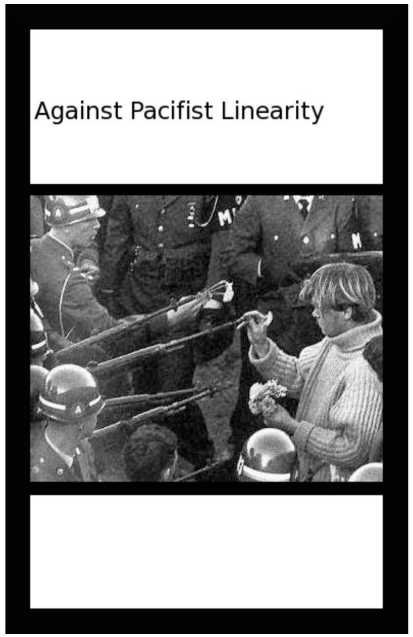
Tom Nomad
Against Pacifist Linearity
August 15, 2011

Retrieved on September 1, 2011 from
zinelibrary.infoy][web.archive.org]]

usa.anarchistlibraries.net

Against Pacifist Linearity

Tom Nomad



August 15, 2011

Politics of Nonviolence. Sharp, Gene. Boston. Porter Sargent. 1973
Leviathan. Hobbes, Thomas. New York. Penguin Classic. 1982
Grammar of the Multitude. Virno, Paolo. New York. Semiotexte. 2004
Chaos: Making a New Science. Gleick, James. New York. Penguin. 2008
We, The People of Europe. Balibar, Etienne. Trans. Swenson, James. Princeton, NJ. Princeton Press. 2004
State of The Union Address. 1/29/2002. Bush, George W
Field Manual 3–19.15: Civil Disturbance Operations. United States Army. 2005
St Paul Principles. retrieved 1/30/2009. www.nornc.org/st-paul-principles
Declaration of Peace Nonviolent Guidelines. retrieved 1/31/2009. declarationofpeace.org

Contents

agents themselves, substituting the equivalence for the actual participants and situation. This is nothing but the very same move made by the state, just in a microcosm.

Secondly, the Subject qua state is taken as the plane of engagement, they are the Subject of consent, doing nothing but reinforcing the Newtonian equivalence of the state as such and generating another appropriation of mass politics, negating the actual existence of actual agents. In positing this series of equivalences the defining of nonviolence comes to supersede the actual goals of the action itself in favor of building mass consent and support for nonviolent tactics and politics.

Can someone explain to me how this is different than the Leninist or political party assumption?

Nonviolence refuses to engage in tactics that would be effective, in the interest of preserving the mass image of nonviolence. But how is nonviolence possible in an apparatus that has formed us in the image of total war? To define nonviolence means to section it off from violence, but if everything is saturated with violence, if the battlefield has been abolished, then this form of definitionality becomes pure simulacra, a generated construct that by design exceeds everyday life and forms its Subject in the cryogenic time of Newtonian equivalence. This becoming-cryogenic prevents any form of nonviolence from responding to attempts by the forces of the state to enforce stability over a situation, the tactics are set, the participants are "responsible" and harmless, and the action becomes nothing but theatre, and ineffective theatre at that.

June 2009

Bibliography

You Can't Blow Up A Social Relationship. anonymous. 1979

> nal to the movement, avoiding any public or media denunciations of fellow activists and events, 4) We oppose any state repression of dissent, including surveillance, infiltration, disruption and violence. We agree not to assist law enforcement actions against activists and others"
>
> (www.nornc.org)

Diversity of tactics theory is an interesting approach to this problem. It at once rejects the equivalence of all acts by generating an "ecosystem of resistance" (a term used a lot on the ground in St Paul) which knows no limitations. This move away from the essentialized act creates a space which is always already destabilized to the degree that there is a multiplicity of actions, either announced publicly or not (and much more destabilized if they are not announced), while still making sure that there is a support infrastructure in place for legal and medic support. It generates an environment of potential non-reducability, an environment which rejects the equivalence of situations posited by the state and its civil disturbance approaches.

Conclusion

The practical meaning of the tactical impasse of nonviolence is that the Subject qua nonviolence frames and limits acts through the definitionality of a fluid nonviolence immobilized in the nonviolence guideline. In other words, the adherence to an abstract nonviolence supersedes the tactical necessities of the situation itself; it is nothing but institutionalized ineffectiveness. There are a series of equivalences made in the calculations of the nonviolent action. First, the guidelines are determined through the naming and defining of the concept of nonviolence which comes to supersede the act and

One of the most played out and trite debates within "activist" movements is the debate about "violent" vs "nonviolent" tactical sets. For numerous reasons this debate has gone nowhere for quite some time. In many instances both sides of this debate make sweeping generalizations about the other's tactics, which engage tactics on the level of effectiveness without examining the very constructed abstractions inherent in either approach. Yet this debate has gained some energy once again with the success of insurrectionary anarchist tactics at the IMF/World Bank demonstrations in the Fall of 2007, the Republican National Convention in 2008, and the recent uprising in Greece, all at a time when the mainstream pacifist antiwar movement has been relegated to the dustbin of ineffective social movements and many in the "official" Left defecting in droves to join in with the "Obamanation. But many in social "movements" have to come to grips with one stunning fact that many of us seem to forget: none of the tactical sets that we have employed have resulted in a substantial victory over the moves of capital and state.

We cannot count how many times we have been subjected to a lecture from an old pacifist, claiming, "Well, these are the tactics that we have always used and they have worked so far". Well, if this current social and political condition is what results from nonviolence working, we would hate to see what happens when it fails. What this all comes down to is that nonviolence has not worked as a force of social change, and the historical precedent of a tactic does not guarantee its legitimacy. Rather, we would like to suggest that this is the very reason that nonviolent paradigms of action need to be rejected. This historical precedent is just another glaring example of the almost total inability of pacifists to make sweeping social upheaval a possibility. In short, nonviolence has become accepted by the state as an acceptable and generally harmless form of action at best and is used as a necessary pressure valve by the feds (just read the COINTELPRO Papers for more on this) at worst.

The classic example of nonviolent action is an action done in front of the White House on September 26, 2005. Over 150 people, including the quintessential activist celebrity Cindy Sheehan, sat down in front of the gate of the White House to wait to be arrested. Now, outside of the complete pointlessness of this action, like the US State cares if people get locked up in prison for political actions in the age of vast prison expansion, there were details that a lot of the observers of this action were unaware of. The organizers of the action had told the police that they were doing the action and entered into a process of negotiation with the police a month beforehand. They agreed that people would be arrested and not cuffed, walked over to a processing van which would be on site, and asked to pay $50, at which point they would be released. So in essence, the organizers negotiated with the police an agreement to make the action the least disruptive that it possibly could be. Now, this is where nonviolent paradigms of action have led, the question is why. We would like to suggest that this is a mentality which is inherent to the nonviolent perspective.

Rather than a debate about the effectiveness of tactical sets, which is an issue that we will engage with at the end of this text, we need to begin to examine the ontological assumptions that structure the kernel of nonviolence. Here we want to examine two pieces of writing representing the two most common arguments for nonviolence, outside of religious jibber jabber and new ageism which are based on the mass authoritarian imposition of religious norms over movements (the rejection of this from my perspective should be obvious). The first piece is "The Politics of Nonviolent Action" by Gene Sharp. Sharp is a well known and often cited theorist and historian of nonviolence. Now he has come under scrutiny for writing often selective histories of movements to back up his positions, famously claiming that the anti-colonial movement in India was a nonviolent movement and claiming that the movement in Russia in 1917 had a significant nonviolent character (Russia

In another instance we personally witnessed one of these Declaration of Peace actions go down at the Hart Senate Office Building and the participants negotiated with the pigs to be able to enter the building. All their signs and banners were taken, and they were told that if they talked they would be arrested. So a mass of 50 or so people stood in the lobby of the building silently without signs until they were all arrested one by one and put on a bus to be dropped in another area of town, and after the action the organizers presented this as a victory. Again, if this is victory we would hate to see defeat. The question becomes, how do we effectively resist without constructing just another mass Subject based in institutionalized ineffectiveness.

It should be plainly obvious that, like the Subject qua nonviolence, there is an impossibility for the Subject qua violence. Now it is also plainly obvious that violence and total war are conditions of possibility for everyday life in the age of globalization. What we mean by this is that while violence is endemic to all relations of power, the construction of a Subject around the definitionality of tactical violence recreates the problematic equivalence of the Subject qua nonviolence. One approach to moving beyond this impasse, outside of agreeing to disagree, is the discourse of a diversity of tactics. This has been expressed in the St Paul Principles, an agreement between various groups and collectivities around tactical limits to the demonstrations at the RNC. The idea is that this framework is a fluid and dynamic way of making sure that all groups, regardless of tactics, have space for their own desires, regardless of how totally ineffective many of these forms are.

> "The principles are: 1) Our solidarity will be based on a respect for a diversity of tactics and the plans of other groups, 2) The actions and tactics used will be organized to maintain a separation of time or space, 3) Any debates or criticisms will stay inter-

exceeds and limits the potential for action, and thus the constitution and potential for the constitution of agency, and thus limits the agent. We like to call this "Peace Police Syndrome". In many of these events there are people in orange or green vests who have the task of preventing people from violating these guidelines and serve as a buffer between the crowd and the pigs, using tactics of de-escalation. In essence the nonviolence organizers attempt to prevent as much destabilization as possible by forcibly limiting the actions of the more insurrectionary among us, preventing us from manifesting a resistance that departs from our lives and contexts by substituting our positionality for one within an abstracted nonviolent Subject.

For example, in the first major antiwar march in DC after the start of this most recent phase of the genocide of Iraq, the pigs attacked the black bloc while still on the permitted march route and instead of allowing space for self-defense and tactical fluidity the "peace police" physically prevented the bloc from leaving the permitted route to get to a space that was more easily defensible. This resulted in a shouting match and eventually one of the "peace police" punched an anarchist in the face, setting off a fist fight between anarchists and "peace police", while we were still attempting to repel a police assault. At the end of this march the police decided to launch smoke or tear gas grenades at the bloc and charge the crowd, most of the pacifists ran, leaving the bloc to defend 35,000 people trapped in a park. While the bloc prevented the pigs from entering the park, giving everyone else space to rest and recover while resulting in a series of blocers suffering broken bones and arrest, we again had to fend off the "peace police" who were attempting to deescalate the situation by physically attempting to push us off the street from behind while the pigs attacked from the front. Is this not the very form of action which the state treats as its limit before attempting to control a situation by force, usually allowing the participants to police themselves, sometimes in a very literal sense?

was an armed revolution after all). Yet his selective reading of history is not what is at issue here. Sharp articulates a common position to back up nonviolence: that nonviolent struggle is necessary to create a nonviolent world. He bases this theory around an articulation of a networked idea of political power, that states persist in their actions because of a structuring of social consent, and that nonviolent action presents a mechanism to stop and hinder undesirable actions by the state while constructing the basis for a new political paradigm through the exercise of popular or constituent power.

The second argument that we want to examine, and this is an argument that is only important to engage with in the framework of anti-authoritarian movements, is the argument presented in the pamphlet "You Can't Blow Up A Social Relationship". The central argument made in the pamphlet is that revolutionary violence is a "strategy of impatience" (12), that it presents a vanguardist tactical set that presents nothing but authoritarian possibilities.

Obviously these two arguments are not separate, they mutually reinforce each other in interesting ways, but also have two characteristics in common. Both approaches assume the legitimacy of mass politics and the pure ideality of the state. This is the basis of their failure. Most other arguments for nonviolence are based on religious or moral rejections of violence, as was mentioned before, yet all of these theological approaches take these to arguments as their basis in the revolutionary context. In order for nonviolence to be more than a self-discovery quest this would have to be the case, and this is the pivot point of the latent authoritarianism of nonviolence.

The next aspect of this question that needs to be engaged with is if nonviolence is even possible. All revolutionary struggle occurs on a plane of engagement with the state. Now, we am not claiming that Sharp is wrong, the state is a collection of acts solicited and enacted on a micropolitical level, but this is only half of the picture. The state has very physical manifesta-

tions, even if these manifestations are just apparatuses of acts and equivalences. The ideality of the state takes on physical characteristics, just ask anyone in prison or in a black bloc. The state constitutes a condition of possibility for everyday life, yet the categories of equivalence have changed. In the age of globalization and cybernetics the ethnic "purity" of the nation has broken down, forcing the state to change form from state qua ethnos to state qua demos. The state qua ethnos was the state of projection, a state which projected an ethnic control outside of the ethnic border. The state qua demos is the state of armed inclusion, the state of generalized war. The state in a certain sense has abolished the border, no longer able to claim the representation of a certain identity. The identity itself, embodied in the founding principles of the state, has escaped the border in the form of a universal declaration. All subjects, all agents, become part of the Subject, the expression of these "universal" principles, or a citizen; all must become One, it is the only way that something like political hierarchy can be justified. The so-called "War on Terrorism" shows this clearly, the fight is not about the imposition of "democracy" in "foreign" spaces, rather the imposition of "democracy" is seen as the liberation of some inherent human essence embodied in the "democratic" state. This is the abolition of the battlefield in the generation of war as becoming-social, or becoming universal and this imposition, or armed forced inclusion, is exactly that, it is armed, it is physical, not just in the minds of bureaucrats.

At this point it does become important to address effectiveness, to address the engagement with this physical manifestation. If the goal of nonviolence is to institute a new form of power, can it accomplish this within the framework of total war? Rather that the state being the determination of actions, it sets an enforced framework for the constitution of the possibilities of actions. In liberal-democratic regimes the concept of political "freedom" is held to be unchallengeable, even if it is an impossibility within political hierarchies. As Hobbes will

content through the unilateral institution of nonviolence guidelines by the organizing group. The original idea was that we should set a date for the withdrawal of American troops from Iraq, or a wave of direct action would be launched across the US. The nonviolence guidelines set the parameters which actions will be carried out:

> - Our attitude will be one of nonviolence, openness and respect toward all we encounter.
> - We will use no violence, verbal or physical, toward any person.
> - We will not destroy or damage any property.
> - When engaging in nonviolent civil disobedience, we will accept the consequences of our actions.
> - We will not carry anything that could be construed as a weapon * We will not bring or use alcohol or drugs (except for medical purposes).
>
> (http://declarationofpeace.org/nonviolence-guidelines)

So under these guidelines any participant cannot be stoned, hostile towards the pigs, smash windows, and must voluntarily allow themselves to be arrested.

Need we say more? The very framework prevents confrontation or any attempt to destabilize a situation. The goal of these actions is to "invite the majority in this country to take steps to call for an end to the US war in Iraq". So, as we talked about earlier, the goal of the nonviolent action is to encourage the building of the mass nonviolent Subject, the subject of nonconfrontation. The generation of the Subject qua nonviolence

pure ideality which, and this is the second point of agreement, can be combatted through mass noncooperation. The state qua demos as the state of technique and stabilization responds to acts of destabilization to the degree that they are potentially entropic. This leads our nonviolence proponents into a little bit of a trap. The mass Subject of nonviolence is the Subject of necessary mass action, or unified and striated action, based in the definitionality of nonviolence.

So they become presented with a choice. The Subject of nonviolence, always already generated as an equivalence, can engage in acts, but acts that are always limited in the potential for potential. If the action carried out is not effective, if it fails to generate a potential destabilization (and most nonviolent actions fall into this category), then the action defeats itself. If the action does become effective then the violence of the state, which forms the condition of possibility for the state qua demos, goes unopposed. The nice pacifists sit in the road till they either get bored with the police escort or get dispersed through the use of force.

The posited equivalence of the Subject qua nonviolence is, like all Newtonian moves, an equivalence of frozen temporality, making it impossible to act situationally. It is no wonder that the pacifists almost never achieve anything.

Diversity of Tactics

The ineffectiveness and technocratic aspects of nonviolence manifest most practically in the sets of nonviolence guidelines that many of us have grown to be completely sick of getting handed on small fliers before every mass demonstration that we choose to attend. A good example of these types of guidelines, and many of them tend to be very similar, is the guidelines set by the Declaration of Peace. This is a campaign which at a certain point had some potential, yet got leached of all its

explain, the state does not prevent actions, (this would be completely impossible unless we were all the state itself, and the state is not a physical entity in this sense) rather the state sanctions actions that have already occurred. In short, the state generates a framework of acceptability through its ontological equivalence of turning multitudes into the Subject, turning the dynamic multiplicity of everyday life into a governable and abstractable social.

In order to maintain this equivalence the state must eliminate or otherwise neutralize destabilizing elements.

Interestingly enough, this is very similar to the language used in various police and military crowd control manuals. Field Manual 3–19.15, the US Military Civil Disturbance Manual, incorporates a structuring of the limit of "acceptable" acts in the interest of maintaining political stability. Now, like the inherent equivalences posited as the condition of possibility for the state as such, the manual states that the police need to generalize and categorize any action into a set of abstractable categories of analysis before strategies of action can be conceived. Much of this is based on the identification of the tactical set of the group at issue. For this frame of analysis to function the mass group needs to be present and centered around a universality of tactics and goals. The category defined by the pigs needs to operate as a One or the analysis fails and therefore their tactical framework fails. Nonviolence makes this calculation all to easy. In the elimination of the possibilities of certain forms of action there is a framework of acceptability which escapes the dynamics of everyday life and situation and comes to operate as a framework of equivalence for actions. By generating its own equivalences of situation, by generating its own sets of equivalences, the tactics of nonviolence can only be mass tactics, or tactics that possess their own form of stability.

This shortcoming of nonviolence has been illustrated in all too many completely pointless actions and this failure allows

total war to continue unabated. In short, all nonviolence can accomplish in the framework of the police crowd control apparatus, or the apparatus of the state channeling of conflict, is to reinforce the myth of freedom in the state. The statement, "well, I don't agree with them but I will always fight wars to preserve their right to do it" become possible. This possibility is a statement of the acceptability of nonviolent actions, they are accepted and dealt with by the police in the most passive way possible to the degree that they pose no threat to the stability apparatus of the state itself, nonviolence becomes political action emptied of risk, emptied of danger, and thus emptied of any form of effectiveness. The limitation on the possibility of tactics of intervention become the institution of a revolutionary politics with no potential.

But here the answer runs into a wall, and this is the point of the text in which we would like to focus much attention. If nonviolence, in its positing of a generalized equivalence, creates another form of stability and a space for negotiation, that does not mean that one can generate the ideology of violence.

This was tried by Nechaev already. Violence, if it is to maintain the potential for destabilization of the political apparatus, cannot become another form of equivalence. Not all violences are the same, a point missed by many pacifists.

War machines and their reappropraition are different moves. Yet it is problematic to begin to argue for the tactical universality of violence without also generating a negotiable equivalence. Recent approaches to this problem have come up in the discourse of diversity of tactics. Employing a diversity of tactics creates the space for agency to be situationally, politically and positionally dependent; one engages in the tactics that they have a desire to engage with. This has never functioned flawlessly as of yet, still pacifists denounce anarchists in the press for being too violent. With the practical failures aside the approach is worth a look. We want to end this text with a discussion of the St. Paul Principles developed to facil-

> "Current crowd control doctrine places an emphasis on crowd dispersal. Forced dispersal may result in a crowd breaking up into multiple groups that scatter over a large area. This may pose even greater public order problems and may pose a continued threat to control forces. A crowd is often controlled better by means of containment (confining its activities to a given area). A crowd has limited duration, and its numbers are likely to diminish as individual needs take precedence over those of the crowd" (2–22).

This manual is quite possibly one of the best illustrations of the mindset of the pigs within the state qua demos. What is interesting here is that the goal of the pigs is not to prevent actions, or to put a blanket level of force around the action itself. Rather the goal is to respond to destabilization with increasing armed stability. The main variable within the approaches laid out here is that the pigs need to have a situation which they can generalize and respond to. It is expressed in the quote from page 2–22, "Forced dispersal may result in a crowd breaking up into multiple groups scattered over a large area. This may pose even greater public order problems and may pose a continued threat to control forces". In other words, the decentralization of insurrectionary violence generates a potential entropy within their strategic framework. The concern of the pigs is to contain and de-escalate the situation, by force if necessary. The state tolerates and even solicits certain political acts, in order to maintain the myth of political freedom within the state apparatus, to the degree that these acts are emptied of their destabilizing and entropic properties.

Nonviolence plays into this strategy completely, and that is why pacifists pose no threat. We laid out earlier that the two fundamental characteristics of the nonviolence discourses analyzed earlier were that they both approach the state as a

second discussion that we will engage in is a discussion of the inherently stabilizing elements in the theories of nonviolence outlined above.

Field Manual 3–19.15 is the standard operations manual for the US military in crowd control situations. It has been repeatedly cited and mimicked by pigs all over the country in learning how to deal with the rise in political demonstrations.

The manual proceeds by generating a series of categories of analysis. Firstly, the crowd is analyzed and positioned into three classes: public disorder is when a small crowd is gathering, public disturbance is when a crowd begins to chant or engage in mild actions like marching or nonviolently blocking a road, riot is when the crowd begins to engage in property destruction or other forms of violence (1–5). "Commanders must be aware of the possibility that some individuals or groups within an organized demonstration may have the intent to cause disruption, incite violence, destroy property, and provoke authorities" (1–3). Their pre-action preparation lays out a series of considerations for the pigs to take into account. They are advised to avoid confrontation, focus on prevention, and define goals beforehand. "Crowd situations are highly unpredictable, but one thing seems certain- confrontation will likely cause crowd resistance. When pushed, people tend to resist opposition to the realization of their purpose" (2–5).

It goes on to recommend that the pigs communicate with the "leaders" of the protest (which in the context of anarchist blocs has led to some really funny situations with very confused pigs, especially in DC) in order to form a working relationship which results in "protest groups largely policing themselves" (2–7).

If this fails the pigs then move into what they call scaleable effects. In other words, they will attempt to develop a matrix of escalation, moving from warnings to disperse to shows of force and finally escalating force (2–13).

itate actions at the Republican National Convention protests. Since that point the St Paul Principles have become the standard point of departure for the discussion and deployment of a diversity of tactics and have led to the development of the Pittsburgh Principles around the G20 meetings.

Basis For Nonviolence

To begin this discussion of the two arguments for nonviolence that we want to outline we need to begin by making a distinction. Many nonviolent actions are carried out for reformist goals, for example in the antiwar movement. These actions are not what we are going to be addressing here. For many of us engaged in political movements it has become plainly obvious that putting makeup on a pig still makes it a pig. Or, for instance, putting restrictions on police violence still makes it police violence, or making capital "ethical" (which is a complete impossibility) still preserves the forced equivalence and channeling of everyday life through the commodity form as condition of possibility. Reformist movements are worth even less than all the paper used for their flyers and all the money and gas wasted mobilizing huge spectacles of conformity. What we are dealing with here is the destabilizing potentiality of the tactics and ontological frameworks of nonviolence. So, to put it another way, the only paradigm of nonviolence that is even worth considering is "revolutionary nonviolence", the type expressed by Sharp or the War Resisters League. All other forms of nonviolence, because they do not even maintain the illusion of attempting to combat the violence endemic in capitalism, is nothing but a lifestyle choice.

The position of a revolutionary nonviolence has been argued by such widely divergent people as Catholic Workers and Einstein. Many of the positions of nonviolence hold religious or moral considerations at their core but these are not the consid-

erations that we are interested in here. Rather we will be engaging with the framework of deployment for these principles of nonviolence, whatever they happen to be. Or in other words, we will be engaging with the modes of action of revolutionary nonviolence. It is also worth noting that there have been some awesome "nonviolent" actions (nonviolent in quotes because of the vast disagreement over the terming of violence, an issue that will be engaged with later). "Nonviolent" activists have broken into draft offices and set draft records on fire by the thousands, sawed down telephone poles at NORAD which connected global positioning satellite dishes from the central computer infrastructure, hacked the US military missile targeting system which delayed the invasion of Iraq by 2 full days. In other words, nonviolent actions can be effective given the right circumstances and effective and clandestine planning and strategic structuring. But the question here is the possibility of nonviolent acts to smash the state apparatus.

The modern American pacifist tactical framework derives from the studies of Gene Sharp. Sharp was a leading historian, theorist, and tactician on a series of "nonviolent" campaigns. There is debate within pacifist circles as to the pacifism of Sharp, who at many points described himself as a "tactical pacifist" (a pacifist not on principle but out of necessity), but none-the-less he is a guiding light for nonviolence trainers all around the world. What is interesting about Sharp, and why he cannot just be written off as a religious fundamentalist, is that his version of nonviolence departs from a discussion on the functionings of political power. "Basically there appear to be two views of the nature of power. One can see people as dependent upon good will, the decisions and the support of their government, or any other hierarchical system to which they belong. Or, conversely, one can see that government or system dependent on the people's good will, decisions and support" (Sharp, 8). The division here is between understanding the state as an entity as such which controls and oppresses the

state of contestation, outside of the anti-statist move (although still subject to repression, again, isn't this the point of the state), the ethnic form can take on a variety of appropriations, while the state qua demos is the state of technique. While the state qua ethnos can take on a variety of forms, stalinist nationalism and fascism for example, the state qua demos is the state of technocracy, the form is already given and the only debates exist around the content of this form. The conclusions of the form of organization are taken as latent in the construction of the Subject as such, the state qua demos is the state of stability, the state of security where the form must be secured and the content allowed to shift within given confines. The primary goal of the political state is to secure borders and stabilize political forms to preserve the limits posited and in order to do this they are willing to carry out a constant security operation, one called national security or just security.

The Impossibility of Nonviolent Revolution

Nonviolent revolution is an impossibility. We will engage with two discussions as to why this is the case. Firstly, we will look at crowd control procedures outlined in "Field Manual 3–19.15: Civil Disturbance Operations" issued by the US military to National Guard forces and police departments. The reason that this manual has been chosen, and there are a lot of manuals which address civil disturbance operations, is that most police civil disturbance operations manuals are tightly based on the procedures outlined in this manual, for a good example look at the recently released RNC Civil Disturbance Manual released by the St Paul Police Department. The main goal of the procedures outlined in the manual are based on the generation of equivalences in order to respond to a situation in order to maintain stability, but not necessarily to end all political acts. The

states determined by ethnic make up, rather they are separated through a process of political differentiation, and with the institution of the European Union and the "War on Terrorism", even that distinction is beginning to break down. Rather the state is presented as the expression of an inherent human essence.

> "America will lead by defending liberty and justice because they are right and true andunchanging for all people everywhere. No nation owns these aspirations, and no nation is exemptfrom them. We have no intention of imposing our culture — but America will always stand firm for the non-negotiable demands of human dignity: the rule of law ... limits on the power of the state ... respect for women ... private property ... free speech ... equal justice ... and religious tolerance. "(Bush, 1/29/2002)

The structuring of the state qua ethnos was the structuring of the state around a necessary exclusion and projection. The war of the state qua ethnos is the war of projection and conquering, recently this was the case in Bosnia, for example.

The ethnic war is the war of subjectification or cleansing, but that war is localized. The state qua demos is the state of armed inclusion. The imperatives of the Subject, or the stability of the state qua apparatus, are expressed as inherent human characteristics which can be realized or not through political structuring. This is the logic of the humanitarian intervention and international policing structures. This inclusion is the territorialization of the Newtonian move of the state in a generalized form. The battlefield is no longer contained, now every act is subject to violent response by the state regardless of positionality. In this sense the state qua demos becomes the condition of possibility for the act generally, and each act can be considered an act of war. In other words, the state qua ethnos was still a

actions within its area of control, or understanding the state as the structuring of consent. Sharp then goes on to argue that the structuring of political violence is the structuring of violence to combat the state qua Monolith or system. If This view, for Sharp, and we would agree with him here, is too narrow. "That theory can only alter reality when both the subjects and opponents of the regime presenting this monolithic image of itself can be induced to believe the theory" (Sharp, 9). In another light, if the generation of the act is based in a continuity of discontinuity, in other words if we depart from the conditions of possibility for the act itself while generating a futurity as the possibility for the act itself, then the act presents a rupture in the continuity of temporality. It generates an act which is a break with all that is past, the act itself presumes that there is a space which is not accounted for in the act itself, and the act is act to the degree that it is based on a necessary destabilization of the circular inertia of history in the linearity of the succession of acts, and then the state cannot act. In other words, each and every action, even something as simple as being alive, changes the conditions that existed before that act, each act destabilizes history and presents a series of effects as possibilities for this rupture.

Like Spinoza's God, the state is a vast apparatus of equivalence and in its universality it cannot generate discontinuities within its equivalence or it threatens to abolish itself, so the state cannot act as an entity as such. The state must be stabile, it presents a framework which is static, immobile. Yet acts themselves move, they destabilize. The elimination of the possibility of acts and in its impossibility, impossible because the state is enacted through actions themselves, means that the state must posit a framework of acceptable destabilizations, or stabilized destabilizations by generating a framework outside of acts themselves, a framework which judges acts through making them all equivalent and in this the state remains immobile. Yet if acts present nothing but effects, or possibilities in a

context, then all acts are singularities, unable to be compared to other acts. Within the Newtonian assumption of equivalence the equivalence posited is an ontological determination, a determination of the necessary equivalence of like and like. In other words, the positing of the Newtonian move, the generation of the frozen temporality of the equivalence, in being ontological is a claim on space-time generally. As such the apparatus which forms the condition of possibility cannot act as such, so the state cannot be an entity in itself. This is borne out in practical experience. The state is an apparatus which frames, limits, and channels actions into acceptable forms, legalistic or informal. Everyday over a million people get up, put on uniforms, and go to work in the bureaucracies and control mechanisms of the state, every cop makes a decision every day to be a cop.

> "The only way to erect such a Common Power…is, to conferre all their power and strength upon one Man, or upon one Assembly of men, that may reduce all their Wills, by plurality of voices, onto one Will: which is as much as to say, to appoint one man, or Assembly of men, to beare their Person…This is more than Consent or Concord; it is a reall Unitie of them all, in one and the same Person…This done, the Multitude so united in one Person, is called a Common-wealth…"(Hobbes, 227)

The state is the generation of the Subject from the multitude of discontinuous acts, it forms the conditions of possibility for the act by structuring the continuity which the act occurs within. So in this sense Sharp is correct, the state is not a monolith. This becomes important because he goes on to claim that nonviolence gains legitimacy because it deals with power "at its source" (Sharp, 10). In short, Sharp is making the claim that nonviolence, in being absent of coercion, builds the basis of a

pressed. That is the point of having an armed gang employed by the state which they call police.

The Generalized Violence of Everyday Life

The point here is that the everyday life in contemporary society is structured on violence. We live on land stolen and cultivated by massacring one group of people and enslaving another. The market is based on measuring how many trees can be cut, mountain tops blown off to mine for coal, sweatshops opened, wages driven down, environmental laws abolished, infrastructure sold off, people downsized, and wars started. The generalization of the commodity form is the structuring of the equivalence of violence and coercion in the form of profit. The more that can be taken from us and sold to the highest bidder, the more profit is generated, all while we slave away to get back the things which are already ours outside of the apparatus of commodification.

As Ernst Junger began to discuss, the borders of the battlefield have been abolished into total war. The change in state form from state qua ethnos to state qua demos has been the germination point of this generalization of violence. "The symptoms of the impasse in which the problematic of sovereignty in Europe is caught is encountered every day; in the final analysis they all refer to the absolute blockage of the question of the 'people' understood not as ethnos or 'communal identity' but as demos or 'constituent political identity'" (Balibar 157). The age of globalization has brought about a lot of changes to the general structuring of social apparatuses, the most stark shift has been the increased flow of people over borders. There are 200,000 ethnic Tamils living in Toronto and almost as many Indian restaurants in London than in Bombay. The state as the expression of an ethnic Subject has broken down and been replaced by the state as political construction. No longer are

those flows, and anarchist assassinations, which caused a general amount of chaos in the ruling structures of the West in the early 20th century, but failed to accomplish its goals.

In a sense both pieces reject the imposition of a mass political solution imposed by a minority group only to rebuild the idea of mass politics. In both pieces the argument is that noncoercive nonviolent acts attack power at the level of deployment, everyday life, by opening up a non-authoritarian social refusal. Yet both pieces rely on the construction of the nonviolent equivalence. Rather than the mass Subject imposed by the violent imposition of social order through violent action, they both construct the Subject of mass action based in a definitionality of nonviolence. This imposes the restriction on temporality and action through the assertion of an inherent nonviolent noncooperation. The argument is that we always have the ability to withdraw consent from the state through mass nonviolent action. Yet if violence is considered as inherently authoritarian, then nonviolence becomes the condition of possibility for action.

A practical example of this occurred in Seattle during the WTO demonstrations in 1999, where pacifists pepper sprayed anarchists attempting to smash windows on Nike Town. Here, an axiom of nonviolence was violently imposed. Like the state apparatus, nonviolence generates a Newtonian equivalence. Once a certain tactical set is rejected absolutely, all attempts at this can be repressed to preserve the nonviolent aspects of the act.

Both pieces also assume that the state is a pure ideality. It is true on a certain level that the state is a structuring of consent, but ask anyone in prison or under FBI investigation if this is a sufficient framework of analysis. Every tear gas canister and taser, every battalion of pigs that occupy our streets, every person killed in cold blood by the pigs, proves this concept of the state as pure ideality incorrect. The plain fact is that if the state decides that an action presents a threat to stability it will be re-

new, presumably nonhierarchical form of power, through the absence of the act qua coercion. Now, Sharp claims that nonviolence can be deployed as a form of non-cooperation. Noncooperation for Sharp attacks power at its base, the very structuring of consent necessary for the state to function (Sharp, 36). This concept of nonviolence begins to sketch out a concept of revolutionary nonviolence based around the generation of mass no cooperation. In essence, he is attempting to construct a concept of nonviolence as war machine. The nonviolent war machine is a tactic of refusal based in a destabilization concept. If the state is the structuring of consent for the state, then refusal of the mandates of the state undermines its ability to implement equivalences. In a sense it is the theory of nonviolence as virus, the hope being that noncooperation will spread. In this sense nonviolence for Sharp is a defensive move, defending an already present human condition from encroachment by the state, the nonviolent activist is exercising an ability that is always already latent. But because of this defensive character, the nonviolent act must always already be the mass act. Everyone in the factory needs to seize the factory or strike, all people need to march to the sea to pound salt, etc. In this sense the nonviolence of Sharp is the generation of a form of alternate stability formed around the maxim to not impose.

The other basis for nonviolence in an anarchist context that needs to be engaged with is the argument presented in "You Can't Blow Up A Social Relationship" about what a series of Australian anarchists saw as the inherent authoritarian vanguardism in the act of violent insurrection. This argument is not important in authoritarian circles, which already accept the authoritarian vanguard role, hell, this essay may just encourage them. "A democracy can only be produced if a majority movement is built. The guerilla strategy depends on a collapse of will in the ruling class to produce the social crisis out of which the revolution occurs, whether the majority favors it or not. Any reading of guerilla strategists reveals that

it is a philosophy of impatience" (12). The argument here is important, though every example that is used is an example from guerilla movements that unapologetically assume an authoritarian character. What the authors of this pamphlet, and their names have been lost in the dustbin of anarchist history, are arguing is that the move of the violent revolution is not a populist move. In the structuring of the concept of revolutionary violence around impatience they have equated all violent action to vanguardism. In essence the claim is that the violent insurrection generates its own structuring of authority around the revolutionary act, a "your either with us or against us" mentality. In choosing to act before waiting for the "masses", the insurrectionist is unilaterally defining the conditions of action within the plane of resistance. "Concentrating on the supposed insanity of the guerillas or terrorists is an attempt to provide a justification for murderousness towards them and for the introduction of general repression" (16).

Now this is not incorrect. Violent actions do draw an increase in repression from the state. Yet this is problematic in a very basic way. The claim is that the acts of the insurrectionists are the cause of political repression by the state. Yet is it not the existence of the equivalent Subject qua state that is the condition of possibility for generalized repression. Now there are practical examples that back this up. In Italy over the course of the 20th century it was standard for fascists to bomb a target and blame it on the anarchists to draw state repression onto anarchist militants. But they have the process backwards, it is not the insurrectionists that generate the repression, rather it is the state reaction that generates repression. The state is a posited equivalence which has exceeded everyday life and become condition of possibility for everyday life. Whether we like it or not, the cops think that they control the streets. In the generation of the Newtonian equivalence all outlying variables need to be eliminated, all destabilizations to the framework stabilized or eliminated. Like the airstream pattern studies that

generated the basis for chaos theory, as an equivalence progresses it needs to either freeze time, which is impossible, or reincorporate or eliminate potentially destabilizing elements in order to maintain its coherence (Gleick, 15) . But if all acts present a destabilization in continuity, if acts form a continuity of discontinuity, what we call history, then acts are reincorporated or repressed due to the threat of entropy which they pose to the abstracting machine. So it is not the act that generates repression, it is the existence of the abstracting apparatus of the state that generates repression in an attempt to maintain coherence, and all effective insurrectionary events will draw repression by the state to the degree that they are potentially destabilizing.

This is why we hate it when anarchists complain about police brutality after actions. Isn't this the point, we reject the state because it can employ violence to prevent us from living our desires, because it makes us all equivalent? If we are serious about this we have to expect that the state will attack with everything they have, within the social limits of acceptability. For instance in the US pigs do not use water cannons because it hearkens back to images of white pigs firing water cannons on black civil rights demonstrators, but do not think for a second that they will hesitate to use a water cannon if they had to, they were on the streets of St Paul during the RNC awaiting deployment.

Both of these arguments make a similar set of assumptions that construct a framework for nonviolent action. Both of these pieces depart from the idea that violence is used against the state in order to "sever the head of state" and impose a new form of organization. They are both correct to argue that this is completely vanguardist and does not engage with power on the level of deployment. This approach has been the downfall of both authoritarian communism, which took power in certain sites and left the general social structuring of power untouched while imposing another structure to control