EXCERPTS FROM BLACK EYE: By Paul Z. Simons

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(INCLUDING "THE ORGANIZATION'S NEW CLOTHES" "SEVEN THESES ON PLAY" "HOW TO THINK LIKE A JACOBIN" AND "BOOK AND GUN")

- PAUL Z. SIMONS

THE ORGANIZATION'S NEW CLOTHES

Capital as a social mode of production realizes domination when it succeeds in replacing all the social and natural pre-suppositions by the correct forms of organization that mediate the submission of the whole of physical and social life to its real needs of valorization.

"On Organization"
Gianni Collu and Jacques Camatte

Organizations are not socially organic nor are they particularly obvious. The rise of the organization is hinted at throughout history, yet its growth and proliferation as a form does not occur until the ascendancy of capital. These developments are not isolated. Organizations are a result of the dominant mode of production and the division of labour. Further, the so-called "revolutionary" organization is an unequivocal contradiction, inasmuch as the existence of such a group is negated and simultaneously recuperated by the system it seeks to destroy, namely capitalism.

Though beyond the scope of this essay, the history of the organization would provide insight into its linkage with real domination. It is essential, however, to look at the birth of the organizational form. The moment of development for the proto-organization was a pregnant one. Contained within it were two devices that enabled the ascendancy of capital. The first, spatialization, is directly related to and a consequence of the second, the hierarchization of activity. The rise of the proto-organization, perhaps typified by the emergence of religion, required new physical and social forms to accommodate it.

Spatialization, the division of space in order to facilitate separateness, was of primary importance to the organization in realizing its genesis. The displacement of an activity from tribal common areas may be seen as one of the first steps towards the extreme division of all space apparent in contemporary dominant culture. The process of spatialization came into its own during the mid-eighteenth century with the forced removal of the workplace from the cottage to the factory. The delineation and definition of space thus enabled the domestication and control of unruly working populations via the discipline of the factory. Perhaps more to the point, it still does. The Yoruba express this concept best, the phrase in Yoruba for "this country has become civilized" translates literally to "this earth has lines on its face."

The hierarchization of activity, the concept exemplified by the various ceremonies and rigors of the group as well as the historical development of the scribe (proto-bureaucrat) whose function is to record and "elevate" the activity of the organization above the day to day activity of leisure, food production, etc., is indicative of the role of the organization in the culture of domination. This tendency finds its logical conclusion in the designation of leadership in many groups under

the title of General Secretary or vice versa. The control of "records" and "minutes" translates historically to the control of people.

The modern organization is less an accumulation of its history than it is a denial of it. The condensation of capital into larger conglomerates made up of smaller and more disparate unconnected corporations has directly mirrored what the modern organization is. The mystification of capital as monolith is slowly losing its resonance as ultra-centralized conglomerates degenerate into mechanisms for profit-extraction by elites. The mega-corporation is a trophy and a purse, nothing more. The eruption in the overnight courier services is no fluke. Capital is becoming more reliant upon external communication systems as a means of shoring up this increasingly fractured state. The concomitant ascendance of factory and middle management cliques reinforces the impression that twilight is near (there is a certain amount of irony that the midwives of capital may well become its pallbearers). Currently the top-level executive is a sniveling bootlicker, the marketing specialist a beast of prey.

In their essay (cited above), Collu and Camatte express this concept in the precise though shadowy terminology of the gang and its larger counterpart, the racket. The gang provides not only structure but the necessary mediation between capital and society. 1his process, which Collu and Camatte describe as "caricaturization" portrays the boss/leader (or his clique) as traditional Individual(s) and the collective form (or business) as a community based upon common interest. These masks, apparent in all organizations, do not in fact obscure reality, they are reality, inasmuch as they hide what does not exist. The gang fulfills another purpose, it replaces human presuppositions between members with the presuppositions of capital, particularly the division of labour.

The political gang varies only slightly, in that it absorbs the commodity into itself. The programme becomes at once producer and product with the ultimate aim of seduction (and of course in order to seduce successfully it must be "better" or "improved" in comparison to the manifestos of other groupings). The political gang puts forth positions in its newspapers, leaflets, and broadsides (usually concerning black, Hispanic, third world, or gay liberation) with the essential purpose of mediating the immediate. The ideologue asks us to see certain oppressions and to respond to them. This appeal always demands that the view and response to oppression be that of the accepted ideology. The gang, however, can only criticize the artifacts of capital, not what it is, nor how to extirpate it. To do so would raise the question of its own existence.

At the moment of admission to the gang a process of binding begins. The novice becomes attached to and dependent on the gang by all the social presuppositions of capital. If s/he shows any capacity at all for a necessary skill, it is exploited and exchanged for recognition or, in extreme cases, absorption into the ruling clique. In the absence of a useful capacity, exchange occurs on the level of dissemination of the gang's viewpoint in return for lesser rewards (i.e., acceptance) . It is important to be aware of the fact that ultra-left organizations-in their attempted rejection of this mechanism-only delay its implementation, not its impact.

Theory is impoverished, if not negated, by the gang. The fact that certain members of any gang will be more capable of confronting theoretical questions, and—hence their authority in such

matters will be relied upon, speaks directly to the dominant cultural valuation of the importance of belonging as opposed to knowing. This phenomenon of the organization is not new, the Scottish Rite of the Freemasons (circa 1680) is composed of thirty three levels of knowledge. Only by attaining the thirty thirdlevel does the member come to know what the other thirty two levels (and the Masonic brotherhood as a whole) represent. Thus theory is removed from individual analysis, it becomes in a very real sense the property of the intellectual clique and as such is recuperated as ideology.

The gang, particularly the self-proclaimed structureless gang, maintains "hygienic" mechanisms for the purging of individuals or sub-gangs whose activities or theory deviates from the accepted. The ultimate threat of the gang is exclusion. Politically this mechanism usually takes the form of rejection and embarrassment. If an individual refuses to leave after being denounced, it is only a question of time before psychological devaluation forces the final break. This "blackmail" is reflexive; not only does it eliminate the heretic, it also enforces adherence to orthodoxy.

The gang in all its forms is characterized by a cyclic pattern. As old gangs lose members and die, new gangs are established and begin to define and separate themselves from the has-beens. This process points to the dependency of the gang upon recognition. The more that a gang appears in the limelight, the greater the possibility of disseminating its views and attracting new members. Thus the organization not only commodifies itself through its programme and activities, it valorizes humanity as consisting solely of potential converts. In this sense the traditional "boom and bust" cycles of capital relate to the unending "drama" of new organizations being formed and old ones being interred.

It really comes as no surprise that the organizational form is beginning to emerge not as a value neutral mechanism, which may be easily shaped and imprinted upon by individuals wishing to utilize it. Rather, the opposite is certainly true; any organization, even in the hands and under the auspices of the most dedicated revolutionaries, must eventually devolve into a device of domination and mediation. This is logical, because domination and mediation exist as the sole potentialities of the organization. The survival of capital is dependent upon the internalization of its assumptions by individuals. When these internalizations are recognized and refused, capital as dominant mode of production must die, because capital in its reified form will have died. To borrow a point from Poe, when the lunatics gain control of the asylum, the asylum will have finally achieved total control of the lunatics. Contrariwise, true revolutionaries (or lunatics) will in all likelihood set the whole rotting structure ablaze.

SEVEN THESES ON PLAY

1.

Play is desire realized; it is the negation of domination. Play is unmediated activity that does not attempt to produce a specific emotion, indeed any emotion at all. The result of play may be alternatively orgasm, terror, delight, even death. Play is ambivalent; any one of these conclusions or any multitudes of others are possible (there may even be no conclusive result). Yet, each eventuality in its own context is correct because none are specifically elicited except in the content of the play-activity that produces it.

2.

In pre-agricultural societies, play was the common denominator of all activity, in much the same way that the gift was the characteristic mode of exchange. For the primitive, play was the activity that not only defined tribal and familial relationships, it also provided food, clothing, and shelter. In the pre-agricultural era of abundance, the outcome of any given hunt was irrelevant. Necessity (and surplus) meant nothing in such societies, consequently food-generating activities were not driven by the alternative of starvation, rather they existed simply as diversion, play. Further, play was essential to the stability of pre-agricultural societies because of play's tendency to exclude coercion, language, even time. The death of play was the triumph of civilization, of domination…

3.

Capital has sought to abolish play and replace it with leisure-time; a void that must be filled as opposed to fulfillment that negates the void. Leisure-time is capital's valorization of play, another mediation in the infinite maelstrom of mediations. In capital's dual role of pimp and prostitute, it not only creates leisure-time, it produces commodities and spectacles with which to fill it. Such valorization demands passive, stupefied participation (the negation of play) and seeks to elicit a single response, enjoyment. Which is, of course, the pay-off for time/money investment in a specific commodity/spectacle. As a result, play (like language) reverts to its magic form and becomes something dangerous, unmanageable, ultimately lethal; and capital-in order to discourage play-portrays it as such ...

4.

Capital, even in its current manifestation of real domination, has been unable to eradicate play. The "discovery" of play occurred repeatedly in this century, occasionally (though not exclusively) in the realm of the avant-garde. Alfred Jarry (in the Ubu plays and his system of pataphysics-the science of imaginary solutions) definitively incinerated the continuum of retrograde representational form. In doing so, he reintroduced play not as an anesthetic, but as a wrecking ball. Dada continued the assault, but with the exception of the Berlin variant (and its most impressive non-member, Schwitters), the notion of play became ritualized, dead. The final recuperation of the avant-garde, achieved via the reaction of surrealism and the concomitant resurrection of the representational form, eliminated play as an element of rejection until the re-emergence of Utopian currents after World War II. A number of post-war cultural movements, most notably Lettrisme, the Situationist International, Mail Art, and Neoism all incorporated play into their experimentation. Each movement, however, failed to realize the revolutionary implications of play, and in doing so allowed it once again to become formalized, rigid, and as such became recuperated as mediated activity.

5.

Play has become an integral part of revolutionary activity. Even Lenin, the idiot father of the authoritarian left, could (correctly) describe the Paris Commune of 1871 as a "festival of the oppressed:' though he (like Marx) arrived at an erroneous conclusion concerning the failure of the uprising. There are a plethora of examples of the inclusion of play in the activity of the Communards, particularly of play in its destructive aspect. This is not surprising, given the Commune's lack of resources, military contingencies, and the fact that the entire rebellion lasted some seventy two days. Still, the toppling of the column at the Place Vendome (a universally

hated symbol of the Napoleonic victories) , as well as the attempt by a few of the more extreme Communards to put Notre Dame to the torch,
can hardly be interpreted as anything but play. Such manifestations also crept into the the behaviour of individual Communards. Recall the story of the young rebel who confronted a suspect bourgeois on the street. The nervous capitalist protested that he had never had anything to do with politics, to which the Communard replied, "That's precisely why I'm going to kill you:' Though the story ends here in historical accounts, it is not hard to imagine the young rebel flashing a fiendish grin at the shaken bourgeois and then walking off to take his place on the barricades.... bon chance, Citoyen !

6.

Modern revolutionary eruptions have also exhibited certain elements of play. The May-July events of 1968 in France immediately bring to mind the joyful, indignant posters produced by the students of the insurgent Ecole des Beaux -Arts. Further, through the blood, tear gas, and concussion grenades of the nights of barricade fighting (May 6-May 1 1) , there emerged numerous examples of play. Most observers concur on this point; Priaulx and Ungar describe the defiant students as "one big frantic family;" even the partisan Trotskyite account by Seale and McConville includes an anecdote about the left-bank café Le Luxembourg. During one night of rioting the cafe had been invaded and transformed into a makeshift battlefield. After the insurgents and police moved off, the manager was directed by a prefect to close his establishment, to which he replied, " ... tonight Le Luxembourg will not close its doors; it has none left!" More recently, during the suppression of Solidarity in Poland, a handful of militants produced a mask with a billed officer's cap and dark glasses that affected a likeness to General Jaruzelski. The twist was that the mask was designed to fit dogs. Evidently during the final days of Solidarity the police would spend their days breaking up demonstrations and nights chasing stray canines who were, for all intents and purposes, impersonating the General Secretary of the Communist Party. . .

7.

The very existence of "theses" that attempt to define and illuminate historical examples of play stand in some sad way as a testament to the alienation from the activity they seek to describe. The terminal malaise that has characterized revolutionary theory and culture for at least the past two decades must be interpreted as the triumph of formalized technique, the crushing baggage of intellectualism. Even the ultra-left communist and anarchist movements seem condemned to stumble the same squalid path traversed by social democracy almost a century ago. The "revolutionary" belief that the "liberation" of women, ethnic minorities, gays and lesbians, or the Third World will take a significantly different form than the "liberation" of the working class via better wages, open employment policies, and "benefits " exists as an iron-clad example of the pervasive disintegrative consciousness of the left. Revolutionary consciousness, on the other hand, seems to currently reside in the refusal of all dominative forms, the permanent contestation of every assumption; in a word, play. If the new society gestates in the womb of the old, then its first duty is quite obviously matricide.

WORKERS OF THE WORLD, COME OUT TO PLAY!

HOW TO THINK LIKE A JACOBIN

"Have no doubt of it, everything must change and end, for everything around us is unjust: victory and freedom will cover the world. Scorn nothing, but imitate nothing of what has gone before us."

\- *Saint-Just*

According to most theorists the Jacobins and their ideology are the last word in revolutionary contradictions. The social historian Crane Brinton expresses well the type of delirium that invariably follows any current study of the Jacobins when he concludes, "the Jacobins present for a brief time the extraordinary spectacle of men acting without apparent regard for their material interests:' Such a statement, however, belies the essential truth of the Jacobins. For though the Jacobins were concerned with the economic betterment of the poor, they were not class warriors. The revolutionary programme of the Jacobins was something much deeper and more elemental than later conceptions of revolution (e.g., Marxist or anarchist). In a very real sense the Jacobins were men at war not with economic disparity nor government, the Jacobins were at war with society itself. They sought to realize a New World in terms of the utter destruction of the Old, and it was this attempted realization of Utopia that fueled both repression and liberation during the Year II. In addition, examination of any historical struggle that sought to destroy a despotic, corrupt regime in favor of Utopia can only inform contemporary revolutionary theory.

Before examining the tenets of Jacobinist ideology it is essential to bear in mind a few facts that were peculiar to the Jacobins and to the epoch in which they existed. Foremost of these is the necessity of perceiving Jacobinism as a revolutionary tendency, for though the Jacobins certainly existed in the context of static (that is, non-revolutionary) societies, it was solely in the realm of revolution that they proved to be an active and effective force.

One must also recall the social, political, and economic milieu that the Jacobins existed and developed within. During the late eighteenth century, Europe was a continent engulfed by dying reactionary structures. In terms of political systems, absolutism and feudalism were the rule, and vocal opposition, if it existed at all, was to be found among the educated. Further, capital (in this context, industrial capital) had failed to gain any serious footholds on continental Europe. Excepting the Rhine valley, Marseille, and Lyon, the predominant mode of production was still cottage manufacture or, in cities, small to medium-size artisanal production. Some thinkers (esp. Marx) attributed the slow process of industrialization to the intransigence of feudalism and its tenacious hold on the reins of power. It is, however, important to recall that more effective forms of refusal were brought to bear by both artisans and peasants (e.g., machine wrecking and sabotage) against the encroaching factory system than any informal proscription imposed in feudalist self-interest.

Given these facts it is perhaps possible for us to understand the nature of the society in which the Jacobins flourished. A society of non-industrial wage-earners, where an artisan and the journeymen he employed felt a common anger with the unscrupulous speculator who for the sake of profit drove up rent and food prices. A society at once deeply pious yet boisterously

irreligious. A society of discontented intellectuals, landless farmers, and hopeless, homeless beggars. A society founded on absurd, meaningless, and finally despotic principles-in short, a society very much like the one of today.

The ideas that animated the Jacobins were drawn and synthesized from many sources; the influence of both Rousseau and Montesquieu are cited often by historians, yet it is not so much the ideas that the Jacobins took as it is what they did with them. One of the core ideas of the Jacobins was the essential equivalence of revolution and regeneration (moral, political, social, and individual). To the Jacobin, revolution had less to do with the seizure of state power than it did with the eradication of fundamental societal assumptions in favor of other, more rational, "virtuous" assumptions. The Jacobins were among the first to recognize the conscious mind as being one of the primary battlegrounds of the revolution. The adoption of the republican calendar and the metric system may be viewed as outgrowths of this realization. If the ideas of what constitutes the individual or society may be either reactionary or revolutionary, then why not the passage of time, or the measurement of physical objects? The Jacobins demanded of their revolution a new totality, a new world to be placed in direct contradiction to and in confrontation with the old. Revolution is regeneration and regeneration is nothing less than a total war against a corrupt society. The statement of Marat concerning the vices of aristocracy is telling, “The evil is in the thing itself and the cure is violent. One must apply the axe to the root”

Virtue is a term that has lost much of its meaning. Currently, its use is confined solely to religious fanatics and generally in the context of sexual abstinence. In the late eighteenth century, however, virtue was an irresistible force. The Jacobins were both serious and sincere when they mentioned virtue, and when they did so it was usually in pursuit of and as justification for extreme revolutionary measures. Virtue served, however, not only as a goal, like Liberty, Fraternity, or Equality, but also as a means, a method whereby further goals could be delineated. In a day-to-day working definition, the Jacobin may have enunciated the idea that virtue was living one's life in harmony with moral principles. Alternatively, he might have given an example of the virtuous man: a poor artisan who after a day of work went to his section or political club to debate the pressing issues of the day, an individual ready with pike, musket, or sword to defend the freedoms that he had won.

The above definition and example were not simply interdependent to the Jacobin, they were the same thing. The political and personal lives of the revolutionaries were one, an indivisible quantity. It was not enough to denounce privilege from the podium; one had to live consistently with what one said. This was the first modern variation of the now popular expression "the personal is the political:' To the Jacobin, such a statement would have been yet another suitable definition of virtue. This New World that the Jacobins envisioned is hard for us to conjure. If anything it takes as much from medieval communalism as it does from Rome and Sparta. It is ferociously nationalist, yet proclaims the highest form of patriotism to be the love of humanity. A federal government is provided for but it is weak and its constitution is constantly revised as the people see fit. Representatives are subject to constant review and censure, the people maintain always the right to insurrection in order to redress the wrongs of the government. The Jacobin Utopia guaranteed property for everyone, its ownership being a natural right that no one may infringe. A world of both small, rural communities and large cities
organized locally. A world of face-to-face direct democracy and popular militias.

In order to realize this Republic of Virtue, the Jacobins hoped to utilize justice as the revolutionary midwife. In January of 1793, justice meant regicide and less than ten months later, justice was the Terror. Most historians deal with the Terror on the level of a historical fact, a loosely contrived series of events that resulted in the deaths of around 17,000 individuals. Yet, as with most of history, facts have little to do with the truth. For the Jacobins the Terror was more than an internal purge of undesirables, more than a mass state-instigated bloodletting, it was an ideal, as essential to their revolution as virtue. Robespierre, in an address to the National Convention stated plainly what was on the mind of the Jacobins, “the basis of popular government in time of revolution is both virtue and terror: terror without virtue being murderous, virtue without terror being powerless.” He continued, "the Terror is nothing but prompt, severe, inflexible justice and is consequently an emanation of virtue."

The final ingredient in understanding the mindset of the Jacobins, as well as the last integrative tenet in their "social war mentality;' was a lethal dose of paranoia, verging on mass hysteria. Though some of their fears, such as assassination, were real enough, it was their irrational horror of "plots;' usually foreign and aristocratic in origin that set the raging blaze to the Terror. Though paranoia is more a diagnosis than a tenet, it did play an essential role in what the Jacobins became. When they found themselves at war with the past, they conjectured that the roots of the past were much more tenacious than the revolutionary ideology that they were evolving. Thus they ceased to be a body that tried to exemplify the revolution and began instead to be the revolution's taskmasters. Essentially, they began to doubt themselves. This led them on the fateful route too often traveled by revolutions, the endless cycle of repression in the name of saving the revolution. The example of Stalin comes to mind in this context and the final spasm of Jacobinist violence, dubbed the Grand Terror, is a suitable name as well for most "revolutions" in this century.

I am questioned occasionally about my fascination with the French Revolution. A usual response is that within this first great upheaval can be found the seeds of every revolution and revolutionary movement that has existed since. But that is insufficient as well, for within the French Revolution lies one of the profound lessons of history (and about history) . Individuals (esp. "revolutionaries") have a tendency to judge social conflict with the same yardstick applied to gas mileage. There is a certain desire to perceive revolutions on a cost-benefit type basis, that is, what was accomplished versus how many people died. This "technological"* outlook begs the question of revolutions and possibly history itself. By their very nature social upheavals tend to their own conclusive result; logic, reason, and order be damned. Still, there is a great need among some to condemn, to see the world in terms of black and white, good and bad. It is this tendency that will certainly produce new “Terrors" and not the other way round. It is essential for revolutionaries to acknowledge their past, to accept it, and in so doing to inform the project of revolution in their own time. The French Revolution is ours, for good or ill. The heritage is twofold: it is the ascent up the steps of the guillotine and it is the all-night meeting debating the nature and necessity of liberty. And therein lies the final question that the French Revolution raises, the eternal question for revolutionaries, as it were. Are extreme goals always served by extreme methods? Are blood and liberty inseparable quantities? How far will you go to realize your desires? Sleep well, revolutionaries ...

*(cf. Jacques Ellul's classic and exhaustive debunk of modernity, The Technological Society)

BOOK AND GUN: A (rather disturbing) look at proto and early fascist history and ideology in France and Italy

"Not only is reason not natural to man nor universal in humanity, but again, in the conduct of man and humanity, its influence is small."

- *Hippolyte Taine*

Before I begin I must admit to a certain amount of ambivalence towards both French proto-Fascism and Italian Fascism. Although I have no love at all for the programmatic aims of the fascists (e.g., totalitarian government, territorial and capitalist expansion) there are a number of areas where these movements have much to teach post-industrial theorists. Foremost of these is the uneasy mixture of politics and irrationality that typifies the early proto-Fascist and Fascist movements, a synthesis that is essential to any theory of insurrectionary egoism.

- author's note

Fascism was one of the most bizarre social phenomena of this century. The entire spectrum of political theorists, I believe, has failed in a fundamental sense to deal not only with the history of fascism but also its ideology and appeal.

There have been two very broad schools of interpretation of fascism, the first, typified by Marxist historians (Guerin), have held that despite a certain level of anticapitalist and antibourgeois rhetoric, fascism was essentially a device whereby the ruling classes retained what was theirs and then had the government steal what was not. These theorists tend to develop the thesis of fascism as one of the last stages in capitalist development. The second movement of critique, personified by Mumford and most liberal critics, deals with the issue of how such a thing could have happened in the first place. What drove essentially "normal" people to embrace fascism, an antidemocratic, totalitarian movement? Significantly, the answer that this school arrives at is generally something on the order of the ease and comfort of renouncing freedom as well as some disingenuous remarks about "mass psychopathology;' brainwashing and the like. Neither of these "schools" has captured the fundamental appeal of the fascist "myth" insofar as both rely heavily upon a rationalist, "enlightened" critique of the phenomenon. An intellectual approach, incidentally, that any "thinking" fascist would have scoffed at. To understand the fascists one has to move beyond the realm of rationality in politics and begin to deal with the "heresies" of individual will, fury as political weapon, and the renunciation of democratic forms; it is here that one finds the fascist truly at home.

The French

As with most discussions that deal with politics and history, one is led inexorably back to France, the birthplace of all modern political debate. The first thinker to begin to stoke the fires of the extreme right was none other than Rousseau, the grandfather of modern revolutionary thought. In his conception of the General Will, Rousseau lays the groundwork for absolute obedience and also its complement, absolute authority. Rousseau theorizes that when a group of individuals, in order to form a society, relinquish their natural rights in favor of civil rights (the social contract), that they also merge their wills into a single will, the General Will. There are a few scary ramifications of such a conceptualization, and Rousseau, ever willing to follow a formula to its logical conclusion, deals with all of them. The consequence of the General Will that concerns us is the essential identity of the General and the individual will. For Rousseau (and the Fascists)

they are one and the same. The will of the nation expressed in legislation, declarations of war, whatever, are to be taken by the individual as manifestations of his own will. Individual conscience and responsibility are non-existent (or irrelevant) in such a system. In a converse construction, total obedience to the state is equivalent to total liberty. To refuse an order issued by the government of a nation-state is to refuse an order that the individual will has issued such refusal is impossible.

All nineteenth-century French political thought may be seen in one way as reactionary; that is it finds its essential premise in events and expresses itself in response to them. Thus the French Revolution, the Paris Commune of 1871, and the Dreyfus Affair have provided grist for the mill of political theory in France. It was the Great Revolution, however, that proved to be the single most important detonator for the explosion of mid- and late century theory. Extreme-left theorists were outraged at the idea of a political revolution without the concomitant transfiguration of economic forms. The extreme right was simply angered at just about everything that had occurred and in response it began to develop new approaches towards the issues that the Revolution had thrust upon the political scene, specifically liberty, authority, and the idea of the nation. It is here that one begins to find the roots of what would eventually be called fascism. Although Joseph de Maistre (1753-1821) may be called the first theorist of the extreme right-his formulations fit more readily into the category of conservative monarchism, and it is difficult to see any relation between his work and fascism. In addition, his critique is solidly rationalist and hence he falls outside the scope of this piece.

It is Hippolyte Taine (1828-1893) who developed some of the most important intellectual formula in protofascist ideology. Taine, in bringing his enormous intellect to bear on the French Revolution, will in the process provide the extreme right with the basis in fact and hardnosed scholarship that it had failed to materialize in the early part of the nineteenth century. After careful examination of what Taine referred to as the "irony" of the Revolution (i.e., how a movement against a monarchy could develop into a dictatorship) he found himself launching a full-fledged attack upon on the very foundations of the Enlightenment. The fundamental assumption of the philosophes, that all humanity progresses towards rationality, Taine negates in an affirmative (and elitist) fashion. As opposed to all humanity, he states that in fact, some men do Progress towards rationality; most, however, do not. He justifies this conclusion by pointing to the mob violence of the Revolution and the "excesses" of the Paris Commune. Thus while some men may be capable of learning a revolutionary doctrine, others simply learn the slogans as an excuse to indulge in a collective insanity. For Taine, reason cannot and should never be a political tool of the left, the movements are dialectically opposed. The masses are incapable of reason, it is the property of the elite, the intellectual and the aristocracy. This is no flash-in-the-pan insight; Taine has effectively refuted almost all of the Enlightenment's theoretical gymnastics in one formulation. For instance, it follows that if the vast majority of humanity is incapable of reason, then the "drawing up" of the social contract is impossible. Men who do not reason cannot form a society of their own volition. Further, Taine will argue that society and the nation, far from being the product of a conscious act, is the result of long historical processes. The nation is not something that is chosen-it simply is. Two things should be evident from this discussion: Taine is an irrationalist. He may believe in reason, but he sees it has some very clear limitations. Taine is also on the edge of antidemocracy; again though he may grudgingly

acknowledge that democracy in some ways is an efficacious form of government, he maintains that there are deep systemic flaws in the idea of the rule of the people.

The next thinker who demands our attention is Maurice Barres (1862- 1923) and it is in his works that we will see one of the truly fascinating tendencies of French political thought. For, though Barres will amplify and enlarge the idea of the nation as the sole possessor of any sovereign right, he will also in the same sentence affirm the right of the nation to realize revolution. It is here, with Barres and a handful of other thinkers from his generation (Sorel will also fall into this category) that we begin to see the merging of extreme left and extreme right political theory. This phenomenon will also be a mainstay of early Italian fascist methodology. It is also important to note that it is a tendency that has continued unabated to the present. The extremist right-wing students of the Sorbonne (L'Occidente) during the May- June events in 1968 will produce pamphlets and flyers that in language and methodology are identical with Situationist tracts.

In most cases, this confluence of extreme left and right political theory has been superfluous, the importance of Barres is that he will delineate political and social goals that are similar to, if not identical with the goals of the revolutionary left. Thus, Barres will continually refer back to the Proudhonian constructs of the federation of small communes and their integration via contract as the most natural (that is, French) mode for the conduct of human affairs. Though shying away from anticapitalist rhetoric, Barres is not beyond castigating centralized, monopolistic capitalist combines. In addition, Barres, in his exposition of the communal units that he sees as the basis of a potentially regenerated society will rely less on medieval forms, as Proudhon or Kropotkin clearly do, and he will paint these communes in colors more reminiscent of tribal groups. This in turn refers us back to the nation not only as the basis of sovereignty but also as the end result of a long and complicated historical process.

Lastly, it must be noted that for most of his life Barres conducted a long and bitter dispute with French educational institutions. He felt that a pervasive and "unhealthy Kantianism" was at the core of much of the ills of French society. To teach the young that every action must accord to some notion of universal law was anathema for Barres. He maintained that ail significant actions must be undertaken not in accordance with any universal law but with the best interests of France in mind. Barres couldn't have cared less whether Dreyfus was, in reality, innocent or guilty, what was important for France was that the sentence of the courts be upheld. That, for Barres, was the only justice that a Frenchman could expect. Universal justice is dispensed in heaven, let Dreyfus find it there. In all his critiques of the French educational system Barres will invoke a single philosophical construct in defense of his arguments, the Hegelian dialectic. The most well-known thinker of the French extreme right was Charles Maurras (1868-1952). Maurtas is perhaps the most enigmatic theoretician of the early part of the century, an outspoken monarchist who was shunned in royalist circles, a vociferous Catholic most of whose works were placed in the Index by the Vatican, and finally an anti-modernist who fixed extremist right –wing ideology firmly in the modernist camp.

It was the Dreyfus Affair that first thrust Maurras, anunknown journalist, into the public eye. And a brief review of the facts of the case are required in order to understand the impact that Maurras' first major article will have. In 1894 it was discovered that secrets were being passed to

the German High Command. Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish captain attached to the French General staff was suspected of the crime. The news leaked to an anti-Semitic rightist journalist who immediately published the discovery. Dreyfus was court-martialed and sent to Devil's Island. Not everyone believed in Dreyfus's guilt and a Colonel Piquart, while investigating the crime for himself, found that a critical piece of evidence had been forged by Dreyfus's successor, Colonel Henry. This miscarriage of justice galvanized the left and in a famous open letter to the President of the Republic, /accuse, Emile Zola demanded a retrial. In 1898 a new trial was ordered by the Ministry of War. Colonel Henry's forgery was exposed in the press and in response the hapless colonel committed suicide. Enter Maurras, who, like most of the extreme right was less concerned with the scandalous activities of the military than he was about the loss of respect for the Army, the only French institution that had remained relatively unscathed by the pandemic corruption of the Third Republic.

Maurras, in response to the uproar following theHenry suicide, wrote an article entitled "The First Blood;' and it is in this piece that all the aforementioned tendencies of the extreme right came into place, not as political categories, but as actual political arguments. Maurras firmly and unequivocally builds the myth of blood, Henry's blood, that cries out for retribution, the blood of the nation that must be purified by fire and sword. Nazi propaganda will follow a similar pattern, as in the slogan blut und baden (blood and soil) . The impact of "The First Blood" was phenomenal. The Right had been searching for an effective refutation of pro-Dreyfusard propaganda, and Maurras, far from providing such a refutation, shifted the blame fully from the army to the pro-Dreyfusards and via association back to Dreyfus himself. As one contemporary observer noted, Maurras said what no one else had even dared to think. Indeed, Maurras spent the rest of his life writing explanations and clarifications of the article, though he never retracted it. Interestingly, the Dreyfus Affair was concluded to the satisfaction of both left and right, Dreyfus was retried by the army and found guilty once again (with mitigating circumstances), he was then pardoned by the President of the Republic, rehabilitated and presented with the Legion of Honor.

As with most of the extreme right, Maurras will also develop a scathing critique of democracy, and it is here that one begins to notice that the journalist has borrowed certain extreme left constructs. First, Maurras contends that far from the stated liberal goals of investing the people with both Liberty and Authority, society has in fact vested the populace with Authority (by the vote) but taken away its Liberty, which is ensconced in the ruling classes. To Maurras, this is an inversion of how society should actually function, where the People are invested with Liberty, and Authority resides in a ruling elite (for Maurras this elite is the aristocracy and the crown). Significantly, similar conclusions were being reached concurrently by extreme left theorists, particularly the syndicalists. Though obviously the formulation by the anarchists veered from the royalist conclusions of Maurras, the substitution of the term union for monarchy produces an identical formulation. Thus, the General Secretary of the CNT could state in the first decade of the twentieth century that the two goals of the Confederation were the reestablishment of Liberty and the destruction of democracy.

As stated above, there was a confluence in the early part of the century between extreme-left and extreme right theory, and more importantly there was a confluence of theorists. In the first decade of the twentieth century a group of young Syndicalists who were working with Georges

Sorel and few of the intellectuals whom Maurras had associated with formed the Cercle Proudhon. Though the stated principles of the Cercle were ambiguous, the primary interest of the group was to develop an overpowering refutation of democracy. Further the Cercle leveled a scathing critique at both the bourgeoisie and the working class for their policies of parliamentary compromise and collaboration. The theorists of the Cercle clearly were delineating a society based less on class struggle than on all-out class war. Similar associations of extremists with similar goals would spring up all over Europe as the continent headed inexorably towards the First World War. And it would be after the cataclysm of the "war to end all wars" that these associations would put their theories into practice. It seems almost incredible to the late twentieth century observer that democracy could have come into such disrepute, especially when one considers the current liberal litany about the immutability of the democratic edifice. Yet, one is drawn to the conclusion that there were a significant number of intellectuals who were willing to renounce almost a century of reason in order to realize an anti-democratic, anti-rational, and in some instances an anti-bourgeois society. In addition, these intellectuals were willing to provide the theoretical justification for the unleashing of a political fury that would eventually provide for the establishment of such a society.

The Italians

The general impression during the last decade of the nineteenth century was that Italian democracy was doomed. This was so for a number of reasons. Most prominent was the sense of betrayal on both left and right that proceeded from the founding of the Italian state in 1860. The left, composed of republicans, socialists, and anarchists, had envisioned a Social Republic along the lines of Jacobin France or the Paris Commune, or at the very least a powerful legislative corps and an elected executive. The right had hoped for a strong nonconstitutional monarchy with a foreign policy aimed ultimately at building an empire. Thus, when a mixed constitutional monarchy came into being, no one was very happy. Another flaw of the Italian system were the restrictions placed on the electoral franchise. An electoral reform instituted in 1881 admitted some small shopkeepers and skilled workers onto the voting lists; this, however, instead of calming the political situation threw it into more turmoil as the new voters rallied around the radical republican standard of Guiseppe Mazzini.

The structure of the government itself provided further complaints. The men who had shaped the constitution had used the extreme centralization of the French state as their paradigm. This produced a dual negative result. First, it denied regional autonomy to areas that had enjoyed almost total freedom of action and commerce for centuries. After unification, political elites were more likely to pursue regional agendas than they were to follow national programs. This allowed for a confusing and constant ebb and flow of national political alliances based on convenience rather than ideological agreement. The resulting instability of ministerial personnel became so pervasive as to warrant its own word, transformismo. Finally, the Italian constitution provided for the division of the country into districts overseen by Prefects stationed in Rome. The Prefects held enormous power in their respective districts and often wielded this influence to sway local elections. Thus an entire class of politicians came into being who were significantly more loyal to the government than they were to their own constituencies. By 1900, after a mere forty years, democracy in Italy seemed headed for certain extinction.

After the expansion of the electoral franchise in 1881 a significant Radical and Republican faction appeared in parliament. The opposition was augmented in 1892 the foundation of the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) . The government, however, viewed this new entity and the attendant unrest that followed its formation with mounting distrust. Less than a year after its initiation the PSI was banned and most of its militants were driven underground. A number of elites viewed this development with some consternation, particularly industrialists, who were convinced that the expansion of political rights was linked to economic progress. In 1899 the PSI was once again declared legal and the leaders embarked on organizing the industrial north of the country.

Enter Benito Mussolini, born in Predappio, on 29 July, 1883. Mussolini's mother was a schoolteacher and his father was a blacksmith and a convinced revolutionary socialist. Mussolini received his teaching certificate in 1901 and after only one year as a teacher he emigrated to Switzerland. While there he became acquainted with the coterie of revolutionary socialist and syndicalist militants who perpetually sought asylum in the neutral country. Mussolini returned to Italy in 1905 and served in the army until 1909. After his discharge he emigrated to Trentino and while there served as the secretary to the local socialist organization. Mussolini rose quickly in the PSI. He seemed to embody the tough, restless spirit then sweeping through the ranks of the younger party members. His irrationalism, intellectual temperament and latent authoritarianism all pushed him rapidly into the leadership of the party. By 1912 Mussolini was ready for one of the several coups that would punctuate his life. During the Congress of Reggio Emilia, called to debate the Libyan War, the revolutionary wing of the party crashed its way into power and the militants, albeit somewhat hesitantly, offered Mussolini the editorship of the party organ, Avanti! Much to the chagrin of the more ideologically coherent militants, Mussolini at once opened up the pages of Avanti! to unorthodox writers and ideas.

The First World War was the crucible that would bring a faltering Italian democracy, a pacifist socialist party, a group of intransigent ex-soldiers, revolutionary syndicalists and Mussolini into a head-on, full-throttle collision. The war itself fractured Italian society. Those favoring neutrality included the Catholic Church, the PSI and the political allies of then-Prime Minister Giolitti. Those favoring intervention numbered among them dissident revolutionary socialists and syndicalists who believed war would hasten the Social Revolution, radical and republican democrats who feared Austrian and Prussian authoritarianism, and the nationalist right who wished to expand Italian territory at the expense of Austria. Mussolini's position on the war wavered. Initially he affected the traditional socialist antimilitarist, internationalist convictions and preached passive opposition. This soon gave way to the perception that the war could be the device whereby the political system of transformismo might be crushed. In a famous editorial in Avanti! on 18 October, 1914 titled, "From Passive to Operative and Active Neutrality:' Mussolini tried to edge the PSI towards a pro war stance. The top leadership of the party tried to change his mind but he remained unmoved and pursued his pro war stance in speeches and in the pages of Avanti! Mussolini's gamble, however, failed. He was jettisoned from the editorship of Avanti! and was then expelled from the party.

Italy entered the war on 24 May, 1915, under an agreement with the Entente Powers in the Treaty of London. The terms provided that in exchange for a declaration of war on the Allied Powers a number of disputed territories were to be ceded to Italy upon the successful cessation of

hostilities. Victory and peace did nothing to allay the deep divisions present in Italian society. Indeed, upon the signing of the armistice long suppressed intrasocial hostilities surfaced with a vengeance. Government to a great degree had lost its legitimacy, due to the denial of Italy its prewar territorial claims. Masses of ex-combatants and officers returned home to what amounted to a defeated nation. The emergent industrial proletariat and the peasantry all pursued conflicting and contradictory goals in the wake of victory. Public opinion turned sharply against the Liberal ruling class. On the left the PSI enjoyed a renewed vigor, and to the right the Italian Nationalist Association and other groups received recruits and money as more and more Italians jumped the liberal, democratic ship.

Meanwhile Mussolini and the dissidents from the PSI viewed these developments with increasing interest. In 1915, after his expulsion from the PSI Mussolini and some of his comrades formed the fasci di azione rivoluzionaria (literally, the group or league for revolutionary action. Note the word fasci denotes nothing more sinister than a loose organization. Only later would Mussolini attempt to tie the image to the fascio, the bundle of sticks and ax carried during the Roman Empire, symbolizing unity) in order to propagate the message of leftist intervention. On March 23, 1 9 1 9, a small group of revolutionary syndicalists and socialists, futurists, and ex -combatants met with Mussolini on the piazza San Sepolcro in Milan and founded the fasci di combattimento (the league of combatants) .

The initial prospects for the fasci didn't look good. They preached a confused program of wartime profit confiscation, mild anti-clericalism, and protection for private property. Such a statement, however, belies the essential strength of the fascist movement, flexibility. It was a commonplace of fascist writing that the movement precedes the doctrine. And even with the first fasci di azione rivoluzionaria this was essentially true; being a loose grouping of militants from different parties and ideologies that came into being in response to a specific problem, the war. The early fascists were also convinced of their elite position in the struggle for revolution. For the fascists the "dynamic minority" were the true revolutionaries distinguished by their sacrifice and idealism from the masses. The fascists in their consistent espousal of intervention came to view the war as an end in itself, a period of purification and regeneration. This, combined with a militant socialist ideology produced a perception of revolution not through war, as initially postulated, but as war. Mussolini provided a number of finishing flourishes to fascist ideology. Foremost of these was the extreme subjectivism that he tended to impart to most of his theoretics. For Mussolini socialism was not a theorem it was a faith. He soundly rejected the somewhat orthodox Marxism of his youth, much as Sorel did, in favor of a more militant, self-willed revolutionary credo.

As might seem obvious from the above discussion, such programmatic and methodological peculiarities would at best hamper a normal political party. The fascists, however, followed the above reasoning to its logical conclusion and declared their movement an "anti-party:' Mussolini in a famous speech of March 1921 said; “Fascism is not a church. It is more like a training ground. It is not a party. It is a movement... We are the heretics of all churches. We can permit ourselves the luxury of being both aristocrats and democrats” Socialism was subtly referred to as a religion and the fascists as standing firmly against "red clericalism”" In another vein he railed against the discipline inherent in the socialist parties of the time, "statutes, regulations etc., that is all party stuff.” This derogation of party discipline and accouterments served the fascists well, as

it appealed to the postwar discontent and undirected revolt then bubbling just below the surface of Italian society. Hannah Arendt was one of the first critical theorists to recognize the strength of such arguments, "The first to consider programs and platforms as needless scraps of paper and embarrassing promises, inconsistent with the style and impetus of a movement, was Mussolini..”

Then on September 12, 1919, an almost surreal political event occurred. Gabriele D'Annunzio, poet and military adventurer, marched at the head of two thousand students, ex-combatants, and assorted human flotsam left over from the war into the disputed city of Fiume. Initially D'Annunzio had proposed handing the city over to Italy, however, when Nitti, the Prime Minister, refused the offer D'Annunzio went him one better and declared Fiume a republic. Assisted by Alceste de Ambris, one-time anarcho-syndicalist and fascist-to-be, D'Annunzio crafted the carta del Carnaro, the first constitution to section society into separate corporative entities and to declare music one of the cornerstones of the state. Daily life in Fiume was transformed almost overnight into a political circus. Concerts, drinking and fornication became the order of the day. D'Annunzio perched on a balcony high above the central square of the city spoke to the citizenry on an almost daily basis. Fireworks, plays and more drinking completed the evening's events. Among D'Anriunzio's followers were two groups worth mentioning, the arditi, shock troops left over from the war, and the escochi, ex-navy men turned pirates who kept the entire city fed by raiding Adriatic shipping lanes when needed.

As expected, the Italian foreign policy apparatus had a very hard time explaining to the rest of the world why one of the country's most important dramatists and poets had seized a city and turned it into a Disneyland for politically oriented drunks. D'Annunzio, of course, didn't help the situation by broadcasting news of his adventure whenever possible. Deputations were sent to a number of important western European powers demanding recognition and the exchange of ambassadors. Finally after months of pleading Nitti prevailed upon the army to liberate the city. This was accomplished without firing a single shot, which in itself is not surprising given the fact that D'Annunzio, his followers and the entire citizenry were probably experiencing one of the most momentous collective hangovers of the twentieth century. Although green with envy, the lessons of D'Annunzio's Fiume adventure were not lost on Mussolini. The idea of the forced seizure of an entire town by armed contingents was something totally new, but the fascists were willing to give it a try. The actual beginnings of what would become squadrismo occur early in the fascist experience. On April 15, 1919, three weeks after the San Sepolcro meeting, a group of fascists torched the offices of Avanti!. During the summer of 1919, Mussolini urged the fascists to, "form armed groups composed of 200-250 sure, tried, and well-armed individuals” The growth of the squads and their importance were inextricably linked to the political orientation of the movement. Prior to the Fiume adventure they had been viewed as a purely national revolutionary force, as Mussolini swung to the right as a result of his inability to attract the proletariat and peasantry into the young fasci, the squads became a bludgeon with which to suppress bolshevism.

The squads were almost all recruited from agrarian areas hard hit by postwar inflation. The first major squadrist action occurred in Bologna during the inauguration of a new socialist administration in November 1 920. The Bolognese fasci sparked a riot that left several dead and wounded. The city administration was suspended and the landlords moved in to crack the spine of the city's remaining socialist institutions, including the peasant union. The successes of the

squads in Bologna escalated into wholesale war in the countryside. The fascists, and particularly the syndicalists, proved to be truly effective organizers when it came to repression. The telephone and the truck also proved to be of singular worth to the squadrists. Often, actions were organized by telephone between several different fascist groups, trucks were requisitioned from sympathetic landowners and the squads would roll into a town, clear out the socialist vermin and return home. It was so well-organized as to be almost choreographed. The extent of the violence was phenomenal, it is estimated that during the first six months of 1921 that 119 labor chambers, 107 cooperatives and 83 peasant league offices were attacked, sacked, and destroyed. Meanwhile, the government, which had initially denounced fascist violence, began to see the utility of the squads in quelling socialist-inspired unrest and thus did nothing as the fascist incursions reached their crescendo in 1922.

By late summer of 1922 Mussolini had effectively turned the original program of the fascists to his own ends. The movement that had initially derogated political parties was now an effective bloc within the Italian parliament. Discipline, control and a rigid hierarchical structure had also been imposed by Mussolini and his henchmen, occasionally by stealth and in a few cases by coercion. The difference between the movement in 1916 or even 1919 with the structured and static form of 1922 is paramount. One post-industrial Italian historian has remarked that by 1922 Mussolinism had become a better name for the political ideology than fascism.

The March on Rome was less a revolution or even a coup d'etat than it was an extra-legal cabinet shake-up. Regardless of how many fascists took part the military was consistently in control of the situation in and around Rome. In point of fact the final saga was played out in the apartments of the king and not in the streets of the city. Liberalism gave way with a whimper and the Duce opened the city to the squads who burned a few subversive newspaper offices and then went home to milk the fruits of victory.

The history of fascism ends here. Mussolini found upon the assumption of power that the Italian State was just as difficult to lead without democracy as it was with it. He eventually took up the task of moderating various regional and sectional rivalries in much the same way that previous prime ministers had done. The only real difference was that Mussolini was probably a little better at the task and he could not be voted out of office. By the beginning of the Second World War Mussolini was having a harder and harder time justifying the regimes continued existence even to his supporters, and if the conflagration of the war had not occurred it is likely that fascism would have been jettisoned as an interesting experience but something of a waste of time.

Lessons

First and foremost of the lessons to be drawn from the fascist experience is the primacy of the irrational in politics. I don't know how many meetings I've sat through where some anarchist or libertarian has crowed about how rational a society without government could be. How economic and political systems will be allowed to develop freely without the fetters of emotion and national/ regional prejudice. I find argumentation on such a level, particularly by anarchists, to be hypocritical if not outright self-delusionary. For what is anarchism but the will of the individual to control his/her own life, the will to liberty. And such a concept, that of the autonomy of the self, is indefensible in rational political dialogue. Additionally, insurrectionists of all stripes have the difficulty of renouncing literally two centuries of rationalist speculation.

Both Marxists and anarchists find themselves bound with the chains of either dialectical materialism on one side or extreme enlightenment ideologies on the other. Neither of which provide the fire, the spark necessary to ignite an insurrectionary conflagration. Ultimately, I am an anarchist because of an irrational desire for liberty: why should I construct a political dialogue (or a new world) using a methodology that I myself have renounced?

Fascism also provides us with an example of the strength of the myth. As Sorel theorized, all social movements are motivated to greater or lesser degrees by social myths. Such myths, though derived from actual situations and conditions, function on a deeper level than that affected by concrete reality. Again the lesson to be learned is that to affect individuals, to make ordinary people do extraordinary things (as in an insurrectionary situation), more is needed than a roll call of statistics, or a dialectical syllogism that now is the time. To achieve a better world, one needs the vision to imagine it and the courage to ask others to imagine it as well.

From the French proto- fascists comes the necessity of aiming a withering attack upon democracy itself. For though I've heard it said many times that anarchism is nothing more than direct, participatory democracy, I find nothing further from the truth or more misleading. Democracy always implies bowing to the will of the majority; it always implies the lie of the voting. Further, I am always surprised that individuals who identify themselves as enemies of the dominant culture use one of its main theoretical props as a basis of their critique. I see no difference between a bourgeois and a workers' democracy, both are tyranny of majorities, both deny my right to choose the course and contour of my life. In addition I believe both economic classes are equally mundane and idiotic, and hence equally incompetent to rule.

Finally, something must be said about fascist tactics: the evolution of the squads and their reckless expeditions. If nothing else the squads were a physical manifestation of the fascists' single-minded drive to achieve their "revolution". Anarchists, however, when they consider even the possibility of a successful incursion into the political sphere tend to degenerate into sniveling hulks of beer-stained denim. Within the past two years a number of autonomous groups have attempted to build a "fighting" movement, only to be sidetracked into protest marches and by now probably candle-light vigils. This is so because such tactics always rely on a negative, the ultimately reformist response of Marxists and others trying to goad the government into doing something. Alternatively, the use of affinity groups to realize an insurrectionary situation in a town or geographic region, where Utopia can be at least be begun strikes me as a far more positive tactic.

In the words of the enrages, "We ask for nothing, we demand nothing. We will take, we will occupy."

Anybody got a light?