

To the customers

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Insurrection and Doublethink

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Insurrection and Doublethink

To those who...

To those for whom the end of civilization is a bookstore or grocery business;

To those who consider insurrection as a breach in the monopoly of falsehood, representation, power;

To those who are able to sense that behind the dense fog of the “crisis” there is a theater of operations, maneuvers, strategies and therefore the possibility for self-promotion;

To those who launch “attacks” in order to occupy seats in the municipal council;

To those who seize the propitious moment to display
themselves in the mass media;

To those who don't seek accomplices, but political
friends;

To those who don't desert, but who infiltrate;

To those who mock the refusal to participate in this
world;

To those who organize others into a party, perhaps –
why not – into a historical party;

To those who intend to give life to a revolutionary force,
as long as it's institutional.

A contribution to a debate that has need of a single way
of thinking shared by all...

II

«By spreading his tail this bird so fair,

Whose plumage drags the forest floor,

Appears more lovely than before,

But thus unveils his derrière.»

Guillaume Apollinaire, *The Peacock*

The Invisible Committee's second book, like the first, was published in France by the same publishing house, La Fabrique, whose name is a homage to workerist ideology. Its animator is Eric Hazan, a real character of an editor, as well as a historian and philosopher. Beyond being, of course, a bitter enemy of the constituted order, although his *First Revolutionary Measures* (the title of one of his books written together with the zombie of Kamo, who, some whisper, was also dug up on the plateau of Millevaches near Tarnac) has not completely managed to make people forget his latest counter-revolutionary measures (his electoral propaganda in favor of the socialist François Hollande, later elected prime minister). Like the preceding work, *To Our Friends* is also part of the battle series of La Fabrique editions, the same series that includes works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Mao, Blanqui, Gramsci, Robespierre, as well as three titles from *Tiqqun* ... But Hazan doesn't only have eyes for the grandpas and grandsons of authoritarian revolutionary thought: his 2010 catalog can also brag of *Les Mauvais Jours Finiront: 40 ans de combats pour la justice et les libertés* (The Bad Days Will End: 40 Years of Fighting for Justice and Liberty), the title that, with the piquant communard-situ flavor, serves to spice up a hot dish from an author as insipid as the Judiciary Union. Well? What's strange about this? Nothing, considering that in 2003, Hazan had already distinguished himself for the publication of the diary of the founder of the National Police union, who spent twenty years doing this «good job in which one helps people and protects society», while in 2005 he published the book of an auxiliary doctor of the police who desired to let the pub-

lic know what it takes to care for the health of the arrested in the police station.

In short, as you've understood, Eric Hazan is a revolutionary, well-read and lacking prejudice.

The back cover of the Invisible Committee's new book, along with listing to whom it is addressed, concludes with the by now inevitable affectation of humility, a genuine trademark of certain movement areas. This new editorial effort is simperingly presented by its authors as a «modest contribution to an understanding of our time». Now, it is already annoying to hear a scholar complimenting himself for his erudition, or a muse bragging about her beauty, or a strong man asserting his strength. But modesty? To flaunt one's modesty is to fall into the most flagrant hypocrisy, it is bellowing out one's conceit. But, as we will see, the Invisible Committee is the supreme master of contradiction.

Starting with an ostentatious humility, the I.C. is announced with great fanfare. In the original promotional press release for the book in France, we actually read: «In 2007, we published *The Coming Insurrection* ... A book that has now ended up being associated with the 'Tarnac case', forgetting that it was already a success in bookstores ... Because it isn't enough that a book be included in its totality in a file of an anti-terrorist investigation for it to sell, it is also necessary that the truths it articulates touch that readers due to a certain correctness. It must be acknowledged that a number of assertions by the Invisible Committee have since been confirmed, starting with the first and most essential: the sensational return of the insurrectionary phenomenon. Starting in 2008, a half-year has not passed without a mass revolt or an uprising taking place

to the removal of the powers in charge ... If it has been the sequence of events that has conferred its subversive character to *The Coming Insurrection*, it is the intensity of the present that makes *To Our Friends* an eminently more scandalous text. We cannot content ourselves with celebrating the insurrectional wave that currently passes through the world, also congratulating ourselves on having noticed its birth before others ... *To Our Friends* is thus written at the peak of this general movement, at the peak of the experience. Its words come from the heart of disorders and are addressed to all those who still believe sufficiently in life to fight. *To Our Friends* wants to be a report on the condition of the world and of the movement, an essentially strategic and openly partisan writing. Its political ambition is boundless: to produce a shared understanding of the times, at the expense of the extreme confusion of the present.»

Advertising language knows only the absolute superlative. The words of this presentation sound so lacking in modesty as to be inappropriate if addressed to potential *friends*, usually not so inclined to welcome such arrogance. But perfect if one intends to address potential *customers* luring them with the promise of strong emotions. Isn't it true that every new product that gets put on the market is presented as if it were a «masterpiece», an «experience you don't want to miss», a «unique sensation»? In 2006, an essay on the propaganda of daily life that appeared in France, published by Raisons d'agir editions, also pointed this out, declaring that «Another symptom of the influence of advertising is the inflation of hyperbole, particularly in ... book and film reviews (...) Journalists make the jobs of the copywriters of the advertising agencies easier, lit-

tering their articles with enthusiastic formulas, rich with adjectives ... The incestuous relationship with advertising contributes to making [of language] a tool of programmed emotion, an impulsive language, just as one describes 'an impulsive purchase'.» Curious – but we are not at all surprised – that the author of this essay, entitled *LQR*, is precisely Mr. Eric Hazan, who in the costume of the essayist lashes out against this invasion of advertising into the language that in the costume of editor he welcomes with the aim of programming readers to the impulsive purchase of his products.

Putting aside the poverty of self-promotional gimmicks, such a conceit brings to our minds some considerations of an old and well-known Italian anarchist, who mocked the «sweet mania of all idolaters. Thus, marxists attribute everything to Marx, and one passes for a marxist even if one says that bosses rob the workers (*ah! so you admit the theory of surplus value*, they shout at you in a triumphant tone) or if one affirms the millennia-old truth that to assert reason force is required. If you say that the sun shines, the mazzinians will say that Mazzini said it, and the marxists will answer that Marx said it. Idolaters are made this way.» The Invisible Committee is also made this way, it is an idolater of itself. It only remembers the disorders that broke out *after* its book was blessed by FNAC or Amazon – not even the insurrections and rebellions that exploded starting from 2007 were due to it, not even the rebels who rose up throughout the planet, did so because they were aroused by reading its text. And what about what happened, for example, in Oaxaca or Kurdistan in 2006, in France or Iran in 2005, in Manipur (in India) or Syria in 2004, in Iraq and Bolivia in 2003, in Argentina in 2002, in

Algeria in 2001, in Ecuador in 2000, in Iran in 1999, in Indonesia in 1998, in Albania in 1997 ... not to mention the ongoing revolts that break out in countries impenetrable to western information like China?

Let the low-down scoundrels of the Invisible Committee resign themselves. They have predicted nothing, they have not discovered and announced anything new. Storms don't break out to confirm the words of the meteorologist. There have been insurrections throughout history, and they have no need of *anyone* to theorize them in order to explode. Neither revolutionaries who discuss them in their autonomous publications, nor intellectuals who transform them into logos of success on the publishing market. So if the I.C. brag about being aware of the insurrectional phenomenon before others, then they have to ask themselves who these *others* are: their competitors in the climb in sales ratings for titles of political critique? Toni Negri who obsesses them so much in the competition for theoretical hegemony of the extreme left, or Stéphane Hessel who incites to the civic insurrection of consciences, or Naomi Klein, icon of the anti-globalization movement, whose books have all sold many more than them, clearly because .. they have articulated even more correct truths?

However it may be, we admit it, the Invisible Committee has achieved a first. Before others, it has commodified insurrection.

But in case advertising hyperbole isn't successful, emotional participation intervenes. In the book's preface, the rugged members of the Invisible Committee enthrall their readers with their personal confidences, making the readers participants in their adventurous life: « Since *The Com-*

ing Insurrection, we've gone to the places where the epoch was inflamed. We've read, we've fought, we've discussed with comrades of every country and every tendency. Together with them, we've come up against the invisible obstacles of the times. Some of us have died, others have seen prison. We've kept going. We haven't given up on constructing worlds or attacking this one.» It is here that that sensation of deep embarrassment, almost shame, for someone else comes out. The strength of anonymity is in its ability to unburden the meaning of an idea or an action from the identity of the one who formulates it or carries it out, returning it in this way to a full availability in its universal essence. But what is there to say when it gets used only to take the license of claiming or boasting about who knows what undertakings? Who is the Invisible Committee out to impress when – certain that no one could refute it – it evokes its omnipresence in disorders, death and prison suffered by its members, its irreducible tenacity? Such boastfulness might impress its customers, but it provokes everyone else to savage sarcasm. We also take for granted that the collection of author's rights has allowed it to make insurrectional tourism, or rather to compete with pacifists and leftists, the police and journalists in rushing headlong to wherever there were outbreaks of revolt. But we still doubt that the I.C. has discussed with comrades of every tendency (okay, let's not be too persnickety: «and every tendency» except for those who don't adore them). Finally, who among its initiates is dead and how? It doesn't say, this way making fantasy fly. Is the Committee speaking of those fallen on the field during insurrections? Or more simply of the dedicatees of this new book? Maybe Billy and Guccio and Alexis were all part of the Commit-

tee? And which of its members ended up in prison? The hacker Jeremy Hammond?

We strongly doubt it, but it is completely useless to dwell on such questions. After having been the self-proclaimed spokespeople of the «historical party» of insurrection, nothing remains to the Invisible Committee but to inspect its properties, coopting the revolt of others through the use of the royal «we» that makes it reflect on «global action by our party», or to recall that on «May 10, 2010, five hundred thousand of us flooded into the center of Athens.» Just as in the past the intellectuals of the Situationist International bragged of expressing the revolutionary theory, maintaining in defiance of ridicule that their ideas were «in everyone's heads – it is well-known», in the same way the intellectuals of the Invisible Committee brag in the present of expressing the insurrectional event, maintaining – in equal defiance of ridicule and feeding off of the slogan of Anonymous – that they are legion and are everywhere on the barricades erected over the planet. It is well-known!

Here it is: the last peacock of the zoo of the extreme left, utterly intent on opening its tail with phosphorescent feathers to put itself on display before its public.

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