

# “Back to Basics: Theses on and Observations about the Struggle in France”

by Raoul Vaneigem<sup>1</sup>

1. *Women’s self-defense is at the heart of individual and social emancipation.*

Freed from governmental and authoritarian feminism, the will to eradicate patriarchal behavior is the surest means of putting an end to the fear of and contempt for nature and life itself.

2. *Against the resurgence of the patriarchy.*

Religious or secular, leftwing or rightwing, patriarchal behavior is the foundation of hierarchical society. To bring it down, we must abolish the reign of all leaders, whether they are male or female.

3. *Against ideological environmentalism.*

Rape and violence are inherent in an economy that is founded on the exploitation of nature. The misfortune of women dates from the plundering of nature, which inaugurated the reign of the commodity. Environmentalism [*écologie*] will remain an ideology of the market as long as the fight of women for their autonomy doesn’t involve a new alliance with the universe of life.

4. *Against the manipulation of fear.*

The fear aroused by the appearance of a virus,<sup>2</sup> at once unusual and foreseeable, has been deliberately amplified by power for obvious reasons:

a) to hide the disastrous state of the healthcare facilities, which have become profit-minded business enterprises;

b) to obtain, at the planetary level, the confinement of whole populations, which is something that no totalitarian regime has ever managed to do;

c) to stimulate the development of the security market. While augmenting the business assets of fascist populism (racism, sexism, fear of the Other), this market also benefits from a Left that is too happy to fight on the ideological front, rather than on the social one, where it is discredited;

d) the terror in which each person shuts him- or herself works in favor of [solving] the principle problem for our rulers: lasting as long as possible, even while rotting away.

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<sup>1</sup> *Retour à la base : Thèses et observations sur les objectifs de la lutte en France*, dated 21 December 2020, posted online by *La Voie du Jaguar* on 22 December 2020:

<https://lavoiedujaguar.net/Retour-a-la-base-Theses-et-observations-sur-les-objectifs-de-la-lutte-en-France> and published as a pamphlet by Cactus Inébranlable on 10 February 2021. Translated by NOT BORED! on April 22, 2021. All footnotes by the translator.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Raoul Vaneigem, “Coronavirus,” 17 March 2020:

<http://www.notbored.org/coronavirus.pdf>.

5. *Against the pauperization of life.*

“Enjoy yourself today because tomorrow will be worse” has been capitalism’s most effective consumerist slogan. But these days, this slogan is no longer used because it confronts us with an accomplished fact. Capitalism now decrees: “The worst has come, you better get used to it.” The Chinese model<sup>3</sup> is in place; it expects increasingly effective technologies. The next remedies for pauperization – in addition to the suppression of “useless” people – will be bowls of rice<sup>4</sup> and transhumanism.

6. *Against the return of Puritanism.*

The necessity of working for a living proscribes taking pleasure in oneself and in the world. The patriarchy has turned this prohibition into dogma. But by stimulating the market in consumable pleasure, consumerism has dealt it a fatal blow. The pauperization that menaces the quest for pleasurable consumption provokes the return of Puritanism in a particularly vicious form: the fear of and contempt for life. Confinement kills by killing emotional relationships.<sup>5</sup> Can’t you hear the cries of the wake reverberating with the clanking of chains? “Stop laughing! Stop having orgasms! Stop living!”

7. *Against reification or the transformation [of beings] into things.*

Capitalism only sees life as a marketable object. It can’t tolerate life escaping from the omnipotence of money. The profit-making machine has shown that, using the pretext of a passing virus,<sup>6</sup> it is capable of unleashing a veritable emotional plague. Panicked hysteria has pushed millions of people to shut themselves into a corner, where despair and morbidity finishes them off.

8. *Against self-sacrifice.*

Consumerism founded its seductive power on the myth of paradisiacal [*édénique*] abundance. “Everything within the reach of everyone” loaned an ephemeral seductiveness to the freedoms of

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<sup>3</sup> The model propagated by the Chinese Communist Party.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Stuart Lau, “‘Chinese rice bowl!’: Backing state-run enterprise,” *The Interpreter*, 5 October 2018: “Posing with farmers and factory workers in a propagandist style not unlike Chairman Mao’s, [Chinese President] Xi [Jinping] vowed, among other things, to guarantee the 1.3 billion people that they will be entitled to self-reliance on foodstuffs. In the era of hashtags, Xi gave it a catchy phrase: ‘Chinese rice bowl.’” <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/chinese-rice-bowl-backing-state-run-enterprise>.

<sup>5</sup> This is rather shrill and certainly doesn’t jibe with Vaneigem’s previous, rather measured statement about Covid-19, which ends with these lines: “Our present isn’t the confinement that survival imposes on us; it is the opening to all possibilities. It is due to panic that the oligarchic State is forced to adopt measures that even yesterday it decreed were impossible. It is to the call of life and the earth to be restored that we want to respond. Quarantine is good for reflection. Confinement doesn’t abolish the presence of the street; it reinvents it. *Cum grano salis*, let me think that the insurrection of everyday life has unexpected therapeutic virtues”: <http://www.notbored.org/coronavirus.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> In America alone, this “passing virus” has left over 500,000 dead people in its wake. And, as of this writing, it still hasn’t “passed.”

the supermarket, which end when you reach the cash register. A salary that was hard-won found its compensation in a casualness that had the virtue of letting people let off steam. But with the pauperization that empties the “breadbasket,” the exhortation to self-sacrifice comes back to the surface, like the belief in original sin, which seemed to have been buried in the past. Accepting the Fall is once again necessary; we must admit that life dries up. The time has come to recall that we never work enough, that we never sacrifice ourselves enough. Existence without profit-making is a crime. Living is a crime that must be expiated. Social distancing [*l'éloignement*], security-conscious withdrawal and the fear of the Other – they all establish a practice of denunciation, a cult of prudishness, a renewal of violence, an advance for obscurantism (instead of daring to burn books, the French government accuses them of being “unessential”).<sup>7</sup>

9. *Against the market in murderous health and security measures.*

a) In France, the political management of healthcare has premeditated the mass assassination of the first victims of pauperization: retirees, the elderly, those who are no longer capable of earning money. The republic of the rich has made the cold hand of money weigh heavily on the republic of the plebs. The former has acted and continues to act under the control of an economy for which short-term profit counts for more than people’s health. We will not deceive ourselves: it has bluntly announced the *final solution* that globalized tyranny reserves for the people who are determined to ruin the further enrichment of the already rich.

b) The security guaranteed to the citizenry by the social contract has been replaced by a security-conscious ideology that increases and multiplies danger, aggression and craziness. The police forces and the judiciary, whose official function has been to protect us against rapists, murderers, poisoners and polluters, have become their henchmen because of the fascistic tendencies within their ranks, which have been encouraged by the State. The strategy of finding a scapegoat – applied indiscriminately to Yellow Vests,<sup>8</sup> immigrants, ecological demonstrators, Muslims and trashcan-burning rioters – is met each time it is used with the cry “everyone hates the police.” Such a smokescreen is intended to divert our attention from the *freedom to do harm* that is left to those who devastate the planet with impunity and who come “right into our homes” to violate our freedom to live.

10. *Against the technological progress that is complicit in human regression.*

The intrusion of a virus has revealed the cynicism of the *lobbyists*<sup>9</sup> for the pharmaceutical and medical companies. They obviously care less for treating human beings than for reaping the benefits of morbidity, the dread of which has been amplified by the oligarchic press and its recorders of doctored [*trafiquée*] death counts.<sup>10</sup> Thus does economic logic confirm the

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. Alison Flood, “French bookshops ask to be treated as essential services during the new lockdown,” *The Guardian*, 29 October 2020:

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2020/oct/29/french-bookshops-ask-to-be-treated-as-essential-services-during-new-lockdown>.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Raoul Vaneigem, “Concerning the ‘Yellow Vests’: Everything is possible, even self-managing assemblies in the middle of street intersections, villages and neighborhoods,” 11 December 2018: <http://www.notbored.org/yellow-vests.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> English in original.

<sup>10</sup> For Vaneigem, the true number of Covid-19-related deaths is lower than what has been reported in the press. But at least here in America (New York State, in particular), it appears far

imposture of a technological progress that, to justify the lies of today, drums up the truths of yesterday. No one contests the original usefulness of antibiotics or vaccines against tuberculosis, polio and tetanus, but what confidence can we have in the *lobbies*<sup>11</sup> that sell old medications under new names? How can we trust experimental vaccines given to people in good health like extreme unction to the dying? How can we tolerate the authorities who calumny and criminally prosecute the practitioners in the field who denounce their malfeasance? When will we see the return of Stalin's good old method of liquidating conspiratorial doctors?<sup>12</sup>

11. *For perpetual reinvention.*

"They didn't know it was impossible, so they did it." Every day this remark by Mark Twain becomes more and more pertinent to the extent that global insurrections multiply, decrease and are reborn. Everyone can see it: ideological confrontations are lures and traps. The real battle is everywhere that inhabitants of a village or an urban neighborhood refuse pesticides and pollutants, renew education, restore hospital organizations, pose the problem of mobility, save local businesses, study the passage from the food-processing industry to re-natured agriculture, open welcome centers to those who suffer daily from bureaucratic, economic, familial, sexist and/or racist oppression.

12. *For healthcare self-defense.*<sup>13</sup>

The coercive and incoherent measures of which we are the victims result in budgetary misappropriations that have ruined and continue to ruin the hospitals. Those who work in this field have no need of conspiracies or anti-conspiracies to denounce the discourse that distances us from living reality. However, vituperating the lies that come from above doesn't push back the politics of budgetary suffocation one bit. Don't we get bogged down in *victimization* when we don't give priority, here and now, to individual and social *well-being*, when we don't break the tyranny of profit, which is the principal cause of *malaise* and the troubles that derive from it? The State prioritizes the interests of the multinational pharmaceutical companies that bribe and control flunky policies over the effectiveness of the doctors in the field, who are in direct contact with their patients. Simple common sense prescribes the restoration of consensual relations between patients and practitioners, even encouraging self-medication that is, if not curative, at least preventative.

a) Examination of the virus in vogue has taught us that its intensity varies from one region to another. Treating it on the national and global plane is stupid.<sup>14</sup> It is up to citizen

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more likely that the death count is in fact *higher* than what has been reported. Cf. J. David Goodman and Danny Hakim, "Cuomo Aides Rewrote Nursing Home Report to Hide Higher Death Toll," *The New York Times*, 4 March 2021:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/04/nyregion/cuomo-nursing-home-deaths.html>

<sup>11</sup> English in original.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. the "Doctor's Plot," circa January 1953, in which several doctors (most of them Jewish) were alleged to have poisoned a couple of prominent Communist Party leaders.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Raoul Vaneigem, "We Decree the Self-Defense of Our Health," 17 May 2020:

<http://www.notbored.org/self-defense.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> The simple facts are that Covid-19 is significant precisely because it has spread rapidly throughout the entire world; there is no country in the world in which it hasn't been deadly; it hasn't been the "intensity" of the virus itself but the speed and effectiveness of the measures

assemblies to decree healthcare self-defense. Acting on the terrain on which patients and doctors live together, get to know each other and maintain relationships based on trust make everyone a nurse's aide who is learning to eradicate the prevailing morbidity and dismiss its cynical managers.

b) Medical progress, though it demonstrates an incontestable effectiveness in certain domains, has also discredited the usage of various plants that have been described as "home remedies" [*remède de bonnes femmes*], which is a name that says a great deal about the patriarchal spirit of traditional medicine. A whole range of flora have been plundered, patented, adulterated and sold to populations who used to use them freely and were in a position to improve their virtues. It is up to us to prevent their despoliation by a science that has no conscience and to ensure that herbal medicines do not end up on an alternative market that is ready to seize upon them with the same shopkeeper's greed.

c) The harmfulness of confinement, withdrawal into oneself, and the panicked fear of a programmed death has, *a contrario*, shown the therapeutic virtues of the joy of being together, meeting up with each other and touching each other without "shielding measures." The fear of living has always galvanized the attractiveness of death. Nazism and Stalinism have shown this. Those who don't celebrate the pleasure of existence celebrate carrion. The merciless battle of those determined to live against the forces of death into which market civilization enlists people by destroying itself is what today mobilizes global insurgents.

### 13. *For the self-defense of our food.*

The false guarantee of feeding the people of the world no longer hides the true motivation of the food-processing monopolies, which is to universally promote food that has been contaminated by profit-making goals. Who believes in the philanthropy of the groups that get rich by damaging the health of consumers? Don't we see the State and its supranational sponsors grant to pesticides and other pollutants the commercial freedom to pollute the entire planet? Many peasants, victims of increasing debt, find themselves being both poisoned and poisoners. Let's stop making them scapegoats or pawns on the electoral board. The question is this: how do we come to the aid of those who have turned to permaculture or other forms of re-natured agriculture? If you are tired of abstract rhetoric, if you want to deal with what's concrete, here's the touchstone with which to rub good environmentalist intentions.

### 15. *For a scholastic and cultural self-defense.*

Against the militarized school that still clamps down on us, we desire to promote a form of teaching for all ages. The agora, public places, houses of the people and communal centers are the gardens of knowledge devoted to the mature [*majeure*] and inextinguishable passion that is curiosity. The playful apprenticeship of "living together" demonstrates that it excludes competition, predation, guilt and sectarianism. Rediscovering the joy of living by creating an environment that favors it little by little fortifies the autonomy that protects us by liberating us from the protection of others. It is a difficult art that requires a *completely different form of intelligence* than the cunning and strength required by the financial wars and the rivalries of

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taken to combat it that has decreased or increased the rates of infection and death; there are in fact several variants of the virus, some of which are *even more communicable* than the others; and so, such a pandemic can only be brought under control, if not eradicated, by coordinated global action.

power. Sensitive intelligence is the intelligence of the living; it always prevails over the intelligence of the wallet.

a) The herd instinct ends when the individual liberates him- or herself from individualism. The creativity displayed by the insurrections of our time announces the end of the idiotic and fickle crowd. Egotistic calculations dry up thinking. Mutual aid revivifies it.

b) Quality wins out over quantity. Things said by a 15-year-old Yellow Vest, heard during a street demonstration, suggest by their acuity that the sensitive and jubilatory intelligence of a few will be enough to burst the overinflated balloon of prejudices that are thousands of years old.

c) Sensitive intelligence is the intelligence of being. It will supplant the intellectual management of having. Pauperization requires it!

#### 15. *For the self-defense of energy resources.*

During its rise, industrial capitalism favored the efflorescence of new inventions (electricity, steam engines, railroads). What remained of independent research then became subjected to the growing scrutiny and control of the commercial interests that managed the budgets. Financial capitalism produces an absence of science and conscience. This vacuum, “which nature abhors,” reveals other possible routes; it encourages the exploration of knowledge derived from life, not from survival, as had been the case until then. Physics, biology, art and medicine seek radical reworking. While the scientific fields, confronted with the coronavirus, are discredited by their incompetence, their lies and their arrogance, curiosity and the taste for research now search for a new dynamism. Marginalized by the scientific *lobbies*,<sup>15</sup> many investigators aspire to have the freedom to tap into *unexplored life* to improve our daily existence and the environment.

a) It is up to local and regional collectives to support projects that contribute to cost-free electricity and heating systems. Only ingenuity and persistence will break the stranglehold that the green-dollar mafias have on renewable energy.

b) The same goes for the self-organization of movement, which requires the establishment of non-polluting and cost-free transportation. Isn't it up to local collectives to reinvent what the petro-chemical mafias have destroyed?

c) There's no need for doomsday scenarios [*apocalyptisme*] to understand that we are at the heart of a civilization-wide transformation. If everything changes from the ground up, this means that the decisions to be made in matters of the environment will be exclusively made by municipal and regional assemblies, which have nothing to do with referendums sponsored by the polluting State.

#### 16. *For monetary self-defense.*

The majority of economists believe that the globalized management of profit prepares the way for the suppression of *cash*<sup>16</sup> and the widespread use of bankcards, which, as a bonus, include the police profiles of their users.

a) While millions of citizens find themselves unable to pay their taxes and fees (intended to further enrich the rich), an initiative is being launched: the creation of local cooperative banks, with money that can't be capitalized and whose exchange value serves, in a closed circuit, to

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<sup>15</sup> English in original.

<sup>16</sup> English in original.

remunerate local businesses, subsidize public utilities, support independent energy projects, and facilitate the emergence of a re-natured agriculture.

b) Such measures have the advantage of assuring the primacy of use value over exchange value, in other words, announcing the end of the commodity.

17. *It is up to directly democratic assemblies to hasten from below the decline of the State, which is rotting from the top down.*

a) The State is only an instrument wielded by multinational companies that, with or without the representatives<sup>17</sup> of Europe, impose their laws and their jurisdictions upon it. Police repression is the only function that the State still exercises.

b) Traditionally tasked with subjugating the provinces to Paris, Jacobinism has been forcefully confronted by the incoherent politics of a government that no longer governs and has made the word “elite” synonymous with “imbecile.” The danger is that it will be followed by regionalisms that will only add [mini] States to the national one.

c) Parliamentarianism is less and less able to hide the odious ridiculousness of a dictatorship that has only kept the baptismal name of a democracy. Elections have always been arenas in which the jabbering of elected officials appeals to the stupidity of voters who have been persuaded that they are indeed represented by them. And yet the ineptitude, lies and corruption of the politicians from all the various parties and factions have reached such a level of cynicism that the probability of massive voter abstention grows dangerous. So much so that the governmental authorities might even postpone, if not willingly cancel, the electoral buffoonery. Perhaps in the hope of sparking renewed interest in it.

d) Voting and direct democracy take on their full meaning every time that a local collective is called upon to take a position on a problem that concerns it primarily. The truth on the ground reveals the lies from above; it rejects the statistics that mock lived realities. Aren't the people who actually live there the best able to judge if a decree that concerns them is unjust or harmful? Who is more qualified than they are to decide the means of fighting it?

e) Supposedly the defender of the Republic, the State is actually there to protect itself against the citizens from whom it wrests the rights that it was supposed to guarantee. Its deterioration constrains it to convert the police, a part of which condemns attacks on the rights of men and women, into a private militia. A toy of financial capitalism, the State rules but does not govern. It is nothing. Its inanity proclaims that, today, we should be everything.<sup>18</sup>

18. *For a self-managing republic that annuls the republic of parliaments and businesses.*<sup>19</sup>

The era in which we are trying to live, in the midst of the ruins, is that of a mutation whose earthquakes are shaking the entire world: the death throes of the old civilization haven't ended; the new one is slow to hatch, as if it fears its own audacity.

a) The parodic civil war fought between conservatism and progressivism takes part in a dramatization that hides the real war, the war of mass destruction undertaken by capitalism.

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<sup>17</sup> The French word used here, *relais*, can also mean “reins.”

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Raoul Vaneigem, “The State is Nothing; Let's Be Everything,” 2019:

<https://www.babylonia.gr/2019/08/31/raoul-vaneigem-the-state-is-nothing-lets-be-everything/>.

<sup>19</sup> This section was published on 20 March 2021 by the blog that Vingtras maintains on Mediapart: <https://blogs.mediapart.fr/vingtras/blog/200321/le-printemps-de-raoul-vaneigem>.

While retro-Bolshevism and retro-Fascism battle it out, globalized mafias poison and pollute towns and villages with impunity. And while municipalities, neighborhoods and regions that aspire to more humanity remain isolated and without voices, impotent rage and compulsive indignation let off steam with braggarts' provocations and trashcans set on fire.

b) The State and its sponsors prioritize their interests over ours. Worrying about our fate is up to us alone. Our legitimacy comes from our humanity.

c) Our struggle is inseparably existential and social. It doesn't deny personal religious or ideological options; it is mutual aid that surpasses them and has the ability to harmonize them. In the struggles of civil disobedience, who cares about skin color, gender or beliefs?

d) On their own, the people make the decisions that concern them and their environment in accordance with the line of self-managing experiments conducted by the Spanish libertarian collectives of 1936. The Zapatistas in Chiapas, the insurgents in Rojava, and the most radical elements of the Yellow Vests in France are *unanimously* inspired by them today, despite the diversity of their historical, political and geographical conditions. The appearance of small societies that seek to manage themselves and to federate at the municipal and then regional levels inevitably exposes the existence of errors, confusion and "havoc," as the State's cockroaches like to put it. But everything corrects itself when there are no human deaths or guilt. What do we risk when we experiment with societies that live together at a time when we are always being treated like guinea pigs in the laboratories of dehumanization and profit making?

19. *Does the emergence of micro-societies that bypass governmental authority allow for coexistence with the governing bodies?*

a) Dialogue with the State is no longer possible. Grievances from the people receive nothing except blows from police batons. And yet, despite this actual disconnection, and even without hoping that protests win the repeal of unjust decrees, it is good to subject the State to constant harassment. Recalling their parasitism to governmental authorities will become even more relevant when the micro-societies that fill the streets with the cries of freedom will oppose the diktats of democratic totalitarianism with the legitimacy of decrees that have been voted on by directly democratic assemblies.

b) The anger and resistance of a growing number of mayors of villages and urban neighborhoods highlights the existential and social dividing line that separates each one of them from the civil servant and the [supposed] guarantor of the citizens' wellbeing. The ever-widening divide between private interests and the public good will rally to directly democratic assemblies citizens who are destabilized by poverty, the tyranny of prohibitions, and taxes to be paid (small businesses, peasants, lawyers, teachers, doctors, shopkeepers, artisans, hoteliers, café managers and local cops who are sickened by the roles that the oligarchic State has assigned them). It will be up to the mayors to resist the threats and pressures of the government and the mafia, to take into account the interests of the population, to become possible interlocutors between the assemblies and the State. This back-and-forth [*le jeu de bascule*]<sup>20</sup> will be as important as (if not more important than) the revolt of a part of the police who go over to the side of the insurgent people with the assurance of exercising a public service that alone will put an end to the reign of Man become human.

c) A self-managing collective that struggles to avoid a confrontation with the State and economic supremacy would have the merit of avoiding the violence that is repugnant to the

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<sup>20</sup> Literally "seesaw."

majority of the citizens, even if the silence of the majority is a great cry of hatred. And yet, who can deny that, from all the evidence, violence is indispensable to a government that owes its continued existence to repression, its ultimate function. Presaged by the crushing of the ZAD at Notre-Dame-des-Landes,<sup>21</sup> the appearance of micro-societies that free themselves from governmental and market tyranny will trigger a military intervention by the French government, with the support of the extreme right, the dictatorial hopes of which the government ceaselessly encourages under the cover of fighting against them.

#### 20. *For demilitarized guerilla action.*

The ongoing global insurrection emanates from the everyday lives of women, men and children. This phenomenon isn't new; what's new is the realization that propagates it. The insurrection's demands go far beyond consumerist satisfaction. Its poetry escapes the shopping cart before it is emptied out by pauperization.

a) The insurrection of everyday life has the distinction of being a peaceful insurrection in that it seeks to overcome the traditional struggle between reformist pacifism and barricaded revolution.

b) Life is a weapon that can harry without killing. The enemy doesn't lack occasions to involve us on terrain that it is completely knowledgeable about because it has military mastery over it. On the other hand, it is totally ignorant about the passion for living that is reborn ceaselessly, that abandons a devastated area, re-appropriates it, multiplies zones to be defended, disappears and reappears like the smile of the Cheshire cat. The enemy is incapable of understanding that life's fight for "being" dissolves "having" and revokes the order of poverty. Our guerilla struggle is endless, unlike the struggle for "having," which doesn't survive the decline of "being" that it causes. Greed is suffocation.

c) "Never destroy human beings and never stop destroying what dehumanizes them" is a battle principle that has the merit of attacking a system of oppression and not those people who believe themselves to be motors but who are really cogs. Sabotaging the installation of something harmful isn't the same thing as killing those who are responsible for it.

d) Time is with us. The insurrection of everyday life has hardly begun to demonstrate its creativity and its ability to be ceaselessly reborn. It's better to worry about not going far enough than to worry about not going fast enough.

e) The drafting in popular assemblies of the fragments of a *Constitution by and for the People* would add weight to the legitimacy of the refusal to tolerate freedom-killing decrees that democratic totalitarianism imposes on us. By confronting us with their *done deals* [*fait accompli*], the authorities on high challenge us to oppose ours to theirs. But in such conditions we could only make a challenge that places us on the terrain of the enemy. Our message is clear: the right to live disregards the laws of murderous money.

f) What's important isn't the number of insurgents but the quality of their demands. The autonomy of individuals is the basis of self-management. It frees people from individualism, which gives a fictitious freedom to the sheep of voluntary servitude. It learns to distinguish between militancy and militarism. Personal engagement won't be confused with making sacrifices. The fight for freedom refuses all orders. Trust and the mandate that solidarity gives it are enough.

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<sup>21</sup> Cf. Raoul Vaneigem, "Message of support and a song from Raoul Vaneigem," 13 April 2018: <http://www.notbored.org/ZAD.pdf>.

g) Individual autonomy can call upon an inexhaustible power to harass. The distended skin of Leviathan makes it vulnerable to mosquito bites.

21. *Environmental self-defense is the self-defense of the joy of living.*

Those who find slogans to be abstract or meaningless refer instead to their own everyday existence and the surrounding environment that conditions it. Isn't that the terrain where their psychological, familial and social problems intertwine and appeal for help?

a) The idea that you can increase your happiness by fostering the happiness of others can become a reality by opening welcome centers for those who are subjected to bureaucratic, economic, familial, sexist and/or racist oppression in their everyday lives.

b) It isn't merely the problem of welcoming *migrants* that mutual aid can resolve. There are human beings in distress, trapped underneath the statistical glaciers that reduce them to the status of objects, whom a large number of communities could house in small numbers, with the consent of the local population.

c) Of course the human generosity that comes to the aid of the weakest members of society entails, both among those who are welcomed and those doing the welcoming, the absolute recognition of the rights of women and the freedom to practice homosexuality. It would not be tolerable if communitarianism, multiculturalism or tradition tried to authorize the predatory behavior that, for the last century, we have been trying to eradicate.

d) In a universe that is increasingly in the grip of the vileness of money and egotistical calculations, the return to beauty, friendship, love, generosity and mutual aid propagates a form of subversion that ridicules the refrain of good moral and charitable intentions. Human meaning<sup>22</sup> mocks humanitarianism, as authentic life does with the dramatizations that falsify it.

e) Consumerism has demonstrated that a pleasure that has been purchased is a pleasure that has been ruined. By switching off the neon lights of the supermarket, pauperization is illuminated by less deceptive lights. By announcing the collapse of profitable uselessness, it leaves to the period of scarcity to come the time to re-nature the land and to rediscover healthy food and unadulterated amenities. Likewise, the coronavirus has taught us to be better about reinforcing our immune systems, and economic bankruptcy enjoins us to use our creative resources. *Do it yourself*<sup>23</sup> thumbs its nose at the *self-made man*<sup>24</sup> whom commercialism has made its hero.

f) The protection of animals, vegetation, the countryside and nature itself has ceased to be a pastel sold on the ecological market. As useful as it is, and even if it goes beyond compassion, the tutelary care of the earth and its species has the downside of being an imperative. Today it gives way to a feeling of fusion with the entire living world. The awareness of a "profound life" revives in us the mineral, vegetable and animal components that the superficiality of survival perceives as dead strata. Thus does humankind take what is, no doubt, its greatest step towards its humanity.

g) The call of the totality has always resounded in the heart of our destiny. The new world takes shape in the wonderment that children teach to those who rediscover their own childhoods. It is up to us to learn to be reborn in the rebirth of the world.

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<sup>22</sup> The French phrase used here, *Le sens humain*, could also mean "human sense."

<sup>23</sup> English in original.

<sup>24</sup> English in original.