently seems impossible. But these terms side too much with eventuality and fetichize the unfinished. It is fundamental for us to cleave to the idea of force as such. Besides, "possibility" is already fully part of the capitalist, entrepreneurial or libertarian vocabulary. "To widen the scope of possibilities" has become a banal advertising slogan that in no way attacks this world. "Potency" has the problem of being commonly related to virility. But as it is also the most connected to the imaginary of force, it seems like the closest word to our idea of a force foreign to power. We therefore choose to fill it with that specific meaning.

“So what do you propose?” For a long time, we had to answer “nothing”, or “wrong question”. Sure, there is no alternative system to imagine, no contours of an ideal society to draw, no egalitarian institutional model to find. Any possibility of an overthrow expressed in the language of the present remains its prisoner. We refuse whatever is currently considered possible and socially reasonable. This means not that we want nothing, but that we have to set up camp inside the field of the impossible. Far from abandoning any constructive gesture, we reconnect with the conditions for an acceptable proposition. First it mustn’t give a damn about its visibility. And although destroying everything without justification will always make more sense than to keep digging our own grave, our ambition is higher. We want to reinforce the possibility that an event—in the sense of a turning point—doesn’t fall back into normality. That insurrections stop dissolving into the formation of a new government or a new constitution. That victory stops being the other word for defeat. What the radical option lacks *first and foremost* is neither intensity nor diffusion, but potency, and that requires assertions.

First assertion: the game is not over. No matter how inextricable what faces us can be, surges of resistance keep springing in both familiar and unexpected forms. This attests to the end of a reign which, nonetheless, can still drag on. Although the game is not over, it does not depend primarily on the political weather, but on a very simple truth: every hegemony has an end. This statement becomes a truth as soon as we turn it into an existential decision. This is how we believe in revolution: we know it’s possible to overthrow the powers that be—what is established and without opposition—and we make it the core wager of our lives. But the consensus these days is rather that there is no truth, no meaning. This defeatism is part of what we have to fight. “This world is full of shit”; “there’s nothing worth saving”: these are disconcertingly banal. From the trader to the radical activist, everyone sits somewhere between cynicism and depression. It has become ever more difficult to reason dispassionately, ever more tempting to follow the rhythm of decadence in order to vibrate a bit with our time, and it’s a vicious cycle. No, just because there is nothing to *save* does not mean that there is *nothing*.

Second assertion: we have something to propose. It might seem somewhat abstract or “meta”, but our proposal is first of all a formal one. There are ways of doing things that don’t necessarily reproduce institutional logic. And there even is *a logic of what resists* institution. Making this logic a priority, making it grow, retrieving it whenever we lose it—it’s a real struggle, it’s the whole struggle, and the outcome is never guaranteed. It can and it must, however, be guaranteed in the form of a concept, a word which concentrates and contains its logic as a whole. This word is “use”. It is not a magic word, but rather an ultra-dense concept. You only have to brush up against its meaning to reveal what we’re not seeing, what we’re forgetting. It concentrates into a single point the list of all the mistakes that make us fall back into the institution. It is decisive, which means that there is a clear contradiction in using it willy-nilly. Since it carries with it a sense of organisation that escapes that of power, it thereby unlocks the possibility of a strong organisation. So there is nothing left to oppose the return of *one* specific use: the Party. How to organise around a position, that is the question of the Party.

Third assertion: let's retake the political terrain. If all incarnations of politics are detestable, from the Member of Parliament to the non-profit activist, from bolshevism to digital platformism, it's for a reason: the terrain has been totally captured. Rather than an excuse for capitulation and the abandonment of politics, we see in it the chance to ask the question anew. Politics is a way of saying that what concerns me goes beyond my loved ones and my surroundings. It's the opposite of privilege. It's about not abandoning the large scale and the long-term. It's the courage to resist social pressure, to stay the course amidst winds and tides. Politics is a matter of decision, whereas morality is a matter of judgment. The enemy makes politics disappear, conceals it, because it is the place where the greatest potency is at stake, where lie the greatest possibilities of liberation. The enemy itself has to act as if it weren't political. How? By talking for everyone, as if it were everyone and everything, as if it were the world itself. Universalism is its invisibility cloak.

What we propose is a Party for the revolution. The idea is to make possible stronger action starting now. By detailing a vision of the Party, we formulate a position and we clarify what we mean by revolution. This process is not an introspective one. The Party is a proposition for the times, one that strengthens a certain kind of relationship to politics, provokes a positioning that extends far beyond the "post-appelist"* group that is speaking here. Talking of Party is a way of saying we have to get out of the reign of informality, we have to reconnect to a certain kind of solidity, and fight against the crumbling of our practices. Of course, in the negative, this also indicates everything that we must absolutely not reproduce: formalism, ideology, enclosure, and ultimately, becoming counter-revolutionary. What the revolutionary parties of the 20th century were lacking was a paradigm foreign to power. When a revolutionary ambition articulates such a paradigm, it no longer needs to translate it into the language of its enemy, nor to compromise its forms into those it wants to fight. For us, this makes all the difference. The problem is that it is very easy to reduce the Party to this or that. An irreducible form can always be distorted, it can always be reduced to an object. In order not to get lost, we have to learn to maintain a gap. The Party is the gap between everything that enters in it and what it enters into. It is not reducible to gestures, to people, to places, to moments, to texts which constitute it, because it cannot exist without entering into relation with things beyond itself, with situations of open warfare. Nor is it reducible to its horizon, or it would just be pure abstraction without substance. It is the *problematic, complicated* and *never automatic* link between practices and demands, between gestures and an infinite horizon. In a word, the Party is a use. It is impossible to understand it without tackling, one after the other, the questions that it raises.

* The French text *Appel* (In English *Call*), published in 2003, carries the refusal of political identities. The term "appelist" therefore doesn't make any sense and has mainly been used as a label to discredit this political position. While looking for a bifurcation, *Destroying Civilisation* nonetheless takes on an inheritance of this text.

Institution and revolution

Institution is the basic unit of the politics of power, the condition underlying all government. So it's the relationship to institution that helps distinguish the revolutionary from the reformist.

We name reformism any political belief and practice centred on institution—be it present, future, or past. Reformism consists in feeding, in varying proportions, two fundamental illusions and their shadows. On one hand, the conservative illusion: “there is no other form than institution”. It is formulated through blackmail: either institution or chaos. Either the hegemonic form or no form at all. Under the term “chaos”, the conservative finds and forms this and that figure contrasted to the “human”: the barbarian, the savage, the animal, the primitive, the monster, the child, the woman. On the other hand, the progressive or leftist illusion: “The institution can lead us beyond itself. It can hold on to its promise”. This is the perverse side of reformism, there is no other way to say it. The conservative holds on to order, and the progressive promises that order will be surpassed. Reformism is the dynamic that synthesises both poles. Its motto: “Everything must change, so that nothing changes”*.

In the shadow of reformism grows a third illusion, the reactionary illusion: “the old regime was better”. We name Reaction the general form of being-disappointed-by-reformism, the shadow it casts. *The reactionary champions yesterday's reformism*, calling it new order. In theory, the transition from reformism to Reaction raises no serious problem: one is just the past of the other. The reactionary always stands in murky relationship with reformism, even though the opposite is not always true. Nostalgic-in-a-literary-vein, or energetic-in-the-fascist-mode, the reactionary always questions existing institutions but never the institution as such. The chronic phobias of the conservative grow inside them, side by side with a passion for law and order. They believe that in order to preserve civilisation (be it French, European, American, Islamic...) its regeneration is required. Just as the conservative is ashamed of the reactionary (and envies them a little) the progressive is ashamed of the revolutionary (and envies them a lot).

Revolution relies on the other possibility: “we can live without government, without anything that serves to govern the real; we can live without the reign of institutions”. What matters cannot be instituted. When it is instituted, it is killed. Institutions must therefore be destroyed. As we will see, we are facing a logic that always tries to come back. We know that institutions will always remain, precisely in the place where things lose their importance and simply because one never gives importance to *everything*. Sure, some could object that there will always be stop signs and traffic signals. What is at stake here is the systematic destruction of what matters. The point is not to embark on a crusade against traffic laws, spelling norms, the habit of tying shoelaces, or the ritual of dotting i's and crossing t's. The point is to destroy institutional hegemony. And since it would be culpable stupidity to try to attack every institution with the same *energy*, the revolutionary focuses the offensive on the greatest of them all: civilisation**.

* Luchino Visconti, (1963), *The Leopard*.

** We do not draw inspiration from primitivist theories in our use of the term civilisation. Our critique of civilisation comprises the critique of modernity and the technologies exploited by power, as well as that of tradition and the myth of the noble savage. We do not fetishise any golden age to which we should return.

1

FORMULATING A PARADIGM

FOREIGN TO POWER

In the last thirty years, the unipolar character of the world has been under attack from all sides. But just because the general model is falling apart doesn't mean it's not the only one. This is the context of our intervention, this is the challenge we pose: to prove that there is more than one model. Only post-alterglobalisation, post-Occupy reformists are raising this question, with their production of alternatives and other "concrete utopias". Naturally they only end up with new versions of today's dominant paradigm. Radicals, for their part, have long since abandoned the question.

The two extremities of power

Power is the greatest curse of revolutionaries. We face a double bind. On one side, any seizure of power will endlessly repeat the same tragedy: the crushing of all resistance. On the other, fighting against power seems to condemn us to an infinite quest, without any perspective. How can we escape this circle?

Any *rapport de force**, any conflict, is nowadays only read in the language and through the lens of power, whether one is defending the prevailing order or fighting against it. Anything that has effects beyond ourselves is just perceived as "some power". This has to do with the fact that once the point was to track power down in the most apparently insignificant behaviours. The point was to show that power was not just the vertical imposition by an outside entity dictating behaviours both forbidden and encouraged; but that it was also present diffusely, within norms and apparatuses that we embody and perpetuate. All true, but then, if power hides inside each of us, then how to fight it, how to *face it*?

* The confrontation or the struggle between forces that take part in a conflict, and where the outcome can't be determined in advance.

This so-called curse actually conceals a widespread confusion. Because we keep mistaking different orders of power for each other, we end up losing the most elementary strategic sense. We can identify two levels, which are also the two extremities of our problem. Power as possibility; and power as a world.

The possibility inherent to power is enclosure. It's this fact: *anything* can close down on us—anything that we do, that we embody, that we love, that we hate, and so on. Power is therefore this strength that some thing can have, the strength to become my condition. What is at stake here is what we must call an *objective condition*: objective because it turns me into an object, because it blocks any subjectivity; and also because the condition itself is an object. For instance, if I look at everything through the social lens, then society becomes the prison-category. After the possibility of enclosure comes its execution: all those things that “say yes to it”. They might be forced to do so. They might also do so by vocation, in which case they are called institutions. The possibility of power becomes one with the process of institutionalisation. This way of thinking helps us to adopt the most unprejudiced point of view, which assumes that anything can wield power. For instance, there is nothing stopping an emancipatory speech from having a hold over people. But there is a flipside to this: power cannot be eradicated on this level; by definition it always tries to push its way back. If the advantage of theory is to help us constantly push aside what makes us blind to the emergence of power, its obvious weakness is to bring us back to our initial dead-end, that infinite fight without any perspective. Any specific form of power can be destroyed, but the possibility of power is indestructible.

To recover some perspective, we have to reach the other extremity of the question: power as a world. Now we are talking about something else entirely, we are switching from ontology to politics. What we are talking about is a socialised force that systematically activates the possibility of power, and ends up exerting its hold on a planetary scale. This force deploys itself entirely through enclosure. It extends its grip to *anything that has force*, to *anything that is a form*. All forms and all forces end up moulded into one single cast. Having made power hegemonic, this force keeps producing its own world. It mesmerises us, disorients us, causes us to lose our bearings: every hegemony works that way. However, somewhere deep inside us, we *know* that not every force, nor every form, is reducible to this. From now on, we will have to prove as much, we will have to go through a *demonstration of force*—and this is where we start getting some perspective. The totalising force that has made power hegemonic, however great its actual domination, still remains a determinate form, and can therefore be destroyed. Taking the offensive requires two mutually inseparable conditions. We will have to identify this totalising force, externalise it, and then place it in front of us in order to confront it. But to do so already presupposes an external standpoint: this requires us to connect with *the other great principle*, one acting in the opposite direction, resisting enclosure, which we call potency. Where can we go and look for such a principle? In which fundamental experience? The world that has made power hegemonic is the one that kills *everything that matters*. This we know by instinct, and political praxis only reinforces this conviction and helps us find the right words for it. So it is through the experience of what matters that we will find the strength of political renewal, and the strength to push in the opposite direction. Along the way this reconnects us with force itself. The idea is not to save what matters, but to grab it as a weapon.

So the fight begins when we make space for another force, which implies some disruption in our vocabulary. We call the force that resists enclosure, *potency* and we call any potent form, *use*. To have a use is to resist enclosure into objective conditions. It means to give potency to something, to find the path to what matters in that thing, to give it again and again the chance to escape, and at the same time to know that capture is always a possibility, a risk. Say for instance that there is something very important that you want to say in this day and age. Even before uttering the first word, the trap is already laid. A whole array of diffusion/reception forms exist beforehand, all designed to capture whatever matters in an argument, in order to cover up its potential scandal and, in the same move, to “understand it”—meaning to re-shape it into a socially profitable format. To have *use of a truth* raises the following questions: is your argument strong enough to get out into the world without being instantly recoded? What is its life expectancy? Are you sure it is the right moment, and especially, the right place? Is giving up on it an option? Have you made your way through the right path?

There is no such thing as salvation, and there is no way of proceeding that will completely prevent the taking of power or its exercise. The difference between power and potency is never crystal clear, it doesn't have a universal ground, nor can it be instituted. This doesn't mean that we have to abandon this frontline. It means we have to get organised so that this line holds and becomes stronger by the day. Let's call this *making a difference*.

Five powers, one hegemony

The politics of power is to have the real at its disposal. This derives from a central operation: *hegemony*. Hegemony is the annexation of a question. It's the founding gesture of the institution, perpetually repeated, through which its concept gains consistency. Security, energy, healthcare, education, food, transport, and so on. It thereby becomes possible to identify a small number of fundamental institutions, which are themselves made of a host of micro-institutions or apparatuses.

As it so happens, the hegemonic gesture, acting as a central power, can be broken down into a set of lower-level powers, all indispensable to its realisation. There are five of them. Understanding this division helps us renew from top to bottom the analysis of the politics of power, by putting most of the existing analyses in their place as partial, and even at fault, seeing as they remain blind to their own partiality.

Firstly, it's a matter of dictating the question, by imposing its formulation, by making any other approach impossible.

Power to dictate—planting the flag of hegemony.

Secondly, the more the formulation crushes the others, the more it seems natural, the more it manages to disappear as a decision. It stops being a possibility and becomes a necessity, and everyone falls into alienation. The perfect alienation is when there isn't any outside left.

Power of disappearing—the mask of hegemony.

Thirdly, the question can always be articulated in the form of an antinomy, an above and below, a centre and periphery. Man above; below the animal, the primitive, the savage, the barbarian, the Black man, the woman, the child, the fag, and so on.

Power of dividing—the knife of hegemony.

Fourthly, based on a founding division, the annexed territory works as a system of domination, with an infinite possibility of intermediate ranks.

Power of dominating—the food chain of hegemony.

Fifthly, every system of domination entails an excluded middle. For instance, national identity imposes a hierarchy among its citizens, but at the same time makes all non-citizens and non-nationals invisible. This exclusion from the sphere of the visible is *carte blanche* for elimination pure and simple, in the case where the invisible manifests its existence a little too much. In general, any machine made to integrate is also a machine made to disintegrate. The ordinary fate of the non-human is to be consumed.

Power of destruction—the black hole of hegemony.

Each of these five levels indicates a property of the we-of-power. Since it is dictated, this we crushes all others. Since it disappears, it sees itself as the world, forgets it's a specific common. Since it is divided, it is simply false. It is the alibi of a system of domination, it digests beings.

From this point, those approaches that stick to one or the other of the five powers appears to us essentially flawed. Such analyses systematise a blind spot and endlessly replicate the same mistake. The moral rectitude they display relies on denial (by refusing to speak of one or the other power), and on an inaccurate focus (inability to zoom out). We can therefore correlate a political sensibility with each power, once it stands in the centre. Power of dictating: a focus on hegemony in general, combined with a merely superficial understanding of it. Denunciations of “dictatorship”. Power of disappearing: the focus is on attacking the norm, on alienation and estrangement from the world that derives from it. Power of dividing: insistence on antinomies and binary-machines. The power of dominating fuels a host of tendencies, generated by the infinite subdivision of the question: Marxism, feminism, decoloniality, antispeciesism, LGBTQIA+ tendency, intersectionality, but also nietzscheanism (obsession with moral/christian domination). The power of destruction has to do with humanity’s actions over the rest, that is to say, ecology. What’s wrong with enviros? While half of the radical scene falls into the ghastly tendency of creating its own tribunal against any form of power, enviros show themselves incapable of integrating the devastation of the world as one piece of the politics of power, which remains the central problematic. In short, they struggle to politicise the issues they decry, serving them on a platter to reformists.

In a way, it is justified to speak of political *sensibilities*. At the end of the day, a sensibility is something that is not yet, not quite a position. Because we are struck first by this rather than that, we become hypersensitive to this, while that will barely make us react. One might be sensitive to the power of destruction, and will go for ecology. Another vomits normality, and becomes able to detect it in its most minute instances, so as to flee. Everywhere such a person sees only this estrangement from the world, this alienation, normal people. This will lead them towards a certain autonomist tendency. Another one will uncover modernity in every one of its manifestations. And by seeing the commons that the present devours, by constantly looking back, one’s communism switches to the side of the reactionaries. In a fourth one’s perspective, the police becomes an obsession, and there they go down the road to victimisation. And so on, and so on.

This represents for us a complex issue. It’s a matter of not being contemptuous a priori of any spark of politicisation, of taking seriously what each of them reveal. But we refuse to take even the slightest step into the *permanent social forum* of activism, where everyone has a little stand to sell their wares, with a cultivated art for guilt-tripping and passive-aggressiveness. For this reason, we want to place any spark in a broader context. This simple change in attitude completely upends one’s relationship to ideology. Refusing both market and contempt has consequences:

- We want to resist the temptation of tying ourselves down to our first spark of politicisation, to what first shaped us. We find potency in it and abandoning it is out of the question; but it is urgent to zoom out. Against unilateralism.
- We refuse to act as a referee (unlike marxists, who will explain that there is a natural site for struggle which is more important than the others), and above all to mistake a general analysis for a simple juxtaposition of refusals (the big soup of anti-anything and everything).
- It is within a specific situation that a site of struggle gains importance
- We don’t abandon the idea of enemy: there is only one, not 36. A composite enemy: civilisation.

Domination is not the central lens

Before continuing, let's focus on a specific case. Domination is a power, the power to organise a society according to a vertical logic, one strictly equivalent to the food chain (a concept itself coming from some National Geographic documentary which civilisation must have been watching in its childhood and which it remains a big fan of). Domination is this social environment, this rotten atmosphere where it becomes real clear real quick that the only thing to know is who's gonna eat who. Domination is experienced as gravity, as a weight growing heavier the closer one gets to the bottom of the social ladder. For us, this weighty reality, is already a sign that we should stop explaining domination only by domination itself. This negative stance is the only one that makes sense in this matter, because it frees us from hasty solutions and leads to a revolutionary spirit.

Republican domination, police domination, racist, classist, sexist domination, domination through sexuality or gender (against the use that could be made of them); familial domination, moral domination (division of ethics into two camps, Good above and Evil below); not to mention religious domination, which can be seen as the first great attempt at totalizing every domination. The operating procedure is consistent: to seize us by one of our qualities, and then to project that quality as the frame of our actions. The debates are infinite about which part of each category is real, which part is constructed. While not every quality offers the same opportunities for capture, some situations are more exposed than others. However, we will not start to create a ranking based on the categories of prey-for-power to which we belong. Even though the temptation to buy into the illusion staged by domination has differing intensities for each of us, we must resist it, whatever it takes. If not we have lost everything. I am not my qualities, even if they are always present in me. I am definitely not what can get me caught. What I am is everything else, everything that resists my conditioning, my arrest, my capture. But what then? What I am is what I participate in. It is what I do, where I deploy my forces, how I fight, everything I put into motion, with whom, with what perspective, and in which order. What I am is a commons of practices, and the horizon.

All of this remains in the blind spot of any type of category. Since it aims at drawing a subject out of the world, at extracting it, a category mostly exists as a certain kind of blind spot. Needless to say the critique that puts a quality at its centre and favours a certain kind of domination is by definition already outdated. If one focuses on sexism, on male-female domination, then what about the domination over anyone not aligned on gender binarism? Since the seventies, the intersectional position dives into this breach of classic critique. But rather than acknowledging that in general the power of domination is not central, intersectionality only focuses on mending the net. And by concentrating its attention on the individual level, it loses sight of the political horizon. Slightly less blind than before, yet still as short-sighted (ableism).

It is imperative to take a step back. Every time categories are taken at face value, what is demonstrated is simply an adherence to the belief that the master's house can be destroyed with the master's tools. Marxism is the theorisation of a classless society based on a class division. Every feminism of every persuasion relies on women as a category to abolish pa-

triarchy. We say that it is pointless and doomed to failure. Hegemony cannot be inverted: this present text must face this question and draw the conclusions it demands. When one is not concerned with dynamiting the whole dominant/dominated division, one is condemned to consider possible only the simple inversion of poles. The most moderate explicitly ask for retribution, symbolic or material. The most radical remain shackled to this logic of recognition, which naturally implies a recognising power.

When we get out of this logic, we refuse legitimisation whether by power or by ourselves, we abandon *any kind of legitimacy whatsoever*. This is about maintaining a minimal degree of consistency, something many so-called enemies of power naively renounce. To grant oneself legitimacy is, within the institution of morality, to act dominant. One sets foot on the upper floor, leaving the lower to the guilty. We must refuse, in one fell swoop, the two sides of moral domination: both the guilt industry and *subjectivation as victim*. We must push away this miserable and repulsive consolation prize. It fits altogether well with the general logic of power: by grounding subjectivity within subjection, it victimises us. It is not surprising to see everywhere a tendency to indulge in one-upmanship about being a victim. Now cops claim they are victims of violence, and fascists victims of immigration. Activist media dive into the spiral; every day provides a new reason to show oneself *even more absolutely* dominated than yesterday, every day is an opportunity to show off proof of violence endured. What vision of the *rapport de force* does all this serve? How are we to aim towards victories, if they are each time reduced to reactions against the offensives launched by the other side? Can we not see that such an obscene exhibition of our weaknesses only strengthens our enemy, by participating in rendering it more terrible, more invincible, than it already is? We break with this enterprise of general enfeeblement.

Since the advent of Marxism, what has strengthened struggles against domination is thinking in terms of sides, a particular kind of politicisation that allows a potent leverage in battle, which breaks with the idea of general interest, which attacks universalism and its false unity. Nowadays, the discourse against dominations has become almost hegemonic and is a new prop for the universal. It is absolutely commonplace to claim to be antiracist, antisexist or environmentalist. At the same time, it becomes subversive to claim to be the opposite. Political incorrectness is only the mirror image of self-righteousness, the same highway to standardised thinking, just taken in the opposite direction. We can no longer feed this opposition, lest all resistance end up on the reactionary side. It is past time to make space for another way of thinking about antagonism.

The weight that we feel with domination, and that insufficiently explains it, is the weight of debt: each and every one of us must provide proof of our existence. We exist so little within society that we have to earn our life. And *some more than others*, as domination commands. This is how we have learnt to live for millennia. We say: negation of the debt. The only basis for good politics. No redemption, we don't have to buy ourselves back! No redeemer, get lost! Reformists will always tell you that we have to wait a bit longer, that now is not quite the right time to escape from bondage, that it is quite a corner to turn, that first there needs to be a certain amount of transitions that only exist in their heads, in other words first we should ascend the steps they have carved in the slope of their own social climbing. They take pride in their famous social progress: but what they never say out

loud is that in every era, we could have *jumped* all the way to the other side of the mirror of division. Progress is just what's left of these leaps and bounds, these moments of upheaval, once reformists have taken over and sent everyone home.

We have to resist the idea of simply inverting the debt, which ends up perpetuating it. This logic doesn't make any sense, since it is based on the absurd hypothesis that debt accrued from thousands of years of domination could ever be redeemed. Take those three cops over there, checking the ID of those two North Africans hanging out in front of a downtown university; making them turn around, hands against the wall, shaming them, giving them a pat down, making it last forever, there, at the top of the stairs, right at the entrance of the uni. Do you really think there is such a thing as one day getting square? As a matter of fact, the most banal manifestation, the most routine control check, already constitutes an absolute harm. In reality, when we want to knock down hegemony, we don't have anything to trade, we don't play the game: we turn the tables. We don't ask to be debt-free, we don't negotiate it, we take it. Politics of the done deal. But what gesture should we adopt? The first conquest towards potency is another conception of the *coup de force**. In politics, there are two irreconcilable ways of *taking*: either by exerting a hold on something, or by helping it escape that hold. The revolutionary is there to release a thing from its hold, and to attack all that invents, perpetuates, consolidates, strengthens, comforts, saves, or hides this hold.

* A move of strength rather than a move to take power.

An enemy: civilisation

It is crucial to name the enemy. It is a process of externalisation. The point is to think the reality of *one* form (not fifty), as the concentration of power operations, and their deep coherence. Otherwise inconsistency keeps growing. Without clear outlines, the enemy becomes something vague and nebulous, which in reality places it out of sight. Refusing to name the enemy and repeating as a good modern person that “it’s more complicated than that”, comes down to abandoning the basic strategic sense. Without clearly naming it, we can always be under the impression that the enemy is just the world itself. We must attack the command post itself, lest we never find the way out and remain endlessly wandering in our present confusion. Hitchcock said: “the more successful the villain, the more successful the picture”. In politics, the revolutionary searches for the *best worst enemy*.

It is in fact our most ancient family secret, the weightiest and the most universal. The best worst enemy is the one whose reign is the longest, burying all the others, so long that it blends into the passage of time itself. It reigns as the Good of humanity, its subjects call each other men and have no culture other than its dogma. Its religion is cleverly disguised: it is exhibited everywhere, and without saying it we practice it, simply by doing what we do. Its majesty justifies, glorifies and sanctifies the worst possible crap. It is the creator of all wealth, and its gift is our ordeal: turning everything into gold and making us lose the use of the world. It takes credit for every success, putrefying them from the inside, and blames the catastrophes on its subordinates. Those active in its service believe that each new idea comes from them, those who get organised to attack it are officially tilting at windmills. Yet there’s no doubt about its reality.

The best enemy is neither person nor group. It is a position, but an opaque one. It is the will that wants nothing but power. We are here in the presence of a generalised project of making the world available, a project called civilisation.

We’re here to demythologise civilisation. Unmasking it first implies figuring it out, defining it politically. We can only think clearly with machete in hand, and even then we must also make a fist. Because we have to be able to hack away at a dense jungle of representations. At every moment, force of habit can make us lose sight of the objective. What we are talking about is a shock that can be compared, on a political level, to looking down on Earth from space. As long as we haven’t felt that kind of shake-up, we will always miss the enemy. Once that’s done, anyone can feel free to declare that the Earth is flat. Or to stick to those most commonly miscast as the enemy, which are, in no particular order: authority, capitalism, the Chinese, Christianity, colonisation, democracy, apparatuses, the Law, the economy, the State, finance, borders, GAFAM, “institutions”, the Internet, the Jews, liberalism, metaphysics, the metropolis, modernity, globalisation, the norm, the West, patriarchy, politics, “power”, smartphones, technology, vice, the 1%. Not to mention the extras, such as Coca-Cola and yuppies.

What is civilisation? Supreme power and complete colonisation. A politics of takeover, a politics based on the confiscation of politics itself. And since it is in this terrain that the greatest amount of force is engaged, so civilisation is the greatest of all hegemonies, and

all others work in its service. It is an opaque we, but a we nonetheless. A will continuously materialised and objectified, but a will nonetheless, the will for hegemony. *Systematic strategy of annexing the questions, and interconnection between annexed territories*. Its we structures itself, its commons asserts itself: every time something is dictated, every time an arbitrary decision covers its tracks, every time there is division, domination, destruction. Five gestures that are one, because they spring from one single decisive point: the task of making power hegemonic. Every time force and power are synonyms, every time it is impossible to conceive the former without the latter*, every time, in a word, that there is no more choice, that is precisely when civilisation gains ground.

It isn't any particular institution, nor "the institutions altogether". Its various sectors all communicate in the same binary language, that of reductionism, of "either something or nothing". Each institution takes root in the same way: what matters becomes neutralised, put in a frame, used as a carrot or as a lure. Each time, civilised power comes from kidnapping potency, taking from us the possibility of decision. One can argue that decisions are exhausting. And sure, the point is not to have to make one every other minute. But life minus decision is just giving up. It's the abdication of any potency. It is a project for human larvae. By depriving the world of what matters, civilisation has declared war against it. If the institution is its weapon, then its soldier is *the citizen*. The civilised subject practices, frequents and maintains institutions—or aims at their regeneration (fascism). And sometimes they are recruited for major conflicts: crusades, colonisation, terrorism, pandemics, the end of the world.

How can we establish that civilisation is the enemy, without falling into demonisation? It's simple: we *restrain* its definition to a political conception. We don't refer to it from a historical point of view, nor from that of culture or mores. Politically speaking, we refuse to consider it as anything other than a creation of power. Of course it manifests historically, chaotically, in contradictory ways, and it is in that great disorder that we must learn to uncover its specific order, its pattern.

We don't demonise: we *isolate* the enemy amidst an indistinct and hazy mass—The West, Progress, technology, the conquest of the West, industry, hygiene—an apolitical nebula that we've had the bad habit to call "civilisation". In reality, civilisation was not this blurry mass—which by being related to anything and everything, ended up being nothing. Civilisation is what a consistent revolutionary politics brings to light. Once isolated, there is no more "devil" there, no more fantasy of a personification of evil. There is only a position to fight against. From now on, any use of the word "civilisation" too close to the mainstream perspective will be considered a marker of depoliticisation.

We can recognise this position, its signature and "its claws" in our lives, in any situation. We cannot fight without learning how to recognise it, without learning to look for the places where it grows the fastest. Each of these places are windows of opportunity, in a strategic sense. Otherwise, everything starts to get confused. For instance, although western medicine is an ingredient that in its own way strengthens global hegemony, civilisation is not western medicine. We can apply the same reasoning to technology, science, art,

* And that "the Will to Potency" is translated without question as "the Will to Power".

culture, sport, or even the West itself. (After all, if the West gets boring, it's always possible to go live somewhere else. But with civilisation, this exit strategy disappears. We will also find it on Mars)

Every time we consider first some specific institutions, and even more so some specific authorities or persons, all we end up with are devitalised fragments of civilisation without political significance. However, once we see clearly, we can resist the temptation to exaggerate, to make *this particular institution* the incarnation of the enemy. No need for all that to make the maximal refusal. Such a refusal has to be able to resist the natural tendency to overstate the significance of what appears in front of us, right here and right now. Not only can we live without this tendency, but when we give in to it, it immediately comes back to bite us by encouraging the opposite: smoothing out and relativising any harmfulness. We know that hate needs to exercise to keep fit, and that it is always pleasant to concentrate it on a particular object, but in the end it harms revolutionary propaganda. Because the issue for us is always to make tangible that which we refuse in what we refuse. This is just the reverse of our primary ethical assertion: not to let slip away that which we love in what we love.

Some will say that we name the enemy *just because we have to*, and will doubt the solidity of our assertion by acknowledging in it no more than activist significance. Although it is a business based on hiding all its fundamental decisions, civilisation is not an occult reality coming from outer space. Its fundamental gesture is *to valorise confinement*, and this doesn't come out of the blue. It is first and foremost a practice, a technique. Something that humans have added to themselves, a recipe which works and which, as always, is suffering from its own success: domestication. With full rigour, its job is to capture in order to extract value. From the beginning, domestication walked hand in hand with politics, because it can be considered as what ousted hunter-gathering, which was once the centre of social gravity. The point here is not to say how domestication has imposed itself, and even less to assert that it could not have turned out differently. Domestication did not contain within it civilisation. We leave this kind of reasoning to the enemy and its cult of history. Domestication does not bear the full weight of the becoming-civilised. But as soon as we politicise it, it appears as one of the great invariants of what is called history and is nothing more than the reign of civilisation. When we look at the contemporary world, we see the obvious imprint of pastoral metaphors (enclosure, herd, lost sheep, dog).

When you attack what has rooted itself in the deepest past, you also rip out in one fell swoop all reactionary nostalgia. But if civilisation makes its deepest choices disappear—all of which concern a stratum of reality different from the everyday one—these are nonetheless operational choices, and we can find them and attack them here and now. Placing our critique at this level is in no way an excuse to endlessly defer the moment of action. When what we have to tear down is so deeply anchored, it can seem dizzying and discouraging. The reasons to act can proportionally shrink as the ambition gets higher. But in reality, we don't meet civilisation head-on. In detailing how its unity works and how it is embodied, we can find a foothold to start fighting.

Destitution or how to destroy a hegemony

There is no good institution. Institution is not the home of meaning, but its funeral home. It is always pointless to ask for the “why” of an institution. The answer will always be the same: “Because we have to”. Or: “I don’t make the rules”; “It’s the same for everyone”. These forms capture a very select prey: the best of intentions. Hunting them down is the way to “make our institutions live”, in other words, to *reform* them. The best energies wilt, get wasted and corrupted by trying to make institutions better, less coercive and more egalitarian. Once again this has historically been the role of progressivism.

The watchword calling for destitution is the right one. But we still need to give it the coherence of a method. We say: every time a question is institutionalised, its that very form which must be destroyed. What we are talking about here is the constituent dynamic within revolutionary movements. We are also talking about every time we stop asking ourselves the meaning of what we do, every time we don’t even admit such questioning as a possibility. Every time we cannot even see that we could do otherwise.

In order to learn how to destroy the very form of the institution, we need to delve into the mechanics of hegemony. Every institution works through the annexation of some field or other. This establishes, on one hand, that there is no way of asking the question differently, and on the other hand that the question must be posed within a preset frame of reference (which amounts to the same thing). In reality, there is no question left anymore, only an answer, the answer of civilisation. Thus the answer obscures the question.

Destitution is first and foremost a theoretical weapon, a particular strategy of thought. It is a concept in four steps:

1. Flag something missing. Ask the question again, show that it overflows the imposed frame, which reveals itself as nothing but an operation of reduction.
2. Reverse the *rapport de force*. Turn the dominant case into a particular case.
3. Humiliate what humiliates. Show that it’s still the same thing: the possibility of failure.
4. Do not transform the chosen possibility into hegemony.

If we apply this to the central hegemony—power—this results in: 1. “Within the context of force, there is not only power, there is also potency”, 2. “Power is a particular case of potency”, 3. “Power is potency being restrained.”, 4. “We choose potency, but power still exists as an option, which we refuse.”

Once we are armed with this concept, destitution can become a practice, a *method*. Now we can start thinking about how to become capable of disassembling the hegemony at work in this particular institution. The problem isn’t just a theoretical problem anymore, but a political one. In practice, we’ll have to decide on a vocabulary, we’ll have to say what to keep and what to abandon to the enemy, according to what kind of hegemony we’ve bumped into and with what angle of impact. This only makes sense collectively and from a specific position, but we can offer some coordinate axes that are valid in general.

First, it's about locating the underlying question. For instance, the institution of "Western medicine" obscures *the question of care*. We are supposed to admit that there is no other serious way of healing. Fully refusing the institution starts here: whenever we are told that there is no other way, we understand that we are no longer dealing with an option, but with a hegemony. In reality, as far as care is concerned, the question opens an infinite field, an infinity of uses. But once the question is raised, we must not act as if we have to answer it. We should never forget level zero of use, which in the practice of clothing for instance, comes down to being nude. In each use, we should never rule out the "butt-naked" possibility. From this point of view, the "non-obligation of care" is paradoxically the vestige of use within the hospital institution. In general, it is always possible to get rid of the question. But when evading an issue becomes a habit, it turns into a scam. This is why we should always wonder if, by abandoning a specific question, we are not simply letting this specific hegemony off the hook*.

Then there's the question of scale. We must take care not to let the frame in which the question is asked, be imposed. The field under consideration remains open, on the condition that we can always *decide on the scale*, the level of commitment involved. From the most local and intimate to the most general. What needs deciding is the precise scale, which will be difficult to separate from the details of how to get started and do something about it. A telltale sign of the end of decisiveness is the reflexive retreat towards the smallest level. We will distinguish two other levels: the level of the position, and the level of the network. Here we stop thinking of scales in terms of political-geographical unities: end of the State. We consider instead three forms of we. The closest and tightest (the crew, the group); the most diffuse and loose (the network), and the most political and potent (the position). We mustn't forget any of them, nor confuse them with each other. Each problem involves a distribution among all those different kinds of we. To each position its own way of distributing problems: there is no universal solution. Neither is there a problem that would only happen in one place.

Finally, we break with thinking in terms of needs. Meaning cannot be framed in advance without immediately suffocating, and a great method for framing in advance is thinking in terms of needs. Such as when we think on the basis of a universal consensus, or when we speak of "care" as if it went without saying. Needs write both questions and answers: it is always the same way of approaching a problem. There is a necessity, an undeniable necessity, always phrased as "we need to". We need to eat. Yeah, sure... This logic functions through the impossibility of saying no. Just like a plebiscite, we should refuse the question since the slope is slippery right away. Saying "we need to earn a living" contains in itself a validation of debt as a general fact of life. It creates the possibility of the "I'm just doing my job" logic. Thinking in terms of needs or necessities is the ABCs of a conservative mindset.

Destituting is asking ourselves whether *for us* this is a question, or whether we truly want to raise it *in these terms*. But we don't want any kind of "for us". "For us" does not mean "for the benefit and in the interests of our little we". But rather: *on the basis of a we that makes itself capable of raising the big questions, what is our approach to the problem?* This kind of we, capable of asking itself what matters most, we call a position. Now let's play a game and practise answering. What do we think about security? First we refuse

* In general, it seems we are always more keen on abandoning a question than abandoning a skill.

to hear about a need for security. In fact is it even possible to pronounce the word without immediately validating *security as a need*? In reality, for us the only question of security has to do with the enemy! (How to protect our correspondence, our links, our anonymity). With regard to everything else, we don't wish for security. However, there is the question of how to confront what threatens us, the question of predation. A predator is a nasty thing but to know one's predators is a good thing. For fear is a hell of a stimulant: the civilised person, who has forgotten this, de-animalises themselves to a level of absurdity, and doesn't know what they want anymore. "The human minus the animal" ends up losing the faculty considered the most human of all: wanting. So it's not about security, it's about the use of violence, finding ways to reduce fear to a level where it stops acting as a condition (but rather as a condiment). This perhaps could be another way of re-asking the question. And it should always go with thinking things together, not facing difficulties alone, and being surrounded by our friendships. Easier said than done? Sure, it's only a general rule. But it's better to *say it*.

Destituting is never just to "resolve a question". For one thing, it's about reformulating it. For another, it's about raising issues that seem incidental but actually help *dissolve* the universal need—which is only there to make us submit. For instance, we seek the conditions in which fear stops being the form of what we live. One way or another, it's about the imperative of finding the conditions of *potency*. Institutions, on the other hand, will always act as a screen obscuring the way.

All of this leads us to a change in imagery. An institution is not a perfectly compact block full of institution, but rather a very tough shell. It is a safe. We don't know what's inside until we break it open. The revolutionary has the yegg's eye, the eye of the safecracker*. Cracking the institution is about overriding its way of thinking. Uncovering its operations. That which is violent in the act of cracking isn't necessarily physical violence. But it's always a break with consensus.

We start by going back to the classics of autonomism. To break the consensus on work: let's get organised. The consensus on identity? As simple as burning a flag. The consensus on merchandise? Stealing as a daily practice, breaking some shop windows (gaining entry), effective looting, destruction pure and simple (Yellow Vests immediately burning freshly looted luxury brand clothes on the Champs-Élysées, on March 16th 2019). The consensus on housing: squatting, occupying, settling on a ZAD, or simply choosing to live together and refusing the flat-share regime. Autonomism provides us with some rudiments of destitution. That it's a bit basic doesn't mean the intuitions are wrong, but that it only speaks for its own world, thus rudimentary. The question of destitution shouldn't be approached "as autonomists". But nor should we "go towards the masses", as ordinary classism suggests, but rather do whatever we can to help our contemporaries realise that the revolutionary task concerns them too. Destitution must appear for what it is: what is at work in our times.

The point is not to collect skills and follow the civilised custom of accumulation, much less is it about watching nicely the creation of institutions forming the "outside of institutions". Breaking into the institution is certainly not entryism, but *theft*. It comes down to seeing if

* Cf. Jack Black, *Yegg*, 1926.

there is not a reality, something, someone, an idea, *to escape the hold* of the institution. Regarding work for instance, we have taken a look at this massive institution, this enclosure, and we have decided to get the hell out of there, which is always a good start. Every safe has its trap, its alarm system, its code to break. We agree, a safe may well be full of rubbish. It can also be empty (in that case, it exists to produce the idea of what it imprisons). But such is the revolutionary: one must know how to break into the meaning of things. One must break into the institutions to liberate uses. Because there is no other way around it. As long as the box hasn't been "opened", it is impossible to know if the cat inside is dead or alive. Then we are free to keep or repurpose this or that element, on the strict condition that it has been thought through and decided on. Thus we escape the civilised blackmail which, on the contrary, tries to forbid anyone slicing the slightest bit off its general logic.

The enemy organising principle: production

Generally, the politics of power combines two aspects: how to tackle a question and how to make someone submit. We cannot only approach the institution “from above”—as if capturing a question. We now have to approach it “from below”—as the capture of the subject. We define production as the civilised regime of participation, the way of integrating a subject into an institution, and the hegemonic conception of action.

To produce is, in the first place, to *reduce to something or to nothing*. This way, production demonstrates the only experience of the outside that civilisation admits: the relation of negation. There are basically two ways of denying the outside: on one hand, to reduce it to nothing, to destroy it; on the other hand, to reduce it to something, to force its being.

The question of organisation as the submission of the subject is a central node, identified for a long time under the name of *exploitation*, an explicitly negative term, which in addition has the advantage of also applying to the non-living. But it turns out that the distinction between production and exploitation does not work. In reality, what we have here is a good cop/bad cop routine: it’s simply bullshit to pretend they’re opposites. Organising to civilise the world and make it available, that’s exploitation, otherwise called production. Pretending for instance to fight the environmental disaster *allwhile saving production* is a reformist fad and a big joke. We must drop any positive prejudice about production. Just like civilisation, it is time for its funeral.

Production does not have the restricted sense of “that which is subjected to the material”. When production is restricted to the economic sphere, it becomes an institution among others, and we miss its deep reality. Rather: education is the manufacture of citizens. Borders produce national identity and the destruction of stateless people. Art can be considered the production of what is useless. Each institution, by stamping its mark on a question, becomes a unit of social production. Production is therefore not one institution among others, but the instruction manual of institutionality.

It has the same general definition as domestication: to capture in order to extract value. What is at stake is indeed controlling subjectivity, and from there controlling everything else. This comes down to controlling access to participation. Thus production sets the rules of the game of integration and imposes the criteria to be allowed a social existence. There is but one criterion: to comply with the condition of being a producer. What is the contract? To extort value from something, to impose production on it. Production therefore demonstrates itself as an infernal Russian doll. Integration into institutions equates to transforming a subject into a producer, which condition consists in behaving the same way towards something else, to make it produce. There is no point in opposing an active pole (“the worker”) to a passive pole (“matter”). At each stage each agent of production is *subjected to* the condition imposed on it, a condition which is nonetheless its own *activity*. The human doesn’t even have a special place in all this: just like everything else, it is turned into an object.

How does the human or non-human subject get captured? The instruction manual contains four parameters: identification, functioning, valorisation, control. This is how to lock someone up somewhere and throw away the key—because it pays.

1. *Identification*: reduce everyone into uniformity. Force into being and prevent from being something else.
2. *Functioning*: reduce everything to a part (of a whole). It must be possible to give a function to any element of the system.
3. *Valorisation*: reduce everyone to their social yield. Value is what is being extracted from what has been captured.
4. *Control*: reduce to obedience. Check that everyone bends to the previous three parameters. Discipline and punish.

Identification, or how to lock up *someone*. Identity is the relation of order we are supposed to establish towards ourselves. Without identity, it's as if the power of having things available no longer had a hold on beings. So it has to impose a primordial stability. And since this simple prerequisite already raises infinite difficulties, it is possible to see the grand civilised saga as the sum of all measures adopted, the demented series of operations and counter-operations desperately aimed at securing this insane starting point: to impose stability on being. The herd has to be accounted for. How many heads, how many units? Criteria for recognition are needed. If you propose to drain the force from a being, you have to detail its qualities as a member of the herd, and its flaws. It is possible to go deeper, to proceed to their evaluation, and why not in real time. The shepherd has always needed an overview of his sheep, as well as dogs to report any of his animals straying too far. Video surveillance, facial recognition, Covid passport. A modernisation of pastoralism. Of course, it is this perpetual indecision between identity and control that makes us hypersensitive to the question.

Functioning, or how to lock up *somewhere*. Functioning is the relation of order that takes place between the part and the whole. Identification makes the catch, but it has to be secured. The captive could always wake up, remember, untie himself from his bonds, tear the stakes apart. He must not be shackled *too much*, be put to sleep *too much*, if we want him to be of any utility. So we will give him a yard of freedom. A prison is a yard of freedom, from a certain point of view. This shows how messed up the question of freedom has been since the beginning. And so, they who have first been tied to themselves (identified), will then be tied to a place. After a name, they are assigned a place, a role. Relating the general utility of humans and things, functioning means participating in a *collective identity*. There is the identity of I, and the identity of we. Collective identities can be built, the herd can be divided into an infinity of subcategories. Modernity makes these “yards of freedom” proliferate. Any community, however evanescent it may be, is always in reality a we that can be identified (by this or that objective quality its members have in common). On the contrary, decivilised politics starts by refusing any attempt to identify a we. Our question is: what does a form or a commons look like, when it is not based on identification?

Valorisation, or locking up *because it pays*. What is value? What enclosure makes us do. Value is what is extracted from the producer, and what the producer himself wrings out of matter. Every institution is a value extraction unit. Imposing a frame on something is the beginning of valorisation. By making it function, something is already being valo-

rised: itself. With production, value is at once the explicit goal, the universal injunction (“sell yourself”), and *the masking of enclosure*. But we must never forget that this enclosure contains its own share of domination (the humans submitted to production), and destruction (the beings, the matter and the time consumed to produce). The question of the distribution of value, of wealth redistribution, always brings us back to the sharing of the booty: we become shareholders in the enterprise of devastation. Value, beyond the money-form, is the question of the social yield each of us produces. Our good and loyal services to the institution, and how it shows its gratitude. From the perspective of a specific historical *rapport de force*, the social value generated by production is captured by those on top, and a little is given back to those below (which is the cliché carrot in the relationship). The value of an income—whatever the amount, and especially whatever the form—always comes from quantifying the potency of our gestures. Thus salary not only marks the pact we sign with the power of domination and destruction—with its share of sweat, blood, tears, and foulness—it also indexes our consent to the transformation into power of our own potency.

We could be tempted to stop here. The reality thus produced seems to be enough in itself to guarantee order. Besides, those three operations are attractive enough to work: you feel that you exist (identification), you feel useful (functioning), and most of all you feel valued (valorisation). This is how the logic of production has good days ahead. Every time an issue is expressed in those terms, the whole view of production is validated anew. It would however be naive to forget the fourth operation. Control, or how to *lock up twice and throw away the key*. It’s the question of the stick. When everything is going along normally, the production process exerts control over itself on autopilot: and gestures become flows. But there are no rules of the game that cannot be cheated. Control by force of arms must therefore be ensured in some way, everywhere and permanently, but at varied intensities which certainly can’t be maximal at every moment and every place. The different strata of order are *placed on top of each other*, instead of being replaced. New forms appear constantly, adding to the older ones. They may perform better. Or perhaps it’s rather their novelty that makes us see only them, at the risk of exaggerating their power, rendering it absolute. The concept of apparatus was at some point the new general interpretation of power. It’s perhaps the oldest dream of civilisation: the return to immanence. The return to an Age where everything fits perfectly into a flawless world order. Where the meaning of everything flows naturally. Yet it is important, on one hand, to track the operations in motion: those which try to impose a new apparatus while making it seem what it’s not (a blessing). And on the other hand, we must resist the temptation of thinking that all of this works perfectly well, totally and until the end. In reality, something always resists. Because alienation is never guaranteed, because civilisation can never completely disappear into the landscape, it will always need to resort to the stick, the simple stupid policing operation. We have to fight alienation, the soft imposition of order, but we also have to fight the violent imposition of order: the police. When we only see the stick, we only know how to oppose this world by fighting its police. It’s still a good start. But if we don’t understand the order the police protect, we risk forgetting why we fight it. And sooner or later, we end up back in line.

Production: this is how civilisation submits the subject, this is what the captive does to the world. This is what reunites as one the four operations of identification, functioning, valorisation and control. Once again, we have to resist militant* specialisation, the tendency to place one of the four parameters above the others. None of them can be the sole focus of our fight. Believing the opposite misses the target and encourages us to invent solutions that quickly become part of the problem. Saying as much admits that the following positions or tendencies are obsolete: 1. individualist anarchism 2. anti-industrialism 3. anti-capitalism 4. critique of apparatuses on the one hand, ACABism on the other.

* By militant we mean doing politics like politicians, as a job, without any consequences in life, and specialising in one political subject.

Use, the communist principle of organisation

Now comes the question of a potent organisation. Once we have taken a problematic into our own hands, torn it away from an institution, then what do we do with it? What guarantees we don't fall straight back into the depths of production? The truth is, as long as we don't have a principle of organisation heterogeneous to production, the method of destitution will only spin its wheels, and what has just been liberated will be captured again. And vice versa, this new principle is nothing if we separate it from the gesture of destitution. However if we can hold on to both sides, we hold a new paradigm and we can truly unlock revolutionary possibility.

It is essential to note that we approach the question of organisation through two preliminary refusals. First, we refuse to limit this matter only to politics. Organisation doesn't wait for politics, it concerns practices *in general*. Secondly, we refuse to separate the issue of subjectivity from that of organisation. The only way of destroying individualism is not to destroy the subject, but as we will see, to displace subjectivity.

Now it's important to state the obvious: potency is not a force condemned to evanescence. The challenge is indeed to come and *stabilise* things, to formalise them, but in another language than power. What overflows any assignment, what is irreducible, what matters, what escapes any form of control: these are a series of trails we can follow. On the way, we should be careful not to give in to the modern prejudice which says that *the beauty of what resists* is always necessarily fleeting, on the side of desire, of the individual, of feelings, of intensity—which is a way of refusing it any growth, and thus any kind of form. For us, what is irreducible is not something on the side, but truly *a way of thinking organisation*, a certain idea of what a form could be. And this idea contains in itself the negation of what was called form until then. Its name is: *use*. What is the definition of a use? *To try and find in something what animates us*. It is a complex experience.

When we get in touch with what matters, an infinite movement begins, a future arises. Use is fidelity to this. It is everything we do to support and strengthen this movement, all the courage we muster, foremost the courage of seeing what is going wrong. Being content to praise courage and fidelity only brings them down to mere values. This cannot be enough, at risk of renewing the division between idealism and pragmatism. Conversely, the form at issue here raises fidelity to what matters up to the level of general thought. As a matter of fact, good intentions and affects have never been enough, nor have they ever prevented the opposite of what we want.

Use is, first, a way of thinking the encounter, or in other words, the *experience of what matters*. In the beginning, there isn't interest but encounter. This is the small narrative that we oppose to production. First, while we can always be forced into a role, an encounter cannot be forced. It is what cannot be reduced to the mere shock of human interaction. We encounter something—anything: a keyboard shortcut, a secondary school. We are never quite sure of what is going on, just that something matters. "Encounter" refers to this small event. Something stops being whatever, becomes an event, knocks at the door. And then it's as if a space opened. A space where we gravitate with other elements. This space has the

power of suspending everything else, not in the sense where everything is dead, but rather that everything comes alive, animates. What dies in this moment is the social hold and its present moment without tomorrow. It is not only a moment apart, it's the possibility of its return. Of course, certain gestures have power to break the spell, and sometimes even to break everything. But when we get back to it, we come to face every obstacle on our way, and this changes us, modifies us, sculpts us. We acquire capacities, good and bad habits. The question of uses always connects us to a tale of learning and training. How does what matters shape us? Under what names does it crash into our lives? A wide open space for potency becomes, years later, a tiny thing left on the side of the road.

But any use can be misguided. Bad encounters are always possible. This shows at least that deep down we were expecting something else. Except for the cases where this expectation turns out to be totally stupid: when we expect something from institutions. This hope has to be killed and initially identified. It postpones everything, it prevents any possible becoming. When there is no space left to differentiate between use and institution in a situation, it is an illusion to try and make something out of it. A bad encounter can sometimes mean falling on something *too strong*. We become ugly, giving in to the productive injunction. A heroin addict must consume drugs and his entire being is caught up in the imperative of producing consumption. What has taken shape is a chimera. Use has immediately closed itself, and the institution of addiction has opened up. When I am no longer the subject of what matters, anything can be done to me.

Use is also thinking resonance, in other words the experience of the outside. It is one of the major concepts of decivilisation. *We define resonance equally as the entry into a relationship with something and a rapport de force*. Unlike the civilised regime, it's a matter of considering an experience of the outside that is not reducible in advance to a relationship of negation. The spectrum of resonance goes beyond reduction, which is only its division, its binarisation: either to integrate or disintegrate, either friend or enemy. Being able to resonate does not mean that we set aside the possibility of absolute incompatibility, but only that we don't approach every relation under the perspective of war and ultimatum. We cannot declare war on what is simply unknown to us. We can distinguish at least six scenarios, six relations with regards to what happens, with use as our touchstone and our landmark.

Indetermination: we don't know what is happening. Its potency of indetermination must be conserved. We must resist the tendency to reduce it to this or that inventoried case, even before it occurs. We must allow what we know best the right to surprise us.

Opacity: when resonance is most weakly determined, its vibration as close to zero as possible. This is the mark of the normal situation, door open to any kind of reduction.

Consonance: what is happening strengthens what is necessary to the use in question. So we welcome it all the more easily. The risk is complacency: consonance comforts and if we only practice it, we fall into comfort.

Dissonance: what is happening weakens use or puts it in crisis. We welcome it even better, since a certain dose of poison fortifies.

Respective incompatibility (dilemma): when, between two things, one must have the upper hand. Because the situation demands a choice, and not because this option is superior in the absolute nor because the other is of no importance.

Absolute incompatibility: confrontation with an institution. The institution aims at capturing use, the use wants what matters, it has to destroy the institution.

There are certain criteria for use. Before talking about revolutionary construction, we need to have an overall view of how every potency organises itself in the world. We can already bring together the different conditions of a communist principle of organisation. In order to list them, all we had to do, in a sense, was to “flip” the usual criticism against form. Use builds itself through refusal, the point of resistance against any form based on the dominant model. Here is what we should take into account in order to get organised.

1. *Subjectivity*. We are only a subject of what matters. To be a subject means to be born: not to be a prisoner, not to be an object. We are always born within something. To fully be in the world is to have uses. Subjectivity is never just about the I, but about how it enters into something.

2. Use is something potent into which one *enters*. But if we cannot exit, there is no entry. Use must not be made compulsory—otherwise we won’t be able to feel its potency anymore.

3. *Equality*. Equality is what we have in common when we have a use. As soon as there is a use, the question is no longer whether there is equality, but at which level of engagement the commons takes place.

4. A use can come back: once and it becomes a habit. But it is not automatic. We can always pass it by.

5. There is always an obstacle. When we don’t see it, the use itself is the obstacle. In use, we cannot eliminate the risk of enclosure, we face it. It is when we encounter what obstructs meaning that it can be liberated. Therefore these 11 criteria are never all present at the same time in what we do.

6. A use is never the world. No form can absorb the world. A use is never the only one.

7. Anything can be a use, but not everything. If the plan is to make everything a use (like the project of aesthetics), then the price to pay is that none of the uses are potent and so they cancel each other out. We cannot forbid something from becoming a use, except the power principle. Since hegemony is the form that knows no other form (except as its subordinate or as a monster), as soon as use is made of it, a little empire is founded.

8. Use opens up with a gesture—but which one? The point is to find an entrance. When there is only one, it stops being possible to get in. Sometimes, the same door opens another house. “*Don’t know what I want, but I know how to get it*”*. It is about finding the right gesture at the right moment. In the end, everything rests on the impossibility of finding the ultimate gesture, and the necessity to keep looking for it.

* Sex Pistols, “*Anarchy in the UK*”.

9. A use is what makes us do potent things. Their strength is confirmed when they also become uses: potent gestures for others than ourselves, which become a habit and which have what it takes to resist social hold.

10. Can we have use of something bad that strikes us? Of course. But where the use of something good is narrowed down to the question of entering it, the use of something bad is first to exit from it, to demonstrate that it is a possibility and not an absolute inevitability. To show that it is not the only possibility in the world, and certainly not the most potent one—even in the case where it would be the winner at the end of the film.

11. Finally, a use resonates with the outside. It is a potency of resonance.

2

UNLOCKING POLITICAL POTENCY

Politics, in its general meaning, is the field that deploys the greatest force. We find it not by “reading the labels” nor by looking at what calls itself politics, but by looking wherever force is most concentrated. There is force elsewhere, but it is always in politics that we find its greatest concentration. And this is why the capture of force by civilisation clamps down the most terrible hold: history.

We call political potency the gesture of gaining ground over civilisation, the joy of taking part in the offensive, armed with this truth: the enemy can fall. This truth is not a given, it is something to regain, inch by inch.

Which hegemonies must be toppled? Peace, the economy, the past, identity, confusion. They draw the outlines of a world for hobbits, in which politics does not survive. For the revolutionary, they are the strongholds of depoliticisation, and it is only with this in mind that one faces them.

Peace puts a sleeping spell on politics, trapping its most basic impulse in a state of low intensity.

The economy organises and defines everything in advance, dissolves everything that could constitute a decisive turn in either dreariness or busywork.

The past is the political hegemony of what is already there, where the horizon does not extend beyond what is available to the naked eye.

While it may aspire to grandeur, *identity* is always too tight and ends up strangling the political we.

Lastly, the unidimensional world that is being imposed on us is also a world of *confusion*. Yet without clarity, politics is nothing.

We can already begin to see the shapes of the major force fields which define politics and structure its content. Conflict, priority, future, belonging, and discernment—in other words the five senses of political potency.

History and politics

1. Politics is the form of organisation where the greatest amount of force is at stake;
2. Any organisation involves a certain relation to time;
3. As a matter of fact, history is the relation to time that prevails over all others, it is therefore a general hegemony;
4. Like any reality, time carries in itself both enclosure and its opposite: there is a time filled with potency and a time filled with power;
5. *Therefore*, history is not only political, it is also the production and the general condition of political power itself. History and civilisation blend into each other.
6. Where does its force come from? From the capture of politics.
7. Thus, the question of political potency is how to find something stronger than history. By showing how and in which major fields history annexes politics, we will understand what has been torn away from politics. By doing this, the major axes of political potency will start appearing clearly.
8. The question of political potency is not how to remain in history or how to become a historical force. The question is how to resist history, and even more, how to destroy it. But since the worm of enclosure is already there in the apple of time, it will never be possible to destroy it outright (since what has been potent will eventually return into history).
9. As the general institution of time, history carries with it the politics of the enemy. This means, from the point of view of the revolutionary, that it manifests itself as a perpetual, clever and total process of depoliticisation. Depoliticisation on one side as a concealment of the dominant politics, and on the other as a crushing of any possible politics.
10. Where civilising depoliticises, politicising decivilises.

Double-front strategy

What does resisting history mean? Does it mean to resist change, to take the side of what lasts, of the long-term, of eternal values, or even of simple, profound and authentic things that modernity has eaten up? No. Resisting history does not mean to “go back to how it was before”. This also goes for what was before civilisation. We can’t *reach* a time before civilisation, only the modern projection of a more or less radical before. This is precisely what we call “tradition”: this or that image that modernity projects of its own before, whether it is negative or wonderful, whether it acts as trauma or fantasy. All this being said, the before cannot be reduced to tradition. Just because we can’t reach it, doesn’t mean that there is no before. Otherwise civilisation would have never started in the first place*. It would be indiscernible from anthropology, perpetuating the idea of a human nature, and wanting to turn that page would be incomprehensible.

Again, what does it mean to resist history? *To be nothing but change*, to humiliate the past because it’s over, to trample all over what has been submerged, to walk straight ahead of us? No. To rush forward is always to fall downward.

We refuse modernity just as we refuse tradition. And this double refusal does not stop here, it aims to spread, impacting other dual questions, to the point of becoming a general strategy. We refuse both universalism and particularism, society and community, reformism and reaction. We have to do both. Our refusal hits both sides respectively. The arguments will take a different path for each side, but they both express the same refusal: against civilisation. To sum up, resistance against history cannot be unilateral, it has to go through at least two paths that are actually only one, it has to resist two *opposite* slippery slopes. Decivilisation is neither the pre-civilisation nor the ultimate vanguard. It stands at the decisive junctions of politics. This is what we call the double-front strategy, or in other words, the revolutionary neither/nor. *When you invert a reactionary position or a progressive position, what you will get won’t be a revolutionary position, but at the most the appearance of one.*

For us, not respecting the minute of silence the day after 9/11 or after the 13th of November 2015, did not mean taking sides with the jihad, nor even finding some kind of meaning in it. Persisting in refusing to vote during the 2002 or 2017 presidential elections, was not to “play into the hands of the far-right”. Refusing to get a Covid vaccine does not mean becoming an obscurantist; just as getting the vaccine does not mean accepting the health pass or turning Scientist. This positioning is not new. But what was lacking until now was to take cognizance of it, all the way through, in order to give this positioning its full potency. Because not quite getting this logic has made us too often take the easy option: choosing one side or the other, in the field of *opinions*. Taking sides means to have a clear-cut position, it doesn’t mean fitting into a comfortable pre-warmed couch.

This raises a whole load of problems and possible misunderstandings. Clearly, a revolutionary neither/nor is distinct from a centrist one, with its politics of the middle ground. This neither/nor does not arbitrate between two sides, it is at peace with neither of them and goes to war on both fronts. It is equally incompatible with the constant temptation in radical discourses—both right and left—to focus fire on one side only, according to circums-

* Nevertheless, we are not talking about a *single, unique* beginning.

tances and the political agenda. Finally, it must also be distinguished from scepticism or nihilism: by having a go at everything these positions end up saying nothing. Conversely, the revolutionary neither/nor has a political definition of the enemy.

Such a position is not easy to hold. It is a demanding praxis but it is the right one. It is both fair and radical, and it doesn't give in to the "radicalist" option, which just doesn't bother and throws the baby out with the bathwater. In substance, we oppose both sides *equally*. But the force that we put into it in an actual situation will never be equally balanced (it will depend on the *rapport de force* inside the general debate, and in which place the complacency is the greatest). In a discussion, this can risk making the revolutionary inaudible. This is the cost of attacking both sides simultaneously: the maximal possible opposition against one camp will be somewhat relative. Theoretically, this doesn't change anything, but unlike those who specialise in it, we will always spend less energy in fighting this or that specific camp. Since we run the risk of being inaudible, we need to be twice as clear. It certainly isn't the conservative taste for "nuance" which moves us, and even less which defines us. A position has outlines, which can move but which cannot be *nuanced*. There is an infinity of things and fields which enjoy nuance, but not the outlines of a position. The point of clarifying a position is to make sure there aren't, at the foundation of an organisation, any blind spots. This is why we reject all *imposed* either/ors, and with them the constant blackmail of civilisation, where the slightly stronger option mechanically tips people from one side to the other. We know that up to now, such a double rejection doesn't constitute a position. Quite the opposite, it precludes having a position and leads to political non-existence. By instinct we have managed to avoid falling into this or that shitty option, but socially, relying on luck acts like a trap. This means that the immediate issue is to formulate a position which can acknowledge the double-front strategy.

The five political senses

Peace, the economy, the past, identity and confusion: the method of destitution has to be applied first to these hegemonies. To do so implies raising questions which have been obfuscated and depoliticised. When we line them up together, we get the minimal content of politics. This gives us: peace obfuscates the question of conflict, the economy absorbs the sense of priorities, the past prevents the future, identity blocks belonging, and confusion—indivisible from a political field that totalises on its own the whole field of potency—makes us lose our sense of discernment. To all this we can add the sense of organisation, which the use can win back from the institution, and which politics cannot invent. This is not only about revealing what general common ground we share with the enemy. We also have to say what makes us raise the question in the first place. *Ultimately, a political being is one who thinks war without killing resonance, who secedes from social reality and at the same time knows how to get out of what they choose to do, who breaks the spell of fatalism, who says us and who takes a stance on what matters most, while acknowledging that there is an outside to politics.* They commit to a speed race: ahead the pursued horizon, behind, hegemony catching up. This race is part marathon and part sprint. Here we are going for the rhythm of a marathon, but revolutionary construction also moves at the speed of a leaflet.

Sense of conflict: war and resonance

Destituting peace

Peace is the dissimulation of civilised war. Civilisation wages war on what matters, and this is precisely why we fight against it. By imposing peace, it covers up its own operations, and at the same time confiscates conflictuality. To rediscover politics, or the sense of conflict, involves formulating the terms of our war, while refusing to make it the principle of any possible conflict.

Since 9/11, we could think that the hegemony of peace is only a distant memory. Still we will keep coming up against it over and over, as long as nothing breaks the sticky empire of normality—“An oasis of horror in a desert of boredom”*. This peace is the most poisonous, all it spreads is only a lie, since everyone knows that *this is war*. Sure, but what kind of war? First and foremost, the one we suffer. What peace obfuscates is *civilised* war. To destitute peace begins with revealing and defining the ongoing war, and therefore to show its real battlefield. As long as we don't, this war will continue operating unilaterally. We say that civilisation kills all that matters for two fundamental reasons. First because it is a hegemonic dynamic, in other words it makes things necessary, and yet *nothing that matters is necessary*. Secondly, it only experiences the outside through a relation of reduction, and yet *everything that matters is irreducible*. Every institution is literally a war machine. By integrating or disintegrating what happens, it prevents things from growing in importance and in potency.

By stating this, the motive of *our war* starts to appear. We fight in the name of everything that matters, of use, of potency, of the irreducible. Some might reply: this is vague, general, abstract. We answer that this has the merit of not fetishising anything. Indeed, there is always a certain kind of worship that prevails in any discourse against the current world: “save the planet”; “save the living beings”. It is even a double fetishisation seeing as in passing we can't help but sanctify our own gesture. What does “living beings” refer to? An extension of the human, which stands at the centre of every domination. What is earthbound, if not the human condition? From a revolutionary standpoint, these are not serious motives. Everyone that stands opposed to this world, from Care-Bears to eco-warriors, agree in a suspect and eloquent way on these poor slogans. And as for reactionaries, their speech is rebranded to be cool but actually hasn't changed much: going back to true values, Reconquest**. They acknowledge the existence of what matters to them, only to reduce it completely. We will say it again, what matters is always irreducible. It cannot be enlisted to any side, we can only point out which general side organises its neutralisation and what positions make it central in their very principle of organisation.

War opposes partisans and enemies of civilisation—of course this doesn't mean that we identify with the figures of the enemy it promotes***. So making space for politics always starts with defining the central conflict of the epoch: and this is the only political definition of the word “war”, as opposed to its trivial definition used everywhere in the news. If other meanings of war circulate and prevail, it is precisely because peace is the annexation

* Baudelaire.

** The Reconquista in Spain is a constant reference for the far right. “Reconquête” is the name of a French islamophobic political party.

*** When the idea of the enemy is still the enemy's idea...

of conflictuality itself. Peace is not only the obfuscation of civilised war and ducking of the democrats whenever the question of the central conflict is raised. It is also the way any conflict is depoliticised. Either the conflict is reduced to a manifestation of violence—in the civilised lexicon, that term is always vague, mystical and pejorative—, or it is reduced to a simple moment of *Pax Civilis*, in other words a necessary step to get peace back. This results in a great and childish image of history that is commonly shared: humans fighting against each other for nothing, just differently coloured pieces on a board game. But how can we speak of depoliticisation when it comes, for instance, to a civil war—in the trivial sense of the term? Obviously, in such an event there is a resurgence and an eruption of buried politics. But most of the time, the conflict happens in the normal course of things. One identity against another identity, one power against another, one institution against another. Civilisation always wins, or at least remains protected from any attack.

We must absolutely fight this depoliticisation. *There can be no revolutionary war, as long as we do not have another way of thinking about conflictuality.* It is not enough to say that politics tends towards a showdown*, we must say that politics is what gives it meaning (as a conflict can also have no meaning at all). We will not have war confiscated from us, we will resist confusion: if those two imperatives mean something to us, then we should look at politics as the thought of *all conflict*. We must stop limiting politics to the thought of war. Reducing all conflict to war is the most widespread symptom of the atrophy of conflictuality.

Politics is about *thinking* conflict, not just experiencing its exhilaration. Pacifists are doomed to linger in error before even facing the question. Unlike what they believe, thinking conflict is already a way of circumscribing it and limiting its exhilaration. To refuse such a circumscription can only lead to having the form of conflict imposed. How else could we describe the gesture by which dominant violence is *let be*? The pacifist argument goes: we oppose resistance to violence, because we do not “play its game”. Actually they do, they are very much in broad daylight playing their little martyr act.

Which general definition can we rely on? *A conflict is the underside of a certain resonance.* Conversely, any resonance is simultaneously a tension, a *rapport de force*. We can tackle what happens either from the point of view of what’s common (which could be very little) or from that of violence. Obviously, shifting from one to the other is never indifferent. But the crucial point is that war remains a specific case of resonance, which is absolute incompatibility. So long as we keep in mind the whole range of resonance, we can put negation of the outside where it belongs: as the case of a resonance which forbids itself, as one colour within a spectrum of at least six. This is precisely what civilisation is unable to do. Under its reign, we become blind to the fact that any relation of integration involves not only the destruction of everything else, but is also itself a relation of negation: to force something into being, to prevent it from being something else. This is because the palette of resonance has already been in advance reduced down to two colours**.

* Carl Schmitt, “épreuve de force” in French.

** It is only natural, then, to find endless nuances of black and white, but the problem remains very much the same.

This does not however make the relation of absolute incompatibility into a marginal case. We have already said it: there can be no politics without drawing the line of absolute disagreement. It is by this gesture that politics truly become what it is: the dimension of the greatest potency possible. Ultimately, decivilised politics can be defined as gathering our forces with an eye on the showdown. We do not recoil beyond this point, but we consider it with what it involves: the *risk* of totalisation. We must therefore, through this politics, learn to resist having that question being imposed on everything else. We have to resist the totalisation of all possibles into a single point, however central and inaugural that point remains for us. This resistance gives birth to another dimension that we call ethics. But yes, politics is dangerous. We will not pretend otherwise in order to comfort those who want to reduce it to mere negotiation.

Our involvement in the ongoing war cannot blind us or make us lose our sense of conflict. On the contrary, it should help us rediscover it. Here is another symptom of conflict illiteracy: to have just a single concept of conflict, which is the mere distinction between friend and enemy. If we insist on sticking to this, we will keep losing everything from the start, both friendship and hostility. Friends regarding what? Friends until what point? This is the myth of concord perceived as absolute coincidence*. Enemies in what sense? Enemies, or rather adversaries? Are we facing a power that we must destroy, or a rival potency—one which we cannot allow ourselves to reduce, lest we instantly contradict our own commitments?

* In reality, there is always a discrepancy within concord: a certain hardening, or a drive towards crisis.

Sense of priorities: decision and escape

Destituting the economy

Politics involves a decision on what matters most. By imposing need everywhere as the only possible framing, the economy annexes and obfuscates the question of priorities, reducing it to arbitrage among competing needs; the very definition of government. To rediscover the sense of priorities means to destitute needs, to exit from the grasp of society, to undo the tendency of turning what we are doing here and now into a necessity.

The gesture of destitution teaches us how to de-generalise questions, how to unravel their apolitical method by bringing to light the conflictuality every question contains within itself. Here, the crucial fact is: the economy is the capture of decision.

The centrality of the deadbolt called the economy is such that its name was for us, for the longest time, the name of the enemy itself. But what is it that actually separates the economy from civilisation? It turns out the politics which dominates us is not *just* the economy. This is because the moment we name this politics *civilisation* is also the moment we understand what the economy *wants*. By itself and in itself, the economy does not *want*, it wants nothing, and this is precisely what constitutes its specific invincibility, its great disappearing power. When we state that in its very emptiness the economy carries a whole world within itself, and that the name of this world is civilisation, we uncover the specific will of that which does not will. We uncover its partisan nature and we leave it open to attack. Ultimately, if we wish to both understand and strike the economy, we must consider it as the trick by which civilisation makes itself impregnable.

We must turn our viewpoint upside down, and strike both the economy's paradoxical will and its specific regime of decision. Its will consists in a certain way of being absent from will. Its decision is a certain way of being absent from decision. We know all too well what results from this: there is nothing left to do except manage, stay busy, take care of things, operate and put into operation, all under the shadow of generalised pacification. It is not enough to see the emptiness of it all, we must also see what all this management-decision-making leaves out. This world basically pretends to do without any political decision. In politics, decision does not mean arbitrage. Decision is not a choice between a set of available possibilities. To decide is always to decide *what matters most*, that is, to prioritise in the fullest sense of the term. The superlative of decision is decision itself. Therefore *the economy is what becomes of the world when political decision is taken away from it.*

Dissolving decision in management can't happen without a permanent power move, which is the constant object of the present text: hegemony, or more specifically the "one institution, one hegemony, one need" trinity. When a question is annexed, the logic of use is supplanted by the logic of need—this last being what draws the contours of the realm we call the economy. We call need the gesture by which what matters most *is imposed from the bottom*. It won't change anything to reflect on it afterwards, seeing as any reflexion will take place within this frame that will come back at each step and every level. And so we all end up banging our heads against "the material question" like wasps trapped in a jar. The logic of need leaves no possibility for decision, since the decision has already been *taken*. It has already been set in the stone of the norm. It has already been materialised in a thousand ways within a social architecture. Need is when something important *becomes*

dictated to us. Need is what matters poured into the mould of diktat. This can help us understand Steve Jobs' devastating insight when he says: "People only know what they want when they see it". Translation: "We bring you your own will on a platter, all you have to do is flip through our catalogue". Under the rationality of need, decision is dependent on social options, and will is enslaved by the possibilities available on the market. Who speaks of rationality and decision anyway? Need is encountered as desire, comfort, well-being, as a dream being sold to us. Because it is the closest to our everyday experience, to the very place where mores are being constructed, need is the most fluid and accommodating element of any given social structure. In response to this, the point for us will always be to show the *power* behind the so-called *softpower*, thus understanding need to be the mark of an institution, choking off our ability to solve our problems. In other words, to confront need as the sign of a more or less diffuse institution that keeps answering its own questions. Conversely, we must learn to unveil the need behind the institution: as long as the need for safety hasn't been destroyed, we will never be done with police as an institution, even once we've defeated it in the streets.

The regime of decision specific to the economy discloses itself in civilisation, but this does not however turn our enemy into an agent with its own will. This kind of decision that does not fall from the heavens is a continuous and complex process; and while we call it government, we should avoid hastily reducing it to "actual" *governments*. The government we have in mind is only the correlate of the economy, its flip side. *If the economy is the capture of decision, then government is the decision to capture*. And anyway, why separate them? Why not consider the order of needs deployed via the economy as the very reality of the world being governed? Actually we have to distinguish the economy and government, if not we would just give credit to that old civilised dream of complete alienation, that is, of an obsolescence not only of repression but of decision itself.

Under government, what matters is, on the one hand, pre-set (since it is always a need, that is, the blocking of a use). On the other hand, it is distributed within a social compartment (it gets confined to a sector: health, security, culture, democracy, tourism, "economics" in the trivial sense, etc.). Government is not only the totality of needs; their concentration both horizontal (one next to another) and vertical (any imaginable social refinements that exist for a single need). To govern is to balance needs, to continually equalise them: nothing strictly necessary is left out—and everything else is sacrificed.

What government operates in real time is therefore a *selection of needs*, which has recently (during the Covid period) been termed "*essential*", a banal superlative. Usually, one is under the impression that what matters most has to do with individual consciousness, that it concerns the scale of everyone's little life—this is a bit like confusing building model aircrafts with flying actual aeroplanes. In reality it is exactly because the essential is managed for you, and because you have been totally deprived of it, that you can dedicate yourself to your own little life. The permanent scandal of dispossession, which usually sounds like *business as usual*, is exposed during a state of emergency. It instantly becomes much more difficult to keep this truth silent: *to govern means to decide for everyone what matters most*. Even if the role of human agents within the process was reduced to the act of pressing a button, even if deciders did nothing but validate, their role would still be decisive: they take part in the construction of a world which tears decision away from us.

Ultimately, it is only when we raise the revolutionary question that we are able to understand the deeper relation between government and decision. The Covid period above all brings to light what we still don't understand. In those sectors of work—as miserable as the others—where their nature as “essential” had been cast into doubt by executive decisions, the reaction was always the same: “What, us, non-essential?” Rather than indulging in cheap irony, there should be sincere agreement with this qualification and we should see it as a demonstration and a badge of honour, as a strength and an ultimatum. Because *everything that matters is intrinsically inessential and unfit for management. Everything that resists proves itself unfit for the economy. Everything that aspires to the economy is by this very fact null and void.*

Thus the question of priorities is one of the great entryways into politics. We have to drag politics out from under the hold of the economy, and never give up on this task. As things stand, this question provokes two main reactions. For some, an uncritical adoption. “One way or another, we need to prioritise, we need to choose”. And so they embrace the dominant logic. For others, a rejection without any kind of distance. They just totally get rid of the idea of prioritising as such, which means losing nothing less than the possibility of politics itself. So what should we do?

First of all, *the precondition of any decision is desertion.* To exit the social hold, to exit the economy, to be done with its value system, to invent a new meaning of the term “value”. From now on, only what resists the economy can be of any value. To desert means to exit from the logic of needs. A need is always in itself a thing fixed into its necessity, that is, a form of power. Real anarchism *develops the means by which needs can be negated.* The exile we have in mind is one that puts us on the path to potency. Real communism is one which *provides proof for such a negation,* one which, in the most extreme of situations is able to state: “Here there is a use”.

Second of all, decision paradoxically consists in the ability to exit from what we are doing. To prioritise is to be able to weigh uses up—to weigh up things endowed with potency. But the logic of use entails not only the capacity to enter into what we are doing, but also *to exit from it*—this is precisely what decision can teach us to do. There is a very simple, infallible way of revealing the real importance of what we are doing: to imagine its absence, to suspend it, to exit from it. If we want to rediscover the sense of priorities, we must learn how to exit not only from a specific use, but from the situation itself, in a single move. To borrow the language of IT, decision is the shortcut that allows us to “see all open windows”. We cease to be focused on what we are currently doing, and all of a sudden, we can look on our existence from the outside. We can see the various things in process, we can temporarily put them into perspective, just enough to be able to guess the presence of other possible things. We also see the free space, the blank page. Decision is the use which, in a given situation, comes with a special vision, one which injects possibility back into things, letting their respective potencies shine through, until one of the options ends up prevailing over the others. We are certainly not talking about some kind of general supervision that would turn politics into a foreman surveilling practice. But this is the only way to discover, hidden behind everything that matters to us, a possibility whose time may have arrived.

Unfortunately, what can we observe around us? Always the same ways of raising issues. Materialism, positivism, the religion of needs: an aura of subversion keeps emanating from them, “in these times where religion is back”. The radical milieu is not immune to this: nowadays, the verb with the highest degree of assertion is “to inhabit”. But to clean the Augean stables, to be done with economics, to stop with the ideal of the builder-engineer-entrepreneur, means that we must leave Marxism* behind. The point is even, let’s say it, *to destroy the hegemony of Marxism within radical politics*. This hegemony is demonstrated with a certain forced alternative. On one hand, a revolutionary politics which, as long as it doesn’t reject production, remains Marxist and ends up reformist. On the other hand, a revolutionary anti-Marxism which, for lack of inventing an entire new politics is doomed to fall into anti-politics. The latter tendency can be seen everywhere-including the Invisible Committee. One hates whatever comes out as revolutionary seriousness, so one calls oneself anti-political, either as the sign of not taking oneself seriously (we wonder who could take autonomists seriously if they don’t themselves), or to yearn for another kind of seriousness. Let us not forget that any hegemony is an option *by default*, meaning it is only the reverse side of a lack of potent assertions. Therefore, deserting the field of politics is today, as it was yesterday, a huge mistake. It only exposes us to endless lamentations about the rise of the far-right, or about the domination of puritanism in politics.

* The only aggressive impact of anti-capitalism in the last fifty years has been to favour the reconstruction of a certain right-wing, which keeps rediscovering the famous red background of the Nazi flag.

Sense of the future: principle of revolution

Destituting the past

*Hardhearted enough to see what is ending,
loving enough to see what begins.*

It's impossible to tear down civilisation as long as we are not able to identify it as the past as far as politics are concerned. To have a future is to bet on the following truth: every hegemony can fall—this truth is nothing else than the principle of revolution.

After peace and the economy, the third political hegemony is the past crushing us. It's a big drawer someone opened by accident a long time ago, in which our lives are squeezed, and that we haven't been able to close ever since. Even deeper, it is also our own past, personal and collective, victories alongside defeats, operating on us as a kind of unsurpassable norm. It is the way we've always done things (what's the point in trying something else? why break with it?); what we've already done but has cost us dearly (what's the point in trying that again?); what we've already done and which now dominates us (what's the point in reinventing the wheel?); what we've never done (what 's the point in beginning now?); everything we have left to do (how to begin "for real"?). The past is the official sponsor of *what's-the-pointism*. The answer comes from a place of instinct: the joy inherent in every beginning, the rocket of fresh starts with its infinite levels. To begin is not sufficient, we also need to be aware of it.

What happens to time, when caught under the heel of the past? The present reduced to a perpetual update. The reservoir of the future contains no more than what is socially possible: it has dried up. And always, *eternally*, the end dominates. Because everything that happens is nothing but a way for the past to achieve its ends (in both meanings of goal and last stop). Since it *already knows how it ends*, the past *spoils* our existences. Its reign extends itself in this paradoxical way: what rules over the end is also kept out of time's reach. And so the end rules over everything and orders every process. And as we know, to end—since apparently that's the only thing left to do—is to end badly. Everywhere, death reigns almighty. "Still, the end, that's something", some might say, carrying armloads of statistics just like they once used to carry verses from the Apocalypse. We answer: if there is an end to imagine, it is only to fight against it, not to kneel before it. That's the whole difference between resisting history and submitting to it.

Within the order of the past, the only conceivable conclusion is for the drawer to finally close itself with the end of the species: without us. A new figure of depoliticisation appears on stage: *the capitulator to the end of the world*. Their gesture consists in solemnly stating the end of all things, one well adjusted to the will of an enemy perceived as too strong for us to take on, of course. Never before has misanthropy been so socially profitable. As a figure of resentment, it becomes a figure of opportunism and is welcomed with applause*. The capitulator raises their own capitulation as a proof of humanity's doom, but they only prove by doing so that they deserve their own doom—if that. And what does the surviva-

* Misanthropy was so much better before, in those times when Cioran used to say: "anyone who lets himself be applauded is a piece of trash".

list do? Convinced that they already live in the future, they only organise themselves within this restrained frame, within the stuffy atmosphere of this drawer labelled “end of the world”.

How does civilised politics get constrained within the order of the past? Certainly not under the form of a uniform bloc. The major difficulty, which is also the main obstacle to the very concept of civilisation, lies in the fact that civilisation imposes the past through two distinct modes, contradictory and yet complementary: tradition and modernity. The usual mistake—to reduce civilisation to the latter—is the result of getting on board with the discourse that modernity elaborates around itself: it believes it liberates us from the past. In truth it doesn't at all, since its program is both a failure and a mistake. We must not destroy the past, but bring it back to its own potency. More generally, it is not by playing one time against another (present against past, or vice versa) that one resists time.

With tradition, the order of the past is in a way the official program—at least the only one we have in hand. Its politics based on the idea of “one territory, one community” aligns it with the reproduction of the Same. At this stage, the productive order is first and foremost a reproductive order. The main concern is copying the same again and again, in order to build some continuity. In other words, to endlessly extend the past as best possible. Use degenerates into custom. The human on the side of tradition tries very hard to be a worthy representative of the past. Tradition is *Fate* as government. But we must avoid falling prey to retrospective illusion. Tradition is nothing but the pre-modern. The *before* cannot be reduced to tradition. We must therefore not forget what we have forgotten: something that used to resist the civilised matrix, and which for that precise reason *we no longer can know*. All we can say about it is that there has been resistance, but we don't know of what kind. The mistake of the communalist, of the primitivist, and of all politics of the past, is to think that they know.

But what about modernity, then? Its whole rhetoric, its epic bellow, rests on the celebration of a so-called liberation from the past, and on the promise of an always more futuristic present. How then can we speak of this headlong rush as a submission to the past? In truth, modernity has understood that everything must change for everything to stay the same. The reformist alloy can be interpreted as follows: we have found a new way of maintaining social order, and it is called progress. Modernity is *government against Fate*. It proves that it is always possible to use the destruction of the past as a means to govern. The modern also defends the order in place, only this order is less a state of affairs than a dynamic manager. But to defend what is already here is to submit to the past. And anyway, what we are saying will remain unintelligible so long as we do not understand that government is not a modern invention. From the standpoint of civilisation, we can measure more adequately this historical stagnation. What has actually moved, politically speaking? One has just accelerated, generalised, complexified, digitalised the good old logic of domestication. This logic consists in forcing, in the movement itself, a certain kind of immobility that enables value extraction.

Why did modernity fail? More specifically, why did its revolutionary element (whose existence we're not trying to deny) fail? Is there a doom that forbids us from resisting history? No. This failure only proves this: history is time as power. Within tradition, the past

submits and shapes the present. Within modernity, the present submits and shapes the past. Both cases mobilise a power relation towards time, which entails a deeper political solidarity between them. History is time *minus potency*. Whichever mode of humiliation towards time prevails, we have to step above this debate and identify history itself as the past within politics. There isn't any other liberating point of view.

However, it is impossible to completely exit history. The world we inherit has been in large part shaped by monks who “withdrew from the world” and were “outside of time”. All we can do is resist history, which means to *aim as much force as possible against it*. Instead of trying to escape time, of cursing the present, of humiliating the past and of repeating “no future” over and over, we shall give potency back to time, in all its dimensions. We can only reduce the *power* of time by bringing *potency* back into it; such is the decivilised answer. We must strike first against the way the end has a chokehold on the future, the way it contains it by writing its content in advance. To rediscover a future is the priority. Apparently, this is not self-evident. But what should we think of the tendency to sacrifice the idea of a future *right at the exact moment when everyone is terrified of it*? How can that not be seen, behind the most radical arguments, as a clumsy attempt at covering up our own fear?

But first we need to remove the idea of future from the general confusion. We must wrest another way of thinking time, where future is a bifurcation point. We have been taught that the future is, if not a science, at least some kind of representation, a modelling, a knowledge. We are so desperate to know what the future is that we spend all our time predicting, calculating, anticipating it, and this is exactly how we destroy it. Quite the contrary, it is only when there is once again space for the impossible and the unrepresentable, that the future can appear. The future is the maximum resistance against the present and the past. It is not an election promise. It is, first of all, a principle: *hegemony can always be destroyed*. Here time opens up. A hegemony is destroyed when it is put in its place by *something with greater potency*. Something that does not eradicate its possibility, but that brings what was advertised as a necessity back down to the level of a possibility, that of a failure. It is not sufficient to say that hegemony fundamentally fails; we must make something else grow. The principle of the destruction of hegemony opens up time. If it did not contain any truth, nothing and no one would have any future. If we were to acquiesce to the principle of conservatism—that “hegemony necessarily prevails”—then everything is already written and there is no future any more. A future that is written is a contradiction. It implies that it is already in the past, trapped by what is already in place. But rather, the future, and the future only, comes with a maximal capacity of negation of what is already there and instituted without opposition. We can confirm this by taking any collective history as an example: to freeze what is happening by tying it to what is already there comes down to losing our future. And when we rediscover it, the whole present suddenly comes alive. The negation of hegemony carves a space within the present, and the further we go the deeper it gets. Such a space is in no way an available social compartment, for it pertains to what is socially impossible—and yet, it is in this space that we get organised. We set up camp in the blindspot of the present. And simultaneously, the future gives us the force to revive the past, to visit it, to encounter within it everything that hasn't surrendered, overflowing with “what has ended”. Once we have peeked our heads

and the rest of our bodies outside this drawer, the past becomes something that cannot be closed back and sealed hermetically. In contrast, we exhume and open up tombs just like archaeologists.

Thus, we are in no way compelled to turn the joy of beginnings into any kind of imperative. All that we have to do is to find an understanding concerning the principle of destroying hegemony. In politics it is called revolution. *Revolution is first of all the name of the future.* Isn't this identification somewhat forced? Not at all. Every hegemony is the possibility of a failure. The current hegemony, that is civilisation, is one possibility within politics, the one in which the potency of politics is disallowed. It is the position which self-obstructs, and which, for this exact reason, disappears, making itself impregnable. More generally, the principle of revolution is what makes space for a politics that attacks what we have every reason to consider the greatest hegemony. This is how a revolutionary politics can rise, today as yesterday. Others have been revolutionaries and have, in their time, named the greatest hegemony so as to expose it to hate.

Since being a revolutionary always takes place in a specific present, we must seize the chance that is specific to us, draw all the conclusions from it, and do it now. Of course defeating civilisation requires an impressive amount of force. We still assert however that the revolutionary fight does not just oppose differing amounts of force, but also different definitions of force. In the tradition proper to power, force is constructed by diminishing a given reality, by putting it down, by subjugating it. The idea of potency entails that force is, on the contrary, constructed by making a given reality greater than ourselves, so that by entering it we take part in its force. The stakes specific to these times are to bring the discourse around force over to the side of potency. Which comes down to saying that political potency must prevail over political power. But to prevail does not mean to exert a hegemony. We can leave that vocabulary in the gutter. To prevail over a hegemony is to be *otherwise much stronger* than it!

Sense of belonging: position Destituting identity

We come to the decisive question of political subjectivity and therefore of the use of politics. There is a padlock on this use and it is probably the most redoubtable: identity. To belong and to undo identity is to take a stance, that is to have the use of a common truth in which we can carve out a space for organisation.

Between the position-model and the identity-model, “there is all the difference between a destiny we take on, and a condition we endure”*. It is crucial to destitute identity, whose territory spreads out endlessly. But to do this we must tackle the question in its full extent, and find other ways to approach familiar infra-political experiences.

First of all, we refuse to place identity as a neutral term equivalent to subjectivity. Identity is not a synonym for subjectivity, it is an error in its conception. Subjectivity always goes beyond identity, it cannot fit in this desperate desire to be stuck inside oneself. It rather embarks on all these small or big things which shine with their own radiance. That’s why we want to reconsider subjectivity as *participation in something*. And the most simple name for this something is *we*. We need to get out from this enclosure of the I in itself, and understand this: *wherever I am, I am in a given we*. We need to break with the civilised experience of subjectivity as solitude. Within subjectivity, I can be the only human, but I can never be the only subject. When I have the experience of reading, of playing a video game, of boredom, I am within a *we*** . But it has to be clear that we miss this *we* as soon as we reduce it to a simple addition of I’s. A *we* is several I’s (human or not) *entering into vibration, into resonance*.

Second, this space of resonance of the *we* has a form which we call a use. *Wherever we are, we are within some use*. This means that from now on we must understand use as a basic coordinate of determination, alongside the here and now. Within a situation, there is always a here, a now, and a use (*or something which prevents it*). We say that as long as this third coordinate is not taken into account, we will remain confused***.

Third, there must be an update to the concept of identity: it is not only self-enclosure (individualism), but also *a certain way of participating that acts as a means of enclosure (institution)*. To let ourselves be identified by something that we have, that we do, that we love, means to let its meaning be sacrificed and imposed as something automatic. Identity is subjectivity producing an object, or in other words producing a self-obstructing subject. It is what cancels our capacity to vibrate and to have use of a situation.

Fourth, we have to reconsider subjectivity on the political field: politics is that moment when participation tips over into *belonging*. The political *we* is not an ordinary one, it constitutes an event and we have to think its specific use as one. What is the difference between belonging and mere participation? On the most general level, use connects us to something important and opens up what we call ethics. But it is only the use that connects

* *And the war has only just begun...*(2001).

** To be told “don’t be lonely” doesn’t make any sense, one should say: “you should change a bit of *we*”.

*** But let’s not fall into positivism, which would come down to considering a continuous subjectivity without gaps or interruptions. It is possible to be in nothing or in an interstice. But when I am in nothing, many things have use of me.

us to *what matters most* that opens up the dimension we call politics. To put it simply, participating has to do with what matters, belonging has to do with what matters most. We do not say that politics just comes down to this use alone, but that politics is its centre of gravity. Its name is position. Thus, position is the mode of belonging proper to potency. Political identity, which monopolises this question, only refers to the mode of belonging proper to power. We refuse any belonging in the mode of institution.

Fifth, *to take a position is a decision*. The position on what matters most is a common concern, something to be shared and discussed. But to assert something shows precisely that we have been able to decide something, that what is indisputable has emerged from our discussions. If we deny this indisputable part, we are doomed to remain at the outskirts of politics. Simply put, a position absolutely cannot be dictated. Position is synonymous with political subjectivity: it is the way a we is constructed and appropriated, the way an I enters within a partisan we. It cannot be separated from the singular decision of *saying we*, and from an intimate movement that says I take it on, I want.

The decision to belong is something that political identity imposes. It converts it into submission one way or another. For instance, when Jan Valtin follows the instructions of the Comintern, against his own will, he ceases to take a position*. The Party then becomes the name of what prevents political subjectivity. Only sarcastically can it be called a potent way of taking sides. Here Valtin expresses a political identity while failing to take a position. This is a risk faced by everyone, and furthermore, it is the fate that history has in store for any we endowed with potency: to end up as an identity and at the same time in the archives. It is therefore crucial to think politics starting from the refusal of such a pact. The Bolshevik model, being a negation of the position as a place of resonance, is obviously not the right one. But refusing all authoritarianism should not lead us to deny the centrality of a position. It is indispensable for any position to come to consensus. But we must continue to see consensus as the expression of a gap rather than a communion**. Beyond a certain point, the gap becomes dismemberment and beyond that an explosion. In order to balance out this risk, without forbidding it, a position first sets its own limits: those of the unacceptable. Let us never forget that the consistency proper to a position is to act as a bulwark against the politics of power. What distinguishes every given position on this topic, is how they determine what we could call the *crystallisation point* of power. Every position must determine this point, again and again, and it is vain to believe that this point could be universal. Every position appropriates the question as its own, because this is where politics can break (or fail to break) with the institution of morals.

Now, from this vantage point, everything becomes clear. And we can observe with a smile the reactions this provokes. Some immediately state their distrust, their reluctance with regard to any belonging. They associate any potent we with the state of mind of a flock, evoking all the worst dangers. Others say ironically: “Here we go, more people speaking *for us!* Belonging is my question. Belonging belongs to me. There is no politics *per se*, there is only our politics. Politics *per se* is just something for privileged white folks”.

* Jan Valtin, *Out of the night*, 1940.

** “To have a go at a flaw is childish if not stupid. Strong minds know how to navigate between these obstacles, that no one is entitled to eliminate and that everyone is capable of avoiding or overcoming.” Blanqui, *Letter to Maillard*, 1852. But he speaks here as a rationalist.

Because belonging gives a feeling of the greatest possible force, it has been coveted by civilised power, cultivating two main aspects. The particularist strategy, traditionalist at heart, consists in downsizing the world until it blends in with the we. The potency of the we is experienced as the deflation of the world. The result of this is suffocation, everyone wishing to get away as fast as possible. Conversely, the universalist strategy involves oversizing the we to the point that it blends in with the world. This sole we thinks it is the world, to the extent of getting lost in it and to the point of losing any notion of what a we with potency even is. Such is modernity. It brings down any political we, any potent we, and makes it fit into one of its housing estate flats. Every time, in order to get in, we have had to make ourselves small. The compensation, if there is any, is that this we receives its little share of power. But no amount of power will ever compensate for the absence of potency! As it so happens, in the very late phase in which we stand, the central hegemony is breaking apart. So very naturally, every potent we that had to lower its head to walk in, starts to reanimate and says: “No, I exist, therefore I cannot be reduced to a mere part of a great whole”. It starts to understand that reducing the we to a part of the whole is one of the most basic operations of power. It is also the most accepted one, since it can appear like a generous and welcoming move, like an invitation. But the wes with potency can see through such paternalism, they can see the vexatious violence at stake.

So we can paint the following picture of the current situation. On one hand, there is the *party of the post-*: the postmodern party. Those who insist on refusing any potent we end up swelling the ranks of universalist belonging, thus prolonging modernity. They necessarily have a tendency for conservatism, despite their apology for singularity. Those who give in to the blackmail about weakness end up creating the network of all networks. They store up within themselves every infra-political identity conceivable, in order to compensate for an inevitable lack of consistency. They convince themselves that it is still preferable this way (since it guards against any dangerous totalisation), or even that actual strength lies right there, in all those labels, in a mosaic so complex that they disco-ball themselves. In truth, what happens there is less an actual universalist conviction than the guarantee for the individual to maintain its place: however liquefied or deconstructed, the ego remains the existential centre of gravity. On the other hand, there is the *party of the neo-*: the awakening of particularism. Those who yearn for strength after a long period of humiliation. Those who consider themselves survivors of the endless massacre of modernity. Yearning for strength, they only experience it in the form of objectivation, through a political identity. This is because they satisfy themselves with the existing belongings on offer. “They know what they want when they see it”.

All similarly different, the former are individualists. Fetishists of difference, the latter are identitarians. We extricate ourselves from the double-bind of post-'s and neo-'s. We say: what is the strongest within the we of a position is the possibility of seceding *from the civilised order*. It's even the only chance we have in this matter. We will never achieve it if we remain stuck in the mode of identity and production. Group, territory, technical support: no objective condition has the capacity to secede. As strong as particularists may be, they have no potency. Their identitarian nature, what singles them out best and most, is always also the point from which government can catch them, reintegrate them, destroy them, humiliate them anew. Given that, how can we find a breach? The secret is to refuse to separate belonging and decision. Within a position, it is by deciding on what matters most

that I belong to a we. This is the gesture we have to agree on. This means that we raise the most important problems, those too great to be faced alone, without risking sinking into ridicule or madness.

Like all superlatives, of course, “what matters the most” gives rise to an insurmountable difficulty for most of our contemporaries. But the difficulty dissolves as soon as we point out a certain number of confusions. First of all, the point is not to agree on everything. A position is a political formation capable of transcending abyssal paradoxes: it can gather together Manchester United fans and Liverpool fans, Yankees and Red Sox, meat eaters and vegans. This also means that we must be strong enough to laugh about (without denying them) categorial differences: age, culture, taste, and so on. Secondly, the issue is about what matters the most, in general and abstracted from any particular situation. This concerns the refusal, the enemy, and different ways of identifying it. Therefore coming to an agreement is not that insurmountable. Saying we is already having gone halfway. But every situation tests this fundamental decision: we will argue with each other, diverge, become dissonant, or worse, come to believe we’re saying the same thing. Halfway is halfway: it would be childish to endlessly try to determine if the glass is half empty or half full. Belonging is only halfway, and that’s the end of that. But, as we know, this decision seems above all *too dangerous* for most people—let’s put this tendency down to the traumas of the 20th century. Reviving the question of a strong organisation is something which indeed forces us to search for a system of compensation. It is actually in such a counterweight that politics can discover its fifth sense. This being said, it is true that the risk is commensurate to the potency at stake: we can’t have it all. A position takes firm hold of both sides, overcoming any unilateral temptations. We refuse belonging without decision (which is the simplest description of any institutional formation, in which meaning becomes inaccessible and which has the consistency of its internal power relations). We refuse decision without belonging, which is nothing but the temptation of authoritarianism and where strategy becomes a body separated from the rest.

When it comes to political identity, the available catalogue offered to everyone contains at least three strategies (they can of course be combined) that humiliate the decision of the we.

-Belonging through the institution of a quality: I have this or that quality (skin colour, sex, class), therefore I automatically belong.

-Through contract: I obey the obligations of an organisation, therefore I belong to it. The point is to fulfil the conditions of a structure. The price of admission can be raised (this is the particularist overbid), but it never comes down to a *decision concerning the heart of the matter*.

-Through the promotion of values, which are actually the institution of meaning itself. We have seen that quality and contract do not bother with meaning and only function by exploiting it. Value, on the other hand, separates things from their meaning, in order to never have to question it again. We refuse to belong through either quality, contract, or values. We refuse any identity corresponding to such belongings: categorical, corporatist or ideological identities. For us, they are simply devoid of strength.

Sense of discernment: ethics and politics

Destituting confusion

The time has come to resist our own becoming-hegemonic. If politics is the only potency, then it is not potent at all: it is power. If revolution is the only truth, then it ceases to be true: it becomes a method of government. Politics is the most potent, but it is not omnipotent: there is potency elsewhere. We must be able to see what is missing in what appears to contain everything. We have to detect the least within the most.

What we fight, when we fight civilisation, is the Great Whole: a world without any outside, a one-dimensional world. Civilisation is always a “mono-politics”, one which only leaves a choice between integration or disintegration. Politically, we are still in the monolithic age. This results in the reign of confusion. When we are surrounded, we end up confused. How can we rediscover a sense of discernment? We can start by locating potency outside of politics, by adding another dimension to it. It is ethics that plays the role of the main counterweight. This way politics isn't the only potency in the world any more.

This must not be read in any way as a moral protestation against good old *realpolitik*. The distinction here is not an operation of division. Everything that matters delineates a use and thereby becomes ethical. What matters most pertains to politics. Politics is an intensification of ethics, to the point of crossing a threshold. In the act of coming out for instance, an existential part becomes suddenly politically charged, at least for a moment. Conversely, it is always possible to rediscover ethical potency underlying a given political intensification: something simpler is at play in that moment, from below.

The sense of discernment is the ability to both recognise potency outside of politics, and yet never devalue the specific potency of politics. It's about never levelling the threshold crossing. This requires us to continually practice going back-and-forth between ethics and politics. It's the ability to see the ethical layers within politics (we can be comrades and not necessarily friends), the political becoming of an ordinary potency, and the very distinctive way a position can merge both (political friendships).

Discerning better, for deciding better. It is a matter of placing feelings in their right place, without ever denying them. Clarity radiates but does not erase nuances or colours. We have to look for strength wherever it lies, and that can be anywhere. Separated from ethics, any position will dry out before turning into a desert. To state the importance of ethics and to turn politics into a concentration of potency is to defend one and the same idea. Whatever the case, we must recognise things endowed with potency.

The five political senses are each indispensable. We must cherish them and constantly take care of the condition of their possibility. Each partakes in the construction of what matters most. But we should always resist the temptation of reducing politics to just one of them, lest we produce figures of obstruction. Reduction to conflictuality produces “the frightful sea of the aimless action”*, that is, the figure of the activist or of the insurgent without any perspective (and whose romanticism should no longer move us), or even of the mercenary, who is always partly responsible for the worst. Reduction to priority produces the figure of the bureaucrat, or of the strategist cut off from his peers, believing himself above the fray and thereby traitor to all. Reduction to the future undoubtedly produces the figure of the theoretician, who, considering only the distant horizon, ends up completely short-sighted. Reduction to belonging crashes on the shores of identity and ideology. Reduction to discernment loses itself advocating nuance in a unilateral defence of subtlety, thus following the modern slide into depoliticisation. Each of us begins with one or another tendency, so the point is to know how to resist it according to our own singularity. By giving more space for the other senses. By listening to them more, and better.

It is not enough to fight, we must also know exactly what side we are on.

It is not enough to desert, we must also say what we join when we desert.

It is not enough to exit and to tear ourselves away, we must also take a stance. If not, the sense of priorities boils down to being critical: we remain modern, progressive.

It is not enough to carry with us a truth—the principle of destroying hegemony—we must have use of it.

It is not enough to have a revolutionary horizon, we must also carve in it space for organisation. To be more or less within the horizon is to become universalist.

It is not enough to say I, we must know how to say we.

It is not enough to say we, we must also say which one.

We have to become capable of showing the political we, a we that is not the object of introspective knowledge, but that we must be able to recognise.

* Musset, *Confession of a child of the century*, 1836.

3

THE PARTY

Invitation

We aim to reinvent the revolutionary possibility through a new definition of the enemy and of politics. However, all this is overly general and is likely to go unheeded as long as we do not establish an organisation as such. The previous pages are important as they *make a possibility* out of decivilisation and they bring forward a mode of thought that is not a simple recombination of radical key words. The importance of the following pages lies in *making* decivilisation *potent* by defining a singular position out of it. The sense of belonging is such a central ingredient that it alone brings all the other senses together. It is pointless to expect the same from the relations to war, to the event, to revolution or to ethics: gathering forces is precisely what a position is about. What is the risk? Why is our era beating around the bush, with everyone preferring to speak for themselves? Once the usual excuses are ruled out, the only serious risk is to lose everything we've gained through thought and to damage political potency by reducing it to a group logic. But this is no reason to stop halfway: it would only amplify the opposite trend of vanishing into the horizon, dissolving politics into its overall idea. The construction of the Party is not any ordinary idea, but the idea of an adventure. It grows with each battle fully lived, with each comrade we meet, with each opponent we face, within each grief life has in store for us. Ultimately, the idea we have today of the Party already contains all this. The more potent things are, the more time their growth requires. We despise small victories and petty desires.

It is not enough to say we, we must say which one. We call the Party this we, this position, this use of politics. To whomever reads and deciphers this, is wondering from the first pages “who is speaking?” this is the answer: those who have hereby started a revolutionary party, who made a proposal out of it, and who expose themselves. We do not have an iden-

tity, we have a position. We have a form and a force of organisation, and this text is a core element of its infinite construction, as it carries the burden of clarifying *what matters most*. The political we is unveiled only by the determination of what matters most, by bringing together all its strong points, and by the gesture of raising a will to its consequences. When the will is directed towards revolution, each ingredient put on the table must be able to spoil the democratic mood.

1. Politics is what matters most. We agree on prioritising it in our lives. When deciding, we first activate the scale of the position, before that of the crew or the network. In our relations, comradeship comes first. But in general, the primacy of one thing does not amount to crushing everything else. The Party is a potency, the exact opposite of a power, and use is its principle of organisation. It is thus built from constant self-destitution, it resists its own institutional becoming. This is merely the reverse of its form, not the effect of any tendency towards self-denigration.

2. The first assertion is to take sides in the ongoing war, to position ourselves as irreducible enemy of civilisation. We must agree on the fact that this is war, and hence acknowledge the formulation we choose. It is strictly defined as the *politics of the hegemony of power*. To put it in more practical terms, if you think that the fight against peace, the economy, the past, identity and confusion is obvious, ongoing and feasible, this is for you.

3. Decision is the most important gesture. There is no higher wager in our existence than the one we place on belonging; and this very constraint unleashes the greatest potency of decision. To decide means to prioritise, to be able to get out of ordinary life and of what we are doing here and now. As violent as this uprooting can be, it is essential to see things clearly and to find the most potent path. As revolutionaries, to decide means constantly gaining perspective on the situation and placing it rightfully within the larger horizon of the revolutionary construction. It starts with putting the highest objective at the order of the day: insurrection. During insurrection, the present opens up. Only then can we properly assess the situation. Any reality *within which we grow* is concrete. The Party features a certain idea of concreteness that is true to its etymology. The present is therefore not the one given to us. But if what you call concrete is about confining ourselves to the existing situation, then you are talking precisely about what we want to destroy. To us, everything begins with the possibility of this destruction, with the principle of revolution. No decision can hold the maximally destructive charge, yet each must have in them a good amount. Because a decision that gives in to fatalism is our enemy, a pure expression of weakness. To act as revolutionaries means paving the way for insurrection and politicising the event according to specific uses and registers: strategy, presence to the event, violence, thought, ethics, discussion, propaganda, distribution of forces, and the material question.

4. There is a limit to the most important: its means of intervention cannot be omnipotent and hegemonic. We must never forget that other potencies are at work between us and in the universe. The principle of belonging, of maximum agreement, is not designed to produce robots. Saying we does not sentence us to unity, there will always be different kinds of we within the we. Decision is the opposite of both personal power and weak consensus,

it is neither authoritative nor majority rule. Once we agree on what matters most, what happens next? We are stronger. We are not stronger for having eradicated dissent, but only for finding a greater assent.

The Party is the form in which we talk, think, and act, in which we conspire. We are neither strangers to this form nor do we take it for granted: we have chosen it. We do not own it, it outstrips the present we that carries it, but we are all responsible for it. Such a form always needs to be re-examined and this allows us to improve ourselves further. This form sets the terms for the indisputable and reminds us of the necessary route towards common construction. We learn to get some perspective on things that singularly have some importance but that we tend to politically overestimate.

But why do we speak of a “Party”? Why do we use a word so deprived of greatness? Everything we extract from history to oppose history, is something it has ruinously sullied. Up to now, the Party has meant a large concentration of power. But for us it means a large concentration of potency, absolutely essential if we want to participate in defeating the highest enemy. The word Party is nonetheless tied to a particular history. Everything could date back to the great year of re-politicisation that is 2001: the revolutionary assault preceded the reactionary one, as Genoa preceded New York. It all started from a simple intuition: the surreal encounter between the Party and autonomy.

*“There is this old Bolshevik notion, a bit chilly for sure: building the Party. I believe that our present war is about building the Party. Or rather, it’s about giving this deserted fiction a new content. (...) Fictions are serious things. We need fiction to believe in the reality we are living. The Party is the central fiction, the one that sums up the war of our time.”**

Obviously, true encounters are never planned. It is beautiful and at the same time it can always be a disaster. Here, the point was to collide both universes (the bolshevik planet and the autonomous constellation). No doubt the idea was to “cool down” the autonomous atmosphere enough for it to finally gain consistency and shape. It was a way of going against its natural taste for diffuse forms and enthusiastic accumulation of practices. Such encounter is not the sum of both universes, but the irruption of something else. There is always the risk of being beneath what the encounter promises. There is also the threat of a two-sided hidden agenda; on one side, the exploitation of autonomy to the advantage of good old Leninism, a rearguard ambition leading to reformism; on the other side, using the Party as a simple condiment to spice up the autonomous sauce. Twenty years later, this reunification gets translated into another language, and results in a sufficiently stable chemical formula. The Party is the use that arises from the encounter with political potency. Wherever we find potency we name it, then we outline its precise location with a magic pencil. This is not arbitrary. The Party is a reminder of what political organisation stands for and no longer constitutes a provocation. We are convinced that revolution will remain a lost cause as long as the autonomous tradition does not embrace the form of the Party, as otherwise the choice is constrained to an alternative between *old-fashioned organisation* (power formations) and *weak organisation*, a loss of force (diffusion, “opening up”, novelty, networking, fluidity). On one hand, energy, good intentions, and a taste for formalisation are insufficient criteria. On the other hand, moral or ethical depoliticisation always dooms

* *And the war has only just begun...*(2001).

the possibility of a revolution. It is, according to us, a political mistake to focus on pluralism and hybridisation. Yet this does not make us enemies of all otherness; that would be too easy.

The inability to ask and hear the question “why?” embodies this era and its prison. To name our fight carries the power to redefine absolutely everything. But oddly this arrives last, at least last in its entirety. Militants are those who consume their “why”. They only use it to brag about how nonconformist they are and to sell their morality piece by piece. Asking “why” is the irreducible religious seed within any collective construction, which is conveniently and carefully hidden as a shameful reality: Walter Benjamin compares it to a grandmaster hunchbacked dwarf hidden under the chessboard*. “Our” why is the result of a long process of clarification, it has survived many aliases, such as “the sensible” (too human) or “the singular”**. It has suffered from namelessness for a long time. It could have fallen into non-existence as it preferred to be nameless rather than being misnamed—and our nihilistic side called for just that. But saying that we do not ask ourselves why is the biggest modern deception***, the ultimate trick of civilised rationale. Our why, that is to say the ultimate element of the organisation, is the logic of what matters most and of the irreducible: use.

Use enables us to organise, while the Party stands as its political locus. It leads to revolutionary will and its unleashing. All political subjectivity is partisan. Regarding decivilisation, fate is a new idea: it is the encounter between an existence and a position.

* *On the concept of history*, Walter Benjamin.

** Two concepts were always needed: the singular in common and the singular commons.

*** There are two great deceptions, two ways to objectify the why and lose it: to identify it with something or to identify it with nothing.

Entering the Party: partisan uses

The Party is the place of organisation that opens when the elements of what matters most meet. We activate this juncture by simply saying: we. We recognise each other through a truth, and the Party is the use of this truth. But this truth is neither alive nor experienced as long as the key to enter the Party is unknown to us. Belonging is nothing without its practice. The next question is about that: the many ways of entering the Party, partisan uses. We do not seek to list all existing *possibilities* today, but to unveil a political *potency*. Classifying everything according to a complete taxonomy of action and therefore putting it on the same level, would mean for us a complete depoliticisation. To make wagers in this era involves being able to give up on options.

The lack of a true position, one that is claimable and claimed, generates a system of equivalence that prevails over everything else. A collective screening of a film, the organisation of a meal in a collective place, a round of talks on a specific topic, boxing lessons, going randomly to a protest, fundraising events, a collective building project, a facebook page, and so on. “As long we’re doing something it’s ok, it’s always better than doing nothing”. We must expect to find the productive logic of accumulation in any place that lacks the strength of belonging. Regarding activism, it really is a fraud based on mistaking the lesser evil for real action. To quote Hannah Arendt, “*those who choose the lesser evil forget quickly that they chose evil*”. Of course all this is a lesser evil only regarding the objective to *change things and doing what must be done*. So, in order to overcome the inner inconsistency of militants, the latter have little choice but to pick between becoming ideologically rigid and renouncing all ambition—or to hesitate between them. Whatever, let them go about their business. The problem is that the system of equivalence always has a disastrous echo in our time: it strengthens the dominant depiction of the revolutionary as the ever-present little shit who, through ideology and restlessness, lies to themselves about the scope, value, and actual relevance of what they do. The problem of the militant does not lie in their ineffectiveness but in their effective force of disabling the revolutionary hypothesis.

Truthfully, not every practice attempting to emancipate ourselves from institutions is necessarily political, or at least not enough to meet the definition of a revolutionary party. Plenty of things need not account for entering the fight and do not come under the Party. If politics does not have a monopoly on what matters and on high requirements, it must learn to identify its own. A sense of discernment probably lies in choosing the practices central to us and whose meaning can always be felt, questioned and put into perspective. We have been able to name nine of them, over time. For each of these practices, we renewed the logic of use, defined specific questions, refused to turn it into an instrument, countering the trend to autonomisation. By doing so, we are done with politics as a shapeless whole. We refuse to endlessly start from scratch, we want to rely on decisions which have turned certain orientations into self-evident truths. We define them in order to experience their living possibility, rather than to set them in stone.

Strategy

Strategy is the ability to make decisions, to lay down the contours of an organisation. We must set a direction and hold the line. Strategic use arranges all the others and determines what is a priority and what is not, therefore it requires some perspective. What are the opposing forces? What is the state of our forces? It articulates a theoretical level of abstraction, together with putting into motion: the intervention.

We know the political meetings we don't want, they have recognisable features. All issues, whether of great or little importance are addressed equally. Energy is so badly spent that we are out of breath by the time we tackle the main issue. There is no overview of the situation nor of what it demands, no one tries to politicise it even broadly. We take *what's there* at face value: whether we decide to withdraw from the situation out of dogmatism, or to follow its worst slopes out of opportunism, we always comply. We do not know how to use our forces: either we weaken them by adopting a wait-and-see attitude, or we magnify them by boastfulness. We get organised the same way, whether it rains or shines. And once a decision has been made, we just cannot stick to it.

We refuse a certain idea of political organisation: one which is satisfied with the absence of general thought, and further, one which can't find its own thought in the melee, and doesn't know what to do with it. If an organisation loses sight of thought, the only options left are (blind) voluntarism or ("lucid") defeatism. Lucidity is often invoked—ok but which one? Courage should be able to pry lucidity away from the depressive camp. To place thought at the centre of the situation is to favor an *armed analysis*, which deals with the nothingness of an ordinary period as much as the hardships of keeping our propositions alive in a hectic one. Hardships should never surprise us. On the contrary, a disarmed analysis will always advise us to adapt to the very conditions we have, in revolutionary faith, sworn to destroy.

What does reading the situation mean? To reach the right *definition* of the subject, a bit like with photography. We begin with defining the subject (what is on today's agenda? What are we talking about?), which means having eyes and contacts everywhere, addressing our shortcomings and learning to foresee the obstacles that still lie ahead of us. Then, we adjust the focus: on the one hand, we put the subject back into the present, within a certain sequence that we have isolated (choice of focal length); on the other hand, we find the right depth of field and the fundamental issues raised by the subject. Yet, should we want to find the right focus, we must be somewhere. Position is a dual ability to position oneself and to position what happens, and this is the first lesson of strategy. As such, we do not identify the subject "objectively", but always as a *problem and opportunity* in the construction of our force—without indulging in ideological enforcement.

How do we free ourselves from the dominant viewpoint, how do we stop thinking from the closed conditions of the present? Insurrection already provides a negating point of view. Usually a distant goal, insurrection is part of the present, of which it is merely its tip. It allows us to open the debate, and to grasp the scope of our actions—which, naturally, can be extremely narrow. Warning: we're not saying that we need to denigrate every situation just because it's not the insurrection. We summon the most liberating and negating

point of view in order to be able to determine what would represent a breakthrough in the situation. Any breakthrough comes first in the form of an obstacle to face. We identify a political target (an angle of attack of the civilised problem), and the political breakthrough resides ultimately in the potency we find to attack the obstacle. To outline an obstacle, to reveal a strong point: such is the motto that gives a new emphasis to the present.

The general spirit of strategy is not the production of decision, but rather the way of approaching problems in order to free space for decision-making—in order to confront what matters most. In truth, there are two modes of decision, to which everyone resorts. We know how to face small or middle-sized problems, or at least we have some idea. We're not overwhelmed, we can choose an intuitive, quick, energy-efficient mode, which activates a highly diffuse and inventive collective participation. This is mode 1, "autopilot", where decision simply lies in having a use for what's happening. One possible pitfall is reinforcing routine, as well as hiding problems by treating them all equally. Things are quite different when facing great and sudden problems: their development is singularly unpredictable, they immediately bring to light the blind spots of our political thinking, they bear a great affective charge, and they can even manifest all at once. Decision here is inevitably slow and tortuous. It cannot do without collective deliberation in its most formal sense, and we need to bide our time. This is mode 2, "manual", more vertical, rational, analytical, critical. It's about exceeding the situation. The main risk is the loss of all immediacy, self-destruction while confronting unsolvable problems or because we do not know how to postpone dealing with certain things that need time. But, on the whole, it's about enabling the shift from mode 2 to mode 1: to find a use, to get out of the infernal regime of critic, to make space... for the next significant challenge.

In practice, strategy comes down to discovering a level of discussion appropriate for strong decisions, true lines. Such a level must be situated ahead of tactical discussions or of the simple coordination between various initiatives. There is therefore no central committee or political bureau, no decision-making procedure. Any comrade must have a spare key to the organisation. It does not entail a constant presence of all at every occasion, but it means that every voice counts. The more a situation matters, the more everyone is needed. Strategic use provides the road-map, organises other uses, outlines the priorities. We must therefore give priority to strategic discussions every time they prove to be necessary. And specifically because this dimension is central, we would be stuck in something way too general if we left it here.

Presence to the exceptional situation

Revolutionary possibility owes everything to the exceptional situation. Every politicisation arises from a historical opening of this kind, be it large or small. This is where we best experience the fact that we are not alone. The partisan must feel like a fish in water, aspiring to inhabit the state of exception.

In no way do we want to miss these turning points; we must not only answer their calls, but also redirect our capacity for decision. The first issue at stake is to assess whether a situation can be characterised as exceptional or not. This immediately refers to the question of

insurrection, which shall act for us as a reference, a focal point. We must guard ourselves against the temptation of perceiving the exceptional in everything and everywhere. Temptation is fueled by a thirst for intensity which, by setting expectations too high, creates endless disappointments. The opposite pitfall seems even more dangerous: as an adverse effect of resistance to activist propensity, we end up explaining our absence during a historical opening whereas it is our very duty to participate fully. The point is therefore to juggle between two imperatives. The first is the basic imperative of finding a temporality of our own and thus knowing how to act even during periods of low intensity. The second one is the *imperative of upheaval*. It involves staying on the lookout for moments which require a non-negotiable presence, and which demand that we reassess our collective temporality. Criteria that distinguish these situations are not set in stone. We must sincerely share our impressions on the issue in question. When we feel that something is happening, that a certain number of elements resist a return to normality, that a local issue raises a general one, that predictability has been overcome; all of these are indicators showing that the time has come to enter the game.

But entering does not mean throwing ourselves blindly into the game: there is still the necessity of elaborating a strategic vision. In these situations, where by definition we lack time and the opportunity to stop and reflect, it is tempting to believe that “the important thing is to participate”. It’s a mistake. There is a great risk of drowning and of mistaking political participation for simply staying on the surface of a situation, by at the most reinforcing the most visible aspects. Truthfully, a situation can be politicised only by aiming to cross a threshold. The issue is always dual: on one side, contributing to the intensification of what is already there; on the other, insisting on what is lacking.

When the situation is accelerating, we must find ways of slowing down the tempo, of catching our breath. We must secure a quiet place within the storm, try and take some distance with things, lay them before us. It has already happened: collectively assessing a situation, snatching even an hour amidst ongoing events, can be decisive and have consequences on the course of things. If some moments of acceleration do not allow long deliberation and force us to compress decision lest we miss a window of opportunity, it is always possible to find ways of counterbalancing this. The least we can do is to discuss it as soon as possible, so that we do not end up endorsing an improvised decision, which could prove disastrous in the medium term.

Political violence

It is not enough to acknowledge the eventuality of political violence, we must also make partisan use of it, as a pillar of organisation. We call political violence the practice which stems from the very existence of the enemy and which is reserved for it.

If we want to avoid mistaking all kinds of *rapport de force* and mashing them all into a shapeless mass, we have to prioritise the one that gives us a grip on the enemy. In a situation of absolute incompatibility, it is impossible to look away and to move on. There is not enough room under the sky for both us and our enemy. Of course, we better have

a strong definition of the enemy, otherwise disaster will strike—or maybe things will just end pathetically. The main constraint for whoever handles notions of this kind is that you cannot play around with them.

If we can't come up with an answer to what a relationship of incompatibility means, we are actually already providing one. Its name is submission. As long as political violence doesn't become a practice—likely because we're having the “debate on violence” for the umpteenth time—refusal is deactivated, the sharp edge of our position is dulled, and we won't have any force of impact.

We must refuse to think in terms of legitimacy or legitimisation. Is violence legitimate? Absolutely not. Why should we ask ourselves this question *if not to re-establish the police*? We need to think violence. Not to secure it with a universal guarantee, but precisely because it has no possible grounding and because we alone are responsible for the violence we practice. No public authority will shed light on its meaning. We are not christian martyrs, and thus we do not speak of political violence in front of the enemy, as they would do with their faith. We know what it does with our actions, how it distorts them to answer its infinite need for legitimisation. Thinking violence is not about justifying it because it is ours. It is about giving it its place within the revolutionary question. It is for the camp that we aim to expand to decide the rightness of our actions.

Any intervention of the Party has a violent nature, directly or indirectly. At the minimum, this means we won't negotiate. Once strategic thinking has identified a relevant target, the only thing left to talk about is the way to proceed. What level of violence needs to be deployed? How can a practice be reclaimed or appropriated? How can a gesture unlock a situation or on the contrary shut it down? And as always, what is the *rapport de force*?

In just a few years, riots have spread like meteors. We still remember the days where the gesture of rioting seemed like the hallmark of an *avant-garde*. We should learn from this to never be unsettled by the momentarily inaudible nature of a practice that we know is right. The riot is a revolutionary use. Not only had it not faded from the landscape, but it was also destined to return centre-stage. All those shocked and yelling at the time were suffering from geographical and historical myopia. Insurrection itself has returned, and the riot is one of its constituent elements. Essentially, the riot appears to us as a potent gesture, because it is the most combative collective form known to this day—or the most collective combative form known to this day. Regardless of how the theater of operations evolves and what space riot carves out for itself, we must focus on the forms with the most promising diffusion/force of impact ratio. That being said, we must also unlock inventiveness, not out of aesthetic considerations but because it is one way to get ahead of the game. Important movements of revolt rarely end without leaving their own little tactical or technical invention.

Over the last four years in France, the expression of violence has become emblematic of the poverty of the political proposition. The problem is that radical possibility has confined itself to such expression. But when there is only one use of politics, there is no use at all. When the practice of riot is reduced to itself, it becomes doomed to depoliticisation. It ends up losing, through codification and predictability, everything that made it so potent.

Partisan thought

Let's do what other revolutionaries were able to do in their time. Without compromising our first intuitions, let's reinvent radical politics, arm it with powerful thought stolen from the best armourer, provide it with a relentless method, turn the spotlight on a new enemy, and return to what we have always done, to do it differently. The point is not to reinvent everything, but to review our equipment and adjust it to today's terrain.

One of our great desires is to formulate a political thought. In other words, a thought. To define the political horizon of a mode of thought means to define the world within which we think, to meet our *why*. All thought has an orientation. To define its horizon without killing it is the most difficult exercise. In truth, we have no choice: those who do not define the horizon in which their thought takes place, actually define it anyway (they're universalists). Therefore, all thought is partisan, *dangerous*: it is the cool-headed part of faith.

Which institutions stand here as ramparts? Church, philosophy, and school. *A Church does not want thought*, but ideology. Ideology implies that thought is the instrument of a closed system. It is not free to unfold its potency, to keep revealing the blindspots of a position. *Philosophy does not want political thought*. It thinks, but it just blows hot air. It refuses to fully stand by the elementary truths that we keep stumbling upon, which constitutes the religious seed of thought. To stand by them fully means to have the will to search for their best formulation and to write them down. Any thought can become a political position once there is this fixed point. If not, we conceal the actual political possibility we harbor. This often comes down to giving another version of hegemonic thought. *A school disseminates knowledge* and passes on elements taken from various systems which might well play a part in the construction of political thought. But these elements are simply used in a careless impetus of construction and deconstruction, regardless of consequences. Most of the time, they have no impulse. Such is the meaning of the word knowledge: the relics of dead thought. Three core institutions, three figures of impotence, which support one another in their mutual contradictions. So it's easy to understand the complete lack of interest we feel when watching the spectacle of their various quarrels.

Partisan thought also faces internal obstacles, of course. We should remember that the idea here is not to breathe new life into well-known activism but to give more and more space to the possibility of a *change of era*. We can take the risk, *for a start*, of a greater dose of theory. The power of abstraction is one thing that has to be communised immediately. Contrary to established knowledge, such thought needs less laborious accumulation of data, and more trial and error, more practice. Such practice, spreading and acting in collective discussions so as to confront everything, carries forward victory on the long term. On the other hand, disuse or misuse of theory is a telling symptom. The absence of relationship to theory is anti-intellectualism*. Misuse indulges in specialisation, whether by being philosophical or by playing teacher and student. But politics is neither aristocracy nor popularisation, it is irrepressible communism. It has one condition, to be said over and over at every step: I am not too small, we are not too small. We must not accept these infantilising operations. But we are well aware of this. When accused of abstraction, the

* "Intelligence" is not a counter-argument as it usually refers to a certain normativity of thought.

only reproach that matters is sticking to generalities unfit for action. We reply that we need impetus to act, and lots of impetus to win. Political potency is an unstoppable rocket engine, which requires a tremendous concentration of forces to launch.

Partisan ethics

There is no communism without *experiencing* the complexity of relations. Partisan ethics consists in navigating together on the map of resonance and of *rappport de force*, and finding the most adequate place for action and affect. But these different registers of experience we're about to detail don't exist without the space that makes them possible: comradeship.

Comradeship is the Party as a *common affect*. It's what it's like to say we, to agree on what matters most: how this changes life, creates a before and an after, uncovers a destiny. It is the trust we share and whose etymology has become a leitmotif: to *believe-in-it-together*. The Party we elaborate, with its uses, its concepts and its recourse to rationalisation, does not wipe away the irreducible part of faith. It only supports it and keeps it from artificial inflation. We have in mind the kind of trust that grows within the experience of shared risk, the physical risk of action, which is underpinned by an existential risk: our wager on the infinite gives us the strength to definitely close the social doors, one after the other, without any regrets. Once we confront an external point of view, it's amusing to see that we will always face symmetrical accusations: some will be horrified by such sacrifices, others will reduce the gesture of belonging to the need for comfort. If potency is everywhere, if each of us is fought over by several potencies, several competing absolutes, we must understand that whatever happens, only one will prevail. When we don't choose between the contenders for first place, our own little self wins by default. A comrade is one who has chosen and for whom the Party prevails. This same Party is not a detached organised structure but the name of our position and its particular place within the revolutionary question. Comradeship makes the most beautiful friendships possible. This possibility might be the one that gives us the most strength, and that deep down in our hearts keeps us going—even when the times call for the familiar consolation prize, romantically named “despair”. In its very clarity, comradeship is already a becoming-friends, because it breaks apart the opacity of the normal regime. Though it can't be made automatic. Besides, there are other kinds of friendships.

Comradeship comes with the experience of collective life. Without it, we can't break individualist, paranoid or depressive reflexes, the belief in solitude as life's great explanation. Without seeming to, collective life trains us in reading situations. It's so important that the temptation has been great to reduce communism and comradeship to it. We shouldn't give collective life misplaced ambition, nor stereotype it. We can experience it in many ways and we must take the chance to live it fully each time.

Partisan ethics poses, again and again, the limits of what is acceptable. Even though trust holds us together, we must never, on behalf of personal fidelity or loyalty, fall into complacency and start justifying anything and everything. Comradeship is not family, it's not defending the indefensible. We make no peace with any power relations, nor with mora-

lising nor self-promotion among us. We must instead stand with openness and courage. We tell each other what we must when we must, without giving in to social control. We don't put each other on trial, we search for and prioritise what makes us stronger. And when "informal" discussion proves insufficient and boundaries have been crossed, we take action. There is no need here to list intolerable situations. There is no set "protocol" for sorting these things out, it is always our collective intelligence at stake. Yet in each question we meet we can find uses, we can refuse to always start from scratch, we can make the first move.

If we choose a strong organisation for ourselves, all the stronger since it's a compass in our own existence, we risk producing another system of imprisonment. We find the necessary counterweight in ethics itself, as it is, in a broader sense, the second dimension of potency: there is something beyond politics, another logic always overlaid on the logic of politics*. Having taken sides, we must not forget everything else, lest we start to believe that existence only grows in this specific light. Any party which gives in to this illusion ends up producing disembodied beings and becoming a desert. This does not mean having a finger in every pie. It only means that collective trust and reliability are impossible without self-confidence. Everyone must learn to discern what makes their heart beat faster, what makes them giddy, what animates them, what will put them out of sorts if they don't have it, what they're good at. Knowing why things happen and what they want, they can commit and be held accountable. Beings of pure sacrifice, those who put aside the things they are passionate about, are beings of frustration: there will be a price to pay, sooner or later, at a collective level. So we are talking about a complex comradeship, one which pulls out all the stops without instrumentalising personal inclinations: we should however beware the dangers of politically promoting the things we love. To commit means leaving things aside and having our eyes wide-open about it. No need to fear being imprisoned, there are no locks. But we cannot live comradeship just by standing on the doormat in front of its door.

Let's come to the partisan cartography of resonance and disagreement. Distinction between the following layers must enable us to distinguish *infra-political disagreement* from *disagreement within a position*, *disagreement with another radical position*, and from *absolute disagreement* with the enemy. Conflict with the most distant enemy must not overshadow and pacify others—emphasizing internal conflicts can sometimes be extremely decisive. We aim for a clearer and perhaps a colder reading of conflict, without refusing to push relations to their decisive point. We must wager on the commons for as long as possible and be able to determine the tipping points, whenever the conflict changes levels.

1. War. There are systemic enemies, no need to hem and haw. There are the institutions or those who are one with them. Here, the reality of conflict is political violence.

2. Openness to surprise. In our general approach to what happens, we must always make room for indeterminacy: anything can happen and nothing is presupposed. Fog cannot be turned into clear air by waving a magic political wand.

* *Partisan ethics* refers to a practice: to find one's way through the different registers of potency.

3. Use. As soon as we share a use, we *exit normality* and its opaque relations made up of mutual strangeness, banal reductions, muffled hostility, and stupid timidity. A complicity is born, friendship is now possible. We break with the purely functional relationship. Suddenly, something is at stake, a certain commons imposes itself. Within it, there is both consonance and dissonance.

4. Comradeship, the most potent we. Within it, or rather straddling everything else, there are other we's. As many times as necessary, we need to point out the underlying realities, so that we can all grasp exactly the issue at stake and the level of discussion. Most difficult is addressing those moments when we find disagreement in differing locations.

5. Transpartisan level. This is another level of sharing between different positions, within the limits of political disagreement*. Though we do think it's important to formulate and formalise a position, participation in what would be a decivilised camp is of another nature. We can only consider doing this within a political situation, where a practice of sharing appears between different positions expressing themselves. There is no universal criterion (that would amount to supposing a revolutionary subject). While we may recognise our enemies and quickly spot them, we cannot recognise our allies before comprehending the fight ahead of us: we should be open to surprise when seeing who stands side by side with us, and find the right level of conflict towards those who do not. This is all the more true since the dividing line might not be the same depending on the circumstances. As we've said, we need a more precise vision of conflict than the simple friend/enemy distinction.

Between different positions within the revolutionary field, one big mistake is to meet halfway. Saying that we agree on the essentials, that we share a common enemy, that we still belong to the same camp, that we share the same horizon. Actually, though we may have the same enemy we do not have the same conception of it (otherwise we would agree). Actually, we participate in the growth of the same infinite field, that of revolution, but we understand it differently (otherwise we would agree)**. Generally, there is no need to rush and put the disagreements into perspective. Instead we should just acknowledge them and make ourselves able to identify in a particular situation what uses we find in common. Each use enables *a certain equality* among rival positions. If both sides experience the meaning of it, then it will be shared with potency. This is how we can overcome squabbles. The concept of ally is nothing but strategic. For strategy not to fall into oblivion, we must understand precisely the meaning of organising together, its conditions and its limits.

Art of discussion

Without some use, decision is doomed to take the highway of power. Yet there is a practice that already attests the fact that communism and strong organisation are a good match: discussion. At the very least, politics requires speaking up.

* The first thing is to make sure that the disagreement is real and not superficial, a mere vocabulary difference or when local situations expose diametrically opposed problematics.

** Either we have the same horizon, but we don't have the same way of cutting out a position within it (otherwise we would agree). Or our form is the same but the horizon is different (likewise).

The issue at stake is to find a common language, to put words to what is not yet here, to let the future electrify the present and transcribe its charge. Practically, it is *through discussion* that we give birth to decisions (“strategic” dimension) and that we orient ourselves on the map of disagreements (“ethical” dimension). This use is central, omnipresent, and protean by nature. Places, people, occasions, security measures, each ingredient matters. We must exercise this art and nurture it without cease. It’s one of the best weapons against formalism and institutionalism, as long as it doesn’t turn into an institution (identification, functioning, self-promotion, control). That would be intolerable for us.

The common ground of our discussions is what we have established as indisputable. On the one hand, let’s remind ourselves of the basics, it’ll save time. On the other, we must always give life and vigor to the indisputable, and we must be able to understand its meaning by reading the situation. It is always about everyone getting involved. Courage is not celebrated enough in the context of discussion. You need courage to speak and make yourself heard, to interrupt what is settled, to raise your voice, to not let things slide. No politics can exist without this rage of expression, and it has to be shared: we also have to learn how to listen to ourselves, to allow time, to unlearn the civilised anxiety of silence. No need for some benevolent tone to ensure the discussion goes well. We know all too well these moments where, out of cordiality, conflicts are kept quiet, disagreements are repressed and what reigns is the regime of the unsaid. The more we strive together to identify the issues at stake, the more we collectively experience the importance of speech itself. That’s why presence counts.

No one is indispensable, but sometimes everyone’s presence is required. Even though for us discussions are not “decision-making bodies” (like congresses or central committees), Party discussions can only manifest their specific potency on that level. This potency isn’t related to any organisation chart, but solely to the collective capacity to deal with greater questions, to take unexpected turns, and also to put smaller problems into perspective. If we do not understand the solemnity of those moments, we miss out on our decision-making potency. If we stifle the singular exhilaration and joy that come out of these moments, the Party will end up sinking into a great big yawn. Discussions between a great number of people can be difficult—even without considering the organisational aspect of things. We must not give up on them, despite the feeling of failure or frustration they can cause. In the heat of the moment, we must learn to counter the effects of power, rather than cowardly making do with forms that are more comfortable and less prone to commitment. Every “safe space” is built on the humiliation of a shared potency. Sensitivity is irreducibility and force, and it is out of the question to enlist it in a collective identity or to lull it to sleep with individual consolation.

Propaganda

Because our position is not floating somewhere in idea-heaven, because it is an impact force, our idea of propaganda is not one-sided. Propaganda is made of gestures, of speeches and of texts, and its basis is our confrontation with reality. We do not want our proposition to be the umpteenth option on the social market. We mean to bring potency out of each situation and for the socially impossible to emerge. We make use of propaganda so that our position becomes a live option for whoever wishes for a change of era.

We speak to anyone, we do not target any specific audience, as anyone can feel concerned by what we have to say. Propaganda grants courage: we're not alone, nor are those who encounter the same truths as us. Whether they live on the other side of the world or geographically close but in totally different realities, it does not matter. Political positioning does not burden itself with that kind of prerequisites.

Such ambition must allow us to imagine gestures of maximum reach, to find our own ingeniousness in how we appear. We refuse to reduce propaganda to any single means of transmission. Even though none of them are inherently to blame, we must not be naive and hypnotized by this or that tool and its special effect. Social networks offer the possibility of a massive diffusion of content, and end up making us believe that was the whole point.

We speak up because we take part in what's going on, we face situations we want to make resonate. On one hand, we refuse the activist ideology: it sees the real only through its own frame of reference, gives a predefined meaning to everything, and is convinced that history is on its side. On the other hand, we refuse the regime of opinion, of comments, of exteriority. Wit may elicit a smile or even get our attention, but without a position as an anchor point and the cutting edge that it entails, every commentator is doomed to speak like a journalist.

We are speaking to anyone, but not to everyone. We do not have to account for our existence and we do not want to reassure anyone. It is not about telling anyone what is going on, what we are thinking, so that all our appearances can be sorted into neat little boxes. We must know how to differentiate between a gesture we make, and our position, which always exceeds that gesture. We must keep in mind that what we show of ourselves is not what we are. To believe otherwise means to become a copy of what began has our cover.

Propaganda is a provocation to positioning. It is about involvement and betting on the situation. No matter the circumstances, never distort a position, never cover up some parts of it, never smooth out the edges just to please. We know that being understood is a satisfaction that can lead to self-promotion. It is by shedding light on misunderstandings and disagreements that we report on the situation. Just as our discourse becomes more and more audible, far from sitting back, it's time to scorch the status quo.

Distribution of forces

To get organised is to restore potency to time but also to *space*. There is a civilised hegemony over geography itself: where one plants a flag has literal meaning, and has often come to be called a metropolis—but old national borders are also still active. In order to break with the spatiality of power, use consists for us in creating a partisan geography. A collective art of movement and of distribution of forces can arise with it, as a conscious consequence of each of our strategic decisions.

Where do we establish ourselves? The place of a truth is everywhere. The ambition is immediately international. The proper place for a position is everywhere it *can* be. Being able to be somewhere means to have in a given place a sufficient amount of affirmative force. This is how we first experience the necessity of a minimal concentration. As they say, we have to start somewhere—which too often means *ending up somewhere*. A position which is only in one single place is a self-defeating one. We must be in at least two places at once—cities, countries, continents. A partisan force starts in a small number of places and thrives there at first. The temptation to establish these territories as objective conditions always exists, therefore reproducing a model of state geography. However we do not grow in the form of territorial units. How do we undo all of this? By short-circuiting functional relations between parts and whole.

*A local reality of the Party is not autonomous**. The power it would claim is nothing else but the subjugation it would impose on itself: as autonomous, it becomes part, and thus mere instrument of the whole. A local reality that gains potency is one that goes against the petty game of local identity. From what it sees and lives, it has the capacity of raising the Party's key issues. If, in a city, we rise to the general level of affirmation, what appears is another idea of "local" potency, or rather, of situated potency**. This is something very different from the model of autonomous communes. That kind of hypothesis puffs itself up about local achievements, leaves the general level in second place, and reduces it to a simple *connection* between sister communes. This is mainly why we defend the Party as a form: the general level cannot come *afterwards*, we must tackle it from the outset, with all that entails in terms of difficulties and risks. To promise a revolutionary offensive which would be the consequence of local realities just reproduces reformist thinking: we get used to waiting for what comes next.

We must be able to summon moments of collective concentration—and sometimes on short notice. Of course, it is always possible to make decisions at another time. Our idea of collective force fears neither disagreement nor a potent we (there is no choice to make between jacobins and girondins, centralism and federalism). The democratic atmosphere relies on a fear of both, cultivating bad compromise.

If we want each point to achieve a sufficient level of affirmation and for moments of concentration to be truly decisive, then a great partisan circulation between points is necessary. Anything in the world can be a good excuse for circulation, but it also has to be considered as such, whether because times are particularly bad somewhere, or conversely because something big is about to happen.

This introduces the second major issue: movement. In what circumstances is it necessary to gather our troops, and how far must we go in terms of concentration? What circumstances foster centrifugal force? Exceptional situations always come with considerations such as these. Of course there is always a gamble in the process, however we should make sure that decisions arise neither from local fetishism (including the capital city), nor from centralist whim, or its diffusionist inverse.

* We must put an end to the old-fashioned petty-bourgeois ideal of local autonomy, of free cities and independent republics, but also of communes – though they may be more on offense, like the Zapatistas.

** To have a potent existence means carving potency, situating it, placing it. But the simple word "local" seems to imply an instant reduction: the territorial reduction.

Material plane

The fascination with so-called “concreteness” can lead any of us into developing our little material idolatry. We thus lose sight of the political horizon, just as we believed we had found the key. The project of opposing civilisation via logistic is a serious political mistake. It’s not about beating civilisation on its own ground but about superseding its principle of organisation and making it old-fashioned. Civilisation destroys all relations to things, and thereby destroys the very *materiality of uses*. For us, matter is the very indetermination, the whatever that determines itself only and precisely *where the matter matters*: in a use, in a position. Every use has its technical and human ingredients*. Our line is very clear: the great challenge is to succeed in *not confusing* materiality with material hegemony. To do so, we must completely overturn our way of reaching the material aspect of things and get out of the imperative of production. This means acknowledging use as the only fundamental unit, whose *political* potency can only be appreciated through a position. To speak of materiality involves approaching a use *through what composes it*, through all the elements of which use itself is the resonance. In practice, and to keep things simple, let’s call “materiality of use” the *technical* aspect of the ingredients (indivisible from the human aspect): any technical object or any technique that enter a use.

Civilisation is the moment where “materiality” (its objectivation) becomes a position. This therefore goes way beyond mere materialism. Beyond material fetishism, there is the fetishism of objectivation. When pragmatism and efficiency are what matters most and therefore have the value of a position, we know that we are dealing with civilised discourse. Why? Because efficiency simply refers to the moment where things function: when objectivation operates, when the institution is producing, when hegemony is at work.

To speak of partisan materiality comes down to tackling political uses through the technical ingredients we must vibrate with. In the productive regime, a technique becomes either mere means or the imposition of a form: the double slippery slope of instrumentalisation and conditioning. As a consequence, the productive relation indicates in the most rigorous sense, the *shittiest vibration* we can establish with technics. From a communist point of view, a technique becomes a subjective potency whose specific vibration can be experienced (or not) *within a use*, against the background of destroying the productive double slippery slope. In political terms, how can we topple the *rapport de force* in this question? By deploying a partisan materiality, by injecting politics into certain things. So there is no “material use”, there is the constant, precise and decisive concern towards the materiality of our uses. There are technical supports invested by the Party with a singular force. They become nodes of aggregation as well as entrypoints towards construction. The question here is how to bring them to life: for a start, learning to find the political vibration of this or that technical ingredient, in order to fulfil its promises.

While the imperative may be clear, its practical deployment is tangled and uncertain, encountering the quagmire of reigning confusion at every step. The influence of the productive regime is maximal, and we keep having to fight against the reflexes of instrumentalisation and conditioning. We instrumentalise something when for instance we justify a practice by its being “at the service of revolution”. First of all, invoking such a vague

* A use is the point of emergence between the ingredients of a we, the ingredients of a collective subjectivity!

horizon (“revolution”) is not enough without specifying which position is talking. Second of all, each time we confine something to the role of an instrument, we ourselves become the instrument of a productive relationship.

Actually, a good number of technical ingredients *lend their name* to this or that partisan sub-use. It happens through a shortcut whose ambivalent character must be kept in mind, as it is characteristic of all kinds of ideological landslides. In this sense, a newspaper can become one of the main entrypoints to propaganda, and its premises the effervescent centre of all ongoing debates. The gain in potency is obvious. But we must keep from: denigrating the necessary technical aspect of the process; reducing our newspaper to this (a machine spreading content); leaving to the newspaper alone relation to propaganda, and thus politics. We could just as easily talk about partisan geography, focusing this time on the peculiar way in which comradely places tend to modify our practice of territory and distort space-time.

This being said, attacking our condition as civilised agents entails escaping the hold of work. We cannot be against work while working. We can't exclude needing to dip our toes into it for a number of reasons, but we must hold this line. Incompatibility with work is not only a question of minimal logic, but also of temporality. Getting organised creates a collective temporality to which we belong, and it is precisely by having the monopoly on time that the organisation of work triumphs. We can try to imagine ourselves as virtuosos juggling time constraints, but there will always be an incompressible threshold of contradiction, a *sensible* threshold: it is not a comradely manner of vibrating, of resonating with beings and with things. But this refusal has a counterpart. It is high time to recover the meaning of organisation as a strong assertion, an enemy of all negligence. We do not want to learn to get organised on the model of work, but acting like we're not working isn't a sufficient criterion for a serious organisation. We need to learn how to see things through the end.

On this path to free ourselves from survival, there are a whole host of technics, illegal or not, which are precious allies. Not only is starving out of the question, but there are some ways to snatch, at our own level, a certain material autonomy (at the level of the Party, theft remains an excellent technique, as the mutual danger it involves is one of the *ethical* factors of construction). Yet because materiality concerns everything, this question straightaway exceeds a group of comrades. It raises another great question, a revolutionary one: dependency. Of course, if we confuse revolutionary construction with local material autonomy, we will say that we must end dependencies of all kinds. We will then see the logic of production prevail, in an apparently innocent way: the idea of interdependence, which actually implies the economic logic of equivalence. If we reflect on this differently, with hostility towards universality and particularity, this is what we will say: the point is to think, in each question, how to resist the reduction of dependency to a power relationship. To discover another regime of dependency, one which cannot be reduced to the obligation of serving or being served, one with, at its center, the logic of what matters and its distribution to the different we's of position, crew, network. Survivalist autarky is a dead end, not to say a horror, so we think that getting organised is also experiencing dependency in an entirely different way. In the revolutionary perspective, the crew, the Party, and the network, are no longer destined to be territorial units. They are differentiated modes of the

commons, therefore of dependency. To organise is to consider equality when we expect things of each other, but within differing spaces of organisation that don't imply the same expectations, the same *rapport de force*, and the same risks of a backlash of power.

Speaking the Party entries is decisive. *The Call* wagered on dismemberment: on one side a hazy invocation of “perceptual worlds” and on the other a celebration of partisan infrastructures. We believe no longer in any synthesis between the solid and the gaseous. Neither spiritualists nor materialists, we refocus on a combination of uses. As we fine-tune our focus, the portrait of the partisan (someone who knows what they want, what they have to do, and who does not apologise for existing) gains in density. What does being a partisan mean? *Making decisions*, putting problems in order, establishing priorities, thinking the situation through. *Diving into exceptional situations*, into times that puncture history and demand our presence, where ideology cannot serve as an excuse. *Joining-organising-practicing riots*, or any other gesture of political violence that seeks to keep the police in check and that attacks the productive apparatuses. *Embracing robust thought*, one able to identify the enemy, to resist society as well as community, to strengthen the minimal capacity of abstraction without which there is no politics, to resist whenever it's attacked from the rear. *Finding our bearings on the map of resonance*, placing what happens and affects us on the right level, spotting and fighting the unacceptable whenever it occurs, all the while resisting the moral passion which enjoys this battle. *Finding in discussion* the most potent manner to take up a challenge and the most immediate way of living communism. *Propagating the position continuously*, our option within the revolutionary option, making it always more intelligible and surprising, without giving an inch of our determination. *Distributing our forces as best we can*, searching for the most relevant way to take part in a situation. Unveiling the potency of some technical realities by giving them a political meaning, without ever considering them as the form of our action.

4

INSURRECTION

AND

THE DECIVILISED CAMP

Neither network nor clan, class nor people, the revolutionary we whose existence involves a show of force, draws potency from the choice of a party, which is always one among others. It converges in a negation of the present, reaching its full intensity in insurrection, and its maximal extension in victory.

The decivilised we

We cannot content ourselves with merely thinking a revolutionary party, we must also think what this party intervenes in. Just as friendship cannot exist in isolation, and finds in politics what allows it to be disrupted and to flourish, no revolutionary party can exist in isolation: it always exposes itself to a greater, but also less certain we. Whenever we tried to simplify this question in the past, we bitterly regretted it. We call decivilised we not one single thing but always two: the necessary articulation between a position and the political camp inside which this position takes sides. It exists as soon as two revolutionary positions meet, *provided that they give a revolutionary character to their very gathering*. If a position presupposes a number of conditions, a camp adds at least one more: confrontation has to take place in an appropriate space. We reject both any omission of the camp (the Party pursuing a solo career), but also any fetishisation of the camp (the belief that there is a space which is already there, ready for use, activated once and for all, the *great family* of revolutionaries).

Revolution is the name of a truth in the form of a declaration of war. The revolutionary we, standing in absolute incompatibility with the times, is destined to become so present as to shift the era. It takes as its starting point all revolutionary stands, all revolutionary uses of

the situation and of the world. But if we have use of a truth when we have a position, we lose it when it is the only one. The very condition of a revolutionary we is that we do not all agree within it. We can make the following conclusions. The first extinction of revolution: democracy, the regime of opinion, in other words, *the prohibition of truth*. The second extinction of revolution: the One-Party, or *compulsory truth*. Our times may insist sometimes on one or the other, but it always conjugates them together: *compulsory democracy*.

“We are never alone with the truth”*, is equally true for a comrade and for a revolutionary party. When either of them feel lonely, they must know how to move while hypothesising that several options are open rather than only one. And only then can they decide on what matters most. It is here that perennial confusion and contemporary depoliticisation creep in. Since revolution cannot be contained in *one position only*, revolutionaries tend to skip this necessary step, by abdicating themselves from any position, or by pretending to have several positions at once (which amounts to the same thing). This brings them back to the scale of the network or of the group. We say the exact opposite: position yourselves. Arm yourselves with your own organisation, a truly political one. Extract yourselves from the condition of the group. Expose yourself as a possible party within revolutionary debates, and not as a group within public discourse. In a word, find your party. Such an intransigence paradoxically indicates the best way of breaking with partisan loneliness, and of allowing true encounter: by refusing any framing of the discussion but that of the revolutionary question.

The revolutionary question raises its head at each era, which is to say that each of us has the heavy task of raising it in our own time. The revolutionary we is this specific consistency we give the question, this effort of extracting the question from the reigning confusion. It is the way in which we elevate the level of general discourse. We say: *today, the revolutionary camp is that of decivilisation*. Without this gesture aiming to clarify the question, we are doomed to feed into identity reductionism, giving up on our resistance to both contemporary collective dynamics and past definitions of revolution. In the vision we propose and have been deploying since the beginning, this we is supported by four elements. It organises around the refusal of institutions, a conception of politics on offense, the choice of a party, and participation in insurrection. For us, the we is dependent on this minimal structuring which we deem common to every revolutionary. Among these gathered elements, the party stands apart from the others: while it is necessary to have a party, we cannot all have the same one. Since the revolutionary we has its own criteria, it cannot be confused with a network, it resists informality; but, because one of these criteria is “free” we cannot give the definitive contours of this we. It resists both its identitarian becoming and the hegemony of one single party. Therefore, the specificity of this we does not forbid us to think it, but simply compels us to admit a certain margin of indeterminacy in its very definition.

As long as we do not position ourselves, we are partisans without party, but as soon as we do, we must know that we stand against other positions, however friendly they are. To deny this is to reproduce a universalist mode of belonging. The sneakiness of Marxism is nothing else than this, explicitly theorised. First, to disguise as lambs. “In what relation do the Communists stand to the proletarians as a whole? The Communists do not form a

* “To a friend”, a few agents of the Imaginary Party, foreword to Blanqui, *Now we need weapons*, 2007.

separate party opposed to other working-class parties”*. Then, to camouflage a position by posing as partisans of only the most general position. “The Communists point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat... They always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole”. What ends does this kind of reduction of the revolutionary we to a vague general movement serve? That of hegemony, in its most trivial meaning: the institution of a vanguard. “The Communists, therefore, are on the one hand, practically, the most advanced and resolute section of the working-class parties of every country, that section which pushes forward all others; on the other hand, theoretically, they have over the great mass of the proletariat the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement”. A reading of marxist strategy makes this apparent: to cautiously refrain from openly affirming a commons that is distinct from the masses, is also the best way to separate oneself from it *in a hierarchical way*, in short, to lead it. In truth, this is constitutive of the very idea of the masses, or the people, which names not a political subject but a political object. *Those who speak of an object of government, even to defend or celebrate it, do so because their horizon is to govern it, whether they like it or not.*

What is it that was once called the “revolutionary subject”? A class, that is to say, the relentless will to keep revolutionary politicisation within a tight social box, and equally the will to forcefully politicise an economic category which, by definition wants nothing for itself, except the interest which produces it. Since politicisation necessarily exceeds all categorisation, such a will is always bound to fail, or to succeed only through an operation of forcing, one which has moved, for the past century, along a continuous axis from “class as nation” (soviet model) to “nation as class”** (fascist model), and which can always take on new forms more suited to the present century. For us, there is no revolutionary class, but a revolutionary we, which has no objective support but which is the site where revolutionary gestures and positions can be shared. Its base of refusals preserves it from inconsistency, while the multiplicity it contains by definition endows it with life and a certain unfinished character. No position enjoys a monopoly on the general question, as that is precisely what we have in common. We can thus dissolve the problem of the vanguard. The decision of belonging springs from one’s position, and it is unclear why anyone would want to occupy a rearguard position. Each considers their option as the most potent, mocks the criteria for force their neighbour uses, spends their time chastising the other’s mistakes. When finding the most advanced position is the *general rule* of belonging, to choose the “vanguard” becomes meaningless.

* *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, 1847.

** Yuri Slezkine, *The Eternal House*, 2017.

Victory

Victory is the point at which we change eras, and of maximal presence of the decivilised we. Without the idea of victory, we create the conditions for dislocating all political rigor, all consistency in debates, because in such a case there is nothing standing in the way of confusion between radical and reformist methods. If we need to learn how to fail better, it is in order to win. We cannot describe victory, but we can and we must think it. Suffice to say, one should not talk about victory indiscriminately.

First, victory is indeed possible. By itself, its possibility is neither an object of belief, nor a matter of temperament (the revolutionary is not an evangelist). It springs from a truth, which we have called the principle of revolution. We admit it as such, or refute it through the opposition of another truth—for instance, in stating that “in the end, hegemony always wins”. But, in both cases, we are outside of psychological concerns. In this perspective, we are able to take revolution as the central axis of our existence, while being frequently, even constantly, plagued by doubts. And, because it is a truth that we have identified and claimed for ourselves, the principle of revolution allows us to fight against the psychopolitical forms which feed into general paralysis. We think here of the radicals who spend their time demonstrating that the present order, because it is great and strong, is nowhere near collapsing. Or the symmetrical tendency, which consist in saying that civilisation, since it is ending, has already fallen.

What content do we give to victory? The fall of civilisation. The moment when what is believed to be so necessary becomes once more a mere possibility. The moment when, on one hand, each has the ability to choose between the mode of organisation of power versus that of potency, and on the other hand, it is quite unclear why anyone would choose the former. Why? Because at this moment we have in front of us civilisation as a possibility, and (almost) everyone knows it is absurd. This does not mean that everyone agrees, nor that the choice of civilisation has become forbidden or impossible. It means that the heaps of *good reasons* for the choice of civilisation have melted away. Victory is the moment when the civilised position is reduced to mere hypothesis, located somewhere between blameworthy idiocy and criminal madness, something akin to what the times of Inquisition or institutionalised slavery are for our contemporary era. And, as with any social construction, civilisation can fall. Even better, as with any position, it can lose, it can become a mere shapeless hypothesis, reduced to a dead satellite.

There is no anthropological hurdle that prevents from living without civilisation. A world in which the *rapport de force* is reversed, where there is a predominance of use over institution, of potency over power, this world can be conceived, and even practiced, without seeing everything collapse. When predicting otherwise, the conservative only talks of *their own world*, which indeed cannot hold without the set of fears propping it up, fears which, without civilisation, become pointless. Here, the notion of position is bound to play a very specific role, since it is nothing but the decivilised form of belonging. For millennia, human beings have learned to live by organising in relatively small groups. We don't mean here to fetishise species-being, nor to raise this observation as a norm of organisation. It is merely something which must be taken into account. The experiment being conducted in

the current world is precisely the absolute negation of this reality: everything turned into flux, attention span dissolved, general disorientation. We do not look at this state of affairs as a destruction of “ancient worlds”, but as the abolition of political sense. In truth, the *lack of focus is first and foremost political*. While the current times dictate that we must be interested in everything, and that, to use a modernist adage, “anything human mustn’t be foreign to us”, we propose, with the utmost clarity, to recentre on and around what matters most. But we are not saying, not in any way, what that is. Everyone, every position, has the task of, must take pride in, and get excited by defining it for themselves, and then letting it upend everything else. While we take up this millenia-old gesture of recentring, we also refuse to fold it back on the clan model. While we need to recentre ourselves, recentring must also be deterritorialised. *Against the network, a position recentres; against the clan, it is everywhere*. We must become able to live not only, not primarily, concerned with what is right before our eyes, what is within our immediate grasp.

However, to speak of victory implies two restrictions on the level of theory, one entailing the other: “*Victory is not revolution*” and “*Victory is never final*”.

First of all, we refuse to turn victory into a synonym of revolution. Revolution remains the name of the future, whatever happens. The phrase “this is the revolution” can be uttered at the moment of any major victory, but it instantly cancels itself out: revolution has already reconfigured itself, it is already elsewhere, and a new formulation must be found for it. One of the major ways of distorting the idea of revolution is to think of it as an advent which abolishes any future, as an objective which contains all futures in advance. To give its irreducible nature back to revolution, we must secure for it the space of the political future. Clearly, there are revolutionary events (insurrections), but revolution is not an event. Beware: it should not become synonymous with a regulative ideal, with an inaccessible horizon perpetually deferring its promise, as it is for the progressive view. The principle of revolution is what allows for identifying the central hegemony, and setting its toppling as prime objective.

Second of all, we refuse to turn victory into *the last and ultimate one*. The moment when civilisation falls, the horizon of *decivilisation* simultaneously ceases to be. We then need to give a new formulation to war. We set aside any idea of a world without politics, a world which would not need to ask itself the question of the central conflict.

What additional reasons could feed into a reluctance to speak of victory? First, the perpetual distortion of the word. This is the work of progressivism constituted as a camp, as a recognisable option, but also as *the becoming-progressive of the insurgent* (which is the only official fate left for them), and as an error, or internal defeat within revolution. Revolutionary lucidity must learn to name *radical progressivism*, for which victory comes to refer either to a step forward (a major social reform), a coming into power (Popular Front, Syriza, Podemos), a defeat and ouster of occupying forces (Resistance, decolonisation), or to the fall of the regime (Arab Spring) *and* a seizure of power (October Revolution, China, Cuba)*. But why would we hand over to the enemy the very word for the greatest extension of potency, under the pretext that the enemy effectively spends its time distorting it?

* It is not the October coup taken as a singular event that is immediately a gesture of power, but the bolcheviks’ incapacity to admit other revolutionary positions. In the perspective we put forward, there is such a thing as authoritarian progressivism. And it’s in reality what has often been thought of as revolution. From this point of view, it is about time that we free victory from the debate between 1792 and 1793, resulting in the republican ideal on one side, and authoritarian revolution on the other.

Why be surprised that the reformist undermines revolutionary terrain, through language itself? This is part of an inevitable psychological war. Second, to speak of victory when we refuse the very logic of power is impossible, unless we have at our disposal an asymmetrical concept of victory. The gesture of vanquishing is for us that of *taking*, on the mode of potency rather than power: to escape a hold, rather than to have a hold over things. This is the asymmetry we seek.

From now on, there is nothing *in substance* disallowing victory. In truth, the hurdle is neither ontological nor anthropological, it is *historical*. But this historical hurdle is not fatal. History itself is not merely an established fact, but the politics of its very establishment, which is to say, the decision to produce and reproduce a number of political hegemonies. Consequently, the revolutionary possibility is under permanent siege. But if the situation fulfilled every condition for revolution to take place, there would be no need for us to be revolutionaries. The very point is to impose another set of conditions, and not to wait for the right ones to show up on a platter.

The epoch

The epoch is the tension between the present and victory. It is first a gap. The present is the historical hurdle, which continuously pushes us back into impossibility, back into a corner of untimeliness, but it is here, and nowhere else, that another era is being built. As long as we do not see the tension between the present and victory, we remain blind to the epoch.

There does exist a revolutionary relationship towards the epoch, and, therefore a revolutionary feeling towards existence. It separates itself from enemy sentiments towards existence. *It's our inability to withstand the negative dose of the present which makes us into reformists; it's our inability to see anything but the negative which makes us into reactionaries.* But we don't say: everything bends towards revolution. Nothing is bending towards anything, in terms of objective time, except towards its end. Events are irreducible to any single aim, which would be impossible to determine anyway. There is no such thing as the direction of history.

Therefore, it is not as observer, nor as prophet, that we read the epoch; it is neither newspaper nor crystal ball. We have no obligation to bend the knee before the facts, neither to disguise them and enlist them within a temporality with a single direction. Facts are stubborn, they are not in anyone's service. To read the epoch is to be able to discern *what is ending and what is beginning* for our side. What remains to undo, and to do. Which illusions must be killed, which requirements put into practice, thought, spread. To attack the tollbooth of history implies detecting everything that blocks, depoliticises and holds back the situation, without participating in making it function. We must always resist the temptation of overstating one element within the situation and having it play the role of objective condition, of a Black Iron Prison, to borrow a phrase from Philip K. Dick. We must know how to zoom out, and never abdicate our maximal capacity to negate what is there. On the topic of the worrisome extension of control, for instance, we say that while it gets ever harder to dismantle or evade it technically, it also gets ever more detestable politically. This is not a matter of pessimism or optimism, but of a partisan unblocking of the possible. The construction of a decivilised we depends on a shared capacity to convert this tension which we call the epoch—for the tension must resolve itself at some point—into assertions minimal yet strong, even watchwords. But are we ready?

Assertion 1: *the epoch is that of the end of the civilised model, but civilisation will enter its night only when decivilisation has completed its rising.* When it comes to our participation in this world, the proportion in which it is *endured* is growing higher and higher, compared to that which springs from genuine belief. It is only propped up by arbitrariness, by police, and by inertia. Which means that there is room for something else to believe in, and with it the temptation to believe in anything else. While the end of the dominant model is no longer a clandestine truth, allowed only to initiate, it is still merely the most widely shared of *opinions*. In denial and cynicism, in depression and capitulation, in realisation and perpetual bargaining with the facts, and even in taking action (survivalism, alternatives) truth does not yet emerge, or else reformism would not still have the last word. Truth lurks within the times as a stationary fog, as a tonality: this is the end. *We must be extremely clear: our times are not those of the end of the world, but of the end of the only*

world we have known, the civilised world. This is a partisan truth, not a scientific observation; we are politicising a fact, making a decision. When facing ongoing great extinctions, choosing not to embrace this idea of the ending, whatever the excuse, is to deserve to be called trash—this is as true as the fact that history is a landfill.

If the model is only strong because of our weakness, if it will not transcend the terminal stage, and will provide no opportunity for political rebirth, the same logic can perpetuate and transform. As long as nothing else comes up, the ending will never know its end. Setting aside any future upheavals, which are bound to occur, we can therefore be assured that the dominant model is, as always, ongoing a process of restructuring. Some great opportunities for innovation are even wide open, stimulated as they will be by an ever-tightening level of restrictions. From this point of view, one must be pessimistic for us, and optimistic for it. But this in no fashion abolishes the idea of victory, it even reinforces it, by murdering any illusion that victory will come by itself, that revolution will be a spectacle.

In the experience of decline, politicisation will in most cases be triggered as a movement of visibilisation. Week after week, new hegemonies are made visible, it even starts to look like a methodical butchering, automatically triggering conservative panic. The problem here is that we don't really know what to do with such a gesture: with it, we are bound to a partial, floating and erratic conception of the enemy, when it is not simply absent. Any politicisation is aborted, jammed, blocked somewhere between identity and confusion. There is nonetheless, something common here, something sensible. In catastrophe, in solitude, we witness the simultaneous realisation and destruction of the ideals of Enlightenment. So that was it, this whole generous program: Humanity accomplished. Consequence? A shiver of guilt runs down the spine of this completed humanity, spreading in every fiber of its being. Guilt has become a political problem, the ill of our century. Any discourse available on the market reads as a solution to either manage, distribute, compensate or decompensate the fault. Four remarkable tendencies:

- Identifying the guilty, moral domination from the standpoint of victims or on their behalf, punitive ecology;
- Victimisation of those who dominate, reactionary backlash;
- New sale of indulgences, in order to buy back one's soul as cheap as possible. Soft underbelly of our present.
- Doctrine of salvation by means of a technological all-in, "if humanism is a near-finished model, we can just augment it".

Of course guilt abides, and can also be understood as a disposition to seriousness, as a need for righteousness and clear thinking. If we think from the position of observers, we will merely talk about a return of morality, or of right-wing drift across the world. In a revolutionary perspective, we see it as a symptom: the present remains stuck in the failure of what was the last great surge for liberation (60's and 70's).

Second assertion: *a new practice of freedom is working its way through the epoch, and we have to participate in releasing it.* How? We must line up behind a first general watchword, one almost reasonable these days: desert and attack productive organisation. This is what liberation thought is about. We will never be content with merely defending the interests of the weak against the strong, what we want is to destroy the very form of interests.

The lockdowns have provided the opportunity to zoom in on our condition as a domesticated species. We enjoyed a “tour of the estate” of the individual domain, the tour of our yards of freedom, with work in the middle of everything else. We have taken stock of how narrow they were, we have measured the lack of oxygen, our proximity to madness. If, as Nietzsche would say, one cannot cross the doorstep of their home without bending their neck, it is because the yard of freedom is conceived only for the smallest of commons. Everything else belongs to networking and weak friendships. From the standpoint of the government of the world, one hopes that scaling this up is enough to confirm the depoliticisation of the commons. But not only do desertion and a complete overhaul of modes of organising not wait for numbers, communism ignores any *numerus clausus*, and must break the domestic frame.

This is how we explain general paralysis: to free oneself from oppression is something most know how to do, at least *a priori*, but to free oneself from freedom, this is the great unknown. Former liberation thought taught us to explode all oppressive frameworks; the new one teaches us to explode the frameworks of freedom. We have every reason to say that during the marches against health passes, the cries of “Freedom! Freedom!” were still echoing old ways of thinking. Every radical aspiration actually stumbles on the same question, that of interest. The creed of interest is what feeds every dominant belief: we presuppose a human nature self-interested and therefore crooked; we attempt to dismantle any pretense at selfless discourse, tying it back down to this or that interest; we say that general interest is the only one to prevail over all others. Most importantly, as soon as we wish to implement “radical solutions”, we inevitably run into mutual incompatibility between political interests we otherwise deem defensible. And so, to restrict ourselves to the central deadlock we face in the present, any offensive against the power of destruction appears impossible except through reinforcing social domination. Here we say: while any attack against a power is respectable, every form of interest is civilised, and therefore abominable. Hipster liberals defend their political capital, truck-drivers their workers’ interest. We see very well that these are the main contemporary issues, but we do not want them to be ours. We need other forms of problems than those which spring from interest, and we shit on all those who think interest is just part of human DNA.

Insurrection: revolutionary use of the event

Insurrection is the destitution of the present, it can be more or less short, more or less decisive. At minimum, a dam of the present bursts; at maximum, it is the final latch binding the epoch. Insurrection is the apex of revolutionary opportunity. The revolutionary we progresses within the situation, its various parties come into play, the frontline becomes more precise every day.

Since the turn of the century (the battle of Seattle in 1999, the year 2001), a variety of violent shocks have destabilised both peace and the economy. In the wake of 2008 in Greece, the new Tens' took on an air of what could be termed an insurrectional cycle, with the following succession: the Arab Springs, Taksim, Maidan, the movement against Labor Reforms (Loi travail) and the Yellow Vests in France, Hong Kong, Chile, Ecuador, Bolivia, Black Lives Matter. To these we can add major territory-based struggles (the ZAD, No TAV, Standing Rock), and the Rojava situation. At the time of writing [2021], Rotterdam police are shooting live rounds against anti-health pass rioters, a (non-health-related) curfew has been imposed in Guadeloupe. The question is not whether insurrection is possible, but which insurrection we want.

What if this possibility was first and foremost suffering from the fantasies it inspired? Let's first consider things in the negative. Insurrection is a hole blown open within the present of power. If we limit ourselves to a single figure or single objective characteristic (generalised riot—overthrow of the regime—armed territorial secession—violent general strike—state of emergency—a square occupied every day and every night—formation of revolutionary committees—maximalist proclamations—some deaths—resistance movement against occupying forces...), we always run the risk of being caught unaware, either by declaring false victory, by failing to notice a novel beginning point, or, from a bias towards "continuing the set plan", by acting in a straight political line from the starting point of insurrection. If, in contrast, we wish to maintain a certain margin of indetermination, and merely speak of an opening, of historical rupture, the revolutionary task becomes blindingly obvious: we need to extend the wound, deepen the cut*. In other words, to find the means to generalise what has been in one place, to intensify what has started to spread, to politicise it to the extreme, relentlessly. What is the minimal determination of something happening? An attack, somewhere, against historical domination—the new start of a conflict which, by its scale, its insistence, its diffusion, its gestures, steps over the bounds of its ordinary, tolerable modes of expression. *But there is no typical insurrection, no revolutionary format of the event. What there is is a revolutionary use of what has started and is ongoing, and we call insurrection the unblocking of such a use.*

In truth, even beginnings fall in the domain of use rather than hard facts. What do we usually call a spark? Oftentimes a major event, a serious, even dramatic one, but one which is by definition limited, which can even lapse into the anecdotal. We say: the event only *becomes* a trigger because there is a first use of it, one which does not have any objective form, but which is, generally speaking, the revolutionary reception of an event. That use

* What happens is never all pretty and cute. We cannot erase the rough edges, for there is always an ugly side, a certain political bad taste, something repulsive in a force that emerges. The point is neither to be choosy nor to side with the worst.

is, with regards to a given fact, a gesture which refuses to let go, to abandon this fact to the leaden road of history, not only because we consider it as an event, but because we extract it from the herd of other events. That being said, a spark is not something we can call out of thin air, and there isn't a "spark typology" of events which we could lay out on paper. All we can do is receive an event in such a way that we are resolved to raise it to the level of the political. Here is the spark: some people, in their immediate reception of something, raise it to the level of a revolt, make a first use of it which, a posteriori, will be decisive for the beginning of insurrection. While reformist politics is the art of projecting forward one's a priori, insurrectionary politics means unleashing the force of the a posteriori in action. It is because there are many who stand strong behind the choice of the first ones, and in so doing dive into the initial use, that we can witness a collective invention of the sparking cause. How many potential sparks are there, every day, in the world? If the death by a representative of political authority was in itself a spark, the world would be in perpetual insurrection. Why, among a thousand others, does a given one specifically spread riots like wildfire? What is so special about it? We can very well multiply the variables of analysis, the right moment for an insurrection cannot be explained.

If, leaving the spark behind, we turn our gaze towards the powder, then we will not have something more available or less elusive to hand. Powder reserves are the resources of anger, either apparent or contained, considered with regards to their flammability. Revolutionary propaganda, on the one hand, shows where the sparks are, shows what is unacceptable, and on the other takes care of the powder, putting every one in contact with their own anger. What gives us the strength of not resigning ourselves to the worst that becomes everyday more certain, to keep our capacity of revolt intact, is, to borrow a phrase from Primo Levi, *the shame of the world*. Shame is a mixture of sadness with rage. It is impossible to overcome, whatever the managers of the soul may promise, it is something to be transformed by giving it the shape of anger*. Today, the shame of the world is at its peak. The present is a ship filled with explosives, which is rejected by every port and which hasn't been set on fire yet.

But all these undecidable factors would too easily lead us to conclude that we are fundamentally powerless, and to justify a wait-and-see approach. In truth, there is a monumental historical roadblock, which can be toppled immediately: the modern belief that *what is beautiful does not last*. In a general sense, civilisation splits what is beautiful into a false dichotomy between what is new and what endures. Once more, the revolutionary is the one who turns away both available beliefs. First, we do not believe in the eternalisation of the beautiful. This is a traditional motif, which blocks its own becoming even as it repeats, and in which what is new is undesirable, fled from like the plague. But we cannot resist time by fixing it, we resist it by providing a history of our own, a singular one. Second, we do not believe beauty comes with an expiration date. This is the modern motif which manages to imprison it in an event, to reduce it to an intensity, to refuse any extension of it, and, here too, to forbid its use. But, not only does beauty pertain to the infinite, but such infinity puts itself into practice, frees itself in the very relation to the event.

* "Shame is already revolution of a kind. Shame is a kind of anger which is turned inward. And if a whole nation really experienced a sense of shame, it would be like a lion, crouching ready to spring", Marx, *Letter to Ruge*, 1843.

We must be done with the representation of the event as the mere antithesis of what endures. If we don't, we cede the long-term ground to institutional dynamics, which have enjoyed an undisputed monopoly in this realm. In the modern regime, of which we are still prisoners, either the new presupposes that it will not endure (prepare to mourn), or it enters into duration but so doing implies that it has returned to the old ways (prepare to betray). This association of mourning and betrayal is what defines reformist cynicism. But it also feeds in revolutionaries an acceptance of the worst on the way to the better, and blindness with regards to what is actually going on. Since each remains unable to consider a way of enduring other than the old way, those who have managed to *face up to the shit in front of them* have some consolation: "beauty does not endure, anyway". Those who didn't want to face it have a good excuse: "whatever, even for a revolution, there is no way to endure but the shitty way". The constituent reflex, the ritual which provides an institutional framework to an irruptive event, imposes the antinomy of novelty/duration, an even more fundamental idol, whose lifespan here will not exceed two paragraphs.

Here is our general thinking about insurrection. It consists, on the one hand, in considering victory from the standpoint of the present, the only site of action. Within the present it consists in considering a specific event, all the while refusing to imprison victory in any fetishisation of the event. What image of victory appears, then? Repeated insurrectional assaults, which a posteriori form a mega-event we will call victory. Or: a first event, infinitised to the point when, *the last ship having burned*, it creates victory. Is the fall of Rome an event, or a long process? First of all, to bet on calm progression, continuous and linear, is the worst illusion possible. We have no other choice than not missing a historical opening when it appears. *The fall of Rome* is not the conclusion of a linear process. Second, to bet only on the event is yet another illusion, that of the Great Night. *Rome wasn't toppled in a day*. But, whatever the case may be, to will victory is to renounce knowing its shape. In the midst of the event, imagining the worst is a necessary precaution; but we must also be able to put the best into action. Lighting the fires of paradox, insurrection is the greatest exercise in *revolutionary realism*. By refusing as much to sacralise its coming as to speak doom about its impasses, we only see it as the Trojan horse we fill with all that is politics for us. *Peace recoils* before generalised riot and the spread of political violence to every aspect of life. *The Economy recoils* before the interruption of the normal flow of things, the setting up of HQs, the return of decision. *Identity cracks* under the pressure of the revolutionary we which rejects its own institution in a political class. A portion of the past (government, large groups) is under assault, and *all the past is shaken*. *Confusion dissipates* in the clarity of watchwords that no one can ignore any more, in the radicality of debate, the depth of expectations.

On insurrectional uses

We can and must sketch out a vision of insurrection which would remain faithful to its most beautiful promise, its revolutionary chance. We refuse, just when the more strategic questions must be clarified, to neutralise discourse by drawing-up a list of mediocre dishes. While the form of victory is inaccessible prior to its irruption, it is still possible to gather in advance its *political ingredients*. Here we do not convoke the logics of need, neither do we formulate any recipe. The idea is to be able to determine which ingredients are lacking in the situation, and that presupposes knowing which are necessary at the general level. They will never be sufficient by themselves, but it would be a political mistake to denigrate even one of them. And when the insurrection will be over, it will be too late to remark on what we fundamentally lacked. We think from the experience of struggles in the recent years, obstacles we have identified, practices we have engaged in. We are inherently limited by the poverty of such experience, but do not give up on maximal formulation. Here are our strategic minimal requirements, with the conviction that the encounters and the trials of strength of the coming times will give them the chance to clarify, complete, condemn or rectify their traits.

The riot

The insurrectional event opens in violence, and it is always closed by the partisans of peace. Each of the dimensions that unfurl will contribute to trace the frontline in one way or another. Let's concentrate now on the central form, that of tactical combat, riot in the broadest sense of the term. The trigger is what it is (for example a series of protests or blockades, a movement of occupation, or consecutive nights of sabotage), but it is always the riot, raised to a certain degree of intensity, diffusion and generalisation, which opens the insurrectional ball.

We do not mean here a protest marred by "some incidents", where the issue of pushing things further is discussed without any hope for success. Ordinarily, the fighting is contained within preordained limits. Stuck in the mesh of a well-conceived apparatus, we see no way of breaking away from it, and the blows remain purely symbolic. Rather we mean the moment where the barrier holding the whole apparatus in place collapses, where law enforcement starts to partially lose ground, and finally abandons it to the rioters. The levels of crowding and anger have been underestimated, the calls for protests have bypassed any negotiation. The apparatus is overwhelmed. The major issue is no longer about starting hostilities, but strengthening them, generalising them, strengthening them again, and so on.

A riot is a matter of organisation, not spontaneity, even though it will always be wrong to say that one has organised a riot: an event cannot be organised, but organisation can be added to the event. Therefore, rather than searching for the conspiracy of the enemy, we should do a little more conspiring. Instead of aspiring to create an organisation unified as a block, we need to coordinate with other groups. This is the minimal political discussion

that radical positions, more or less distinct from one another, must engage in. When the riot is strong, it never ceases to be surprising and unpredictable, but the more we practice it, the better we understand the role of *the organisational factor*.

It is difficult, and even noxious, to have an objective representation of the riot set in advance. Its origins, first minutes, first night, its unfolding, each time have something unprecedented. However, our attention must focus on some invariable actions. Anyone can experience them, and this means we can resist the logic of specialisation. When it comes to preparation: being ready to quickly join a hot spot, scouting the location, coming with the proper equipment, taking the necessary security measures, having some means of communication. In the situation, the technical aspect encompasses: supplying projectiles, erecting barricades, deactivating some of the enemy's weapons (teargas, cameras), looting everything which could strengthen the situation, real time recon.

Thinking the riot as a necessary notch for insurrection entails a certain vision of the general *rapport de force*. Two figures of revolutionary defeat: on the one side the literal crushing of our forces, on the other the formation of an army, which means forcing or putting a price on engagement. We remain opposed to both the militarisation of conflict and its disarming. In revolutionary politics, even the guerrilla, the irregular fighting, does not have the meaning that experts in asymmetrical warfare and counter-insurgency give them.

An insurrection that endures allows rioters to exercise and sharpen their strategic vision. To make clear what blocks the situation below a given threshold, to imagine what it would take to cross it. Not to remain in denial of the obstacles nor to freeze the vision of the situation, its actors, its dramaturgy. To discuss the maximal hypothesis, to come back to the minimal option, to decide. The material force of destruction is a strange reality, because it simultaneously operates in a completely symbolic, fantasmatic, idealist dimension. The simple gesture of destruction loses nothing of its eternal youth, but we keep telling ourselves stories which are highly variable in terms of political potency. To see police as the historical obstacle makes a great deal of sense, and we must restate the particular position of States as bulwarks of civilisation. Who else holds the hegemony on violence? And yet, we do not simply fight for the toppling of the State: through the proxy, we truly aim the final boss. In concrete terms, what is to be done with ministries and houses of parliaments*? Empty them, void their meaning. They would make for great landfills, but time is running out, and everything must be destroyed in a hurry.

Since the riot brings with it all the other political dimensions, it can easily become the sole object of the insurrection. However, what is its *only strategic goal*? *To become irrepressible*. Actualising this political objective can only be done in concert with all other insurrectionary uses.

* "Well, we break in!", Eric Drouet, December 5th 2018 (Yellow Vests).

Full stop

A halt in the normal course of things is a decisive ingredient. It is what allows a riotous moment not to be ephemeral, or even more to kick things up a notch in the politicisation of a violence which has already begun to last. Insurrection needs to interrupt the *institution of everyday life*. Insurrection means an event goes outside its assigned bounds and that we find ourselves in another relation to time.

At the time of the Yellow Vests, such interruption took form in the occupation of roundabouts, but most of the time those who were holding them still had to go to work. Daily life was upside down, but not to the point of disrupting the order of days, and it is symptomatic that protests were happening on Saturdays. In this crazy context, what did the unions decide? *Not* to call for general strikes, and for this they are the first responsible for the aborted insurrection. To imagine the consequences of the opposite decision is enough to demonstrate the necessity of a general halt, beyond the obsolete myth of the general strike. If the death of this myth helps us set insurrection free from all narrow representations, we still need to find a new way of approaching its most basic gesture.

General interruption is that which escapes the merely instrumental level. First, it involves liberating the gesture from any labor-oriented perspective. Not only do we stop working, we stop everything: we dive into an entirely other time. We cannot understand any gesture of political fight if we start by situating them in an economic framework. The idea of the strike as something to build up in sequential steps, from the economic strike to the political strike up to the insurrectionary strike, is a great bit of marxist hogwash, one which has long ceased having any function except letting everyone rot on step one. In truth, we must first *take*. It is from there that we build, which is to say, that we keep on taking. This is what happens: disgusted by the idea of things going back to normal, we call for the necessity of a full stop and we participate in building the political conditions for the event to occur and last.

Once the imposition of tired reformist schemas has been swept away, the great obstacle is the absence of any guarantee—once provided by unions and their control, which came with its usual price tag: “One must know when to stop stopping”. If we speak of an existential gesture, one which must acknowledge itself as a leap into the unknown, it is necessary that this hypothetical unknown land be a collective one. The less the full stop is precarious, solitary and sad, the stronger it is. The point is not to rush and try to fill the void, to pack the agenda with new occupations. We must first find ourselves, as simple as it sounds, experience this new time together, give ourselves to the irruption of politics, explore new ways of organising small things outside the set frameworks. All this is obvious. The material aspect must support what is happening, and not act as a brake, either through negligence or through the invasive forms of production (two mistakes feeding one another).

There are technical gestures, techniques of courage, which allow for the *blocking of time* to endure. There are few productive sectors without a shut down button. We can burn our ships in many ways, create a blackout, and this is done all the more easily now that asking for permission to revolt is outdated. But the general halt is only the prelude to something else, and cannot sustain itself, as if it were the goal of the insurrection. For us it

is very clear: when we devote ourselves to the perpetuation of the material conditions for a full stop, we limit ourselves to the *maintenance* of this stop. An insurrection, however, can only be maintained through attack. When it does not assert itself, it retreats. The perpetuation of a general stop is only possible through the crossing of further thresholds in its politicisation. Now that we have left the classical narrative of the strike behind us, the full stop can become the long-awaited blank page, the counter-historical chance to finally do politics in new ways. An opportunity happily wasted by those who only seek to bring back the very economy which we had just expelled. “Alternative practices” are ambiguous: since insurrection necessarily calls on them for small things, they are welcome, but they also represent a political threat. They must be absolutely divested of what makes them alternative, what puts them in league with the ever-detestable *camp of the Good*. Everything we said about the sneaky side of the economy can be reiterated here. It is in the very ways these practices can be useful for insurrection that we see the possibility to confuse them not only with the ideological comfort of radicalism, but also with the politics of the enemy.

HQ

The HQ is where it's at. Obviously we don't entertain the possibility of confining insurrection to a single point. We don't speak of a single centre, since insurgent geography only begins when two places start rising up*. It is then in every locality where it has surged, in every one of its strongholds that insurrection provides itself with an HQ. This minimal level of centrality is simply the beginning of its organisation and the first step in making the full stop a permanent one. In this respect, the enemy will always strive to prevent it from happening, or to turn it into a besieged reality. Organisation must, in opposition, provide insurgents the energy and strength required to resist psychological warfare.

That a *rapport de force* to our disadvantage cuts us off from this possibility is one thing. That we give up on it ourselves, encourage the opposite logic, is nothing less than a counter-insurrectional tendency. To turn away from the necessity of having a central location for ourselves, to always prefer ten places to one, or to make the central one inconsistent: all ways of practicing the logic of the network, of dispersion. The repeated chants about a “convergence of struggles” only builds a reformist movement, one which blocks any strong decision.

To have an HQ, is, in contrast, to find a site of concentration, to give it enough importance to be able to defend it, to turn it into a lawless zone. In a sense, this is what creates the strength of radical territorial struggles. But if we speak of an HQ, it is to make possible a form of political centrality, not of territorial centrality. It is an element of organisation which we add to the insurrection. The general questions which are raised there concern the entire surface of the event, whatever the place. To think of it this way is the first step to getting out of the state of siege.

For us, an HQ is identified by its open character, rather than through the imposition of a ready-made form. It is in this openness that we find the singular excitation it creates and spreads around it (which can result in a negative pressure on the politicians in training which might have settled there). Form only appears in politicisation itself, in the questions

* Insurrection is not an “island”, it is at least two...

of the decision and of the we. It depends on the way the insurgents put them into practice and respond to them. In the meantime, the immediate reality of an HQ is to let us access the event as something other than individuals. Minimally, it intensifies in a specific point the sharing of practices and the possibility of encounters. Any consistent strike movement brings about occupations, in which we experience a sudden disruption of ordinary life. Organisation begins there, in the disturbance of settled time, in free-flowing conversation between two or a thousand, in the joyful mess of assemblies, in parties (the insurgent is within the current times the one who has something to celebrate), in irruption rather than framing and procedures. *It is not decision yet*, but it is a basic condition for it: not to look at one another as strangers, to open the sharing of time. Politics cannot start without collective organisation, it grows on this ground, without confusing itself with it in any way. When we obfuscate the communist ground of politics, we lose its possibility; when we conflate the two, we end up with an apolitical communism, in which the economy rushes back in. To firmly hold onto the communist condition for revolution is at minimum to fight against the idea that we could be satisfied with an organisation happening entirely through a social network. Granted, digital spaces have allowed for secured communications as well as propaganda campaigns, but there can be no virtual HQ for an insurrection. Some may cite the Hong Kong insurrection, its systematic use of platforms allowing for lightning-fast mobilisation at scale, in a context of general atomisation. But that's just it, insurrection cannot adhere to the individualistic norm. In Hong Kong as well, insurgents attempted to break free of their isolation by occupying universities, without managing to turn them into an HQ. The speed at which they were thrown out is additional proof that the takeover of a location is a distinctly combative move in insurrectional times.

Decision

To decide is to *confront*. Neither to turn our backs to the situation, nor to fantasise it. Is anything more central to an insurrection than the shared practice of strategy? But we are made to wonder if such practice is even possible in the current circumstances. We do not mean here the catastrophist atmosphere, which certainly does not help, but rather a foundational issue: any reading of the situation presupposes a position, but we know well the insurgents are starting off in very different places, not to mention the confusion that surrounds everything. What should we do?

It is out of the question, at this moment where everything can shift, to give up on positioning. We must on one side refuse any neutralisation of speech (neither self-satisfied unitarism, nor imposition of a single party, nor sterile ideological battles), on the other, be able to focus on what matters most: the situation. When we focus on the situation, what is it we speak of? Everything comes down to a single question: the *rapport de force* with the enemy. We share, sometimes hour after hour, our views on the unfolding of events, the enemy's movements (we should say: those of the enemy's proxy), their little manoeuvres, the traps they set, the propaganda they produce, all the ways in which they depoliticise the event, the echoes of past situations, and so on. Already, in the refusal of any negotiation, are the seeds of a strategic we.

There is strategy as soon as we raise the question of how to turn the *rapport de force* to our advantage, and *raise it in terms foreign to those of the enemy*. Discussion then will naturally be about how the enemy represents an obstacle to the growth of the insurrection, and about the most potent way to attack it. While all this is simplified to the extreme, the questions being put in the centre (the enemy, ourselves, and the why of the fight) are all the same the deepest and the most complex politically. We will not untangle them all at once in an irrelevant ideological battle doomed to failure if those who discuss the situation remain strangers to one another. Decision is precisely that which allows for the angle of approach that has the most potency in the here and now. Far from being an easy way out, such simplification is a strong gesture through which we are able to get rid of a lot of parasitic problems. But already some begin to grind their teeth, they will refuse to be rushed into anything: they wish to fiddle about endlessly.

Thus, in the insurrection, the strategic question appears as the paradoxical conjunction of great simplicity (what is on the table, what we are discussing) and great political depth (there is an enemy, a we, a why?). Familiar existential upheavals might originate in the encounter with this paradox. To remain faithful to this encounter abruptly shows that the political dimension is almost always set in the wrong terms, and the situation problematised in the terms of the enemy. At the same time we understand that in order to sustain the simple yet profound demand of strategic discourse, we must demarcate it from idle chatter, but most of all we must silence the reign of false speech: democracy. We must hear positions instead of the habitual chorus of opinions, in which the fundamental question has already been decided, insurrection has already folded.

Democracy is that institution through which the attempted uprisings end up translated in the very terms of government. That it is today threatened by other regimes of decision should not push us to be more conciliatory towards it. Out of its current decadence, *the hegemony that is democracy* is smoothly starting to fit into totalitarian moulds. Not only will we not hold onto something just because there might be something worse at hand (the lesser evil remains evil), but what we refer to here is precisely the movement through which the worst is becoming every day more certain. The democratic question is a plague. The time has passed to show in detail the aberrations such a relationship to decision engenders, such as those collective actions voted on by 500 people, but where nobody shows up. In every struggle, democracy has a monopoly on access to decision. It mobilises the whole arsenal of depoliticisation on this specific ground: votes in assembly, demands, operations aiming at evading a power-relation through the imposition of another power-relation (code of conduct, protocol, pointless interdictions...). Democracy, with its rotten methodology, the swarm of procedures which obfuscate actual priorities and dissipate the actual problem, the boredom which descends upon us at the first sentence of an intervention, a *je-ne-sais-quoi* in its tone which makes us all feel like we have one foot in the grave. But we do not oppose democracy as dogmatists or aristocrats. If we take part in strategic discussion, it is not because we know *exactly* what the priority is, but precisely because we are never certain until we have decided it together. We hold no secret solution for this, but we have the absolute conviction that discussions must not lose track of their priority. When this disposition is shared, it is possible to talk for hours, we know we are not wasting our time.

The potency inherent to the gesture of decision resides in its ability to draw the contours of an insurgent we within the general situation. The point then is to have a use for this we, to make possible a camaraderie that fits the intensity of the event, and to ask the right questions.

Now, if the we stays content with itself and withdraws, it forbids its own becoming. Seeing this, the usual reflex is to rush to the masses, to melt into a definition that would be more flexible, less discomfiting, less demanding. In other words, to relativise our commitment rather than to aspire to something greater. We see things differently. First, decision constantly puts insurgents to the test: what is it we want? We discover new contradictions as a collective will asserts itself, gaining its texture obstacle after obstacle. What appears to be an internal crisis might in fact signal a threshold that needs crossing: the question of the we can no longer be avoided. *Therefore*, we must come to an understanding about what matters most, lest we end up paralysed, imploding, generally inconsistent, or taken over by one of the parties. We must carry something strong together and be able to put it into the world. At some point, the insurgents have to understand that they are experiencing something greater than their objective we (a sum of people), without however translating it into some universal ideal. *It's no longer just a question of who takes part in the insurrection, but what the insurrection takes part in.*

First, one might say: "Let's continue the beginning". This is an intuition which gives proper orientation to the question, but it still needs some interpretation. What is the beginning in question? The event, that which is going on and due to its scope can be called insurrection. In a way, even though its underlying gesture is quite potent, speaking of an insurgent we does not mean much, we are merely attesting to participation to the insurrection, whose definition is by nature variable, since the situation evolves daily, if not hourly. For us, if gathering the listed ingredients gives a bit of content to the idea of insurrection, its very definition is necessarily terse and formal ("destitution of the present", or "revolutionary use of the event"). While the event presupposes those ingredients, they are never its sufficient cause. Insurrection must, in order to find itself, discover an aspiration that is higher than itself. Everything, then, leads to the conclusion, simple on paper but always bold in actuality, that the insurgent we is a revolutionary we. Obviously, it is not sufficient that the insurgents declare themselves to be revolutionaries, and nothing is more weakening than shouting the word *revolution* into the void, in the absence of any decided commons. The criterion is in no way ideological. It is precisely the interpretation we give to the slogan "let's continue the beginning". The insurgent we liberates its revolutionary potential when it begins to understand, and openly claims, that *nothing is going to stop it.*

How can we say this in the face of the repeated crushing of any revolutionary attempt? In truth, the revolutionary we does not stop with its defeat. It is enough to consider the contrary case to understand this: what would we say of a revolutionary we which, when the defeat comes, purely and simply disappears? We would take it as exact proof it was in no way revolutionary (cynically, one would say: you see, everyone went home). We are touching here on a central point of revolutionary doctrine. If we completely confuse the *temporal sequence* (beginning, middle, end) with their insurrectional *we*, then we are

doing the exact opposite of what we are talking about: fetishising the event, stuffing the revolutionary possibility in there as if it could fit entirely. With this reduction of revolutionary possibility to the event, nothing prevents the participant from going back to normal at the moment of defeat. They are already nothing more than oldheads and veterans. This thinking only opens the door to betrayal, and ends up getting it. The danger is also that, when the whole of politics seems to concentrate itself in the event (its chronicle, its dramaturgy), the reality of defeat appears all the more impossible to admit. This only creates more denial in turn, because defeat takes a definitive turn. To know when to withdraw, even to put an end to things, is actually a potent gesture. This is especially true when everything that remains of the “victorious” possibility is to be able to say that one has continued “to the end” (of victimisation, that is), or, that the perspective of scrounging for a consolation prize in order “not to have lost everything” appears—let’s not even mention the case of entering into negotiations. If, on the contrary, we shed this way of thinking, we can consider the possibility (to be confirmed or refuted) that a we can survive even a great year. For instance, 1917 is the proof that there is a revolutionary we which survived 1905. We can apply a similar reasoning to the year ’68. In Italy, ’68 continues, *prepares* ’77, while in France ’68 only gives way to the post-’68 era.

Why so many defeats? Because there is only one victory, the moment when the revolutionary we takes on the scope of the present itself. The rest of the time, insurrections end up crashing into the wall of history, while the we of revolution, which walks through walls, continues its march. With or without you, it continues its slow and steady work of undermining. When it discovers itself as revolutionary, the insurgent we claims for itself an unstoppable, infinite nature, and armed with its strength it tackles obstacles and defeats head-on. This does not mean that it believes the insurrection to be invincible, but it opens up the possible use of our camp’s wounds, uncovering in so doing an idea of political determination which has nothing in common with that of progressives. Here once again we refuse to provide an objective definition of the revolutionary we, one apt to comfort everybody. Indeed, no objective clothes will fit, it will always end up tearing them, and indeed it is only by shedding one after the other that it moves forward! The moral is, we must reject any *representable we*. We must reject the *victimised we* with regards to State politics (if the Black Panthers or the Communards had been nothing but victims, they would never have haunted the minds of revolutionaries of later generations). We must reject the *territorial we*, and with it *the sad framework of communalism*. We need to relentlessly politicise our name, or else the enemy will give us that baptism reserved only for the dead.

It is through affirming itself in such a way that the insurgents separate themselves from the progressives (quite often, these rats will leave the ship early, and in fleeing they make way for the coming repression). The progressive is the one who will satisfy himself with this or that objective we. Some might reply, here: “But why signify such a difference? To be insurgent is plenty enough already”. This generous drive is at the same time what closes, what reduces the insurgent we. Any excuse will do, then, not to commit towards a revolutionary we. The slippery conservative slope never waits for the end to assert itself, defeat works within us from the first moment.

The use of the we is not limited to tracing the line of demarcation with reformism, but it also carries with it internal political contradictions. The revolutionary camp is not a glass of water designed for soluble tablets, in which different parties can be left to gently dissolve. Why would we abandon them? For the Nth Republic? For the best of all possible communalist world? In situations of exception, distinct parties will on the contrary continue to resist assimilation. When they stop doing so, there are two hypotheses. Either the party in question didn't have the consistency of a proper position, but only that of a tendency, or a nuance within some other position; in this case, we can only rejoice. Or, the party has caved in, submitted, has given up on what matters most, and has been annexed; which is unacceptable. We must therefore abandon any fusionist representation among parties and camp. Some will say, as cowardly as they are full of good intentions: "but, listening to you, the Party will maintain itself through historical overcoming, and therefore it is fated to become a force of capture. It must be destituted!" But the Party's destitution for us means preventing it from becoming an institution (and thereby failing in its aim), not abandoning it in the middle of the fight. If Party means a reality which is just waiting for the opportunity to be sacrificed, then we have only given ourselves one more institution, one too many, or we have conflated it with a crew of friends, with a "phase of our lives". If the Party has any worth, it is throughout *its own* history, and its history is always the one of its own destitution. It is not a hollow shell, a mere cold instrument, a weapon to be thrown away after the contract has been fulfilled. It is a collective adventure, made up of unshakeable bonds, a world—or it is nothing.

Watchword

*Naming can take two mutually hostile forms.
One wards something off, the other embraces it*.*

The insurgent's strongest decision becomes a revolutionary watchword. We will not say which, but we will say how. With a strong watchword, a refusal can begin to take shape. The sum of every refusal never becomes an event without a certain projection into something in common, without the capacity to formulate what goes beyond the particulars of a situation of struggle.

Some might claim that we cannot be content with a slogan, which is the very name of a squandered word, dead as soon as it is uttered. We have learned by now to see through the watchword, to understand what is really being sold. Fundamental to the liberal experience of language is a devaluation of *every language*, and in the end, nihilism**. Because the revolutionary fight retrieves the use for words, and among them the most solid (concepts), everything which, in politics, partakes in the reproduction of an inconsistent relationship to language must be seen as counter-revolutionary. If the phrase "watchword" *sounds* authoritarian, we will not however give up on the strength of words, *those great organisers of disorder*.

* Tiqqun, *Introduction to civil war*, 2001.

** To take but an exemple, the expression "fake news", created to signal a counterfeit, is itself a counterfeit.

To come up with a watchword for insurrection is to imagine a cry with nothing to sell or buy. It is a word whose capacity to take the offensive begins as soon as it is understood. Since its affirmative charge resides in its specific effect, that of spurring us into action, it might not be explicit. The watchword is not reductive, but it has the tendency, like any representation, to spell out the part for the whole and it is once we forget this that the reduction operates. Every representation consists in making an absence present. It is the way of doing it which must be interrogated, and here we find again our two hereditary enemies. One names what is lacking in order to ward it off, to sell fantasies. The other names what is lacking in order to take it up, raise it up, and embrace it. Behind the apparent political confusion, there is often a very simple reality: progressive speech aims at staving off that which the revolutionary aims at claiming and unleashing. How, then, is it possible to shout any kind of word without working for the enemy? Of course, there are the words we choose for ourselves, but the most important ones will often be themselves a political battlefield. It is the way we put forward what was left out of view, in a state of social death, which will be the decisive factor. When one is selling hopes and dreams, what is actually happening? One gives social value to an image. This can take a more materialist aspect, in which the hopes and dreams are offered through concrete propositions, a program (goods, services, but also laws, major projects, *new deals*). In one way or another, progressivism always functions through forcing image onto what is already there.

The revolutionary's proposition is to lift up from the social void and dwell in this possible which society produces as its impossible*. Its slogan mobilises neither dream nor material goods, but a truth which finds its way into the real. They say: what is to be lived, to be done and to be practiced, is the social-impossible (whatever the government framework at hand, even self-government). But, if that is the case, then what is to be lived resists any realisation**. We make it present, but *making it present is not what exhausts it*. A revolutionary slogan is therefore incompatible with any program and any demand. In the logic of demands, not only is the enemy considered a worthy interlocutor, not only is the existence of war denied, but the demand comes to an end at the moment where it is satisfied. We can even wonder why we still see a demand for retribution, of recognition as a political act. Some will answer: there remains something of the initial claim even after it has been obtained, it continues to act, under the form of a new right. To be sure, there is some force here, but it is a form of power.

In order to have a revolutionary watchword, we could put forward what is most absent ("revolution", or the name of the future), or the most distant ("decivilisation", or the name of victory). Problem: to repeat at the top of our lungs the name of victory only makes the permanent defeat visible. The concept of victory, thus devalued, quickly becomes an alibi for habituation to defeat. We could also put into play the strongest negation. If maximal negation has the advantage of avoiding a betrayal of its affirmative dimension, it can however submerge it, and we must remain aware of that possibility.

It is actually from what is lacking in these times that the revolutionary fight finds its orientation. What is lacking is not a politics against a certain register of enclosure (for instance, against racism), what is lacking is a politics that would not itself be a register of enclosure.

* Quite logically, the potency of attraction of the word "impossible" is everywhere over-exploited.

** The very notion of "realisation" belongs to the universe of production, that of the engineer and the politician.

What is lacking is not a politics that wants to remove a person or certain institutions from power, but a politics that wants to do away with political power. The revolutionary air of the *que se vayan todos* tendency probably sprang from the possibility of hearing within it a sort of polite anarchism, but the great scam it entailed was that our will to oust them was simultaneously a cry for them to come back on the scene again, as in children's theater.

On the choice of words, the only thing that can be said is that it must be able to practice a radical withdrawal from the initial context of insurrection. Otherwise, the imperative to be intelligible is nothing more than an excuse for political cowardice, and will always end up as fuel for opportunism. As it would be ridiculous to pretend to be able to control the reception of any watchword, propaganda has to learn how to aim accurately. Some words which were politically careful can end up as the signal of decisive anger (as everything else will be heard in them, for instance, in "never work", "never produce" will be heard); others, quite outrageous, can end up only as the cover for a superficial revolt.

Ordinary destitution

Insurrection spreads, settles. It endures, becomes unstoppable. As it advances, it opens up new questions, and when we refuse to face them, when we declare them peripheral or beside the point, then we arrest the politicising movement, and become gravediggers of the revolutionary event. Naturally, one can be a gravedigger from the start, by setting up a revolutionary program, or by giving oneself over to political anticipation. What we have set up so far is of a very different kind: it is a method for the infinite politicisation of insurrection, with which we ask ourselves what the right way is to raise questions. There can be no illusion here: anything revolutionary thought leaves in its blind spots will be a breeding ground for the engineers of politics. If thinking must be pushed to its limit, it is neither for modeling or prophesying, but so that, when the time comes, we are able to destroy every solution dreamt up by the specialists of What Comes After. No unilateralism here: one can kill the event by trying to make it last, or conversely by forbidding in advance the possibility of enduring. All this presupposes that we dissolve here and now any question of What Comes After, which, at heart just boils down to the reformist approach to ordinary life.

A great political step remains for the insurgent we that springs from the fight. It experiences its own disagreements and demarcates itself from reformists, but how can it keep on asserting itself as political, without instituting itself as a new political class, and producing the people as its outside? Insurrection is a moment of clear-cut positioning: we must experience it, and not remain content with hasty representations, in one direction or another. The point is neither to turn anyone who hesitates into an enemy, nor to crush the situation under fraternal praise, but to continue triggering politicisation. This means putting our watchword into practice and relentlessly propagating destitution. The extension, diffusion, and vigor of the insurrection can be measured by the extension, diffusion, and vigor of the destituting movement. We cannot block destitution's access to any question, and therefore its vocation is to be generalised, to come and upset everything that stands in its way. The more it is generalised, the more ordinary it becomes.

For destitution is the name of the demolition of the norm, no more, no less. It is the process of destruction of the economic and social sectors through which we ordinarily relate not only to politics, but to life itself. We have said that it has the capacity to reclaim any question; what does this mean in the concreteness of insurrection, “knowing that no one lives in questions?” A superficial observation: actually, everybody lives in questions, and they are reasons for imprisonment as long as we don’t ask them, or only ask in the worst possible formulation. Insurrection is precisely the moment when choices become apparent. Since we are not progressives, we do not believe that “people” change outside of moments of violent jolting. Insurrection, then, is precisely the right moment to ask questions. We will never be on the side of “Later, comrade!”. For the insurgent, it is the best situation to put destitution on the day’s agenda, and in so doing, to get an idea of how it is outside. The more ground politicisation manages to gain, the less the outside continues to look like a great monolithic exteriority. There is no population, there are the pro- and the anti-insurrection, but this is a frontline which only appears inasmuch as everyone starts to encounter here and there the problems being raised by the insurrection, and thus to fall on one side or another, with varying degrees of commitment and conviction.

Insurrection relies on and is built on a systematic destitution of *everyday life*. The latter is the general institution of depoliticisation, a banal yet effective synthesis of the peace-economy-past-identity-confusion bloc. Everyday life is history on a weekly scale. But to destitute ordinary life is to destroy it as an institution, not as a question. It would be both naive and stupid to see it as plain abolition, which would only mean betting on a dissolution of ethics. And we have showed sufficiently enough how a totalising establishment of politics would be its downfall. Ethical potency and political potency are, at heart, mutually constitutive, but in the sense of a *mutual irreducibility*. One needs the other to resist it.

Then, as we go on destroying everyday life as this apolitical bloc that guarantees dominant politics, an entirely new idea emerges: ethics brought back to its own potency. To destitute everyday life is just politics itself, insurrection itself, and it is simultaneously a way of wresting ethical potency from the peace-economy-past-identity-confusion regime. The revolutionary partisan has an ordinary life, just like everyone, but in an opposite direction: they destitute it. Their enemy is the Average Joe, or rather their reign. Actually, if we content ourselves with an absolute denial of ordinary life, we will leave the Average Joe’s reign intact. Day after day, we will confirm that it is ever less political, just like this assessment itself, and all will be in order. We must approach things otherwise, then. It is not enough to upset *one’s* ordinary life, one must think the upset of *every* ordinary life, which is a whole other issue.

What is the decivilised version of daily life? All of the uses of weak or medium potency, which nonetheless resist being crushed by normality. To this very day, this corresponds to any minuscule time wrested away from the productive norm, from the imperative of return on investment, performance, optimisation, social display. A given use can be small and happen daily, but this doesn’t make it objective nor definitive. It is just that way because it diffuses in the everyday life. Everyday life is not necessarily low intensity, it is merely made up of uses which are of *every day*, of *every human*. Every human has their singular inclinations, which in this regard remain ordinary. Everyone can even have their preferred uses: something, some stuff, which cannot necessarily be put into words, but which in any

case cannot be *identified* with any productive activity it would seemingly correspond to, something in which one excels, sometimes touched by grace, and which can rise—why not?—to the sublime. But even in this case, use will remain within the bounds of ordinary life: because it is the characteristic of every human to have a use of this kind, even if the current norm has long been to stifle it. A first overcoming happens at the moment where it accesses a collective dimension: a *singular we* is put into play, or we begin to have an impact beyond the original use, all the while remaining irrecuperable. And precisely, this *sine qua non* condition implies a political *rapport de force*.

In truth, insurrection does not happen as a messianic event, by which every aspect of existence miraculously takes a political turn. It rather happens as a generalisation of the *possibility of politicisation*. It is time to bring everything we can to it. Through this gesture, one thing will find a place within the revolutionary present, hold a certain position in the fight. This implies to find out precisely how, to what extent, according to which limits and conditions. Insurrection has an outside, it is not the whole world, and this outside is certainly not monolithic. Next to the enemy bloc, there are all the questions which are yet to be explored, and which constitute so many possible complicities. We must consider this unknown not under the perspective of warlike conquest, but that of indetermination. When we encounter a question, we are equal to all those who ask it for themselves. We share the same difficulties, which cannot be resolved by dictating that what resists us is counter-revolutionary.

Insurrection is not the humiliation of everyday life but its raising up, the elevation of its specific potency in the very act of sharing the gesture of destitution. *Destitution is the common political use for insurgents of all kinds*. Whatever way we might scowl at each other, we stand here equal. There is no “common good”, but rather a common ill, rephrased as a political problem. What we have in common is not the sum of social sectors, which are neither our heritage nor our responsibility. What we share is one and only great question and the way it diffracts, the way we address it. We can envision that question as a bridge, which can always be taken from both the ethical and political shore, even though each of us will have our favorite. This difference in preferences is not something we intend to essentialise as if they were two mutually exclusive categories (“the political ones, and the other ones”). However, anyone can *devote their existence to politics*, but not everyone will. We cannot universalise that calling. We cannot be done with this difference, even though we will always refuse to turn it into any kind of fatality. Insurrection cannot abolish it by decree, it must simply stand up to it, think it in order to liberate revolutionary practice. To erase it in a flaccid unity, or to let it grow through a superiority complex, or even to try to forcefully compensate for it: such is the social practice of difference, with which we must break*.

How do we get to destitution? From the ethical shore, every time that, in this or that domain of the everyday life, wanting to go all the way, emboldened by the collapse of central power, we enter into contradiction with the institution. Whether the stakes are to remove an activity from the economy, to turn a place upside down, to attack those who own everything, to destroy a monopoly, to expand the perimeter already subtracted from money.

* The mere observation of *mutual disdain* between two groups is the first step in curing disdain: if the one I tend to consider with contempt also tends to do it, this incites to disdain disdain itself.

Those who arrive from the political shore must strengthen these gestures, by concretely attacking the battlements of the enemy and, in the same gesture, contributing to the unfolding of questions. This means speaking a language that is not always nice. The point is to break the illusion that revolution will be the conclusion of this or that singular venture. If, in politicising, a singular problem can emancipate itself from the hold of an institution, it will *never* constitute a lever for liberation from *all* institutional chokeholds, because this is the matter of politics alone, which is a matter of position, and, whether we like it or not, of general thought. Therefore, the gesture of destitution will lose itself if it turns into pure praise for this or that resistance against production, without making its own dead-end clear. A politicisation which would only happen on the basis of this or that practice, even linked in a network of similar ones, will only result in the return of the economy, and this is exactly what alternativism is about. But those who come from the political shore do not only give, they also receive. They can, from various encounters, pick up useful practical knowledge for the aim of partisan construction. At a deeper level, it is the very idea of destitution which they can see grow, take on new layers, as it extends its breath on new continents of practice. At each occasion, revolutionary strategy is gaining new angles.

Because general thought, which gives politics its strength, is also its weakness, it is at this very point that it is the most significantly dependent on everyday life. We finally locate the possibility of a dependence irreducible to any form of power, negating any interest: *Because everyday life calls out for politics, because politics calls out for ordinary life, not for the same reason, not in the same way.* Neither in interdependence, nor in independence, but in reciprocal and asymmetric dependence: this is how those which events have brought closer together, but which have neither the same life nor the same position, can always break the infernal chains of interest and submission.



The question of the Party is fully charged, it bursts. Not that its past is too heavy, as its detractors believe, but because once everything gets dismantled and rebuilt differently, the Party emerges as a brand new bursting word. Once unpacked and laid out, several important elements come to the forefront. The enemy (*civilisation*): the way it captures questions (*hegemony*), the way it captures the subject (*production*). The revolutionary question: the “why” (*the existing order kills everything that matters*), the motto (*negation of debt*), the opening of questions (*destitution*), the organising principle (*the use*, the logic of communism), the very definition of politics (*with its five meanings*), the organisation of a position (*the Party and its uses*), the building of victory (*insurrection and its uses*).

In the picture we have been unfolding and suggesting from the beginning, the revolutionary we relies on four forces: ethics, politics, party, insurrection. These are thresholds either crossed or yet to be crossed.

Without *ethics*, we lack the minimal impulse: Hatred towards the institution. It brings forth a whole different organising principle. Without it, no revolutionary upheaval is possible: we will just keep reproducing the same shit.

Without *politics*, all the uses in the world remain impotent. Coming out of destitution, politics emerges fully armed—with conflict, priority, future, position, discernment—like Minerva out of Jupiter’s thigh.

Without *a party*, there is no use of politics.

Without *insurrection*, the revolutionary we dissolves into progressivism. However, we won’t endorse the positivist criterion: “None are revolutionary but those making revolution.” Insurrection is a fateful threshold, a moment of truth, but we must avoid the easy humiliation of the three preceding thresholds, lest we simply produce future veterans. On the contrary, our ideal of insurrection is not only to keep heeding these thresholds all the way through, but to continuously put them into practice.

The revolutionary we contains three fixed elements and one that is free (the Party). For this free element to actually be something and not anything and everything, we must agree on the other ones. We believe this can happen immediately.

We agree on what we reject. To be consistent, we agree as well on the smallest unit of organisation—the use—as a new way of approaching the perennial question of the means.

We agree on a different way of doing politics.

Exceptional situations, especially insurrections, are as much opportunities to come together.

12/21/21

Ontological Preface

The almost-nothing that changes everything

*Nothing that matters is necessary,
but it is always necessary for something to matter.*

Such is the maxim of potency. This criterion allows us to reject both the people of power and the nihilists. Shifting epochs always means foiling certain fundamental modes of thought.

According to the nihilist, there is fundamentally nothing. Why? Because everything that matters, we make important. *Nothing that matters is necessary*. But this is only half the truth. Nonetheless the nihilist always stops here and infers that the foundation is empty. Actually, it is not empty. There is at least one principle: the necessity for something to matter. There lies the other half of the truth. This is the one fundamental rule of the game. There is not a single exception to it. All that exists carves out some potency (each time this is reduced to determinism, singularity is sacrificed).

Fundamentally, there is not nothing, but almost nothing. Almost nothing is not nothing. But neither is it something! This is far too much to grasp for a positivist mind. Neither nothing nor something, yet this has a name: *no-matter-what*. All existence consists in knowing what should be drawn out of the *no-matter-what*, out of the undifferentiated, to make it something. Neither a void nor a fullness: the opening. There lies the foundation. And this is not just an opening-of-possibilities, a mere market.

Whoever says “there is fundamentally nothing” chooses nothing as their foundation. People of power believe they know that there is a thing (God, Reason, need...) at the basis of their power. The nihilist believe they know that there is a thing at the basis, which they call “nothing”. Both retreat or tremble when faced with choice, and for that reason are quick to impose it. All that is imposed as the basis of things, all that is universally established, even the greatest refusal, takes the place of decision. And why impose a choice—if not by fear of the void? And why embrace the void—if not by fear of decision? People of power and nihilists share the same fears.

Actually, nihilism has always been the flip-side of power. Those in command know how vain, arbitrary and delusional their existence is. Power imposes norms, institutes *necessary* things, and then all hegemonies eventually fall, showing that what presented as natural relied in fact on a decision. Confronted with the heap of fallen hegemonies, one can always say: “See, there is indeed nothing”. But this is exactly the same sigh heaved by those in charge. In reality, it only proves that one has not yet understood anything about either decision or potency. We have to start all over again, and that’s for the best.

Here is what we say: since *no-matter-what* is the only foundation, there is plenty of choice! And since everything that exists carves out potency, we must choose! Choosing means: making something potent. But this results neither in making it necessary (we're against all hegemony), nor in making no-matter-what potent (we're against all relativism).

The only universal foundation is to *have to* make something potent, knowing that if that thing substitutes itself for the foundation, it will destroy it. We fight in the name of this rule. We fight by outlining the strength of certain realities, certain distinctions, without ever granting them a universal foundation. The first of these distinctions is the one between power and potency. *Power is the opposite of potency*. The 21st century must confront, experience, and deepen this truth. It contains the secret of change.

Contents

INTRODUCTION: A PARTY FOR THE REVOLUTION	3
Institution and revolution	6
1 FORMULATING A PARADIGM FOREIGN TO POWER	7
The two extremities of power	7
Five powers, one hegemony	10
Domination is not the central lens	12
An enemy: civilisation	15
Destitution or how to destroy a hegemony	18
The enemy organising principle: production	22
Use, the communist principle of organisation	26
2 UNLOCKING POLITICAL POTENCY	30
History and politics	31
Double-front strategy	32
The five political senses	33
Sense of conflict: war and resonance	34
Sense of priorities: decision and escape	37
Sense of the future: principle of revolution	41
Sense of belonging: position	45
Sense of discernment: ethics and politics	49
3 THE PARTY	51
Invitation	51
Entering the Party: partisan uses	55
Strategy	56
Presence to the exceptional situation	57
Political violence	58
Partisan thought	60
Partisan ethics	61
Art of discussion	63
Propaganda	64
Distribution of forces	65
Material plane	67
4 INSURRECTION AND THE DECIVILISED CAMP	70
The decivilised we	70
Victory	73
The epoch	76
Insurrection: revolutionary use of the event	79
On insurrectional uses	82
The riot	82
Full stop	84
HQ	85
Decision	86
Insurgent we	88
Watchword	90
Ordinary destitution	92
Conclusion	96
Ontological Preface	97

www.604.cafe