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INTRO- DUCTION TO **CIVIL** **WAR** (FRAGMENTS)



insufficiently intrusive, it will ally itself for as long as it takes with some local mafia or even some local guerilla group, on the condition that these parties guarantee they will maintain order in the territory they have been assigned. Nothing is more irrelevant to Empire than the question, “who controls what?”—provided, of course, that *control has been established*.

62 Imperial sovereignty means that no point of space or time and no element of the biopolitical tissue is safe from intervention. The electronic archiving of the world, today’s generalized traceability, the fact that the means of production are becoming just as much a means of control, the reduction of the juridical edifice to a mere weapon in the arsenal of the norm—all this tends to turn each and every citizen of Empire into a suspect.

72 The sphere of hostility can be reduced only by extending the ethico-political domain of friendship and enmity. This is why Empire has always failed to extend this domain, despite all its protestations in favor of peace. The becoming-real of the Imaginary Party is simply the formation—by contagion—of a plane of consistency where friendships and enmities can freely deploy themselves and make themselves legible to one another.

Under the regime of the norm, nothing is normal and everything must be *normalized*. What functions here is a positive paradigm of power. The norm *produces* all that is, insofar as the norm is itself, ONE says, the *ens realissimum*. Whatever does not belong to its mode of unveiling is not, and whatever is not cannot belong to its mode of unveiling. Under the regime of the norm, negativity is never recognized as such, but reduced to a simple *default* of the norm, a hole to be taken back up into the biopolitical tissue. Negativity, this power that is not supposed to exist, is quite logically abandoned to a traceless disappearance. Not without reason, since the Imaginary Party is the Outside of the world without Outside, the essential discontinuity lodged at the heart of a world rendered continuous.

58 | Empire perceives civil war neither as an affront to its majesty nor as a challenge to its omnipotence. It sees it only as a *risk*. This explains the pre-emptive counter-revolution Empire has not failed to wage against anyone who might have punctured *holes* in the biopolitical continuum. Unlike the modern State, Empire does not deny the existence of civil war—instead, it *manages* it. If it denied it, it would have to do without certain means it needs to steer, or contain, this same civil war. Wherever its networks are

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PREFACE TO INTRODUCTION TO CIVIL WAR (FRAGMENTS)

THIS TEXT WAS FIRST PUBLISHED in the journal *Tiqqun*, a radical publication of theory, and was recently translated by Jason Smith for the journal *Soft Targets*. Coincidentally, people associated with *Tiqqun* were arrested along with others throughout France on November 11, 2008, in conjunction with five incidents of sabotage against high-speed trains throughout the country. We have chosen to reprint this text as a small pamphlet as a gesture of solidarity with the accused.

Introduction to Civil War shares with us a few theses to explore and discuss. It proposes very little in the way of concrete objectives to achieve but rather poses questions to the reader regarding the meaning of being and becoming in the form-of-life within capital and as subjects to the state and perhaps as something else as well. This modest text examines some key concepts from contemporary theory, notably the works of Giorgio Agamben; and elaborates on Agamben's own discursive framework *in practice*—exposing a coarse seam connecting an insurrectional practice with an ontology of the common.

Civil war is this discursive framework; the ever-present potentiality for hospitalities and for hostilities. This is what Agamben locates as the meaning of the human form-of-life—a practice of ethics from moment to moment. Furthermore a force of interruption that inscribes meaning, that writes *law* with *anarchy*. It is once we feel this fact of global civil war that we can elect to become a party, something some have already begun.

From a flat part of the South,
Liam Sionnach '09

For more information on the "Tarnac nine" visit, tarnac9.wordpress.com

sovereignty of what is outside it, the norm is acephalic—headless—and is delighted every time ONE severs the head of some sovereign. The norm has no *hieros*, no place of its own, but acts invisibly over the entirety of the gridded, edgeless space it distributes. Nothing and no one is excluded from this space, or rejected into an identifiable exteriority. What is called “excluded” is here only a modality of a generalized inclusion. It is therefore no longer anything but a single and same field, homogenous but diffracted into an infinity of nuances, a regime of limitless integration that sets out to maintain the play between forms-of-life at the lowest possible level of intensity. In this space, an ungraspable agency of totalization reigns, dissolving, digesting, absorbing and deactivating all alterity a priori. A process of omnivorous immanentization deploys itself on a planetary scale. The goal: *make the world a continuous biopolitical tissue*. In the meantime, the norm stands watch.

the extent it is *administered*, taken up in an *integration* that positively eliminates these exteriorities in order to permit their subsequent recirculation. This is why, at the heart of Biopower, there is no such thing as death: there is only murder, and its circulation. Through statistics, an entire network of causalities embeds each living thing in an aggregate of deaths. . . . The truth is that there is no margin that can be identified as such, since *liminarity itself has become the intimate condition of all that exists*.

The Law fixes divisions and establishes distinctions, it outlines what defies it, and recognizes a world it both forms and gives duration to; the Law ceaselessly names and enumerates what is outlawed. The Law says *its outside*. The inaugural gesture of the Law is to exclude its own foundation—sovereignty, violence. But the norm has no sense of foundation. It has no memory, and stays as close as possible to the present, always claiming to be on the side of immanence. Where the Law gives itself a face and honors the

1 | The elementary human unity is not the *body*—the individual—but the form-of-life.

2 | The form-of-life is not *beyond* bare life, it is its intimate polarization.

3 | Each body is affected by its form-of-life as if by a clinamen, a penchant, a leaning, an attraction, a *taste*. What a body leans toward also leans toward it. This goes for each and every situation. All inclinations are reciprocal.

4 | This taste, this clinamen, can either be conjured away or assumed. To assume a form-of-life is not simply to recognize such a penchant, but to *think* it. I call *thought* that which converts a form-of-life into a *force*, into a sensible effectivity. In every situation there is one line that stands out among all the others, the line along which *power grows*. Thought is the capacity for singling out this line, and following it. That a form-of-life can only be assumed by following this line means: *all thought is strategic*.

6| Asking why this body is affected by that form-of-life rather than another is as meaningless as asking why there is something rather than nothing. This question only signals the refusal to recognize, and even the terror before, contingency. *A fortiori*, acting accordingly.

9| In and of themselves, forms-of-life can be neither said nor described. They can only be shown—each time, in a necessarily singular context. The play between them, considered locally, follows rigorous signifying determinisms. If these determinisms are thought, they become *rules* and can be modified. Each sequence of this play is bordered, on each side, by an event. The event disorders the play between forms-of-life, introduces a fold within it, suspends past determinations and inaugurates new ones through which it should be interpreted. In all things, we start from the middle.

There is no longer any visible Outside—no *pure* Nature, no Great Madness, no Great Criminal and no *classical* Great Proletariat with its really-existing Homeland of Justice and Liberty. These have all disappeared, above all because they have lost their imaginary force of attraction. There is no longer any Outside precisely because there is exteriority at every point of the biopolitical tissue. Madness, crime or the proletariat no longer make up a world outside the world, their own ghetto with or without walls. With the dissipation of the social, they have become reversible modalities, latent violences or suspect possibilities of *each and every body*.

This suspicion is what justifies the continuous socialization of society, the perfecting of the micro-mechanisms of control. Not that Biopower claims to directly govern men and things—to the contrary, it governs *possibilities* and *conditions* of possibility.

Everything that had its source in the Outside (illegality, first of all, but also misery and death) is, to

nothing seems to have changed. ONE is simply struck by the sudden uselessness of so many familiar things, and the old divisions that once had so much weight now no longer function.

A nagging little neurosis makes ONE want to continue to distinguish the just from the unjust, the healthy from the sick, work from leisure, the criminal from the innocent or the ordinary from the monstrous. But we need to acknowledge the obvious: these old divisions are no longer intelligible.

They have not been suppressed, however. They are still there, but *without consequences*. The norm has not abolished the Law—it has merely voided the Law and ordered it to its own ends, in line with its own immanent practices of calculation and administration. When the Law enters the force field of the norm, it loses all its faded luster of transcendence, and can only function in a sort of state of exception that repeats itself indefinitely.

The state of exception is the *normal* regime of the Law.

10 | Civil war is the free play between forms-of-life; it is their principle of co-existence.

11 | “War” because in each singular play between forms-of-life, the possibility of a fierce confrontation—the possibility of violence—can *never* be discounted. “Civil,” because the confrontation between forms-of-life is not a confrontation between States—those coincidences between a population and a territory—but between *parties*, in the sense this word had before the advent of the modern State. Because we must be precise from now on, let us say that they confront one another as *partisan war machines*. “Civil war” then, because forms-of-life are indifferent to the separations between men from women, political existence from bare life, civilians from military; because to be neutral is *to take sides* in the free play of forms-of-life; because this play between forms-of-life has no beginning or end that can be *declared*, its sole end being the physical end of the world that no one would be able to declare; and above all because I know of no body that is not hopelessly carried off into the excessive, and perilous, course of the world.

12 | The point of view of civil war is the point of view of the political.

16 | When I encounter a body affected by the same form-of-life as I am—community—this encounter puts me *in contact* with my own power.

18| When, at a certain moment and in a certain place, two bodies animated by forms-of-life that are absolutely foreign to one another meet, they experience *hostility*. This type of encounter gives rise to no relation; to the contrary, it bears witness to the prior absence of relation. The *hostis* can be identified and its situation can be known, but it itself cannot be known for what it is—*singular*. Hostility is therefore the impossibility for certain bodies to enter into composition with each another, for certain bodies to know each other as singular. Whenever a thing is known in its singularity, it takes leave of the sphere of hostility and thereby becomes a friend—or an enemy.

19| For me, the *hostis* is a nothing that must be annihilated, either through cessation of hostility, or by ceasing to exist altogether.

23| Hostility puts me at a distance from my own power.

24| What comes between the extremes of community and hostility is the sphere of friendship and enmity. Friendship and enmity are ethico-political concepts. That both give rise to an intense circulation of affects only shows that affective realities are works of art, and that the play between forms-of-life can be *elaborated*.

30| I call “communism” the real movement that elaborates, everywhere and at every moment, civil war.

33| The modern State referred its etymology to the Indo-European root *st-* and its implications of fixity, unchangingness, to what *is*. This maneuver fooled more than one of us. Today, when the State is no more than a survival of itself, the reverse becomes clear: it is civil war—what the Greeks called *stasis*—that is permanent, and the modern State that will have been a mere *reaction-process* to this permanent war.

46| The modern State will have failed in three different ways: first, as the absolutist State, then as the liberal State, and finally as the Welfare State. The passage from one to the other can only be understood in relation to three corresponding forms of civil war: the wars of religion, class struggle, and the Imaginary Party. It should be noted that the failure here is not found in the result, but in the process itself and its entire duration.

53| Empire is the turning outside-in of the liberal State. Once this has taken place, **ONE** has passed from a world partitioned by the Law to a space polarized by norms. The Imaginary Party is the other, *hidden side* of this turning outside-in.

Gloss **W**hat do we mean by **Imaginary Party**? *That the Outside has moved inside.* The turning outside-in of the liberal State into Empire has occurred silently, without violence, as if in the night. From without,