

# Communiqué N° 0

## The Invisible Committee

February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022

The political and moral significance of thinking comes out only in those rare moments in history when “Things fall apart; the center cannot hold / Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,” when “The best lack all conviction, while the worst / Are full of passionate intensity.” At these moments, thinking ceases to be a marginal affair in political matters. When everybody is swept away unthinkingly by what everybody else does and believes in, those who think are drawn out of hiding because their refusal to join is conspicuous and thereby becomes a kind of action.

—Hannah Arendt, “Thinking and Moral Considerations”

The Invisible Committee was originally a workers’ conspiracy in Lyon during the 1830s. In his *Arcades Project*, Walter Benjamin writes, “The Invisible Committee — name of a secret society in Lyon.” In the conclusion of the La Fabrique edition of *Theory of Bloom*, released in February of 2000, one reads, “The Invisible Committee: an *overtly secret* society / a public conspiracy / an agency of anonymous subjectivation, whose name is everywhere and headquarters nowhere / the revolutionary-experimental polarity of the Imaginary Party.” The back cover of the same book was even more politically explicit: it defined the Invisible Committee as an “anonymous conspiracy that, from sabotage to uprising, eventually liquidates commodity domination during the first quarter of the twenty-first century.” By “Imaginary Party” we understood, *and still understand*, the whole ensemble of those who find themselves in conflict — whether in open or latent war, in secession or in simple disaffection — with the technological and anthropological unification of this world under the sign of the commodity. To this process of unification by which the planet is constituted as a “continuous biopolitical fabric” we assigned the indifferent name “Empire” or “world of the authoritarian commodity.” In 2022, the obviousness of such notions, or at least of the intuitions to which they attest, can be ignored only at one’s own expense.

Under such conditions, the Imaginary Party forms both the blind spot and the unspeakable enemy of a society that today acknowledges only errors to be corrected in its impeccable programming — as well as a handful of demons to be urgently crushed. Whenever a sudden burst of activity nevertheless leads the Imaginary Party to erupt into the Spectacle, it is quickly denounced as the action of some “marginal minority.” Of course, one must dutifully avoid ever acknowledging that the margin in question henceforth lies *everywhere*, and that this society produces it all the more continuously as it pretends to absorb it. Constantly cast back into the

unreality of a specter, the Imaginary Party is the form of appearance of the proletariat “during the historical period in which domination imposes itself as the dictatorship *of* visibility, and dictatorship *in* visibility” (*Tiqqun* 1, “Theses on the Imaginary Party”). It is also true that the kind of inner disaffiliation that afflicts this society is generally so mute, so diffuse and so discreet that it tends to accentuate its disposition to paranoia — that atavistic and often *deadly* disease of power. As we noted at the time, “in a world of paranoids, the paranoid are right.”

These theses, which at the time were considered alarming, insane and even downright criminal, have been confirmed point by point over the past decades, despite all efforts to the contrary, including our own. In September 2001, the opening text of the journal *Tiqqun* 2 concluded with this premonition: “The preceding phrases will usher in a new era that will be shadowed, in ever more tangible ways, by the threat of a sudden unleashing of reality. At some point, the ‘Invisible Committee’ was the name given to the ethic of civil war expressed in these pages. It refers to a specific faction of the Imaginary Party, its revolutionary/experimental wing. We hope that with these lines we can avoid some of the more vulgar nonsense that might be uttered about the nature of our activities and about the era just now dawning” (“Introduction to Civil War,” *Tiqqun* 2). As predicted, no shortage of the “most vulgar nonsense” was uttered in November 2008, at which time a dozen people were arrested for “terrorism” on the double pretense of having committed a series of anti-nuclear sabotages and of having written a book, *The Coming Insurrection*, signed by the Invisible Committee. The press proceeded to make a fine display of how it goes about its task of informing the public, taking over the governments’ fabrications wholesale, and with them those of the anti-terrorist police too. It made a complete fool of itself, which obviously taught it nothing about either itself or us. This whole shaky edifice ended up collapsing, yet not before inducing the wider public to read the Invisible Committee, at the price of some inconvenience for all those involved. If anyone still needed confirmation of the essentially *police-like* character of very notion of authorship — the need to hold someone “responsible” for a truth uttered in public — the whole affair seemed designed to deliver up the definitive proof. After ten years of painful proceedings, the indictment of the public prosecutor’s office eventually came down heavily on the identity of the man accused of sabotage and suspected of having been the “principal author” of *The Coming Insurrection*. The needs of the defense — since when do we owe the truth to our enemies? — led one of the accused, who risked nothing in the event of a trial and who had not written three lines of *The Coming Insurrection*, nor of the subsequent books, to claim authorship of the pamphlet before the judge. In an epoch in which mystification reigns, it could be expected that this lie would eventually be passed off as truth, and that the liar would end up almost convincing himself of it, by dint of passing as such. Since he therefore became the *spokesperson* for the accused, this boy went on to illustrate the structural tendency toward autonomization characteristic of modern communication, which allows one to believe that simply having an account on Twitter, all alone behind one’s smartphone, is sufficient to shape reality. Even governing authorities themselves manage to stumble over this carpet of illusion. In any case, spokespersons are generally not expected to have a deep understanding of what they speak; it can even be detrimental to their task.

On the other hand, the torments of publicity were not taken into account. The Invisible Committee has never been a group, and still less a “collective.” We have long been aware of the dangers of “terrible communities.” It is therefore not susceptible to any dissolution, neither legal nor voluntary. It was always spared that tragi-comedy of small groups described by Wilfred Bion already in 1961. On the other hand, it did not escape the throes of publicity. How many

“members of the Invisible Committee” have we heard about, that we have never met? And how many people we have met who owe their scant aura to the mystery they nourish about the fact that they “might have been” a part of it, or even “might be” again? This risk of usurpation, as well as the entire regime of pretense that the latter authorizes, counts among the few downsides of anonymity in these dark times. In any event, such shams only fool the foolish. The Invisible Committee names a certain partisan intelligence of our epoch, scattered like splinters among all those *unreconciled* with their times. Clearly, what matters is not being a part of it but the work itself, that of *gathering the fragments*: to maintain, across and against all the maneuvers of integration, a position apparently lost in the war of time. “Who else, then, can change the world? Those who don’t like it.” This was already Brecht’s answer, in 1932, in *Kuhle Wampe*.

The Invisible Committee functions as a site of strategic enunciation. Those who write under its name have been able to do so only after undergoing a certain asceticism, a certain practice of desubjectivation, which strips from them all the defense mechanisms that form, in the last resort, the “I”: they *drop the ego*. Only on this condition do they manage to do something other than to “express themselves,” to instead express what they find suspended in our epoch, and therefore fatally *also* in ourselves. The texts of the Invisible Committee are assembled out of this dust of intuitions, observations, events, words seized on the fly, experiments and experiences undertaken or undergone, gestures accomplished or thwarted, confused sensations, distant echoes and gleaned formulas.

This explains why we have always regarded it as a matter of indifference that one or another of us writes an overwhelming part of this or that text. Whoever writes under this signature is literally *nobody*, or everybody. Among those who hold the *schismatic* position of the Invisible Committee, all the friends will debate this or that unilateral formulation, this or that thesis, this or that perception. In short: we are scribes of our time, which is to say, of *the real movement that destitutes the existing state of things*. Whence the absence of any author for these texts. The method seems to work fairly well: few can claim, after two decades, to have not a word to withdraw from what they said about their time, and to have been able to hold such a scandalous position throughout. “To refuse to hold the state of things as valid is the attitude that proves the existence, I would not even say of an intelligence, but the existence of the soul” (Dionys Mascolo).

The recent publication of a truly anonymous book, the *Conspiracist Manifesto*, perfectly unacceptable to its epoch, has provided the occasion for a remarkable campaign of revenge on the part of all those who long felt humiliated by the “successes” of the Invisible Committee to date. The signal for this public lynching was given to *L’Express* on the basis of “information” emanating from the police — sloppy detective work that was followed by the interception and destruction of correspondence from a “prestigious” Parisian publisher, a snoop work that it would not be hard to attribute, once again, to the DGSI (General Directorate for Internal Security). The journalistic flunkies bravely followed suit, without any memory of how little success they’d previously had in howling with the wolves against the Invisible Committee. At the climax of their campaign, they boasted that they understood nothing of the *Manifesto*, but not without first complaining that the book was too informed in too many areas to contradict it — poor guys! Finally, the old Negrist partisans of “minor biopolitics” or even of “inflationary biopolitics” joined the throng, those whose historical defeat coincided precisely with the victory of their ideas *on the side of the Empire*. Today it is Klaus Schwab of the World Economic Forum who is invited to the Vatican to discuss with Pope Francis his philanthropic project of universal income. As for “inflationary biopolitics,” after the last two years no one needs any help picturing what’s at stake. “Because

the most formidable stratagem of Empire lies in its throwing everything that opposes it into one ugly heap-of ‘barbarism,’ ‘sects,’ ‘terrorism,’ or ‘conflicting extremisms’ (“This is not a Program,” *Tiqqun 2*), our failing Negrist spectres and other sub-Foucauldians hastened to shriek “confusion,” “fascism,” “eugenics,” and why not — while we’re at it — “negationism.” It is true, after all, that the *Manifesto* in question makes a mess [*fait un sort*] of positivism. QED. Yet those who have been invalidated by the course of events ever since the Yellow Vests prefer to tell themselves that it is the revolts themselves that are confused, and not themselves. The “fascism” they see everywhere is merely the one they desire at base, since it would make them right, if not intellectually, then *morally*. They would then have some chance of finally becoming the *heroic victims* they dream themselves to be. Those who have given up fighting historically prefer to forget that the war over the epoch is also waged on the terrain of ideas — without which, incidentally, Foucault would not have wrested “biopolitics” from its Nazi and behaviorist designers. As for the belief that there is a kind of revolution that comes draped in purity, or that it is by multiplying moralistic anathemas, political prophylactic measures, and cultural snobbery that one defeats counter-revolutions — we leave all this to the imperial left. The latter only condemns itself, decomposing behind its sanitary cordons and its preventive measures, clinging to what it believes to be its accumulated political capital — condemned to watch as its rhetoric inclines asymptotically towards that of the rulers.

As for us, we prefer to attack, to take some shots and to give some too.

We prefer to *engage*.

We will never surrender.

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