

# **The Veil Drops**

**– anti-extremism or counter-insurgency?**

some anti-authoritarian barbarians already inside the walls

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*“The planning of psychological operations has to understand:*

*a) That successful counter-insurgency operations are based on the involvement and identification of the population with the plans and operations of the government.*

*b) That the population acts on the basis of what they believe – without consideration of the facts.*

*c) That the action of the population in support of the government will only emerge, if the people believe that they can reach their individual and collective objectives best through this government.”*

*– Counter-Insurgency Planning Guide, U.S. Army Special Warfare School*

*“To link the exploitability of the Third World with the stability of the western industrial nations – this is the ideal picture of a successful counter-insurgency campaign.”*

*– Jochen Hippler, Krieg im Frieden*

## **Foreword: Terror as Governance**

A nightmare stalks the streets of Old Europe, an apparition spitting death and terror into the icons of the metropolis. France, gripped in a state of emergency without end in sight, after the extension of a fundamentalist campaign which has already claimed many more lives in places like Suruç [ed. – see **Why We Are With the Fighters**], Anakara and Beirut (whose populations simply don't tally against the blessed children of the West who fill the media's quota for the rituals of televised, real-time mourning). The jingoistic chorus peaks in a crescendo, war-drums are beaten, a surge of applications for the French military, racist pogroms and one-dimensional denunciations, and an intense and hostile atmosphere on doubly-policed streets (visibly or not) weighs down on those of us sickened by the slaughters. We are summoned to a so-called 'war between civilisations', and certainly there is a power-play going on for the dominance of a God or the Nation. But it doesn't take much to see that these competitors form two sides of the same coin, and try to subjugate by the same indiscriminate means.

The public administrators of the European order are counting on the tide of fear and indignation to wash away the blood visible on their own hands from the various fascisms they have incubated, from inflamed nationalism to religious fundamentalism. And we are told, again and again, by politicians and media pundits, while the roll-out of more background surveillance, militarisation and homogenisation of opinion already becomes banal (after all, we've been here before), that 'our' victory over this threat lies in continuing everyday life; keep shopping, keep working (or looking for work), keep partying, keep voting. It is to this daily life that the European victims of Islamist massacres are portrayed as having been martyred; appropriated even in death for the needs of capitalist modernity. This same daily life is meanwhile further invaded and colonised by the same security state which claims to defend it.

*“No barbarians will stop us from living how we decide to live,”* declares the French President, but who could be said to have decided what, and for who? The irony of this statement, additionally with such a loaded term used in the pejorative<sup>1</sup>, isn't lost when deployed against the children of North African migrants in a country whose so-called 'standard of living' is and has been raised from the enlistment of those who never chose. Evidently, the “we” in the President's

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'barbarian' finds its Old French root in Barbary (former European name for North Africa), the land of the Berbers, and 'foreigners' whose speech supposedly sounded like “bar-bar” to European ears with a latent threat of foreign invasion.

speech reflects the accelerating polarisation they would like to impose on our times: with “us”, or with the terrorists. We might remember that killing isn’t the only way either of the camps seek to attain or maintain control – most important to these authoritarians is the enforcement of *a certain way of life* while repressing others. The creation of a herd, which – aside from the black sheep and sacrificial lambs – the shepherd must preserve from those who would destroy what they cannot themselves manage to possess.

Lawyers of the prevailing order call for responses comparable with the internment of Algerian decolonisation militants in the mid-twentieth century and the suppression of Irish nationalists by the British State. Indeed the state of emergency legislation in force in France, with all its prohibitions and restrictions, was created and used first during the war against Algeria (which saw the other significant massacre in Paris since World War II<sup>2</sup>), then again during nation-wide 2005 rioting emanating from the suburb housing estates which constitute some of the nation’s ongoing (and in this case internal) colonies. But if in these prior (and, clearly, not quite extinguished) rebellions we caught many glimpses of our own desires reflected, today we must admit that the forces taking centre-stage show no such liberatory potential (whatever clumsy ‘anti-imperialist’ lens you look through), but rather a contemptible practice which perfectly mirrors the dissociated society which produces it even in an attempt to wield religion as a weapon against that order. In the face of war that aims at the oppressed or indiscriminately, we concur with some comrades within nearby Belgium who called to ‘break ranks’ in the midst of the nationalist frenzy: *“The days when European States could go to war anywhere in the world, striking blows, occupying, opening up new markets, wildly exploiting and plundering resources while preserving their own territories from acts of war (if perhaps not exactly the same, at least in the same logic) seem to be over. The war has struck right in the heart of the French capital, and will not go quietly. And the logic of war advocates striking into the crowd. As all States have done since the beginning of their existence, against their own subjects and those of other States. As all those aspiring to conquer power and impose their domination have done and continue to do. Be they Islamic or Republican, democratic or dictatorial.*

*[...] Need we remember where the phosphorus bombs that burned Fallujah were produced, who delivered computer technologies to the secret services of the regimes of Assad, of Sisi<sup>3</sup>, who trained the pilots that bombed Gaza? Need we remember how cobalt and silicon are extracted from the depths of Africa for technological gadgets, how all the consumer goods found on the shelves of supermarkets and shops are produced? Need we remember how civilized capitalism manages its hundreds of labour camps, from Bangladesh to Mexico? Where the sinister shadows of the drones that strike around the world come from? How and in the name of what thousands of people have been drowning in the Mediterranean for years now? So, say it, who is responsible?*

*But if our rebel eyes rightly look up to find the answer, they should also look within ourselves. For in the time to come, and already in the times that are and were, by our passivity we are complicit in*

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<sup>2</sup> “17 October 1961. French police attack a demonstration of Algerian immigrants and kill perhaps 200 (the numbers have never been confirmed), dozens are beaten, thrown off bridges and drowned in the Seine, others shot by impromptu firing squads in the police station courtyards” (All States are Murder Cults).

<sup>3</sup> For example, the FinSpy program, which Egyptian insurgents reported finding upon storming the State security agency during the 2011 revolution. There are 32 countries suspected of using the program, made by Britain’s espionage and surveillance outfit Gamma International Ltd. and costing €3 million, and networks between States are generated, sharing data. A so-called ‘Trojan’ file (which may have the appearance of a security update or browser plug-in), once downloaded to a computer or phone, collects information such as conversations, text, webcam footage, downloads, posts etc., for remote accessing by the operator.

*our own oppression. And this passivity is not merely the inaction of the body, it is also the brutalization project programmed for decades by the power that deprived us of the tools to understand reality, to understand our rage. That deprived us of any sensitivity other than that required for the needs of the moment, of any capacity to dream. It was from there, this program of human reduction, that today those who decide to commit massacres come from, to participate in the power game, to kill themselves too. It would be foolish to have believed that their slaughter would target the powerful and their structures. Modern warfare in a world bloated with technology and remote massacres no longer allows such subtleties, if such subtleties could ever have existed in the minds of men [sic] at war.”*

Let's not be redundant: it seems like we need to equip ourselves with better analyses than those which only respond to events such as the Paris massacre with a mechanical script that refuses to take the religious character of such events seriously. Modern capitalism, statescraft and their geopolitical strategies co-exist with plenty of older, more millenarian alienations (although updated for the modern era), which, though sometimes wielded by the former, are not reducible to them. To shy from a critique that includes, in this case, Islam, makes us politicians (even if sometimes only of identity), complacent in the suppression of those who – to use the words of a Kyokai in Paris – adopt “attitudes of individual revolt against the family, the traditions and pressures of all sorts (direct and indirect) suffered by individuals from a Muslim culture within their homes and their “community” (as in all homes inspired by religion, in most other homes in different ways, and within what is generally called “communities”).”

Yet our focus for this text will be something different; it will be on the misconception we perceive that frames these spectacular outbreaks of repression which follow from such atrocities as merely reactive (rather than an intensification of a project already afoot in 'peacetime'). It will attempt to decode the many battlefields which play out daily over resources, obedience and legitimacy. In this world founded on tortures religious, colonial<sup>4</sup> and psychological<sup>5</sup>, it will examine the more pervasive terrorisation currently underlying them: and, because it isn't our business to play the victim, some prospects of rebellion also (even if they have yet to prove their efficacy).

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<sup>4</sup> “I encourage those citizens of the US who recoil at the atrocities ISIS inflicts upon those they consider ‘infidels’ or enemies of their way of life to contemplate the following seldom-recounted piece of American history: “In 1813 several hundred Cherokees enlisted under the command of a bush lawyer turned general, Andrew Jackson. Old Hickory, as he became known for his intractable personality, was forty-six, gaunt, shrewd, violent, one arm crippled by dueling wounds – the latest from a duel with his own brother. Of Carolina frontier stock, he hated Indians but was more than willing to employ them as high-grade cannon fodder. His Creek War, hailed by Jackson as a victory for civilization, was notorious for the savagery of white troops under his command. They skinned dead Creeks for belt leather; and Davy Crockett, who was there, told how a platoon set fire to a house with “forty-six warriors in it” and afterward ate potatoes from the cellar basted in human fat.” (Ronald Wright, *Stolen Continents: The Americas Through Indian Eyes Since 1492*) We now pay homage to Old Hickory, who later became the seventh president of the United States, by printing his likeness on our currency. Readers from fellow civilized nations: feel free to supply your own favorite “victory for civilization” from your homeland’s illustrious history, and we’ll show those jihadis how truly civilized people behave” (*Wilderness Before the Dawn*).

<sup>5</sup> As an adjunct to their daily pathologising and narcotising, the American Psychological Association was exposed as collaborating with the U.S. regime to justify its ‘Enhanced Interrogation’ program following the disclosure of prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib since the ‘00s, by shooting down legal troubles threatening senior intelligence officials. Psychologists directly supervised simulated drownings (‘water-boarding’) of detainees to signal when they deemed them sufficiently broken-down to continue the questioning.

## The Terror of Borders

*“[M]igration is contained, managed and restricted by a top-down process of trans-nationalization. And with an increase in mobility and migration, irregular migration is being perceived as a threat to the world-order and to the integrity of the nation state. [N]ew borders are erected where one is “processed,” “profiled,” “sorted,” “filtered,” “contained,” or “rejected”. The border is a site of unequal power relations where a selection is made between the useful and unwanted in relation to market demands.” – Migration, Borders & Climate Change*

There are currently more people on the move around the world than ever before, both across borders and within them. Forced off their lands and into burgeoning cities (a song as old as civilisation), rounded up and herded into the zones for the maximum economic exploitation on which the world market rests, or fleeing from the global elite’s ‘structural adjustment’ programs, when not from outright slaughters; the occupied and contested territories of Afghanistan and Palestine account for the largest migrant populations.

The European Union’s thirty-year project of Shengen<sup>6</sup> is rescinded in some parts as the specific mode for managing and regulating via transmigration shifts, walls go up and guards flood areas. Borders alleged to have disappeared materialise once more overnight. The proxy wars that Western nations spent billions creating and equipping arrives on ‘our’ shores; not just as marauding reprisals, but as a hunted humanity trapped between fundamentalisms to the East and nationalists to the West, and/or chasing economic crumbs of the looted ‘resources’ from their country of origin. And they are confronted with barbed wire and steel, internment camps and troops of the very countries which have exploited, destabilised and bombarded theirs.

Institutional powers know that leaning on the ‘immigration paranoia’ they have inculcated in European societies is a key division between the exploited, leading to a strengthening of the perceived need for the State (even when its ‘failure’ is scandalised). They terrify the populace with the spectre of ‘migrant crime’, while Britain has pledged £25 million to its former island slave colony of Jamaica from its international aid budget for the construction of a new modern prison that they can deport inmates to; forming another part of the (rebranded) global trade in human beings. Neatly, this would ease pressure on the U.K. prison system and make space for more bodies in cells, more fodder for the prison-industrial complex and its profiteers, State or private. Meanwhile the check-points and searches, the latest monitoring satellites and scanners, the warships and drones patrolling the Mediterranean, all portend a rising capacity for generalised social control, for which the migrants are a convenient trial population (while themselves innovating and pioneering all kinds of evasion strategies in tandem, which we would do well to study).

Tensions have run high, with a series of hunger-strikes and/or yard occupation at the majority of the U.K. migration prisons in our corner of the world alone within the last year, from Dover to Dungavel. Sporadic street fights continue near the border-point in Calais, like elsewhere, as many attempt to breach police cordons to reach British soil, while fire generated by other enemies of the border regime and its world spreads south to light up the property of its collaborators such as GDF Suez in Marseille for their hand in the detention centres, or of the police stationed at the tri-point of the Swiss-German-French frontiers in Basel. Fences are cut or torn down along

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<sup>6</sup> The Shengen Area comprises 26 European countries which agreed to both eliminate border controls with other Shengen members and to strengthen border controls with non-member States.

the re-fortified 'Balkan Route'. Small but steady glimpses, as yet, of a flipside to the transnational system at war to impose a nationalist and neo-colonial ordering on life, that prefers a migrant drowned than non-registered or imprisoned rather than 'smuggled', that seeks to create a terrified and controllable underclass workforce disciplined by fear, racism, precarity and the whims of immigration bureaucrats and police.

## The Terror of Climate Security

*“Political systems, willing to place one group of people above another, are already responding to the potential impact of climate change. With the “war on terror,” security politics and nationalism flourished globally; climate change is being used to give further legitimacy to the concepts of “national preservation” and “homeland security.” So the Indian state is currently building a perimeter fence around its entire border with Bangladesh, a country more at risk than almost any other from the devastating consequences of rising sea levels. The fence has been explicitly talked about as a barrier to migration. If sea levels rise and Bangladeshi people are driven from their homes, they will now find themselves trapped inside this ring.”*

– *Climate Change is not an Environmental Issue*

A little-emphasised component of the desperate scenes at the borders and internment camps is the impact of ongoing resource colonialism, such as Eritreans – supposedly the third most common nationality to be crossing the Mediterranean – whose lands are devastated by firms like Canada's Nevsun Resources (operating one of the largest open-pit copper mines in the world, constructed by enslaved army conscripts) and Sunridge Gold Corp., to supply the technological-industrial behemoth. Soon this may pale in comparison to what the unfolding impacts of industrially-generated climate change could bring – indeed, from the South Pacific to Alaska, climate refugees are already on the move. The insanity created by globalised agribusiness has led to situations such as a large part of the world's rice coming from the one Mekong basin in Vietnam – now at risk from inundation, risking a knock-on tide of forced migration that would dwarf the Syrian exodus through people fleeing shortages from Dhaka, Jakarta and beyond. With climatic shifts emerging convulsively (discernible to the 'scientifically'-untrained of us through a myriad of little signals, as we see an annual plant appear early here, migratory birds appear later – or not at all – there, etc.), and with 2015 the hottest year in recorded history, by some estimates nearly ten percent of the Earth's human population are at direct risk of consequent displacement.

In an increasingly unstable world, discourse is regulated as well as movement. Even before the sensationalised Islamist attacks there, France contradicted Schengen practice by enforcing border controls before the December circus of the COP21 (the United Nation's twenty-first annual climate summit), denying entry for some and also refusing to grant visas for known dissidents from outside the European Union. It was clear there was to be a hard-line approach to anything which might sully the summit which some of those who were then preparing for in opposition characterised as follows. *“There will be the chance to dream up new pollution quotas which the lesser polluters can sell to the biggest polluters (we all know that the atmosphere balances itself out in the end...), to develop the “green” industry, to introduce crazy scientific plans for geo-engineering (modification of the climate by chemical and/or physical processes), and even to produce new labels of green-pollution. [...] Opposing this incredible democratic parody of a world driving on four*

wheels but constantly checking its exhaust, is "civil society", the heterogeneous mass of associations and political organisations who participate in the end of the year media-political social gathering.

[...] As December draws near, as before any big international political or sporting event, they are socially cleansing the areas around the summit venue, chasing away the poor so that they don't offend the eyes of the rich and transforming the urban space into a private high-security zone. The Seine-Saint-Denis département is one of the poorest and most heavily polluted in France and it is there that COP21 will be staged, next to Le Bourget private-jet airport. Attendees will be able to fly right in to the conference site and won't have to encounter either the endless traffic jams which clog up the motorways north of Paris or the high-rise estates and factories which stretch as far as the eye can see. For miles around there will be no more squats, gypsies, immigrants or anything else typical of an area which is normally is a byword for Parisian precarity. Unfortunately there will be police violence, home evictions and raids" (What's the COP21). In the end, all demonstrations during the summit were banned.

The world of 'sustainability' as (hypothetically) touted by such summits becomes a kind of entertainment, a comic tragedy, bringing together the scientists who warn with the air of raving prophets that "the "vast majority" of known fuel reserves must be left in the ground to avert intolerable risks to future generations" with the major energy corporations who make no secret of their intent to exhaust them and find more (and subsidised by their sideline in so-called 'green' technologies'). With its schemes such as REDD+ (the UN's Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation plus "conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks"), the whole debacle is already well-known as a joke<sup>7</sup>.

It's the same quantitative and alienated logic which led the U.K. Secretary of State for the Environment to give developers the all-clear to destroy remaining ancient British woodland – just so long as they plant a hundred trees somewhere for each felled. Globally, only two really substantial tracts of forest remain intact (the Amazon and the Congo). Fragmentation (when a forest is

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<sup>7</sup> "The "mechanism" of the COP21 agreement calls for an "accelerated reduction" of carbon emissions to keep global temperature rise at 1.5 degrees. To get there, it summons a list of "shoulds" rather than "musts" with no actual "mechanism" of enforcement. [...] Relying on the good faith of some of the most heinous violators of human and ecological rights in the world sounds great when read off of an official document signed by those perpetrators, but when one steps outside into an abject police state at permanent war with its own population and countless other groups, sects, and parties, the clarity begins to fade into an overwhelming, terrifying, and stark sense of grey. [...] "The Paris accord is a trade agreement, nothing more," explained Alberto Saldamando, human rights expert and attorney. "It promises to privatize, commodify and sell forested lands as carbon offsets in fraudulent schemes such as REDD+ projects. These offset schemes provide a financial laundering mechanism for developed countries to launder their carbon pollution on the backs of the global south. Case-in-point, the United States' climate change plan includes 250 million megatons to be absorbed by oceans and forest offset markets. Essentially, those responsible for the climate crisis not only get to buy their way out of compliance but they also get to profit from it as well." [...] Among the problems with REDD++ have been the proposal to make palm oil plantations count as forests, so that companies can count as carbon credits the vast deforestation and pollution caused by the transplanting of native rainforest that have displaced Indigenous peoples and significantly imperiled the existence of orangutan and other endangered species in places like Borneo. [...] Rather than acknowledging the underlying bases for the climate crisis embedded within the processes of resource extraction, land seizures, monocultures, and industrial production operating through Schumpeterian "creative destruction" and planned obsolescence, returning to the land and air the waste and detritus of useless and artificial life, the agreement acts as though a technocratic approach of all world leaders can coordinate on a massive scale a top-down solution to what is really a problem grounded in everyday life. The problem of mass-scale animal agriculture is overlooked, dams and hydroelectric, mining and rare earths, endangered species, plastics in the ocean are overlooked, nuclear pollution is overlooked – all in the teeth of a militarized police state that supports global warfare on a scale that menaces the entire planet" (Grey Not Green: Technocratic Climate Agreement and Police State Terror<em></em>).



shot through and diced up by roads, suburban settlements, agriculture, etc.), by a study's average, is thought to cause more than half of the resident species to die out in just twenty years. Seventy percent of forest lands around the world are already currently within half a mile of the forest's edges. Since the 1970s alone, half of all known ocean life has been wiped out; by mid-century we are on course for more plastic waste in the sea than fish. The advanced stage of the biodiversity crisis may be obvious to those whose lives are filled with conscious intimacy as people of the land, but it is dangerously less so in the gray cocoon-like metropolis. Millions of humans are spending our lives in industrialised environments and cityscapes, evermore logistically and sensorily entwined with this civilisation. More than five thousand years since Enlil in 'the Epic of Gilgamesh' already bemoaned "*the uproar of mankind*", one more sensual mode for engagement with a more-than-human world is gravely diminished. A decade-long effort to collect audio data in one of the quietest places left on Earth (by the Alaskan mountain the Athabaskans call Denali, "*the great one*") found some daily averages of motorised land- or sky-traffic sound every seventeen minutes. The creeping din is becoming more recognised as imperiling wild habitats "*as surely as a bulldozer or oil spill*"<sup>8</sup>. Yet we are the generations who have grown up accustomed to constant auditory intrusions, numbed by the hum of the urban environment.

While we can list these horrors and more, with the hope to argue that what we seek isn't this life just 'more sustainable', but a life that feels worth living, the spectre of the Ecological State of Emergency is also deployed by our enemies. After so many crises, scandals, disturbances, etc., the advent of catastrophic climate change offers the State and Capital a chance to consolidate power, by claiming to be the only ones capable of addressing it. Jaime Semprun and René Riesel have commented that "*the current mobilisation to "save the planet" [...] has allowed the manufacture of consensus to concede the title of "ecological consciousness raising" resulting from its own operations, to the docile readiness to repeat its slogans and submit to its requirements and prescriptions. It celebrates the birth of the re-educated consumer, the eco-citizen, etc. [...] After all, mass society (that is, those who have been integrally formed by it, whatever their illusions in this respect may be) never talks about the problems it claims to "manage" except in terms that make its perpetuation a sine qua non. Thus, while the collapse is underway, it can only try to postpone for as long as possible the dislocation of the ensemble of desperation and madness that this society has become; it can conceive of no other way to do this, whatever anyone may say, than by reinforcing all means of coercion and making individuals submit more completely to the collectivity [while] repressing the intuition of the serious conflict that will inevitably be entailed by an attempt to destroy or even to seriously consider destroying the totalitarian society, that is, the technological macrosystem to which human society has been reduced.*"

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<sup>8</sup> "Noise can mask mating calls, cause stress and prevent animals from hearing alarms, the stirrings of prey and other useful survival cues. And as climate change prompts a shift in creatures' migration schedules, circadian rhythms and preferred habitats – reshuffling the where and when of their calls – soundscapes are altered, too. [...] Sightless, earless and adrift in the open ocean, coral larvae seek to settle on tropical reefs by swimming toward the throbs of muttering fish and snapping-shrimp claws. Eurasian reed warblers en route to southern Africa at night flutter blind over pine forests, sand dunes and the Baltic Sea until, hundreds of feet below, the cheeping of other warblers signals the presence of sustaining wetlands. If those aural cues disappear, the species that heed them may be floating and flying without a compass. [...] Porpoises and whales have beached themselves fleeing the high-pitched shrieks of U.S. Navy sonar, researchers believe; they also blame the low-frequency booms ships use to search for oil and gas for fatally ripping through the organs that cephalopods like squid use to detect vibrations. [...] Subjected to constant mechanical whirring, certain primates, bats, whales, squirrels and frogs all change their cries. Many other animals, it seems, lack the physical equipment to adapt, and perish or move away" <em>(Whisper of the Wild)</em>.

Hence, the powers that be can terrify the more attentive members of the public with images of the winter wildfires in the Arctic and so on, to blackmail us into accepting the (rebranded) advances of the industrial system, from 'green technologies' to genetic engineering<sup>9</sup>. As for geo-engineering (a showpiece topic at COP21), one of the most seriously discussed proposals at the moment is to spray sulfuric acid into the upper atmosphere, forming tiny particles in clouds to block incoming solar radiation, therefore supposedly cooling the planet. (In effect, the scientists would be installing a radiative shield between Earth and the sun, one which could be adjusted by those who control it to regulate the temperate of the planet.) While doing nothing to help acidification of the oceans or risings carbon concentrations in the atmosphere (and actually expected to slow recovery of the hole in the ozone layer), 'sulphate aerosol spraying' is very popular with the same fossil fuel corporations who have for years been the most strenuous deniers of climate change; having done an about-face, they now say that emission-reduction is unrealistic or politically-impossible, so geo-engineering is that remains (now they are in the big business of its research and future deployment). In this way, instead of climate change jeopardising the system, climate engineering represents its triumph. The military would play a dominant role in geo-engineering due to the high chance of conflict stemming from its uneven results; some studies suggest sulphate aerosol spraying would disrupt the Indian monsoon and hence food supplies for a billion humans. Simultaneously, in summer 2015, the U.S. military conducted massive 'Northern Edge' war-games in the Gulf of Alaska, following on from a Navy symposium called 'Naval Operations in an Ice-Free Arctic': implicitly anticipating climate wars in the melting wars of the north, already contributing to the death-knell ecologically and culturally in the area<sup>10</sup>.

Also in the name of 'climate security', land and food can be appropriated from the Global South to become biofuel for cars and planes in the North, while when required for those eco-gadgets, even notorious mining projects can get rebranded as 'green' by the conceptual acrobatics of a world trying to outrun its own deserts of concrete (guided by a culture which churns out 7.5 billion cubic metres of the above every year). Even more naked in its imperial ambition, global capital runs rampant in the so-called 'developing' countries, bringing death, dispossession and disease<sup>11</sup>. Securing agricultural production zones, or those for 'conservation' (even when merely a means to fill a 'carbon sequestration' quota), drives international phases of 'green-grabbing'

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<sup>9</sup> As an example outside the well-known sphere of modified crops, the U.K. firm Oxitec, based in Oxford, breed mosquitoes engineered so their offspring die before adulthood, so as to cause a population crash then released to breed with wild mosquitoes. This was explicitly sold as a measure to tackle dengue fever and other viruses exacerbated by global warming and the spread of urban environments around the world. Oxitec plan to expand the treatment to other insects persecuted by the agricultural sector in Europe and the U.S., and its founder was shortlisted for the European Inventor Award.

<sup>10</sup> Held in a so-called 'marine protected area', Northern Edge defiled some of the purest and most nutrient-rich waters on Earth. Eskimo, Eyak, Athabaskan, Tlingit, Sun'aq, Aleut and other indigenous peoples rely on the area for nutritive, cultural and spiritual sustenance, and it is critical habitat for all Alaskan wild salmon and hundreds of other species including greatly endangered North Pacific right whales. The bombardment (tens of thousands of pounds of toxic munitions, and high-intensity sonar lethal to sealife) came during the key breeding and migratory period of the region, and most of the chemicals released are also present in the Gulf of Mexico dead-zone from BP's 2010 oil release atrocity [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.1 pg28*].

<sup>11</sup> The ebola outbreak in West Africa has provisionally been linked at least in part to expanding palm oil plantations of the likes of Sime Darby (Malaysia), Equatorial Palm Oil (U.K.), Golden Veroleum (Indonesia) etc., with police eviction of indigenous peoples in Guinea to increase milling capacity. During the ensuing deforestation (and that which came before), fruit bats carrying the virus are forced from their habitat and into higher contact with humans, their gardens and domesticated animals, disturbing previous local practices which may have acted as a barrier to its spread.

as peoples such as forest-dwellers, their livelihood-dependent necessity to exist in those specific bioregions recognised either weakly or not at all by the governing legal institutions, are policed, evicted, displaced. Here is when, even where dramatic effects of climatic shifts are not yet present, the terrorism of climate security is on a less existential level. James Fairhead and Alexander Dunlap explicitly linked schemes including REDD+ with new high- or low-intensity warzones, in their study debunking the portrayal of climate conflict as inevitable and ecologically-driven alone, rather than as intensified or even created by the flailings of an imperiled industrial capitalist order which has never baulked at the vilest means to secure a profit margin. They emphasise that “*enclosure, territorialisation, and market strategies of accumulation by dispossession are principal drivers of climate related conflict. [T]his continuum has largely been influenced by political and economic conflict for the control of natural resources – land and people – that has necessitated the creation of centralised political structures, the modernisation and disciplining of people into dependence on an industrial economy that strips, poisons, and degrades the natural environment to the point of climate, soil (desertification), and biodiversity crises.*”<sup>12</sup>

The authors labelled this as the militarisation and marketisation of ‘nature’, whereby supposedly-‘environmental’ goals such as preserving a certain area’s ‘biodiversity’ (at its most static notion) are deployed primarily as a way of stabilising global powers and financial systems, often meaning “*initial aspirations of ‘selling nature to save it’ cede to the ‘saving of nature to trade it’*”. They show this to be “*inherently antagonistic to the natural environment and land-based people – making conflict and pacification in some form almost inevitable*” in military or neo-colonial forms. All armies (and hence, all governments) understand the State’s need to control ‘resources’ better than most environmentalists understand the above, and the focus on these newly-enclosed ones doesn’t come at the expense of neglecting the more traditional supply-based interventions – often couched in ‘anti-terror’ rhetoric. See the renewed fighting for U.S. control over the Iraqi oil fields against the Islamist insurgents, French deployments to secure the uranium mines of Mali, Italian preparations to defend its energy infrastructure in its old colony Libya, or the Israeli Defence Minister’s admission that the push to ‘uproot Hamas’ (via destroying that Palestinian administration’s support base through “*dahiya doctrine*” targeting of civilian infrastructure) is also closely tied in with dominating Gaza’s gas reserves. We are reminded that, as this one aspect among others shows, the ‘war between civilisations’ is nothing but the war of civilisation, its rapacious appetites and armed divisions.

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<sup>12</sup> “*Climate change markets have helped rebrand and make politically feasible old and new forms of ongoing conflicts over conservation, REDD+, industrial tree plantations (ITP), and a variety of resource extraction projects. ‘Climate Security’ concerns are popularly envisaged as mitigating conflict, but in the ways we have outlined, end up generating it, through the political and economic structures they enlist[...]*” <em>Agrawal and Redford’s (2009) estimation of conservation-induced displacement in the range of 10–20 million in a span of twenty years does not take into account other climate change reinforced sustainable development projects – ‘green grabbing’ – that have been on the rise and are noted as a significant contributor to land acquisition and conflict. The popularised concern that climate change will induce and intensify conflict – climate-conflict nexus – can be regarded as solidifying a self-fulfilling prophecy that reinforces political and economic relationships around land control, which continues the industrial processes that ferment conflict and market processes dependent on usurpation of the natural environment. These measures are reinforcing ecological crises as they give the impression of ‘win-win’ solutions using the market and ‘saving’ the environment as their justification.”

## The Terror of 'Crisis'

*"[I]t is undeniable that the strong convulsions to which the whole social order is prey at the start of this third millennium have extinguished the smug smile of many subversives in front of those who dare to call for insurrection here and now. Yesterday's skeptics are transformed into today's enthusiasts to the point of making it become a downright international best-seller on the editorial, media, and militant marketplace [ed. – see **Radical Scavengers Come Out of the Woodwork**]. The reason is easy to understand: the social peace that accompanied the 1980s and 1990s, in its most inflated and complacent aspects, is terminated. The virtual wealth is not able to compensate for the real poverty: the supermarket shelves may even gleam with goods, but their consumption is no longer accessible to those who find themselves forced to tighten their belts; or, almost everyone. Today voluntary servitude is still certainly majoritarian, solidly majoritarian, but it has lost its air of stupid innocence. Discontent, malaise, and indignation spread everywhere in an unstoppable way, causing worry, panic, but also some hope for a counter-charge. These feelings of frustration will get pacified in a new institutional social cohesion; or, in the face of the relentless succession of "political scandals", "financial crises", "ecological catastrophes", "religious wars"... will they finally provoke a generalised hostility?"*

– afterword to *At Daggers Drawn*

Once, the children of the 20th century West were assured that a life spent on their knees (before teachers, bosses, lecturers, experts, union officials, politicians) would at least guarantee a more-or-less quiet, more-or-less 'peaceful' survival. To be sure, this was the often-false promise of a society structured to the most basic level on exploitation, but for at least many of the baby-boomers it made good on the once-utopian offer of one's own car, suburban home, computer. However, despite the escalating claims of technological-industrial culture (for an immanent life of endless peace, replete with one's own household artificial intelligence, pollution-free air and food, or should that fail even a new home on another planet; offers which have hung empty since at least the '80s), today there is little comfort in such an illusion. The technological trinkets that the capitalists dangle before the masses may play their role in distraction and pacification (arguably more so than the racket of expressedly-political ideologies which they seem to be replacing as the frontier of 'progress'), but it's not enough to entirely dull the pain from a profound and all-encompassing restructuring of consumer democracy – the oft-lamented 'crisis'.

In Europe, the social democratic model of calculated concessions to placate the populace is whisked away piecemeal, replaced with even more debt-slavery and anti-depressants. If in the past the governing systems saw fit to afford welfare its place to serve as an example of a modern civil society, perhaps a fitting image to discipline the collective psyche of the renewedly-austere classes would be the 2015 coordinated dawn raids in Croydon, London, against suspected 'benefit cheats' – featuring police in riot gear and balaclavas. Lay-offs, pension scandals, service cuts become the daily fare. Commerical centres and banks get super-secured against theft. Energy corporations in the U.K. now send revenue-protection lackeys in stab-proof vests to force the installation of pre-payment meters in some homes, as the line between cops of the State and those who police our daily lives in other ways further blurs. The security and defence markets are in boom, with huge investments in public and private research into methods of control and imprisonment.

Meanwhile we are told by economists and politicians that we're 'all in this together', and even if very few people might actually take them for their word, it still seems that 'crisis' (or recovery

from it) is the dominant way of understanding these conditions; albeit increasingly popular to blame a cartel of 'corrupt' bankers, still essentially framed as a case of foolish speculation and mismanagement. Yet when training the notorious 'Chicago Boys' elite of neo-liberal economics, Milton Friedman declared that "[i]f you want to force a change, set off a crisis." And in the sphere of governance, the crowd of daily global alarms, scandals and precarity which accompany this round of capitalist restructuring (again, to call it what it is) serves to render an image of a world unintelligible to the majority, and hence in need of the guiding hand of the authorities. Rage and hostility is vented into bigoted avenues (with the notion of a reduction in prosperity handily linked to hatred for those who are deemed less worthy, and the reinforcement of ideologies of nation, race, gender roles, 'deserving/undeserving poor', etc.), through the many competitions and divisions this order subjects us to.

With citizens of the Global North increasingly atomised, the state of crisis is often also played out on the 'internal' or affective field of people more-or-less unable to name the source of their malaise. Some aspects of this rife condition are commented on in the text 'We Are All Very Anxious'. ***Each phase [of capitalism] blames the system's victims for the suffering that the system causes. And it portrays a fundamental part of its functional logic as a contingent and localised problem. [...] All forms of intensity, self-expression, emotional connection, immediacy, and enjoyment are now laced with anxiety. It has become the linchpin of subordination.***

*One major part of the social underpinning of anxiety is the multi-faceted omnipresent web of surveillance. The NSA, CCTV, performance management reviews, the Job Centre, the privileges system in the prisons, the constant examination and classification of the youngest schoolchildren. But this obvious web is only the outer carapace. We need to think about the ways in which a neoliberal idea of success inculcates these surveillance mechanisms inside the subjectivities and life-stories of most of the population.*

*We need to think about how people's deliberate and ostensibly voluntary self-exposure, through social media, visible consumption and choice of positions within the field of opinions, also assumes a performance in the field of the perpetual gaze of virtual others. We need to think about the ways in which this gaze inflects how we find, measure and know one another, as co-actors in an infinitely watched perpetual performance. Our success in this performance in turn affects everything from our ability to access human warmth to our ability to access means of subsistence, not just in the form of the wage but also in the form of credit. Outsides to the field of mediatised surveillance are increasingly closed off, as public space is bureaucratised and privatised, and a widening range of human activity is criminalised on the grounds of risk, security, nuisance, quality of life, or anti-social behaviour.*

*In this increasingly securitised and visible field, we are commanded to communicate. The incommunicable is excluded. Since everyone is disposable, the system holds the threat of forcibly delinking anyone at any time, in a context where alternatives are foreclosed in advance, so that forcible delinking entails desocialisation – leading to an absurd non-choice between desocialised inclusion and desocialised exclusion. This threat is manifested in small ways in today's disciplinary practices – from "time-outs" and Internet bans, to firings and benefit sanctions – culminating in the draconian forms of solitary confinement found in prisons.*

*[...] Anxiety is personalised in a number of ways – from New Right discourses blaming the poor for poverty, to contemporary therapies which treat anxiety as a neurological imbalance or a dysfunctional thinking style. A hundred varieties of "management" discourse – time management, anger management, parental management, self-branding, gamification – offer anxious subjects an*

*illusion of control in return for ever-greater conformity to the capitalist model of subjectivity. And many more discourses of scapegoating and criminalisation treat precarity as a matter of personal deviance, irresponsibility, or pathological self-exclusion.”*

While those on the lower social rungs grasp for the means of survival and grapple with such affective tortures, those on the top (or who guard them, want to be them, etc.) prepare for the feared social explosion. At the 2015 convention of the World Economic Forum [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.1 pg75**] in Davos, Switzerland, Robert Johnson admitted that he knew “[other] hedge fund managers all over the world who are buying airstrips and farms in places like New Zealand because they think they need a getaway,” with spiraling global disparity as 62 individuals are said to hold means equivalent to that of three-and-a-half billion others. In that same country this September, the Swiss military trained (although not without hindrance<sup>13</sup>) for a ‘threat scenario’ as follows: *“In a fictional Europe of the future, with new countries and borders, there is an economic crisis. The following consequences also have an impact on Switzerland: supply shortages, a black market, and criminal organizations. Big oil, gas and grain stocks are the target of sabotage and looting. Moreover, ethnic tensions lead to larger refugee flows to Switzerland.”*

In 2011, the entrance exam for the world-renowned ruling class Eton school in England required 13-year-old boys to write a Prime Ministers speech set in 2040 to justify martial law and a massacre of combative demonstrators during an oil crisis that brings rioting to the streets of London after petrol runs out. To be sure, the like is a much older necessity of the State, but it held a certain poignancy in the year of the widest actual insurrection the country had seen for decades [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.1 pg61**], with international resonances echoing back from the ashes of police, corporate and luxury vehicles in Fresno, Madrid and Morlanwelz; and just three years after the Prime Minister allegedly considered deploying the army and enforcing a curfew just as he was to announce the government’s bail-out of the banks. Indeed, as well as riotous moments in the territories which have taken the greatest of the Eurozone’s economic blows (Greece, Spain, etc.), the 2015 opening of the European Central Bank headquarters in Frankfurt was scene to extensive rioting reminiscent of the ‘anti-globalisation’ disorders of the later ‘90s and early ‘00s world economic summits. Six weeks later, fiery clashes also inaugurated the EXPO2015 convergence of green-washed scientific, political, techno-industrial and media interests in Milan, at the more prosperous end of Italy (where in preparation the president of the Lombardy region announced the eviction of over 200 occupied houses, as the city prepared to show off its luxury shop windows during the event; although these moves too met with confrontational resistance). Time will tell whether the so-called ‘crisis’ will draw out these kind of battles on a wider and more generalised level, and for what stakes.

## **The Terror of Terror**

*“In his Technological Society, ex-French Resistance fighter Jacques Ellul pointed out that for a security state to work effectively, everyone must be treated as a potential threat, the better to identify and neutralise actual threats. [A]ny resistance to this, stemming from a desire for autonomy, even pri-*

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<sup>13</sup> A demonstration in Basel, called “against militarisation, deportations, nations and borders”, attacked police outside a deportation prison with projectiles and pyrotechnics, blinding some with laser-pointers, then rampaged through the district and trashed bank ATMs, numerous border patrol and police vehicles, and a local anti-migrant newspaper office. A car of ISS (who provide facility management to prisons Europe-wide) was burned. Four cops left <em>injured.

*vacy, moves citizens into the 'threat' category and tightens the security state's intolerant definitions of 'terrorism' still further."*

– *The Perennial Wild Men*

In June 2015 the counter-terrorist operation code-named Strong Tower was unleashed on London. Armed gangs of police, intelligence officials and soldiers swept through the streets and evacuated locations at gunpoint. Six months in the planning, a thousand cops engaged across the capital over 48 hours. The operation, a training exercise – a “noisy and visible” one meant to test the decision-making and crisis-management skills of these agencies in conjunction with the fire brigade, ambulance service, various government departments, the transport and health services – was not announced as being based on any specific intelligence; but in a very real sense, the target was the whole populace. Carried out only days after an Islamist massacre aimed at Western holidaymakers in Tunisia, we could understand it as a similar strike on the battlefield of the public imaginary – simultaneously as pacification and mobilisation, as putting the nervous masses back to bed while filling their dreams with terrorist nightmares. Anti-terrorism uses the intimidation of such shows of force with the blackmail of ‘national unity’ to silence any challenge to their methods, their interests and their power, with the target far broader than the demographic nominally cited.

This way of understanding the instrumentalisation of anti-terrorism, as a technique of governance, shows us the crucial role the mass media play as the vehicle for bringing this terror into our homes and lives by the screen, spreading fear as surely (more widely if more thinly) as a car-bomb, cowing people into subscribing to an airbrushed ‘public opinion’ which only really exists through that same spectacular medium that channels it. As the authors of ‘We Are All Very Anxious’ commented, “*each new crackdown or new round of repressive laws, adds to the cumulative weight of anxiety and stress arising from general over-regulation. Real, human insecurity is channelled into fuelling securitisation. This is a vicious circle, because securitisation increases the very conditions (disposability, surveillance, intensive regulation) which cause the initial anxiety. In effect, the security of the Homeland is used as a vicarious substitute for security of the Self.*”

Across the world we are also seeing a rise in nationalist vigilantism as a measure of disciplining, from fascist paramilitaries who track anarchists and their associates in Chile<sup>14</sup> to white supremacists wounding demonstrators in Minneapolis with gunfire at a gathering after the fatal shooting of yet another black man by U.S. police. The State has seen no reason to forfeit occasional use of extra-judicial gangs (whether Loyalists in Ulster or the Saudi-backed jihadis), and sometimes feels it can afford to openly supplement their force with its own. Hence in Calais the riot police stand shoulder-to-shoulder with French fascists in combat gear as they gas and stone migrants. Having reoccupied their ancestral lands in Cauca (once leafy savannah, converted to intensive sugar monocrops since their eviction from the plains by the Colombian police in 1915), the Nasa tribal resisters have engaged in fierce battles with cops and army reinforcements. By night, the local land-owners, narco-traffickers and police form a paramilitary group that ordered its own regional curfew, promising the “*social cleansing*” of the area and eradication of the Nasa “*bandits*”, under the slogan “*United for a northern Cauca without Indians*”.

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<sup>14</sup> In October 2015 ‘Anti-Marxist Movement HUSAR’ coordinated their own intelligence-gathering with the police to raid a suspect of a recent incendiary attack on a prison guards building, also re-capturing Cristian Melinao of the Mapuche [ed. – see **The Intensification of Independence in Wallmapu**] who had escaped some time before the attack from his prison sentence for robberies to fund their ancestral struggle.

The various nationalist, terrorist, and neo-colonial fervours have brought us to the point where war, instead of each time being declared by the politicians and generals, quite simply exists as a constant (see Libya, Syria, etc.). The latest round of Western interventions have commenced with scarcely a breath of the public dissent which blew hot air against the warmongering of the '00s. An editorial from the anarchist correspondence periodical *Avalanche* noted that, in years gone by, “*a war was supported by a war mobilization and also a war economy, it required a different effort than during a period of peace. But today, the war economy is permanently running, oriented towards international trade – to supply conflicts around the world – and domestic repression. That makes it paradoxically always present but also less visible.*” Judging by the preparations of the largest terrorist alliance in the world – NATO – this is only set to expand. The ‘Trident Juncture’ exercise<sup>15</sup> held on the land, seas and skies around southern Europe in autumn of 2015 finds its place within a strategy articulated at NATO’s 2014 summit in Wales, of general rearmament and weaponry development.

It’s terror of a qualitative difference to that of villagers in Pakistan, Yemen, Afghanistan etc. who must live in fear of death raining from the sky or abuse, kidnap or execution by one armed patrol or another, but again, we can trace the contours of terrorisation as they are grafted onto our own bodies in the capitalist core countries made witness to a display of State potential. Now like always, war, coercion and terror are the bread and butter of the State; and yet to develop our understanding of the social order which confronts us, we also look to the spaces inbetween and beneath these moments of spectacularised force.

## Peace: the War of Progress

*“Politics, as a technique of internal peace and order, sought to implement the mechanism of the perfect army, of the disciplined mass, of the docile, useful troop, of the regiment in camp and in the field, on manoeuvres and on exercises.”*

– *Discipline & Punish*

The fact of the matter is, we have lived within this war for a long time. The civilised social relationships we now inhabit as if they were timeless and unassailable were established through domestication, patriarchal conquest, colonisation (internal/external), market economics and the ascendancy of the nation-state, which has always used each element of national power (whether military strength, diplomacy, economics, ideology, technology or ‘culture’) to bring a real-or-latent conflict to its advantage. Exploring the origins of resulting institutions (and reversing the proposition of 19th century strategist Carl Von Clausewitz, inspired by the military campaigns of French ruler Napoleon, that war is “*the continuation of politics by other means*”), Michel Foucault asserted that “*law is born of real battles, victories, massacres, and conquests which can be dated*

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<sup>15</sup> “*The “Trident Juncture” manoeuvres – mainly in Italy, Portugal and the Spanish State – will involve more than 36,000 troops from 30 states. They will be “the most important NATO exercise during 2015” and “the largest deployment of NATO forces since the Cold War”, according to the Spanish Defence Ministry. There is a sinister sub-text to the exercises, in which NATO says it will implement the “lessons” it learned in the war of occupation in Afghanistan. The whole thing is looking very much like a dress rehearsal for massive military intervention across the Mediterranean in northern Africa, so rich in the minerals and hydrocarbons needed to keep the industrial capitalist system churning. Although the pretext for the focus on Africa is the Islamist threat, and the war games will also send a belligerent message to Moscow, analysts think the main target of the US-led initiative is to combat Chinese influence in the continent*” (The Acorn bulletin #15).



and which have their horrific heroes; the law was born in burning towns and ravaged fields. It was born together with the famous innocents who died at break of day. [...] We could, and must, also ask ourselves if military institutions, and the practices that surround them – and in more general terms all the techniques that are used to fight a war – are, whichever way we look at them, directly or indirectly, the nucleus of political institutions.

[T]he role of political power is perpetually to use a sort of silent war to reinscribe [that relationship of force] in institutions, economic inequalities, language, and even the bodies of individuals. This is the initial meaning of our inversion of Clausewitz's aphorism – politics is the continuation of war by other means. Politics, in other words, sanctions and reproduces the disequilibrium of forces manifested in war. Inverting the proposition also means something else, namely that within this "civil peace," these political struggles, these clashes over or with power, these modifications of relations of force – the shifting balance, the reversals – in a political system, all these things must be interpreted as a continuation of war. And they are interpreted as so many episodes, fragmentations, and displacements of the war itself. We are always writing the history of the same war, even when we are writing the history of peace and its institutions."

By this definition we could see how, once the norms and values of a civil society are inscribed, every government must remain engaged in a continuous battle to maintain that legitimacy and control over its subjects. Politics and all the other tools of statescraft must standardise and codify everyday life. It is on top of this continual and sometimes masked struggle, that we encounter the concept of *peace* as it currently stands in this society.

In Europe, since the Middle Ages, peace was not understood as contradictory to war; but rather as when war was *happening*, but *elsewhere* (possibly with the spoils of that war trickling into the coffers and slave-pens 'at home'). Very quickly we can see how tied up the benefits of such a 'peace' were with what became valued as economic prosperity and 'development', maximising productivity under favourable conditions, leading into waves of European empire-building and the industrial era. Industrialism, of course, meant a major ramping up in the one-way consumption and destruction emanating from civilisations in general, and so any 'peace' within either consists of the piled corpses of untold animal, sylvan and mineral life, with evermore regimented and prescriptive roles within its human practitioners and genocide for those standing in the way.

Foucault also characterised the period through the middle ages up to the threshold of modernity as that within which the State "acquired a monopoly on war. [...] Increasingly, wars, the practices of war, and the institutions of war tended to exist, so to speak, only on the frontiers, on the outer limits of the great State units[...] it tended to become the technical and professional prerogative of a carefully defined and controlled military apparatus. This led, broadly speaking, to the emergence of something that did not exist as such in the Middle Ages: the army as institution." Hence, this armed peace of the European order, which we are now told is jeopardised by barbarians at the gates, relies conceptually on the erasure of whole categories of violence – removal or domestication of species (including humans), the dictates of work to earn enough to survive, enforcing codes of law or gender roles for the reproduction of the civilised order, quashing internal rebels, etc. – as well as outright military conflict. The peace of 'progress' [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.1 pg 11**] is a continual war against the Earth and humans as part of it. Today, those in power must find innovative and adaptive techniques to keep us confined within this paradigm, and often prefers to utilise the lie of 'peace' to do so. It's this managing of bodies, opinions and 'resources' which we want to study and subvert.

## The Battle for Legitimacy

*“Thanks to capitalist globalization, all that was previously separated now interpermeates: populations, economies, conflicts. Today’s world is not so much divided into rival nations as into concentrically circled gated communities; the increasingly precarious and volatile job market in the United States and France mirrors more dramatic instability in North Africa and the Middle East, which can no longer be quarantined outside the gates. For a population to be militarized in this context, it is not a question of pressing a gun into every pair of palms and setting a helmet on every head. Rather, it is a matter of inducing the population to identify with a certain kind of order, the imposition of which takes place within the national borders as much as outside them. From the speech that Bush made on September 11, it was already clear that the same National Guardsmen that were to be sent to Iraq would sooner or later be deployed in the United States as well. Bush’s task, on that day, was not to persuade his countrymen [sic] to enlist to fight overseas so much as it was to maximize the number of people who would acquiesce to the militarization of their daily lives. This declaration of war served to obscure the possibility of any other war, any other stakes for which we might fight outside the framework of defending the state against its rivals.” – CrimethInc.*

It’s almost a decade since NATO strategists published a paper in April 2007 stressing the need for the alliance to adopt a more ‘proactive’ approach to diverse ‘threats’, from migration to unrest following food crises. What it suggested was preemption, blurring the distinctions of ‘internal’ and ‘external’ security, and the general need for a ‘comprehensive approach’ linking the militaries and police with researchers, academics, politicians and civil society institutions. In this, we simply see a conformation of a much older doctrine now in the process of being transnationalised (and, as ever, corporatised) – counter-insurgency.

If ‘conventional’ military conflict aims at winning the war, counter-insurgency aims at *winning the peace*. Hence, the image of counter-insurgency as consisting only (or even mainly) of armed patrols, open suppression and death-squads in the night is an unsophisticated view of the battle which envelops us. Those moments when the veil, so well-crafted to sit over the face of capitalist democracy, slips and drops, are not the extent of what constitutes repression in these societies. A more recent paper, from a French security think-tank, reiterated the need to continue the shift of war from the open battlefield to the *field of perception*. This way, a successful campaign is waged by ways of integration; as well as publicity and propaganda, social ‘advantages’ offered by one part or another of the dominant order to sections of the population, based on their acceptance of (and, ideally, identification with) that order. From its beginnings as a means to drain away the specific social support which anti-imperialist guerrillas, rebellious slaves and tribal warriors enjoyed in their many countries, in the modern era it has become a cornerstone of governance, engaging or preempting threats while grooming the opinions, values and loyalties of the population.

Counter-insurgency is not simply synonymous with repression, but draws from a pool of military, paramilitary, political economic, psychological and civic actions. It does not necessarily prioritise monopolising force, but rather legitimacy. Ideological or material incentives are as likely to be deployed as armed strength is. Kristian Williams characterised it as *“involving both coercion and concessions, employing violence and building support, weeding opposition and seeding legitimacy. That is the basis of the counterinsurgency approach.*

*[...] This style of warfare is characterized by an emphasis on intelligence, security and peace-keeping operations, population control, propaganda, and efforts to gain the trust of the people. This last point is the crucial one."*

In essence it is a technique to head off or co-opt (even nascent) social tensions – understanding co-optation as when people are convinced to adjust their goals to ones which the system can accommodate – by convincing people that there are avenues to address their grievances; if they were only to put their energy into trusting or adjusting the system as it exists, that would be the entity which can best care for their needs. To this end, social institutions are turned into instruments of war (that is, when they weren't actually founded as such) to pacify populations, spread capitalist economic relations and seize 'resources', with people specifically sorted and targeted according to the needs of statescraft, corporate profit, industrial expansion, etc. By the same token they seek to gather intelligence and influence so as to undermine and make predictable the actions of (suspected) dissidents, and ultimately, as a counter-insurgency theorist put it, *"to restructure the environment to displace the enemy from it."*

In terms of statescraft this has meant that, as mentioned above, repression in its many forms is not something which raises its head as an exception, but it a continual means to maintain the normality favourable to the dominant order (at least in terms of keeping potentially-subversive antagonisms at their lowest manageable level). As an example of the dual-approach of counter-insurgency in this regard, we can see how following the debacle of the war in Vietnam a large amount of military hardware was given over to police departments within the U.S. (to the point where currently even small town forces generally have at least one tank), but simultaneous a huge push to introduce 'community policing' was launched. Cops were made out to be problem-solvers for the hypothetical 'person on the street', and portrayed as newly-accountable (via citizen input on advisory boards) and concerned (via public neighbourhood meetings etc.). (A commentator in France linked police image more specifically with the spectre of terrorism, regarding wide-spread unrest after police killed a young person fighting a dam construction [*ed. – see **Radical Scavengers Come Out of the Woodwork***], *"which was also the moment that rioting broke out in Ferguson, the separation between the police and the population reached its widest point. You can't understand the way in which the government led the response to the attacks of January [2015] if you don't understand it strategically, as a calculated reaction to this extreme dissensus. Ever since then, it seems that the police are here to protect us."*) These were – and are – techniques to both streamline and mystify the power of the State, now in use in much of the Western world, and simply the other side of the coin to the massive armament of the repressive forces; should the facade not suffice, a single radio call transforms the jolly, shirt-wearing, bike-riding community cop into the airborne armed response team.

As well as reassuring or co-opting the populace, these measures and many more help the State to 'read' its subjects so as to devise the most effective governance. This can still take the more traditional routes too – for example, the 'anti-extremist' Prevent program which legally requires U.K. teachers to report school-children over views they express in the classroom, alongside a more general 'mapping of Muslims' – but these can prove clumsy and bad for publicity (some teachers have complained at being turned into spies), and besides, in this era the target of intelligence operations is the whole populace. *"To meet the challenges of counterinsurgency, the security forces have had to shift their understanding of intelligence. Since the cause of the conflict is not just a subversive conspiracy, but necessarily connects to the broader features of society, the state's agents cannot simply ferret out the active conspirators, but need to aim at a broad understanding of the*

social system. *The U.S. Army Field Manual on Counterinsurgency, FM 3-24, incorporates this perspective arguing that strategists "require insight into cultures, perceptions, values, beliefs, interests and decision-making processes of individuals and groups."*

*This sort of intelligence work is concerned with questions that are primarily sociological. And so, a great deal of FM 3-24 is concerned with explicating basic social-science terms like "group," "coercive force," and "social capital." In fact, the entirety of Appendix B is devoted to explaining "Social Network Analysis and Other Analytic Tools." It offers this picture of how such analysis is practiced: "[A] social network is not just a description of who is in the insurgent organization; it is a picture of the population, how it is put together and how members interact with one another. [...] To draw an accurate picture of a network, units need to identify ties among its members. Strong bonds formed over time by family, friendship, or organizational association characterize these ties. Units gather information on these ties by analyzing historical documents and records, interviewing individuals, and studying photos and books."*

*The security forces can no longer focus narrowly on the hunt for subversives or terrorists, but must also collect information on the population as a whole. This changes, not only the type of information they're seeking, but also the means they use to collect it. A Rand [ed. – security corporation] report on information warfare in counterinsurgency emphasizes: "Even during a security operation, the information needed for counterinsurgency is as much or more about context, population, and perceptions as it is about the hostile force. [O]nly a small fraction of the information needed would likely be secret information gathered by secret means from secret sources." The report suggests a few specific mechanisms for collecting broad-based information: tracking cell phone use, conducting a national registry-census, installing vehicle- and weapon-mounted video cameras, and analyzing internet sites (in particular, creating a "national Wiki (where citizens describe their community)")" (Kristian Williams). Of course, in the age of so-called social media, people largely present much of this information freely online.*

*If some radicals may be slow to associate so-called quality-of-life-assurance and service-provisioning by the State with pacification, with the defeat of social struggles which may have had more ambitious elements [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.1 pg48**], the powers that be with their police and military certainly are not, and see the above as a vital tool in their 'weeding and seeding' approach. To this end they find a ready partner in the non-governmental organisation (NGO) sphere, as some of the many institutions which can be weaponised. "The Rand study *Networks and Netwars* outlines "a range of possibilities" for the military's use of international nonprofits: "from encouraging the early involvement of appropriate NGO networks in helping to detect and head off a looming crisis, to working closely with them in the aftermath of conflicts to improve the effectiveness of U.S. forces still deployed, to reduce the residual hazards they face, and to strengthen the often fragile peace." One result of this perspective is that aid money, and thus NGO attention, increasingly follows the state's priorities – and its military's priorities in particular. For instance, in 2010 the U.S. awarded \$114 million to aid groups working in Yemen, with the stated goal of "improving the livelihood of citizens in targeted communities and improving governance capabilities". This supposedly humanitarian assistance came alongside \$1.2 billion in military aid, clandestine military and intelligence activity, and a CIA assessment that the Al Qaeda affiliate in Yemen represents the largest threat to United States' global security. Meanwhile, the Defense Department now controls 20% of the U.S. government's budget for Official Development Assistance. "[D]evelopment priorities follow the battle space," David Rieff writes in *The New Republic*. "[D]evelopment is a continuation of war by other means" (Kristian Williams).*

However, we need not look so far afield to see the nefarious ends that humanitarian missions can serve (regardless of the intentions of each participant individually). The migrant situation in and around Calais (as well as being symptomatic of an unregulated movement of bodies which the State would definitely like to see controlled, regulated and ordered for maximum exploitation or exclusion) looks bad for both the British and French governments; it's worth asking to what degree the horde of associations and 'concerned individuals', while certainly not confronting the root causes of many migrants' plight, serve to an extent to boost the image of a civilised Europe and prevent the situation from exploding. Meanwhile the State (together with a multitude of private contractors<sup>16</sup>) have their hands free to continue harassing, beating, detaining and deporting. At the more extreme end, the veil drops when the charities Salaam Association and La Vie Actif are the ones clearing migrants out during eviction of the sprawling 'Jungle' encampment side-by-side with riot police. In fact La Vie Actif were the ones to run the internment camp offered as a replacement, where fingerprints were required on the door for the privilege for families to live in a shipping container. (Before it was to open, unknown persons torched two pieces of machinery used for the construction and also for the evictions, leaving 'no border' and 'this is a prison' sprayed on the containers.)

This charitable 'human face' to the policing it its own counter-insurgency, the 'soft' approach waiting by the side of the metal barriers (recycled from the NATO summit in Wales) to repel migrants often willing to risk their lives to reach the U.K. Elsewhere in the world it is corporations themselves whose 'charitable', 'participatory', 'community' schemes cultivate a favourable environment for their plunder – this was also emphasised in Fairhead's and Dunlap's study cited above. *“Working under the assumption of the order-for-stability argument, The RAND Corporation's National Security Research Division studied the use of 'corporate counterinsurgency' as a means to mitigate violence and promote market stability in areas where resource extraction corporations operate. This report highlights the importance of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and social-development initiatives as a means of reducing conflict for continuing business practices – noting that social-development eases violent conflict, even when violent actions appear unabated by CSR programmes as in the case of Royal Dutch Shell in the Niger Delta. It draws the parallel between CSR and 'soft' corporate counterinsurgency that is now being adapted and geared towards the 'green' economy with carbon, biodiversity offsets, and most importantly with the REDD+ package. This tactic obscures corporate-led environmental degradation, attempts to render resistance illegitimate, and strategically divides communities, a capability previously observed in REDD+ project in the Lacandon Community Zone in Chiapas Mexico. In the Niger Delta [ed. – area of prolonged and often violent struggle against the likes of Royal Dutch Shell], REDD+ clearly demonstrates itself as a device of social pacification designed to prolong the damaging ecological practices of oil extraction corporations and the industrial economy on the whole.”*

Once again, social scientists themselves also become another part of the ruling order's armoury, even in 'conventional' warzones themselves. See the Human Terrain Systems (H.T.S.) initiative of the U.S. military, who utilise cultural anthropologists in the theatres of Afghanistan and Iraq (funding for the initiative increased substantially in recent years, anticipating the expansion of its counter-insurgency to Indonesia, Malaysia and other places in the Islamic world,

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<sup>16</sup> <em>Such as Tascor, who run short-term detention facilities for the U.K. border forces stationed in Calais and Coquelles; and two of whose prison buses were smashed up in Bristol by the Informal Anarchist Federation 'Borderless Solidarity Cell' as a result.

with an emphasis on sub-Saharan Africa). The project mixes ethnographic fieldwork with 'troop education', aiming to reduce violence between the population and the occupying forces, using social scientists to present themselves as the 'patient listening face' of a harsh military occupation, while generating huge profits for the military contractors running the program. Inevitably, as well as encouraging compliant behaviour from a more-easily-'read' people, the targeting of other sectors is facilitated; such as that of Nuristan, a region of diverse habitats and peoples, which the H.T.S. administrators suggested attacking on the basis of their resistance to every face of the invasion, as they previously had against Islam, the British and then Russian forces.

While there has been minor outcry in some corners of academia about the likes of the H.T.S. program, which David Price described as "*farming out the piece-work of empire in ways that can allow individuals to disassociate their individual contributions from the larger project*", the military effectively marginalised the consequences by announcing they would begin to issue their own PhDs at military academies and cooperating institutions. (Moreover these criticisms paper over the fact that, whether in the direct pay of the military or not, the scientific-academic division of labour [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.2 pg6*] itself is part of what insulates researchers from the knock-on effects of their discoveries, whoever applies them<sup>17</sup>.)

Just as a H.T.S. scientist linked these practices to those deployed several generations ago (and since) against the indigenous of North America, these preventative techniques of governance tested in the neo-colonial laboratories of today hold a symbiotic relationship to domestic repression. It was Alexander Dunlap who noted that "*following the siege of Fallujah, the city's entire population was fingerprinted, retina-scanned, and issued identity cards required for travel or to receive government services. And since 2007, biometric readers have been used at military checkpoints in Baghdad to control movement between ethnic enclaves. Of course, the military has been preparing for this sort of operation for a long time: 1999's "Urban Warrior" training exercises included the biometric scanning of "resistance fighters" - in Oakland, California. [...] Iraq, Afghanistan, and most importantly Gaza are acting as new laboratories for repressive technologies such as drone strikes, targeted assassination, new urban warfare techniques, biometric data collection, 'predictive analytics', and infrastructural controls. This exposes the increasing commonalities between occupied territories, gated communities, and prisons overseas and at home. This point is made clear as the New York Police Department (NYPD) with assistance from the CIA with advice, training, and embedded staff has modelled their department on Israeli intelligence operations in the West Bank.*" If contemporary policing of American inner-cities is directly employing counter-insurgency, we could also list in this role the efforts of the welfare departments and NGOs, who today fulfill the services

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<sup>17</sup> "Leaving all the alibis aside, Science as it exists is inconceivable without its unbroken institutional, philosophical, and economic connections with policing, warfare, and industrialization. Its medical knowledge of bodies corresponds to the State's need to discipline, exploit, and torture those bodies; its funding and the areas of its advancement, its "discoveries," correspond to the need of states to wage warfare against their neighbors and the need of capitalists to get an edge on their competitors and their laborers. It is not merely a complex of academic institutions that has advanced alongside, and been corrupted by, the institutions of the modern nation-state and of capital investment. On the contrary, at no point is Science autonomous within and endogenous to those academic institutions. It has always been a primary motor for the expansion – material and spiritual, to borrow the tired dichotomy – of the present world system that has colonized the entire globe, put all forms of life to work, reengineered the landscape to favor production and social control, and that is now busy rewriting the very matrix in which life and existence unfold; therefore its development has not been an exclusively academic affair but a chief concern of all the institutions of power with which it is coterminous" (Alex Gorrión).

that combative entities such as the Black Panthers briefly pioneered before they were smashed by the State (featuring the U.S. depot of the SWAT team, for example).

H.T.S. itself conducts training exercises within the U.S. in indigenous territories and sites of controversial development projects. A H.T.S. trainee described a hypothetical scenario that, it came out, was tasked to them in which the army moves into an area on the Missouri river which is attempting secession during turmoil over the pollution from a coal-fired power station, including activity in the area by the Earth Liberation Front. *“Staff Assignment to the several Human Terrain Teams that make up the class of the November Cycle were issued as follows: 1. ‘Find out more details on the criminal activity.’ 2. Find out the best conduits to pass ‘information’ (PsyOps and InfoOps) to the local population. 3. HTT is assigned to produce a ‘Research Plan’ to understand the situation at the IATAN power plant – people’s concerns, desires, etc., and identify those who were ‘problem-solvers’ and those who were ‘problem-causers,’ and the rest of the population whom would be the target of the information operations to move their Center of Gravity toward that set of viewpoints and values which was the ‘desired end-state’ of the military’s strategy.”*

As David Price continues, *“Human Terrain Teams practicing training scenarios set in regions actually within the United States bring the very notion of “human terrain” back home to its domestic counterinsurgent roots. As anthropologist Roberto Gonzalez documents in his book, American Counterinsurgency: Human Science and the Human Terrain, the very phrase “human terrain” grew out of domestic counterinsurgency initiatives. Gonzalez describes how in 1968 the US House Un-American Activities Committee released a report entitled “Guerrilla Warfare Advocates in the United States” which warned that the Black Panthers and other militant groups threatened the country’s political stability. HUAC warned that “[irregular forces] possess the ability to seize and retain the initiative through a superior control of the human terrain.” The clear implication was that the control of civilians in America’s cities was vital to winning the counterinsurgency struggle at home.”*

## **Anti-Extremism or Counter-Insurgency?**

*“As counter insurgency is derived from the creativity of insurrections and is in essence always slightly behind, it tries to make up for its deficits by meticulous studies, violence, gigantic apparatus and prevention. Restructuring districts, intimidating anyone sympathizing, isolating the enemy, creating figures of enemies from which the population will dissociate, therefore disarming itself. COIN (Counter-insurgency, in NATO slang) wants to coin a passive depoliticized public, and in that sense it is constructive. As a strategy of pure power preservation, it remains at once as deadly and reactionary as colonial wars, for which it was developed.”*

*– invitation to an international anti-militarist action camp against the G.Ü.Z.<sup>18</sup>*

The wake of events like the Paris massacre has often been a convenient time for the State to ‘neutralise’ old enemies under the terrorism talisman; in recent history, the aforementioned Earth (and also Animal) Liberation Fronts were the earlier victims of the notorious U.S. Patriot Act after 9/11 (although hysteria over ‘eco-terror’ in the ‘90s, and the dubbing of the E.L.F./A.L.F. as the number-one domestic terrorist threat by the government, preceded those famous Islamist

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<sup>18</sup> The high-tech combat training center (GefechtsÜbungsZentrum) in Altmark, Germany, where soldiers from NATO countries train for urban warfare. In 2012 construction began for a whole city (various buildings, streets, a subway and an airport) so as to better prepare for operations in neighborhoods, city centers, slums, industrial estates and shopping malls. “This city could exist anywhere in the world”, said the G.Ü.Z. chief executive.

attacks), in a 'Green Scare' which is far from over, as dignified fighters still sit in prison [*ed. – see Return Fire vol.1 pg70*] and the momentum of an eco-liberation offensive in those lands has yet to recover. Similarly in France, where anarchists had already been imprisoned and convicted in recent years under terror legislation<sup>19</sup>, we can easily imagine what Nicolas Sarkozy (the former President) also has in mind when he wants to force everyone suspected of 'radicalism' to wear an electronic tag. By implication, anyone resisting the clampdown can handily be portrayed as a violent extremist, or at least sympathiser.

Specifically relating to the many self-professed – and sometimes mutually-antagonistic – anarchist currents within the wider radical circles, if we can agree that none of us/them alone seem poised for the total overthrow of ruling elites, then why (aside from mutual incompatibility and hostility) need the State dedicate such energy to attacking us/them? Perhaps an answer lies in the needs of counter-insurgency that, again, does not look at subversives in isolation from the wider public. The RAND Corporation text 'War by Other Means' divides uprisings into three phases: insurgency, small-scale insurgency, and major insurgency. During the first, subversives' capacity is "*small, narrowly based, vulnerable, and incapable of widespread or large-scale violence. Proto-insurgents may be barely noticeable, not seen as having the potential to inspire insurgency, or dismissed as criminals or inconsequential crack-pots. Therefore, during proto-insurgency, the most important aspect of COIN is to understand the group, its goals, its ability to tap popular grievances, and its potential. In turn, shaping the proto-insurgency's environment, especially by improving governance in the eyes of the population, may deny it wider support.*" (This need to 'read' social feeling could also go towards explaining, for example, the penetration of police undercover into the most innocuous 'peace' or 'justice' groups, as well as those with more potential for militancy, which has been disclosed in the U.S., U.K., etc.)

In several countries on different continents, this target group has clearly been marked as having higher potential for disruption: again, not because we/they pose the biggest threat in and of itself, but because we/they have tendencies to push the more unmanageable elements further during peaks of social tension (as historically did anarchist migrants serving as detonators in 19th century labour struggles from the U.S. to Argentina), or merely serve as a sufficient visible scapegoat for those elements, to be made an example of. Large contributions to counter-insurgency theory were made from the lessons of British colonial campaigns in places like Kenya, Cyprus and Northern Ireland, and clearly they define the need for State intervention to restrict the spread of ideas, prevent radicals from achieving influence, and disrupt their efforts to establish oppositional organisations. In this way, "*techniques of counterinsurgency warfare, made explicit for Iraq and Afghanistan, have been actively deployed domestically in the United States, UK, and Europe since the 1980s, if not earlier, further complicating the notion and substance behind western democracies.*

[...] *Ken Lawrence identifies a strategic shift in the security apparatus in the late 1960s, which could be characterised as a shift from strategic repression to 'permanent repression'. Resulting from*

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<sup>19</sup> Ivan, Bruno, Damien, Inès, Franck and Javier were tried together in 2012. The charges stemmed from the following accusations: placing an incendiary in a police truck (Inès; her brother Javier; Damien); burning a series of signaling stations which paralyzed a section of the rail network (Javier); possession of manuals for sabotage techniques, a juvenile prison map and chlorate salts (Inès; Franck); possession of smoke-bombs and caltrops (bent nails for spiking roads to puncture tyres, for example those of police cars) en route to a demonstration at the Vincennes migrant prison which later was burned down by inmates in revolt (Ivan; Bruno; Damien). Bruno and Ivan spent 17 and 22 months on the run respectively, but were eventually recaptured and tried.



*the social upheavals in the United States around issues of civil rights and the Vietnam War, permanent repression was articulated at a conference held by the RAND Corporation on counterinsurgency in 1969, the concepts of which formally appear in the 1971 book, *Low Intensity Operations: Subversion, Insurgency, and Peace Keeping* by British Brigadier General Frank Kitson. His book divides the social process of insurgency into three phases: the preparatory period, the non-violent phase, and insurgency. This notion of permanent repression appears most clearly in the chapter titled, 'The Preparatory Period'. In the tradition of *raison d'Etat*, Kitson outlines two necessary procedures of the legal system to maintain state legitimacy over the population. First, 'law should be used as just another weapon in the government's arsenal, and in this case it becomes little more than a propaganda cover for the disposal of unwanted members of the public'. Second, the use of the law is strictly objective, but framed by the need to construct legislation in detail to support and accommodate military and police operations. Recent examples that come to mind in the United States are the 2001 US Patriot Act, the Homeland Security Act and the 2006 Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act (AETA). Preparation advances the state apparatus as a weapon to maintain order, irrespective of the formal characteristics of the political system" (Alexander Dunlap).*

The spectre of terrorism is without a doubt a popular means to such ends today. In Spain, rowdy posts online can earn you terror charges. In Britain, so can attempting to travel to defend Rojava [*ed. – see **Why We Are With the Fighters***] from Islamist obliteration. In Italy, it can be hindering infrastructure construction and 'national image' (using legislation pushed through after the Islamist 7/7 bombings in London etc.) or publicly refusing to dissociate from armed action; in France, it can be insurrectional graffiti during the so-called Arab Spring [*ed. – see **Return Fire vol.2 pg87***]. In the U.S., photographing industrial factory farms; in Belgium, discussions or publications about rising social control either side of a prison wall; in Brazil, vandalism or blockades – we don't list these expansions of what constitutes 'terrorism' (a term evermore elastic since at least the '70s) to decry such legislation from the logic of (self-)victimisation, despite the almost surreal absurdity of a world where even the number of deaths from those acts of 'classic' terrorism is at best 1.5% of those killed by traffic. Rather, we understand these attempts at social neutralisation as coterminous with a wider strategy by the ruling order which aims at all who they want to believe have no option for themselves but to vouch in their governance and 'protection'; because (so they say) to desire other ways of life is deluded, to organise against this one is madness, and to attack its structures and values is suicide. Before this blackmail, we can only echo the sentiment which drove saboteurs in Viña del Mar onto the streets to torch luxury trucks, rather than waste breath either defending against or 'claiming' terms which are alien to us. "[I]f negating legality and civic life, sad and predetermined, is terrorism, then that's what we are... but we know and you know *compañerxs* [*ed. – see **Return Fire vol.2 pg34***] that we only desperately seek a world that is not covered by so many atrocities, by so many displays of insensibility, by the desire for power, by the desire to step on others human or not. We know that the convinced and courageous search for a new reality that is not rotten with bad desires, ambitions, and authority [is a] valid and a long battle without truce. Against all authority, against society, against civilisation and the machines, international solidarity, down with the borders and every state in the universe."

The evolving field of counter-insurgency regarding active dissent also takes the form of State or media PR campaigns before protests or mobilisations which they feel they can't simply ignore, using their ability to frame particular events or actions in certain ways to increase discourses they favour and demobilise from those they don't. Increasingly, the policing of the disruptive fringes

of the social consensus involves reliance on early intervention or the grueling bureaucratic legal process as the punishment in itself<sup>20</sup>, before any convictions are gained or not (the latter leaving to the expression “you can beat the rap but you can’t beat the ride”).

The advantages of the intelligence-gathering at the heart of counter-insurgency operations in an increasingly transparent cybernetic society allow for more precise blows to be landed by those in power when needed. Highlighting the diffuse applications of ‘permanent repression’ as a tool of social order, it was not ‘political activists’ but U.S. street gangs whose targeting Kristian Williams also studied. *“Once the data was assembled, the researchers, following Boston’s example, used it to map gang territory and perform a social network analysis, illustrating rivalries and alliances, and identifying likely sites for conflict. They then took the analysis to the individual level charting the connections between gang members and others who associate with them. By diagramming these relationships, researchers were able to distinguish between core members and those only marginally involved.*

*Such information was crucial for making both tactical and strategic decisions. Police could approach individual members differently, based on their role in the gang and their level of commitment. They could also identify the pressure points and know where to strike for maximum effect. “Network analysis also allows one to identify people who hold structurally important positions within the gang networks. Cut points, people who are the only connection among people or groups of people, may be ideal selections for spreading a deterrence message or for affecting the structure and organization of the street gangs” (McGloin). Unlike Boston, where the focus was strictly on stopping gang violence, in New Jersey the aim was to disrupt the gangs themselves.”* The same techniques are used when the Spanish State strategically arrests the lawyer who defends radicals from terror charges (recent events in those lands [ed. – see **Rebels Behind Bars; Operations Pandora-Piñata & Zaragoza Bombing Trial**] are a good illustration of many of the dynamics we’ve mentioned), or when the Greek police accuse an individual whose only known activity to this day in the timeframe was visiting anarchist guerrillas in prison [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.2 pg64**].

Lastly (and, to be clear, aside from what it itself is actively responsible for in each case by at large – threats to any alternative and aforementioned police infiltrator influence notwithstanding), in the anti-extremist theatre the State can well rely on a key ally within dissenting demographics themselves: the whole raft of unions, official organisations, pacifists, and other civilisation-reformists hovering to disarm social struggles from within, by denouncing those whose passions lead them to a more direct confrontation with what exists. Whether the advocates of such positions can recognise it or not, the discourses they adopt and jealously defend

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<sup>20</sup> “We might here focus on two related developments: pre-emption, and punishment by process. Pre-emptive tactics are those which stop protests before they start, or before they can achieve anything. Kettling, mass arrests, stop-and-search, lockdowns, house raids and pre-emptive arrests are examples of these kinds of tactics. Punishment by process entails keeping people in a situation of fear, pain, or vulnerability through the abuse of procedures designed for other purposes – such as keeping people on pre-charge or pre-trial bail conditions which disrupt their everyday activity, using no-fly and border-stop lists to harass known dissidents, carrying out violent dawn raids, needlessly putting people’s photographs in the press, arresting people on suspicion (sometimes in accord with quotas), using pain-compliance holds, or quietly making known that someone is under surveillance. Once fear of state interference is instilled, it is reinforced by the web of visible surveillance that is gridded across public space, and which acts as strategically placed triggers of trauma and anxiety. Anecdotal evidence has provided many horror stories about the effects of such tactics – people left a nervous wreck after years awaiting a trial on charges for which they were acquitted, committing suicide after months out of touch with their friends and family, or afraid to go out after incidents of abuse. The effects are just as real as if the state was killing or disappearing people, but they are rendered largely invisible” (We Are All Very Anxious).

from perceived infringement upon are often the offspring of co-opted aspirations from another generation's defeat and subsequent revision. (See, among others, the diminution of radical ecology struggles in their at least slightly more holistic sense into a more mainstream, populist and monothematic goal of 'saving civilisation from climate change', and how easily it dovetails into the alienated and quantitative logic of carbon particles and emission quotas espoused by the scientific specialists or politicians, who can even be found at the forefront of these movements today.)

Quite an illustrative instance of the degree to which 'environmentalism', for example, has become integrated into the industrial society in crisis as a kind of sedative mechanism (once the sensibilities of an ecological perspective have been taken and debased into tokenistic clichés, devoid of the interconnections that would lead to any de-civilising and rebellious direction) was telling in the mobilisation around the COP15 climate summit in Copenhagen during 2009. By way of comparison, some comrades agitated for attack on the delegates and their defenders as a continuation of insurrectionary tensions and for Earth liberation, announcing their intentions of *"ridding ourselves of those who claim to be representing us and by defeating the ideology of endless economic growth, industrial production and consumption. [...] It is time to state: we are going to consciously attack the structures supporting the COP15: we will break through the lines of their police; we will refuse to negotiate with warmongering governments and the embedded media; we will refuse to side with sell-out NGOs and all the would-be managers of protest; we will refuse all governments and governance and not just de-legitimise the present ones. [...] At Copenhagen, they will argue over how to properly create a market to commodify and so pollute the biosphere, dispossessing millions of people from their land to profit from destroying what remains of our earth. Governments and corporations will not sacrifice their growth to reduce carbon emissions, or only do so in order to create a new authoritarian regime for themselves. The entire rhetoric of the climate crisis and the financial crisis is a cynical manoeuvre by the state spin-doctors to deny the all-encompassing crisis of self-declared civilisation. The COP15 will only attempt to hide the war that capitalism is waging against all life on the planet, a war that has spread across the entire globe for the last five hundred years, a war that encompasses the totality of even the oceans and atmosphere. In the midst of war, one does not talk of management and technical solutions. You cannot fight a war by pretending the war does not exist, by blinding yourself to repression and becoming complicit in accepting the false-promise of a petite bourgeois tranquillity. Instead, one recognises the enemy. One chooses a position. One fights."*

The call was heeded by some from around the world who came to the summit explicitly to fight the dominant order. Perhaps aware of the dead-end that the 'summit-hopping' mania of the '90s and early '00s had eventually presented for radical ruptures, others supported the fighters going to the Danish streets by continuing their own momentum of destruction where they were; like in the U.K. when a busy shopping centre in Nottingham got a window-smashing afternoon visit from the E.L.F./A.L.F. as hundreds of Christmas shoppers passed by, or as a petrol station was burned to the ground just over the bridge from Copenhagen in the Swedish city of Lund by some anonymous individuals who were *"not going to let the charades of the political elite distract us from what we know needs doing"*. However, while the anarchists who attacked even the sponsors of the pre-summit in Barcelona stated they *"know their intentions very well: improving capitalism to perpetuate its existence"*, many of the COP15 attendees had other ideas; some seriously suggesting their preference to block the world leaders *into* the summit to formulate a 'rescue plan' for the planet, braying for deliverance to the very same who are systematically strip-mining the

biosphere. Others contented themselves with hosting an “alternative” summit, hosting the usual specialists and demagogues in an institutional complex, and we see the full circle: protest, mediation, integration, a democratic ceremony with a seat at the table for every kind of bureaucratic or scientific department to “crowdsource” the continuation of their hegemony.

Out on the streets, during one of the larger protests black-clad individuals passed out a communiqué critical of the reigning atmosphere before proceeding to trash the window-fronts of the Danish Foreign Ministry and finance institutions like the Stock Exchange: *“The slogans just seem too familiar. “Traditional wisdom and new technology must go hand in hand.” Haven’t we been reading them on the ads [ed. – for the official summit] all over town? Everyone is playing their role in the summit, just like in a movie. And there are even different versions of the same stage, distinguished mostly by their budgets. [...] What if the mobilization of the entire city and even the protests were nothing but an immense peacekeeping operation? In times of war, there is a call for submission behind every call for unity. Everyone agrees that capitalism is in crisis, that the previous forms of management will not suffice. This summit may be the most obvious sign yet of the shape of the management to come, where everyone’s contribution is obligatory. This step could be described as social engineering. A utopian attempt to **produce** an entirely controlled life, a totally calculable existence by making us forget that some struggles cannot be reduced to power games, that sometimes friendships are more than just economics. This living excess cannot be described but can only be experienced. What can be described though is how this operation functions: our living is first fragmented into several quantifiable bits and pieces and then resold to us as the real thing. “Hope in a bottle”. The enthusiasm with which all political stripes have been converted to ecology teaches us about the true nature of this new green universal religion.”* As if to prove the point of the communiqué, when the combatants then attempted to re-enter the main body of the demo after the smash-and-dash foray and with riot police in full pursuit, some members of Climate Justice Action physically blocked them.

By the time the COP21 came around, not much had changed in that regard. In an atmosphere of heavy securitisation after the Paris massacre, with many environmentalists under house arrest and convergence centres of associated squats raided and put under 24-7 armed surveillance, activist organisers cooperated heavily with the police to the point where the groups *Solidaire* and *ATTAC* informed the authorities of anarchists planning an autonomous demonstration against the state of emergency, while activist ‘peace police’ advised protesters to facilitate the arrest of disruptive elements. It’s a classic example of a tendency whose aspirations have been domesticated into making placid appeals on prescribed occasions, and one which the authors of ‘What’s the COP21’ recognised beforehand. *“On the one hand we need to exert pressure on decision makers through constant lobbying and on the other, to prick the public conscience, they say. And all this needs to be achieved through benevolent non-violence, an assault on neither goods nor people. Petitions, flash mobs, blockades, demonstrations, alternative villages and acts of civil disobedience are some of the tools that we are told can be used. [...] The ZAD of Notre-Dame-des-Landes [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.1 pg81**] and other struggles against controversial imposed development projects have called for convoys to converge on Paris during the COP 21. These comrades, still too few in number, did not wait for counter summits or fixed dates in their diaries before they took up their fight and their struggle will continue afterwards. In this sense, they show us the way forward.”*

When it came to it, a number of people came to the streets on the Sunday of the summit and clashed with the police – and over 200 were arrested. One of the major official organisations which had cancelled its own protests to comply with the State, 350.org, condemned those who

had instead defied martial law as “*unaffiliated with the climate movement*” (and if they’re the self-proclaimed climate movement, who could disagree?). We could only imagine their displeasure with those who chose to manifest their rage in accordance with their own timing and terrain – like those who beforehand had claimed the burning of five EDF vehicles north of Toulouse. “*EDF is one of the COP21 partners. It’s also a state company seeking to introduce nuclear as a solution to the problem of climate change. Nuclear is death, let’s destroy it’s sponsors! We believe it’s important to attack the cop21 where it is: that is to say wherever there is profit and power. We prefer the qualitative, complicity and surprise to the media and spectacle appointments with the state and its police riots. With some fire lighters, a petrol canister and satisfied smiles, we humbly respond to the surveillance, fear and resignation that alienates us daily.*”

We hope not to show a one-dimensional moral image of these situations, with “the brave and right ones who fight” over here and “the cowardly ones who do not” over there. While we make no secret of our enmity for the organisers who point fingers for the police, legitimate the repression through the media, etc., we can’t see every participant or affiliate of their wider movements as equivalent (though certainly still no accomplices of ours), nor discount individuals from breaking out of reformist straitjackets. Still, these movements, and the rest like them, are one more terrain on which counter-insurgency plays out, and where it crosses our own path we won’t shy from conflict. We don’t see ourselves as having any perfect analysis or conspiratorial knowledge which would render us immune to recuperation and control, beyond an awareness of these factors we have brought up – the many ways in which the State inscribes the ‘need’ for its existence, and a few of the barriers we must climb on a path to liberation.

## **Find Each Other**

*“If politics is a process of social control and colonisation, how do people genuinely undermine their control, make space for their conception of peace, and avoid becoming the metaphorical resistor necessary for the function and continuation of the social machine? These are the timeless questions of how to change our social relationships in the face of a Leviathan that went from mechanical to cybernetic within the past century. But this also draws attention to the need to realise the depth of these social impositions, while also discovering as individuals or as collectives who each other are and what will fulfil genuine individual and collective needs. Otherwise action may not even be self-serving in any substantial form, going in circles, playing the game prescribed and possibly falling into traps put in place to capture and recuperate people and ideas – a problem as old as history and as ancient as the war that many have and are still experimenting to overcome.” – Alexander Dunlap*

So if we want to break out of this so-called peace of progress, what can we address that hinders the kind of insurgency which might be of help? Obviously in different places the clash takes different forms, but where we are we could identify a lack of the continuity of an antagonistic presence which could span generations, identity groups and geographies, as one factor among many; doubtless some of the contributors to this are the difficulty of subverting the dominant family structures, and, today, the proliferation of virtual (i.e. not lived) experiences of radical milieus as just another item on the digital shelf. (We are not so arrogant or stupid to believe that self-professed ‘radical ideas’ are the spark or fuel for many of the insurrections which we’d still welcome; but they almost always exist within them, and we make no secret of the invitation we offer to co-create the character we desire them to hold for us.)

Faced with this, how do we situate our struggles not as 'politics' in a separable, classifiable and ultimately avoidable sphere, but in that of our daily lives; both with the institutional forces which attempt to govern our horizons, and within our relationships, filled as they are with the shared defeatism Ron Sakolsky termed "*mutual acquiescence*" and with the smaller or bigger prospects for rebellion and complicity? Our thought here goes to the post-script we read from a discussion between anti-militarists in Germany. "*To come to a realistic evaluation of our possibilities to act, we think it is necessary to acknowledge that which we have not chosen: that we are in a state of war everywhere in the world, even if the international division of labor distributes suffering unequally. The acknowledgement of this point should not be mistaken for a self-righteous "Yes to war!" combative bathos, which despite feeling less helpless nevertheless gets stuck in a twisted understanding of our situation, swapping the places where power and powerlessness are to be found in our lives in a confused manner. Put rudely: those ruling us don't give a shit which fantasies of omnipotence we devote ourselves to, regardless of whichever fantasy we like better, be it the pose of the wise prophet of peace or that of the apocalyptic nihilist warrior. Both serve the function to shift our desire for self-determination to spheres far out of our reach, while we can barely face up to even the most tiny changes in our everyday life.*

[...] Admittedly, it is not too easy to sort out the subtle threads of being set up for war that move right through ourselves. This is exactly why we find it interesting to have a close look at counterinsurgency, as it theorises and practically links together from the start repression and the shaping of public opinion. **This is not to talk about some great world-spanning conspiracy, but a systemic functioning where the question of conscious decisions and manipulation in favor of war alone is not sufficient to understand. This is about techniques of militarized thinking spreading throughout life, the transformation of our lives in direction of the preservation of the system at any cost: social engineering.** In which way can we understand and dismantle the conscious and unconscious processes of this reorganization, how it becomes possible to leave this cybernetic model of society – so often portrayed as control circuit including feedback loops – might become clearer, if we remind ourselves of an old finding of feminism.

It contributed quite a lot to the recognition of our own strength to think directly through the concept that the structural violence of patriarchy is closely tied to personal experiences in relationships, friendship circles, job, and so on. A woman, who above all always doubts herself in the first instance and who asks herself whether or not her husband deceives her, because she is too old, too ugly, or too stupid; this woman is posing the wrong question. Wrong, because it is exactly the question that patriarchy is suggesting that she pose, namely that everything remains just the way it is. This answer protects the operational principles of patriarchy when the woman is quarreling with herself instead of seeing that already her personal perception is already tinged with patriarchal presumptions. To take one's own feelings not as protective shelter, opposed to a cold and calculating outside world, but as a collaborator of patriarchy, of one's own submission, is not an easy step. On the other hand, once the feelings are striped of their hypocritical immediacy, it is much more easy to welcome them in the struggle for liberation, which promises to overcome a certain old division so we can finally fight with heart and mind.

Maybe this example can help to free ourselves from theorising militarization either as a personally staged intrigue of generals and bosses – which would not work out if they could not in some way count on our cooperation or at least make sure we keep quiet – or as an abstract mechanism, where there is no protagonists anymore, which is so absurd that we won't go into it. [...] **The constructive moment of counter-insurgency consists today – at the end of the history of progress (and**

*its false promises) – in making us believe that we do not have any influence on reality, that we cannot change our perspective, even if the system does not have to offer one anymore. If we simply believe this or deduce it in a highly academic way, if it is indifference, the fear of being recuperated, or military superiority that leads us to not finding other ways, this doesn't matter from the viewpoint of counter-insurgency. What counts is the effect.”*

By the same token, how can we turn the crises in our own lives into a crisis for the system? Can we compose a struggle, the trajectory of which is resistant to being co-opted by the State or engineers of Capital (and let's not pretend it's only pacifist struggles which hold that vulnerability), or programatised by the purveyors of 'alternatives'? How can the conflict reach *over a certain limit* after which events can go out of control?

## The Martial Against the Militarist

*“Those skilled at uncommon maneuvers are as endless as the heavens and earth, and as inexhaustible as the rivers and seas. [...] Subtle! Subtle! They become formless.” – Sun Tzu*

It will probably be clear from our tone so far that we favour the advancement of martial capacity; our own and that of others with similar feelings to ours. This is something which has been steadily stripped away from us over the generations; the ability to fight on our own terms, as much as the awareness of the war we inhabit. However, no matter how banal it may seem to keep repeating, this is not the only sensibility we lack; from herbal knowledge as an attunement to our bioregion, to higher emotional literacy with our friends, to sharper analyses of the changing field of domination, there are many fields of great importance for the direction we want to head. We are duly aware of the dangers of militarism (of beginning to see all problems in military terms, reducing all struggle and subversion to the moment of the armed clash), just as we are aware it's possible that the notion of a 'permanent war' we inhabit can be used for purposes which run counter to our own<sup>21</sup>. To us it seems clear that it is up to each and every rebel to work out where such lines in their own life-struggles can be drawn, and to act accordingly.

With that said, let's hear some thoughts from Sea Weed on the matter. *“In military theory, it is said that for the conqueror to really succeed the losing population must accept defeat, otherwise the conquerors only win after every single person has been killed, which isn't normally in the conquerors interest, because they need slaves and soldiers, etc. [...] The vast majority of the world's population*

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<sup>21</sup> “It is in fact a discourse which has, ever since it began and until very late in the nineteenth century, and even the twentieth, also been supported by very traditional mythical forms, and it is often invested in those forms. This discourse twins subtle knowledge and myths that are – I wouldn't say crude, but they are basic, clumsy, and overloaded. We can, after all, easily see how a discourse of this type can be articulated (and, as you will see, was actually articulated) with a whole mythology: [the lost age of great ancestors, the imminence of new times and a millenary revenge, the coming of the new kingdom that will wipe out the defeats of old]. This mythology tells of how the victories of giants have gradually been forgotten and buried, of the twilight of the gods, of how heroes were wounded or died, and of how kings fell asleep in inaccessible caves. We also have the theme of the rights and privileges of the earliest race, which were flouted by cunning invaders, the theme of the war that is still going on in secret, of the plot that has to be revived so as to rekindle that war and to drive out the invaders or enemies; the theme of the famous battle that will take place tomorrow, that will at last invert the relationship of force, and transform the vanquished into victors who will know and show no mercy. Throughout the whole of the Middle Ages, and even later, the theme of perpetual war will be related to the great, undying hope that the day of revenge is at hand, to the expectation of the emperor of the last years, the *dux novus*, the new leader, the new guide, the new Führer; the idea of the fifth monarchy, the third empire or the Third Reich, the man who will be both the beast of the Apocalypse and the savior of the poor” (Foucault).

*consists of defeated peoples in this war. And in fact, we are more than just defeated. We are kept. Kept in fear, kept in awe, kept out of touch with each other and the earth that gives us life. It has been said that our chains are long and our cages big, yet this still implies that we are prisoners. [...] Part of breaking out involves shedding all those ideological skins grafted onto us through schooling, the mass media, living in nuclear families, etc. But my involvement with rebels over the past 20 years tells me that we already know that this is important. What we don't seem to inventory is the means available to us to counter our physical occupation. [I]t is only by ridding ourselves of organized coercive authority that we will truly begin to have real opportunities to profoundly transform ourselves.*

*[...] Part of being an insurgent today could involve acquiring martial skills. Martial traditions include everything from fighting techniques, military theory, group cohesion and earth knowledge to skill with a weapon. Weapons include rifles, shotguns, handguns, sling shots, knives and various bows and arrows, among others. These could be used for acquiring food as well as for self-defense or to chase away adversaries. This isn't a call to "armed struggle" but for inclusion of a neglected aspect of a holistic approach to rebellion.*

*[...] The following are just a few examples of using martial tactics to succeed in present day struggles. Opening new fronts as solidarity with other rebels engaged in a confrontation or action. Encouraging defection within enemy ranks. Avoiding capture. Blockades. Unarresting a comrade. The ambush. Spying. Interrupting the enemies' means of communication. The surprise. Raids on enemy stores of food and weapons. The siege. Physical battles that expand territory. Freeing captives from enemy prisons. Destruction of enemy arsenals. Destruction of enemy wealth. Regrouping. Hiding. Secret codes and other means of communication. Bolder actions. Creating clandestine camps in which to hide friendly fugitives. Insurgencies. Fleeing to areas outside the enemies' control. Increased ability to fight as groups.*

*[...] I want to repeat that sharing our unique world-views and critiques and creating community are as essential as acquiring martial skills. A martial component is simply one part of a holistic approach. But we also must remember that a small band of rebels can accomplish a lot[...] And a clandestine group of friends that creates beauty by destructive means or that spreads subversion using playful methods, can also benefit from and help inform the martial approaches I am advocating." Not coincidentally, when adopted by dissidents many of these tactics imply a mental break from the internalised legitimacy of the State (the current one as it exists at least, although of course they have been used both by the State and to institute new ones), as well as some steps towards its removal from one's life on a practical level. We don't doubt that such skills would advance struggles in our own lives, alongside the other vital elements: envisaged not as the science of war, but the art of rebellion.*

## **Social Sabotage**

*"[S]peaking of anti-social war is not a denial of the social ways of spreading the anarchist idea; rather we insist that it is solely a demarcation from the groups which, through violent or non-violent means, neither claim nor carry in their ideas the search for the total destruction of the existent society. We support all of the ways of intensifying anti-systemic, anti-capitalist, anti-civilisation ideas; through texts, zines, activities, squats, words of love and rage, reflections and communiqués (like this one), But always keeping in mind that mere understanding (if we want to call it that) is not enough..." – anonymous claim for incendiary disruption of the public transit system of Santiago*



The admission of counter-insurgency as an approach is that the State recognises that, when a population puts greater hope in the insurgency to meet their needs than in the government, even an overwhelmingly larger military is insufficient to win the peace. Once again, legitimacy is key. Losing that legitimacy is what the States of today fear, and what they defend against. And yet where does this analysis leave us, when we ourselves certainly don't intend to embark on a campaign to win 'society' over to 'us' as a unified opposition; when we ourselves understand 'society' as an anthropocentric mass imposition, the opposite of freely-chosen and maintained unions or communities (inter-species as well and intra-species), and so something we want to see dissolved into the latter? In other words, what if we don't want to play the State's game (even as a competitor) – wouldn't the means contradict the ends?

Even from an anti-society position, we recognise that the State's power (and indeed, the disciplinary power of mass society itself) rests on social consensus as much as military force. In other words, a compliant society, hence our repression, rests on the degree of legitimacy certain institutions are granted. Truly, at least in the crowded lands we inhabit, there is not option yet of living 'outside' society. Like it or not, it is our environment; our anti-social position is from within that it opposes, not without. While this certainly makes the worlds we inhabit confusing and messy places to try to live out our ideas, the one sure thing to us is that our liberation is inherently tied up with the subversion of social relations on a scale larger than we have interest in forging actual connections (i.e. as opposed to the syndicalist dystopia of "one big anarchist union").

We found ourselves in agreement with some unknown anarchists in Barcelona, when they wrote that "*[o]ne cannot propose the creation of a new world without the destruction of the current one. And we cannot plan the form of the new world because currently we cannot imagine future conditions. Moreso, planning the form of the world – or planning the form of any collectivity greater than our circle of acquaintances – is an authoritarian exercise. But the State does not only exist in its material forces, rather also in the social relations it reproduces, and a relation cannot be destroyed without simultaneously creating a new relation. A building can be destroyed without constructing a new one, but a relationship of alienation cannot be ended without the creation of another type of relationship. There is always a relation between the beings and bodies in the same space. Without speaking of the creation of new social relations, we cannot speak honestly about the destruction of the State. To put it another way, we have come upon a bifurcation between the proposal to attack the State and the proposal to destroy the State. The proposal that speaks most of destruction, the nihilist one, may be unable to realize it because it dedicates itself only to the attack. It would be a very sad vision of "permanent revolt": forever attacking the symbols of the State without ever being able to touch the base of its power.*" Hence, without wild lands we could meld with undisturbed by an ongoing civilisation (which itself would at best be a temporary fix so long as that neighbouring civilisation still existed, given spreading pollution, colonial expansion, climate change...), our struggle where we stand is not that of violently defeating every believer in the legitimacy of the State – or civilisation, or society – but rather undermining that belief.

How to not drive people back into the arms of the State with our attacks? (Clearly this is always a risk, and one which we don't feel a particular responsibility to avoid causing in each individual – more important seems the potential opening up of space when a windowfront of order and stability is cracked, where people's own doubts, dreams or designs could sprout along a trajectory less inhibitory to ours; or not, who knows.) We see value in anarchic publishing, graffiti, posters, open discussions, solidarity where felt and subversion where possible, and their

potential to inflame hearts we would personally like to know (or at least make an environment more amendable to how we ourselves want to live), if nothing else because they've touched our own lives when we were ready for something of the sort to sit with our own experiences in the world. The disadvantage of this visibility is increased scope for State 'reading', surveying, infiltrating, co-opting etc., but as even the most secretive spread of anarchic practices would earn the State's attention sooner or later this is simply a problem we see must be contended with. There seems to be a fair amount of hostility around towards at least a few of the institutions we ourselves despise (although surely not enough of them); what we don't see so often is attempts to assert other ways of living and relating which could be specific to each community, while linking these aspirations to the ways in which the structures and officials which block those paths so far are vulnerable – every day and every second.

Chipping away at authority's monopoly on legitimate force need not be a simple appropriation of the rhetoric of 'winning hearts and minds', with all its manipulative and homogenising implications. We don't need to solicit agreement or approval as we experiment to free ourselves specifically; just to discredit and undermine the impervious facade of the current structures, to create the indisputable fact of physical opposition to the 'peace' of progress, and accentuate the social war it would like to conceal with notes of our own composition.

One side of (proto-)insurgency could be looking at what things the State needs which it can only get from the population it governs – whether obedience, civility, resources, the ability to intervene in daily life, etc. – and attempt to deny it those things. There are a great many forms this could potentially take or has taken (and obviously not all of them martial). One avenue for throwing a spanner into the works of social reproduction is the many technical infrastructures of (post-)industrial capitalist life, which, by ensuring the mobility of goods and services, the function of the social factory and the 'quiet day at the office' at the root of exploitation, war and ecocide, gives the system its air of irreproachable durability.

We could look in this light at the deeds of some anonymous saboteurs in Belgium; whose acts were committed one night during the lockdown after the Paris massacre and into the COP21 summit, and reported on in the Ricochets bulletin #10. *“The first one was a sabotage, in four different spots, of an international high speed train network (TGV, Thalys, Eurostar). By setting fire to the fibre optic cables along the rail tracks close to Ath in the province of Hainaut, the complete train circulation has been paralysed for more than a day long. A day on which the international delegates and the ministers needing to speed to Paris for a summit were blocked, a day on which the executives of companies, the Eurocrats, the directors have been cornered in the station watching the screens announcing the cancelling of their trains. This act of sabotage shows us that by using simple means it is always possible to cut into the veins of power and its men [sic], of its networks of transportation and data. And in the disorder thereby created, spaces are opened up which are not saturated by the speech of power, spaces where freedom can take a jump.*

*The second act of sabotage was aimed at no less than a military base, one of the most important ones of Belgium, where the Special Forces of the Belgian army and the military secret service are stationed, in Heverlee in the province of Flemish Brabant. Covered by the night, the saboteur(s) penetrated the base, avoiding systems of control and patrols, to trap five army vehicles with home-made fire bombs. [...] A single act has managed to ridicule the aura of the army and its grand master, the state, and this in the middle of a state of emergency. An act which somehow proposes to all who are sick of their wars to attack directly on the spot where they are produced: in the military bases, in the arms and security companies, in the technological research centres.”* (This shows a

stronger challenge to State legitimacy to us than was visible after, for example, the 7/7 bombings by Islamists in London; following which a step-down from militancy became the watchword for many at the protests against the G8 summit of world leaders in Scotland, where you could find police and activists lighting candles for the victims side by side.)

The entities at the 'softer' end of counter-insurgency can also be located, exposed and attacked, showing the lie of their innocuous position. Take the example of the attack during late 2015, in Besançon, on the Red Cross (simultaneous with the defacing of a ruling Socialist Party office): *"this humanitarian organization – which has a long history of collaboration with the powers that be (from the Second World War and its collaboration with the Nazis up until today) – organizes raids, manages migrant flows alongside the police forces and murderous guards of the FRONTEX Agency, administers the detention centres... It is entirely responsible for the miserable plight of the undocumented. Right now, this humanitarian organization – perfectly in gear with this world of borders and poverty – is currently distinguishing itself at the Franco-Italian border between Menton and Ventimiglia, by chartering its lorries to transfer migrants to detention centres. The structures of the enemy can be found at every street corner. Let's not bow down to the state of emergency!"*

Neither are the more foreboding forces of the security apparatus immune from targeting, those who would like us to believe them unthinkable to assault. After security agencies (including the director of Frontex), international politicians, delegates from the armament and surveillance industry etc. gathered in Berlin for the European Police Congress of February 2016, the counter-terrorism centre of the federal police was hit with molotovs and paint-bombs, and the street spiked to puncture tyres of any pursuit. As those responsible say, such attacks can be a *"small light in an otherwise pitch-black night"*; when we who dream and fight for better days are pushed evermore into the margins by an order which consolidates its legitimacy with concessions and coercion, the importance to us of the courage of ideas in action – however minoritarian – only grows.

## **That Which Advances in Rebellion**

*"Facing what hinders freedom also makes us face ourselves: it is for us to determine, experiment, approach what we want to live. It is certainly not easy, but we have weapons that the powerful fear: SOLIDARITY among rebels against isolationism, SELF-ORGANISATION without leaders or hierarchy, individual and collective ATTACK on all everything involved in domination."*

*– poster on the walls of several French towns, February 2016*

The shadow cast by the spectre of atrocities like unfolded in Paris (and those in Afghanistan, Syria, etc. by some authorities or others, and the many more to come) may be long, but despite the State's attempts there is hope that it will fail to eclipse the other, more fundamental war. The year or so before was also marked by rebellions over killings by the police, as one example; in multiple places and days in the U.S., but also around France as mentioned above, and even cropping up again in the U.K. to a lesser extent<sup>22</sup>. Meanwhile, the State strategies of self-preservation sometimes have difficult bedfellows in the neo-liberal capitalist restructuring, that tends towards enclosures and privatisation which can sometimes undermine some of the 'soft',

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<sup>22</sup> March 2015 saw four consecutive nights of disturbances in High Wycombe after the verdict for the death of Habib 'Paps' Ullah after a stop-and-search; 130 cars were damaged, scores with 'NJNP' (No Justice No Peace) sprayed on them.

legitimacy-building aspect of counter-insurgency. (To be sure, sometimes counter-insurgency is brought in to 'clean up' a crisis of confidence left by neo-liberalism, and other times counter-insurgency pacifies a situation so neo-liberalism can then be smoothly enacted, but the relationship can be a troubled one.

How could we move within situations like these? Understandings of legitimacy-building and legitimacy-eroding are just part of the criteria by which we analyse social circumstances, one more yard-stick by which to judge how, where, when and why to use certain methods as well as their effectiveness in pursuit of lives worth living. Lessons can be drawn from the experiences of many varied struggles, experiments and repressions, and maybe links between these diverse situations could be of use to us. We remember, along with the authors of 'We Welcome the Fire, We Welcome the Rain', that *"there are a great many who have met one another, grown together, and been emboldened by confidence in our abilities and relationships. These trajectories of learning have intertwined into something beautiful and ferocious here. Within this space there is room for all of us to contribute. Those of us who've found ourselves in recent years – in black blocs and graffiti crews, in anti-police riots and anti-austerity fights, in occupied plazas and buildings – have a great deal to share. Not as instructions or grand plans, but as proposals in each moment. Small suggestions which open more space: a call for a time and place when announcements are made, maybe barricades when people take the roads, maybe fires when barricades are built, maybe expropriation when facades are shattered. We have no interests in being specialists in fighting. Rather, we dream of moments which call on each of us to become everything at once; situations which demand that each of us become fighters and healers, caretakers and firebringers. We have no desire to lead, either from the shadows or from the megaphones and we will do everything in our power to combat and undermine those who seek to control and manage these outbreaks of joy and fury. We want to fight, side-by-side, in the first person, alongside those who want similar things. We want to build a type of solidarity where each of us can recognize our own struggles and projects in the struggles and projects of others. We want to find conspirators in this and to learn from one another. The interweaving and spreading of these attempts is what we call 'insurrection'."*

Avenues for sharing, discussing and sharpening perspectives and methods is one accomplishment of anarchists and other radicals, in our own limited way so far. Our enemies are well aware of this, as you can read in the Czech intelligence agency report 'Relations between extremists in Central and Eastern Europe and Greece': *"Extremist violence is considered a serious threat to modern European and global security, especially when linked to terrorism and other strategies of guerrilla warfare. Extremist environmentalists from different countries and regions are now in close contact and are mutually reinforcing. An important part of today's international extremism is the exchange of strategies and tactical elements. The emergence of extremism in one country or region is linked to the development of extremism in other countries or regions."*

It's hard to know what will come in this changing world, what opportunities will arise or how to make it through the times when none seem visible to us. But experience tells us that even a little empowerment and picking-up of skills can have a huge impact in one's character or desires, and with our unconstrained lives at stake, let's not be stopped by fear of failure.

*Let's attack the parts of the system we encounter in our daily lives by those means that we have the ability and desire to use.*

– some anti-authoritarian barbarians already within the walls

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The Veil Drops  
– anti-extremism or counter-insurgency?  
Winter 2015-2016

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