

To Our Friends  
Chapter Six

Our Only Homeland:  
Childhood

*the invisible committee*



- 1.** *There Is No "Society" to Be Defended or Destroyed*
- 2.** *Selection Needs to Be Turned into Secession*
- 3.** *There Are No "Local Struggles," but a War of Worlds*

## I

On May 5, 2010, Athens is experiencing one of those days of general strike where everyone is in the streets. The atmosphere is springlike and combative. Trade unionists, Maoists, anarchists, civil servants and pensioners, young people and immigrants, the city center is literally flooded with demonstrators. The country has discovered the incredible memorandums of the Troika and reacted with a rage that's still intact. Parliament, which is in the process of passing a new set of "austerity" measures, has come within an inch of being stormed. Failing that, it's the Ministry of Economics that yields and begins to burn. Pretty much everywhere on the routes, cobblestones are wedged out, banks are smashed, there are confrontations with the police, who are generous with their flashbangs and horrible tear gas canisters imported from Israel. The anarchists ritually launch their Molotov cocktails and, less customary, are applauded by the crowd. People chant the classic "cops, pigs, killers" and some shout "burn down the parliament!" "Government kills!" What resembles the beginning of an uprising will come to a halt in early afternoon, brought down in full flight by a government bulletin. It seems that anarchists, after having tried to light up the Ianos bookstore on Stadiou Street, set fire to a bank that had not respected the general strike proclamation. There were employees inside. Three of them died of suffocation, one of them a pregnant woman. It was not immediately specified that the management had locked the one emergency exit. The Marfin Bank event stunned and deflated the anarchist movement. The movement, and not the government, found itself in the role of killer. Under the pressure of the event, the rift between "social anarchists" and "nihilist anarchists" that had been growing since December 2008 reached its maximum intensity. There was a re-emergence of the old question of whether to engage with society in order to change it, suggesting and offering it examples of other forms of organization, or to set about simply destroying it, without sparing those who, through their passivity and submission, ensured its perpetuation. People got into a worse muddle than ever on this point. It went beyond diatribes. Blood was shed in the fighting that took place, to the great amusement of the police.

The tragic aspect of this affair, perhaps, is that people tore each other apart around a question that is no longer relevant, which would explain

why the debate has remained so sterile. Perhaps there is no longer a “society” to destroy or persuade. Perhaps that fiction which was born at the end of the 17th century and which occupied so many revolutionaries and rulers for two centuries has breathed its last without our realizing it. But we would still need to know how to mourn its passing, since we’re immune to the nostalgia of the sociologist who laments *The End of Societies* as well as to the neoliberal opportunism that declared one day with martial aplomb: “there is no such thing as society.”

In the 17th century, “civil society” was what stood in contrast to the “state of nature.” It was the fact of being “joined together under the same government and the same laws.” “Society” was a certain state of civilization, or it was “the good aristocratic society,” one that excluded the multitude of commoners. In the course of the 18th century, as liberal governmentality developed along with the “dismal science” corresponding to it, “political economy,” “civil society” came to denote bourgeois society. It no longer stood in contrast to the state of nature, it became “natural” as it were, as the habit spread of considering it natural for man to behave as an economic creature. So “civil society” was now understood as the entity that was counterposed to the State. It would take all the Saint-Simonism, all the scientism, all the socialism, all the positivism, and all the colonialism of the 19th century to impose the self-evidence of society, the self-evidence that, in all the manifestations of their existence, humans form a great family, a species totality. At the end of the 19th century, everything became “social”: housing, the question, economy, reform, sciences, hygiene, security, labor, and even war—social war. In 1894, at the height of this movement, a group of concerned philanthropists even established a “Social Museum” in Paris with the mission of testing and disseminating techniques for improving, pacifying, and sanitizing “social life.” In the 18th century, no one would have dreamed of founding a “science” like “sociology,” much less doing so on the model of biology.

At bottom, “society” only denotes the projected shadow of the successive modes of government. It was the whole set of subjects of the absolutist state in the age of the Leviathan, then that of economic actors in the liberal state. From the viewpoint of the welfare state, it was man himself, with his rights, needs, and labor power, who constituted the basic element of society. What is perverse about the idea of “society” is that it has always helped government to naturalize the product of its

And of course, as far as nice well-ordered totalities are concerned, the fascists will always have the last word.

No society, then, but worlds. And no war against society either: to wage war against a fiction is to give it substance. There’s no social sky above our heads, there’s us and the ensemble of ties, friendships, enmities, and actual proximities and distances that we experience. There are only sets of us, eminently situated powers, and their ability to ramify throughout the endlessly decomposing and recomposing social carcass. A swarming of worlds, a world made up of a whole slew of worlds, and traversed therefore by conflicts between them, by attractions and repulsions. To construct a world is to create an order, make a place or not for each thing, each being, each proclivity, and give thought to that place, change it if need be. With every manifestation of our party, whether it’s in the form of a plaza occupation, a wave of riots, or a deeply moving phrase tagged on a wall, the feeling spreads that it’s definitely “we” that’s at stake, in all those places where we’ve never been. This is why the first duty of revolutionaries is to take care of the worlds they constitute. As the Zapatistas have shown, the fact that each world is situated doesn’t diminish its access to the generality, but on the contrary is what ensures it. The universal, a poet has said, is the local without the walls. There seems, rather, to be a universalizing potential that is linked to a deepening per se, an intensification of what is experienced in the world at large. It’s not a question of choosing between the care we devote to what we are constructing and our political striking force. Our striking force is composed of the very intensity of what we are living, of the joy emanating from it, of the forms of expression invented there, of a collective ability to withstand stresses that is attested by our force. In the general inconsistency of social relations, revolutionaries should stand out by the density of thought, affection, finesse, and organization that they bring to bear, and not by their susceptibility to division and pointless intransigence, or by disastrous competition in the arena of phantasmal radicality. It’s through attention to the phenomenon, through their sensitive qualities that they will manage to become a real power, and not through ideological coherence.

Incomprehension, impatience, and negligence are the enemy.

The real is what resists.

revolution already seems, instantaneously, to have kept its promise: all men are brothers, anyone can speak freely, hearts are full, solidarity is strong. Historically, the formation of a new government transfers much of this power to the state instead of to civil society [...] The period of transition between two regimes seems to be what comes closest to the anarchist ideal of a stateless society, a time when everyone can act and no one holds final authority, when society invents itself as it goes along.” A new day would dawn on a responsible humanity full of common sense and capable of taking charge of itself in a respectful and intelligent collaboration. This assumes that the struggle will be content to allow an essentially good human nature to emerge, whereas it’s precisely the conditions of struggle that produce the humanity in question. The apology of civil society merely reenacts on a global scale the ideal of the passage to adulthood where we could finally do without our guardian, the state, because we would have finally understood; we would finally be worthy of self-governance. This litany appropriates everything associated so sadly with becoming an adult: a certain responsible boredom, an overplayed benevolence, the repression of vital affects that inhabit childhood—namely, a certain disposition to play and to conflict. The basic error is doubtless the following: at least since Locke, for the upholders of civil society, “politics” has always meant the tribulations caused by the corruption and negligence of the government—the social base always being natural and without a history. History, precisely, would only be the succession of errors and approximations that delay the coming of a satisfied society into its own. “The great end which men pursue when they enter into society is to enjoy their property peacefully and without danger.” Hence those who fight against the government on behalf of “society,” whatever their radical claims may be, can only desire, at bottom, to have done with history and the political, which is to say, with the possibility of conflict, which is to say, with spirited life.

We start from a very different premise: just as there is no “nature,” there is no “society” either. Pulling humans away from all the non-human elements that, for each one of them, go to make up their familiar world, and lumping together the creatures amputated in that way under the name of “society” is a monstrosity that has lasted long enough. Everywhere in Europe there are “communists” or socialists who propose a national way out of the crisis. Their solution would be to leave the euro and constitute a nice limited, homogeneous, and well-ordered totality. These amputees can’t keep from hallucinating their phantom member.

activity, its operations, its techniques. It was constructed as what essentially preexisted it. It was only after the Second World War, really, that one dared to speak explicitly about “social engineering.” Since then, society has officially become what one constructs, sort of like doing nationbuilding by attacking Iraq. Moreover, this doesn’t really work as soon as one openly claims to be doing it.

From era to era, defending society was never anything else but defending the object of government, even when this was being done against those who governed. Up until now, one of the mistakes of revolutionaries has been to fight on the terrain of a fiction that was essentially hostile to them, to appropriate a cause behind which government itself was advancing, wearing a mask. But a good part of our party’s current disarray has to do with the fact that, since the 1970s, government has abandoned this fiction. It has dropped the idea of integrating all humans into an ordered totality—Margaret Thatcher just had the candor to admit this. In a sense, it has become more pragmatic, and has abandoned the exhausting task of constructing a homogeneous human species that would be well-defined and distinctly separate from the rest of creation, bounded below by things and animals, and above by God, heaven, and the angels. The entry into the era of permanent crisis, the “years of easy money” and the transformation of everyone into desperate entrepreneurs of themselves dealt such a whack to the social idea that it came out of the 1980s somewhat dazed. The next blow, sure to be fatal, consists in the dream of the globalized metropolis, induced by the development of telecommunications and the parceling of the production process on a planetary scale.

One can continue seeing the world in terms of nations and societies, but the latter are now traversed, permeated, by an uncontrollable ensemble of flows. The world presents itself as an immense network in which the large cities, become metropolises, are no longer anything but platforms of interconnection, entry and exit points—stations. Henceforth, one can live the same life, it is claimed, in Tokyo or London, in Singapore or New York, with all the metropolises forming one world where what counts is mobility and no longer attachment to a place. Here individual identity serves as a universal pass ensuring the possibility, wherever one is, of connecting with the sub-population of one’s fellow creatures. But a collection of uber-metropolitans caught up in a constant shuffle from airport terminals to Eurostar toilets doesn’t make a society, even

a global one. The hyper-bourgeoisie that negotiates a contract near the Champs-Élysées before going to hear a set of music on a Rio rooftop and recovers from its emotions with an afterlude at Ibiza symbolizes the decadence of a world—to be enjoyed hastily before it's too late—more than it anticipates any sort of future. Journalists and sociologists cry endlessly over our moribund “society” with their litany about the post-social, the increasing individualism, the disintegration of the old institutions, the loss of reference points, the rise of communalisms, the steady worsening of inequalities. And why wouldn't they, since what is passing away in this case is their livelihood. One will need to think about reinventing oneself.

The revolutionary wave of the years 1960-1970 delivered a fatal blow to the project of a capitalist society into which everyone would integrate peacefully. In response to that, capital undertook a territorial restructuring. Since the project of an organized totality was crumbling at its base, it was from there, from secure and interconnected bases, plural, that the new global network of value production would be created. It was no longer from “society” that the new form of productivity was expected, but from the territories, from certain territories. These last thirty years, capital's restructuring has taken the form of a new spatial ordering of the world. Its focus is the creation of clusters, of “centers of innovation,” offering “individuals possessing significant social capital”—for the others, sorry, life will be a little more difficult—the best conditions for creating, innovating, and launching, and above all, for doing it collaboratively. The universally recognized model is Silicon Valley. The agents of capital everywhere are getting down to the business of creating an “ecosystem” enabling the individual with the right team to develop fully, to “maximize his talents.” This is the new credo of the creative economy—in which the couple engineer / hub of competitiveness is on the dance floor with the duo designer / gentrified neighborhood. According to this new orthodoxy, especially in the Western countries, value production depends on innovation capability. But, as the planners themselves recognize, an environment favorable to creation and its sharing, a productive atmosphere, can't be invented, it is “situated,” it sprouts in a place where a history, an identity, can enter into resonance with the spirit of innovation. A cluster cannot be imposed, it emerges in a territory on the fertile ground of a “community.” If your city is decaying, the solution will not come from investors or the government, explains an entrepreneur who's in fashion. One has

the adventure that followed from it as a “local struggle”? And yet what could be more localized than that armed insurrection against the thrusts of neoliberalism which inspired a movement of planetary revolt against “globalization,” after all. The counter-operation that was successfully carried out by the Zapatistas involved immediately extracting themselves from the national framework, and hence from the minor status of “local struggle,” and linking up with all sorts of forces worldwide. In this way they applied their pincer attack to a Mexican state that was doubly helpless, on its own territory and beyond its borders. The maneuver is unstoppable, and reproducible.

Everything is local, including the global, although we still need to localize it. The neoliberal hegemony results from the way it floats in the air, spreads via countless channels that are barely visible for the most part, and appears invincible because it can't be situated. Rather than seeing Wall Street as a celestial raptor dominating the world as God used to, we would have much to gain by determining its material, relational networks, tracking the connections from a trading floor out to their last fiber. One would find, no doubt, that the traders are just idiots, that they don't even deserve their diabolical reputation, but that stupidity is a power in this world. One would ponder those black holes, the clearing houses such as Euronext and Clearstream. Similarly for the state, which is perhaps, as an anthropologist has suggested, nothing more, basically, than a system of personal loyalties. The state is the mafia that has defeated all the others, and has thus won the right to treat them as criminals. To identify this system, trace its contours, locate its vectors, is to restore it to its terrestrial nature, bring it down to its real level. There is research to be done, then, which alone can remove the aura from that which claims hegemony.

Another danger lies in wait for what is expediently construed as “local struggles.” Those whose everyday organization shows them the superfluous character of government may imagine that an underlying, prepolitical society exists, where cooperation comes naturally. They are logically induced to position themselves against government in the name of “civil society.” But this always entails the postulation of a humanity that is stable, pacified, homogeneous in its positive aspirations, and motivated by a fundamentally Christian disposition to mutual aid, goodness, and compassion. “At the very moment of its triumph,” writes an American journalist about the Argentine insurrection of 2001, “the

against the European Union's rotten project.

What is capable of linking these different struggles that aren't about "territory" at all, is not the fact of being faced with the same capitalist restructuring, but the ways of living that are invented or rediscovered in the very course of the conflict. What ties them together are the acts of resistance they give rise to—blockage, occupation, riot, sabotage as direct attacks against the production of value through the circulation of information and commodities, through the connection of "innovative territories." The power they generate is not something to be mobilized with a view to victory, but victory itself, to the extent that, little by little, the power grows. In this respect, the "Plant your ZAD" movement is well-named. They're in the process of resuming cultivation of the land expropriated by the company contracted to build the Notre-Dame-des-Landes airport, now occupied by inhabitants. An undertaking of this kind immediately places those contemplating it on a long-term basis, longer in any case than that of traditional social movements, and calls for a more general reflection on life at the ZAD and what it can become. A projection that will doubtless include dissemination outside Notre-Dame-des-Landes. In fact, this is already happening in the department of Tarn.

We risk losing everything if we invoke the local as against the global. The local is not the reassuring alternative to globalization, but its universal product. Before the world was globalized, the place I inhabit was simply my familiar territory—I didn't think of it as "local." Local is just the underside of global, its residue, its secretion, and not something capable of shattering it. Nothing was local before one could be pulled away from it at any time, for professional or medical reasons, or for vacation. Local is the name of a possibility of sharing, combined with the sharing of a dispossession. It's a contradiction of the global, which we can give a consistency to or not. Every singular world thus appears for what it is: a fold in the world, and not its substantial outside. Reducing to the rather insignificant category of "local struggles"—akin to the pleasantly folkloric "local color"—struggles like those of the Susa Valley, Chalkidiki, or the Mapuche, who have recreated a territory and a people with a planetary aura, is a classic operation of neutralization. For the state, on the pretext that these territories are situated at its margins, it's a matter of marginalizing them politically. Aside from the Mexican state, who would think of categorizing the Zapatista uprising and

to get organized, find other people, get to know each other, work together, recruit other motivated persons, form networks, shake up the status quo... It comes down to the mad dash for a technological advance and the creation of a niche, where the competition is temporarily eliminated and where for a few years one can draw a situational rent. While continuing to think in strategic terms globally, capital deploys a whole casuistry of territorial planning. This allows a bad urbanist to say, concerning the ZAD, a territory under occupation in order to prevent the construction of an airport at Notre-Dame-des-Landes, that it seemed to afford "the opportunity for a kind of Silicon Valley of ecology and society [...] Silicon Valley itself was born in a place that presented little of interest at the time, but where the low cost of space and the mobilization of a few persons contributed to making it the special, internationally acclaimed place it is today." Ferdinand Tönnies, who believed there had never been a society that was not commodity-based, wrote: "Whereas in the community, they stay together in spite of everything that separates them, in society they remain separate in spite of everything that unites them." In the "creative communities" of capital, people are bound together by separation itself. There is no longer any outside from which to distinguish between life and the production of value. Death is in its element. It is young, dynamic, and it smiles at you.

## 2

The constant incitement to innovate, create, start up, never works so well as on a pile of ruins. Hence all the promotional publicity the past few years around the cool, digital enterprises that are trying to make the industrial desert named Detroit a field of experimentation. “If you think of a city that was near death and that’s coming into a new life, it’s Detroit. Detroit is a city where something is happening, an open city. What Detroit has to offer is for interested, engaged young people—artists, innovators, musicians, designers, city-makers,” writes the man who has oversold the idea of a new urban development articulated around the “creative classes.” Yes, he’s talking about a city that has lost half its population in fifty years, that has the second highest crime rate of the large American cities, 78,000 abandoned buildings, a former mayor in prison, and whose unofficial unemployment rate approaches 50%—but where Amazon and Twitter have opened new offices. While the fate of Detroit is not yet decided, a promotional operation on the scale of a city has already sufficed to transform a postindustrial disaster lasting several decades, comprising unemployment, depression, illegalities, into a hip district that only swears by culture and technology. It’s the same waving of the magical wand that has transfigured the fair city of Lille since 2004, when it was the ephemeral “European capital of culture.” No need to point out that this involves drastically “renewing” the population of the inner city. From New Orleans to Iraq, what has been aptly called a “shock strategy” makes it possible to obtain, zone by zone, a profitable fragmentation of the world. In this controlled demolition-renovation of “society,” the most conspicuous desolation and the most outrageous wealth are just two aspects of the same method of government.

When one reads the prospective reports of the “experts,” one finds roughly the following geography: the great metropolitan areas in competition with each other to attract both capital and smart people; the secondary-zone metropolitan poles that manage well enough through specialization; the poor rural zones that cope by becoming places “likely to draw the attention of citizens needing nature and tranquility,” zones of agriculture, preferably organic, or “biodiversity preserves”; and lastly, zones of exclusion pure and simple, that will be ringed sooner or later with checkpoints and controlled from a distance with drones,

## 3

One of the geopoliticians of territorial development can write that “the increasing intensity of the conflicts around development projects over the past twenty years or so is such that one wonders whether we’re not witnessing a gradual shifting of conflictuality in our society from the social to the territorial. As the social struggles have been declining, the struggles over territory have been gaining strength.” One is almost tempted to agree, seeing the way the struggle in the Susa Valley has been setting the tempo of political contestation in Italy for several years, from its distant mountains; seeing the consolidating power of the fight against the transport of nuclear waste by the CASTOR trains in Germany’s Wendland; and noting the determination of those combating the Hellas Gold mine at Ierissos in Chalkidiki and those who forcibly blocked the construction of a garbage incinerator at Keratea in the Peloponnese. So that more and more revolutionaries are also pouncing on what they call “local struggles” just as greedily as they did on “social struggles” in the past. There are even Marxists who wonder, just a century late, if it might be appropriate to reevaluate the territorial character of so many strikes, so many factory battles that appeared to involve entire regions and not just workers, and the grounds of which may perhaps have been life more than simply the wage relation. The mistake of these revolutionaries is to think of the local in the same way they thought of the working class, as a reality preexisting the struggle. So it is logical for them to imagine that the time had come to build a new international of resistance to the “big useless projects being imposed on us” that would make the resistance stronger and more contagious. This overlooks the fact that, by reconfiguring the everydayness of the territories in struggle, the combat itself creates the consistency of the local, which prior to that was perfectly evanescent. “The movement was not satisfied with defending a ‘territory’ in the state it found itself in, but inhabited it with thoughts of what it could become [...] It made it exist, constructed it, gave it a consistency,” note some opponents of the TAV. Furio Jesi observed that “one gets a better sense of the city during a time of open revolt, with its alternation of charges and counter-charges, than one has playing in the streets as a child, or later walking there with a girl at one’s side.” It’s the same with the inhabitants of the Susa Valley. They wouldn’t have such a detailed knowledge of their valley, and such a strong attachment to it, if they had not been fighting for thirty years

of the Lyon-Turin rail line write: “What does it mean to be NO TAV? It means to start from a simple statement: ‘the high-speed train will never pass through the Susa Valley’ and to organize one’s life to make it so that this statement is borne out. Many people have come together around this certitude over the past twenty years. On the basis of this quite particular point on which there is no question of yielding, the whole world reconfigures itself. The struggle in the Susa Valley concerns the whole world, not because it is defending the ‘common good’ in general, but because a certain idea of what is good is commonly thought in the struggle. That idea confronts other notions, defending itself against those wanting to destroy it, and linking up with those having an affinity with it.”

helicopters, swift operations, and massive phone-call interceptions.

So one sees that capital no longer has the problem of “society” but rather that of “governance,” as it says politely. Spitting in its face, the revolutionaries of the years 1960-1970 were quite clear that they wanted nothing to do with it. Since then, it selects its people.

Capital doesn’t frame itself any longer in national terms, but territory by territory. It doesn’t spread itself evenly in every place; it concentrates itself locally by organizing each territory into a milieu of cultivation. It doesn’t try to get everyone moving at the same rate, with progress on their radios, but allows the world to delink into zones of intense surplus-value extraction and neglected zones, into theaters of war and pacified spaces. There is the Italian northeast and the Campania, the second just being worthy of receiving the garbage of the first. There is Sofia-Antipolis and Villiers-le-Bel. There is The City and Nottinghill, Tel Aviv and the Gaza strip. The smart cities and the horrible banlieues. Ditto for the population. There is no longer a generic “population.” There is the young “creative class” that makes its social and relational capital bear fruit in the heart of the smart metropolises, and all those who have so clearly become “unemployable.” There are lives that count and others that aren’t even factored into the accounts. There is a plurality of populations, some being at risk and others having a substantial purchasing power.

If there still remained a cement in the idea of society and a bulwark against its dislocation, it was certainly the hilarious “middle class.” All through the 20th century, it went on expanding, at least virtually—so that today two thirds of Americans and French people sincerely believe they belong to that non-class. But the latter is prey to a pitiless process of selection in its turn. One can’t explain the proliferation of reality TV programs staging the most sadistic forms of competition except as a mass propaganda aimed at familiarizing everybody with the little everyday murders among friends that life in a world of constant selection comes down to. According to the oracles of the DATAR, the French governmental agency that plans and coordinates government actions relating to territorial development, in 2040 “the middle class will have shrunk in size,” a projection it is pleased about. “The most favored of its members will make up the lowest fraction of the transnational elite,” and the others will see “their way of life draw closer to that of the lower classes,” that “ancillary army” who will “meet the needs of the

elite” and will live in deteriorated districts with an “intellectual proletariat” awaiting integration or estranged from the upper level of the social hierarchy. Put in less opaque terms, their vision is more or less the following: devastated exurban zones, their former inhabitants having moved into the shantytowns to make way for the “metropolitan market gardeners who organize the supply of fresh edible goods to the metropolis over short distances” and the “numerous nature parks,” “zones of disconnection,” “of recreation for city-dwellers wishing to experience the wild and the unfamiliar.”

The degree of likelihood of such scenarios matters little. What counts here is that those claiming to combine future-projection and an action strategy assume the demise of the former society from the outset. The overall dynamic of selection contrasts in every particular with the old dialectic of integration, of which social struggles were a moment. The partition between productive territories on one side and distressed territories on the other, between the smart class on one hand and on the other, the “dummies,” “retards,” “incompetents,” those who “resist change” and those who are attached, is no longer predetermined by any social organization or cultural tradition. The challenge is to determine in real time, in a calibrated way, where the value lies, in which space, with whom, and for what. The reconfigured archipelago of the metropolises has few of the features of the inclusive and hierarchized order called “society.” Every totalizing ambition has been abandoned. This is what the DATAR reports show. The same ones who developed the national territory, who constructed the Fordist unity of Gaullist France, have launched themselves into its deconstruction. They announce the “twilight of the nation-state” without regrets. Setting definitive boundaries, whether by establishing sovereign borders or through the unambiguous distinction between man and machine, between man and nature, is a thing of the past. It’s the end of the demarcated world. The new metropolitan “society” is distributed over a flat, open, expansive space, not so much smooth as essentially fluid, runny. It spreads at its edges, overruns its contours. It’s not so easy anymore to say, definitively, who’s in and who’s out. In the smart world, a smart trash receptacle is much more a part of society than a homeless person or a hick. By re-forming on a horizontal, fragmented, differentiated plane—that of territorial planning and development—and not on the vertical and hierarchical plane derived from medieval theology, “society” as a playing field of government only has vague, shifting, and hence revocable,

boundaries. Capital even takes to dreaming of a new “socialism” reserved for its adherents. Now that Seattle has been emptied of its poor people in favor of the futuristic employees of Amazon, Microsoft, and Boeing, the time has come to establish free public transportation there. Surely the city won’t go on charging those whose whole life is nothing but value production. That would show a lack of gratitude.

The resolute selection of populations and territories has its own risks. Once the division has been made between those to be supported and those to be allowed to die, it’s not certain that those knowing they’re destined for the human trash pile will still let themselves be governed. One can only hope to “manage” this cumbersome remainder—assimilating it being unlikely, and liquidating it being indecent no doubt. The planners, whether indifferent or cynical, accept the “segregation,” the “increasing inequalities,” the “stretching of social hierarchies” as a fact of the times and not as a drift that needs to be halted. The only wayward drift is one that could cause the segregation to morph into a secession—the “flight of a part of the population to peripheries where it might organize into autonomous communities,” potentially “at odds with the dominant models of neoliberal globalization.” There we have the threat to be managed—but also the way for us to proceed.

We will take on the secession that capital already practices, therefore, but in our own way. Seceding is not carving a part of the territory out of the national whole, it’s not isolating oneself, cutting off communications with all the rest—that would be certain death. Seceding is not using the scraps of this world to assemble counter-clusters where alternative communities would bask in their imaginary autonomy vis-à-vis the metropolis—that already figures into the plans of the DATAR, which has already foreseen letting them vegetate in their harmless marginality. Seceding means inhabiting a territory, assuming our situated configuration of the world, our way of dwelling there, the form of life and the truths that sustain us, and from there entering into conflict or complicity. So it means linking up strategically with other zones of dissidence, intensifying our circulations with friendly regions, regardless of borders. To secede is to break not with the national territory but with the existing geography itself. It’s to trace out a different, discontinuous geography, an intensive one, in the form of an archipelago—and thus to go encounter places and territories that are close to us, even if there are 10,000 kilometers to cover. In one of their pamphlets, opponents