

Radical Scavengers Come Out of the Woodwork

2014

[ed. – This text concerns the aftermath of police killing Rémi Fraisse in 2014, a young fighter fatally struck with a concussion grenade during the 26th October assault on the police-defended construction site of a much-protested dam destroying woods and wetlands (a Z.A.D., or zone to be defended, had been raised in the area of Testet by opponents). Many cities in France exploded in revolt, while the French embassy in London and consulate in Barcelona were both splattered with red paint, construction machinery in a gentrifying part of Brussels burned, etc. Amidst the riotous demonstrations and night-time attacks, the media as ever were keen to find 'spokespersons' who they could bring into the spectacle of representation and dialogue, and unfortunately they found them once again in the commune of Tarnac. Tarnac was the site of a police raid in 2008, and residents were accused of sabotage on the international high-speed rail network and also authorship of 'The Coming Insurrection', by the Invisible Committee. That particular text, and others by the 'Tiqqun' tendency, has seduced radicals (including some anarchists) in many places as well as being lauded by academic scavengers and the literary world, as a 'cultural' appropriation and mystification of more readily-understandable insurrectionary and anarchic tendencies. It's not the place to critique the ideas and (truthfully, rather few) proposals of the Invisible Committee here, but the following text tackles how they carry out their ideas of 'building power' in practice; by collaboration with the media.]

"Our strength won't come from our naming of the enemy, but from the effort made to enter one another's geography."

Comité invisible, To Our Friends

Mathieu Burnel, co-accused in the case of Tarnac, chattered in good company Friday, October 31, on the Tonight Or Never show, broadcast by the official spokesman of state terrorism, Channel France 2. At a time when clashes occur daily in cities for almost a week following the police killing of a protester in the fight against the Sivens dam, an early dialogue between "*a representative of the radicals*" and representatives of power could finally be established. **Blessed, therefore, are all those citizens who scrupulously continue to pay their mite to the public service to fulfill its sacred duty to maintain order (including dialogue between dominated and dominant) when times are grim. For without representatives, *no more represented*, and therefore, hello anarchy!** To stock the shelves of supermarket with cathode opinions, Mathieu Burnel used his best round of effects to rival Juliette Meadel (national secretary of industrial policy for the Socialist Party), Corinne Lepage (European delegate of MoDem [*Democratic Movement*]), and Pascal Bruckner (reactionary philosopher).

On the theme “Ecology, a new battlefield?”, he once again revealed to the blind the practical consequences of the words “grow our power” or “not to name the enemy but compose with him [*sic*]” [ed. – *typical Invisible Committee phrases*]. Facing potentially uncontrollable situations, power regularly needs interlocutors, including virulent ones, as we are reminded, in another style and time, by Daniel Cohn-Bendit’s apparition at ORTF [*French state radio and TV*] on May 16th 1968, after the general strike début [ed. – *Cohn-Bendit was a self-appointed ‘student leader’ during the May ’68 revolt in France; now a member of the European Parliament*]. And if, as remarked an old bearded man [ed. – *Karl Marx*] dear to the authoritarians [ed. – *and to the Invisible Committee*], history often serves its old meals up again, this time as farce, it is also because **power has only the buffoons it deserves**. October 2014 is obviously not in May 1968 (“*Fuck May 68, Fight now!*” said a tag on the walls of Athens in 2009), but not everyone has the lucidity to wait until after the uprising to rush to TV shows and try to take the lead. Unless the insurrection is already there, of course!

Speaking of course for all and for everyone – as “*our generation*”, Rémi Fraisse (who would have been of “*those people who try to take minimally seriously the issue of their existence*”) or “*today’s youth*” – the cheap opportunists now claim to embody this rage of a thousand faces. After radio and TV appearances with his colleagues Benjamin Rosoux (Municipal Councillor of Tarnac since March 2014) or Julien Coupat (who received nine journalists for four hours in an apartment to be interviewed in November 2012), he wasn’t there this time to defend himself from police accusations, but to tout his wares about an “insurrection that came” [ed. – *reference to the Invisible Committee’s ‘The Coming Insurrection’*]!

*“The idea of using, to the advantage of the revolutionary, media niches that authority itself granted them is not only illusory. It is downright dangerous. Their presence on the sets is not enough to crack the straitjacket of ideology in the heads of spectators. Confusing **expressive power** and **transformative power**, and believing that the sense of what we express by the word, by the pen, by the image, etc. is given a priori, without having to worry about who has the power to do so; believing that there is content that may exist in various forms without being affected; old illusions of the reified world where activities appear as things detached from society by nature. But no more than other forms of expression is the subversive form of language the guarantee of the incorruptibility of meaning. It is not immune against the dangers of communication. Expressing it on the lands of domination is enough to erode its significance or even to reverse it.”*

The Mirror of Illusions, Notes of *La Bonne Descente* discussion (Paris), 1996

Intervening in the media with the old Leninist argument (about parliament) to use it as a platform, not only reinforces the legitimacy of these instruments of domination, but also endorse the democratic game of dialogue rather than confrontation. “**You do not argue with the enemy, you battle**” is certainly an old saying from the revolutionary experience, but it concerns only those who really intend to remove all authority. For others – like to start with the politicians of “the movement” – it is certain that one day one may use tact, manage sensibilities and work strange “alliances”, “composing with what is where it is”, meaning to adapt to the existing order rather than subvert it. To accept the rules of the game rather than blow up the game itself. We have seen the resurgence of this dynamic in recent years in Val Susa [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.1 pg70*], Valognes¹ or Notre-Dame-des-Landes [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.1 pg81*] after

¹ ed. – There in Normandy (northern France), there is resistance to passing ‘Castor’ nuclear waste trains from The Hague to be stored in Gorleben, Germany.

the clashes that pushed out the cops. **It has long been known that all politicians do not sit in Parliaments but also emerge from struggles, and the conquest of power (or hegemony) sometimes borrows byways.**

To refuse the mechanism of politics – of which recuperation and representation are full parts – is not a question of principle, it's a condition of real experimentation of autonomy and self-organisation. **Only dialog of the revolted, among themselves in a space of anti-authoritarian struggle where words and their meanings are not mutilated by means of control and consensus imposed by power, can possibly overgrow organised confusion.** It's there, away from all representation, that ideas without masters or owners that drive us will, at last, belong to all those who recognise themselves in them.

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