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Ten Blows Against Politics

Il Pugnale

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Fall/Winter 2006

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10. Politics is the art of calculation.

In order to make alliances profitable, it is necessary to learn the secrets of allies. Political calculation is the first secret. It is necessary to know where to put one's feet. It is necessary to draw up detailed inventories of efforts and outcomes. And by dint of measuring what one has, one ends up gaining everything except the will to lay it on the line and lose it. So one is always taken up with oneself, attentive and quick to demand the count. With the eye fixed on that which surrounds one, one never forgets oneself. Vigilant as military police. When love of oneself becomes excessive it demands to give itself. And this overabundance of life makes us forget ourselves. In the tension of the rush, it makes us lose count. But the forgetfulness of ourselves is the desire for a world in which it is worth the effort of losing oneself, a world that merits our forgetfulness. And this is why the world as it is, administered by jailers and accountants, is destroyed – to make space for the spending of ourselves. Insurrection begins here. Overcoming calculation, but not through lack, as the humanitarianism that, perfectly still and silent, allies itself with the executioner, recommends, but rather through excess. Here politics ends.

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tience that is the exuberance of desire. Waiting for an objective that escapes from the curse of the particular. Waiting for an adequate quantitative growth. Waiting for measurable results. Waiting for death. Politics is the constant attempt to transform adventure into future. But only if I resolve “I and now” could there ever be an us that is not the space of a mutual renunciation, the lie that renders each of us the controller of the other. Anyone who wants to act immediately is always looked upon with suspicion. If she is not a provocateur, it is said, she can certainly be used as such. But it is the moment of an action and of a joy without tomorrows that carries us to the morning after. Without the eye fixed on the hand of the clock.

9. Politics is the art of accommodation.

Always waiting for conditions to ripen, one ends up sooner or later forming an alliance with the masters of waiting. At bottom, reason, which is the organ of deferment, always provides some good reason for coming to an agreement, for limiting damages, for salvaging some detail from a *whole* that one despises. Politics has sharp eyes for discovering alliances. It is not all the same, they tell us. The Reformed Communist party is certainly not like the rampant and dangerous right. (We don't vote for it in elections – we are abstentionists, ourselves – but the citizens' committees, the initiatives in the plazas are another thing). Public health is always better than private assistance. A guaranteed minimum wage is still always preferable to unemployment. Politics is the world of the lesser evil. And resigning oneself to the lesser evil, little by little one accepts the totality in which only partialities are granted. Anyone who contrarily wants to have nothing to do with this lesser evil is an adventurer. Or an aristocrat.

ences in slavery – equality before god, equality before the law. This is why politics replaces real dialogue, which refuses mediation, with its ideology. Racism is the sense of belonging that prevents direct relationships between individuals. All politics is participatory simulation. All politics is racist. Only by demolishing its barriers in revolt could everyone meet each other in their individuality. I revolt, therefore, we are. But if we are, farewell revolt.

7. Politics is the art of impersonality.

Every action is like the instant of a spark that escapes the order of generality. Politics is the administration of that order. “What sort of action do you want in the face of the complexity of the world?” This is what those who have been benumbed by the dual somnolence of a Yes that is no and a More later that is never. Bureaucracy, the faithful maidservant of politics, is the nothing administered so that no one can act, so that no one recognizes their responsibility in the generalized irresponsibility. Power no longer says that every thing is under control, it says the opposite: “If I don’t ever manage to find the remedies for it, let’s imagine it as something else.” Democratic politics is now based on the catastrophic ideology of the emergency (“either us or fascism, either us or terrorism, either us or the unknown”). Even when oppositional, generality is always an event that never happens and that cancels all those that happen. Politics invites everyone to participate in the spectacle of this motionless movement.

8. Politics is the art of deferment.

Its time is the future, which is why it imprisons everyone in a miserable present. All together, but tomorrow. Anyone who says “I and now” ruins the order of waiting with the impa-

1. Politics is the art of control

So that human activity is not freed from the fetters of obligation and work revealing itself in all its potential. So that workers do not encounter each other as individuals and put an end to being exploited. So that students do not decide to destroy the schools in order to choose how when and what to learn. So that intimate friends and relatives do not fall in love and leave off being little servants of a little state. So that children are nothing more than imperfect copies of adults. So that the distinction between good (anarchists) and bad (anarchists) is not gotten rid of. So that individuals are not the ones that have relationships, but commodities. So that no one disobeys authority. So that if anyone attacks the structures of exploitation of the state, someone hurries to say, “It was not the work of comrades.” So that banks courts, barracks don’t blow up. In short, so that life does not manifest itself.

2. Politics is the art of recuperation.

The most effective way to discourage all rebellion, all desire for real change, is to present a man or woman of state as subversive, or – better yet – to transform a subversive into a man or woman of state. Not all people of state are paid by the government. There are functionaries who are not found in parliament or even in the neighboring rooms. Rather, they frequent the social centers and sufficiently know the principle revolutionary theories. They debate over the liberatory potential of technology; they theorize about non-state public spheres and the surpassing of the subject. Reality – they know it well – is always more complex than any action. So if they hope for a total theory, it is only in order to totally neglect it in daily life. Power needs them because – as they themselves explain to us – when no one criticizes it, power is criticized by itself.

3. Politics is the art of repression.

Of anyone who does not separate the moments of her/his life and who wants to change given conditions starting from the totality of their desires. Of anyone who wants to set fire to passivity, contemplation and delegation. Of anyone who does not want to let themselves be supplanted by any organization or immobilized by any program. Of anyone who wants to have direct relationships between individuals and make difference the very space of equality. Of anyone who does not have any we on which to swear. Of anyone who disturbs the order of waiting because s/he wants to rise up immediately, not tomorrow or the day after tomorrow. Of anyone who gives her/ himself without compensation and forgets her/himself in excess. Of any one who defends her comrades with love and resoluteness. Of anyone who offers recuperators only one possibility: that of disappearing. Of anyone who refuses to take a place in the numerous groups of rogues and of the anaesthetized. Of anyone who neither wants to govern nor to control. Of anyone who wants to transform the future into a fascinating adventure.

4. Politics is the art of separation.

Where life has lost its fullness, where the thoughts and actions of individuals have been dissected, catalogued and enclosed in detached spheres – there politics begins. Having distanced some of the activities of individuals (discussion, conflict, common decision, agreement) into a zone by itself that claims to govern everything else, sure of its independence, politics is at the same time separation between the separations and the hierarchical management of separateness. Thus, it reveals itself as specialization, forced to transform the unresolved problem of its function into the necessary presupposition for resolving all problems. For this reason, the role of professionals in poli-

tics is indisputable – and all that can be done is to replace them from time to time. Every time subversives accept separating the various moments of life and changing specific conditions starting from that separation, they become the best allies of the world order. In fact, while it aspires to be a sort of precondition of life itself, politics blows its deadly breath everywhere.

5. Politics is the art of representation.

In order to govern the mutilations inflicted on life, it constrains individuals to passivity, to the contemplation of the spectacle prepared upon the impossibility of their acting, upon the irresponsible delegation of their decisions. Then, while the abdication of the will to determine oneself transforms individuals into appendages of the state machine, politics recomposes the totality of the fragments in a false unity. Power and ideology thus celebrate their deadly wedding. If representation is that which takes the capacity to act away from individuals, replacing it with the illusion of being participants rather than spectators, this dimension of the political always reappears wherever any organization supplants individuals and any program keeps them in passivity. It always reappears wherever an ideology unites what is separated in life.

6. Politics is the art of mediation.

Between the so-called totality and individuals and between individual and individual. Just as the divine will has need of its earthly interpreters, so the collectivity has need of its delegates. Just as in religion, there are no relationships between humans but only between believers, so in politics it is not individuals who come together, but citizens. The links of membership impede union because separation disappears only in union. Politics renders us all equal because there are no differ-