

Red and dead: reply to critics

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This article is a response to the comments made by Illan Rua Wall, Caroline Holmqvist, Claudia Aradau and Yari Lanci on my book *War Power, Police Power* (Edinburgh UP, 2014).

'We Communists are all dead men on leave. Of this I am fully aware. I do not know if you will extend my leave or whether I shall have to join Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg.'
– Eugene Leviné¹

When Eugene Leviné addressed the Court at his trial after having led the Munich Soviet, he knew that he would receive the death sentence. He knew that he would be sent to join the recently murdered Luxemburg and Liebknecht and he knew that there would be no extension to his leave. But he did not know just how far and wide his words about being a dead man on leave would reverberate. In her biography of Leviné, his wife Rosa Leviné-Meyer reports hearing his words repeated in Vilno, Paris and Tel-Aviv from people who did not even know his name, and found the sentence attributed to all sorts of other writers and activists. She also notes something picked up by one of the conservative newspapers at the time: 'Leviné had borrowed this metaphor from the conceptual world of militarism'.² Facing a Military Court operating under conditions of martial law, Leviné chose his words carefully, offering the Court the language it would understand but appropriated to describe the situation of the Communists in such a way that would infuriate it.

In such a spirit, Leviné's speech also dealt with the many things of which he had been accused, one of which was 'endangering peace'. Leviné commented

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1 E Leviné, 'Leviné's Last Speech' [1919], Appendix V to R Leviné-Meyer, *Leviné: The Life of a Revolutionary* (Saxon House, 1973) 209, 217.

2 Leviné (1973) 154-55.

that ‘the Prosecution has spoken of the internal peace which I have endangered. I did not endanger it, because internal peace does not exist . . . Take a look round! Take a look at the homes of the so-called “Spartacist nests”, and you will understand that we have not endangered the internal peace’. Instead, he argued, ‘we have only revealed that internal peace does not exist’.³ In a year when the bourgeoisie had declared ‘the War’ over and ‘the Peace’ settled, Leviné was making a profoundly important political point about a *different kind of war*, one which was continuing *despite* the declaration by the bourgeoisie that war was over, and *within* the very thing the bourgeoisie was calling ‘peace’.

With that thought in mind, let me try to try and pick up on what I think are the overarching themes raised by Claudia Aradau, Illan rua Wall, Caroline Holmqvist and Yari Lanci in their insightful and generous comments and questions about my book *War Power, Police Power*.

Let me start on the question of Foucault. Aradau and Wall directly, and Holmqvist and Lanci less directly, pick up on one of the springboards for *War Power, Police Power*, which is a certain tension in Foucault’s work between thinking of power through the lens of war or through the lens of police. On the one hand, Foucault is undoubtedly the thinker who has done most to put a broad concept of ‘police’ back in the centre of political thinking. The series of engagements with the police idea in books such as *History of Madness*, *The Birth of the Clinic* and various lecture-series such as *Security, Territory, Population* and *The Birth of Biopolitics*, all pick up on the broad historical conceptualisation of the police power. At the same time, Foucault has also sought to think social relations through the model of war, suggesting that we think of politics as the continuation of war by other means and that we view political power as the perpetual inscription of relations of force through a form of unspoken warfare called ‘civil peace’.

One of the underlying starting points for the book is the fact that Foucault never really does very much to bring these lenses together or to connect his concepts of police and war. In the lectures published as *Security, Territory, Population*, for example, he speaks of ‘two great assemblages’, a military-diplomatic apparatus on the one hand and an apparatus of police on the other, but although he hints at a relation between them for the most part he keeps them apart. This separation between war and police is repeated and sustained by what is now a fairly large body of Foucauldian scholarship working on those themes: on the one hand, there is a substantial and important body of work within socio-legal studies which has sought to mobilise the original concept of police for new critical insights concerning social orders, but which rarely

3 Leviné (1973) 215.

speaks of war or the international dimension of the police power; on the other hand, there is a substantial and important body of work within IR which has sought to bring Foucault's work to bear on questions of war and order, but which rarely utilises Foucault's account of the police power. Moreover, keeping these concepts apart replicates liberal ideas in this field and thereby undermines any attempt to grasp these forces as a totality.

Part of the driving force of *War Power, Police Power* was to eschew the entrenched distinction between war and police, to ignore the disciplinary divide that keeps the study of these things apart in the University, and to challenge those who talk about overcoming disciplinary divides only to reiterate them. All of which is to say that it is a book that in many ways seeks to realise a potential in Foucault's work. As such, it is perhaps unsurprising that the comments from Aradau and Wall pick up on a certain tension surrounding Foucault in the book.

Aradau suggests that in Foucault's reading of police the problem is not so much the constitution of waged labour, on which I focus, but the constitution of difference, while Wall suggests that I omit lines of argument that would perhaps focus on issues such as the splendour of the state. To be sure, Foucault wants to talk about police and difference in general, in the abstract so to speak, and there is also a certain aesthetic at stake in Foucault's concept of police, concerned more with 'splendour'. So there is no doubt some truth in their comments. But it is also the case that when Foucault works through 18th-century cameralism and police science he never stops stumbling on the connection between disorder and the problem of wage labour. In *Madness and Civilization*, Foucault comments that 'police is the totality of measures which make work possible and necessary for all those who could not live without it', and he goes on to say that the question Colbert had asked is still the definitive one: 'Since you have established yourselves as a people, have you not yet discovered the secret of forcing all the rich to make all the poor work? Are you still ignorant of the first principles of the police?'⁴ The first principles of police: to make the poor work, to organise and order the measures which make work possible and necessary, and which in turn make a certain kind of order and organisation obtainable. It's a telling comment and one that I want to stress over and above questions of difference or splendour.

Is this stress overdone? That strikes me as the wrong question to ask. It's a version of the question that goes 'what did Foucault really mean?', one which often tries to fit Foucault's work into the kind of 'Foucauldianism' that emerged after his death. The more productive route is to explore the fields left fallow, as

4 M Foucault, *History of Madness*, trans. J Murphy & J Khalfa (Routledge, 2006) [1961] 62.

Aradau puts it, and for me the fundamental connection between the poor and the police is one such field. Because although we might choose to think about ‘making the poor work’ as just *one* facet of the police power, along with managing difference and achieving splendour, thinking of the police power as making the poor work connects the process to the world historical struggles taking place at the time.

If we wanted further evidence for such an argument we could look no further than the massive range of legal treatises which touch upon the police power. A key feature of such legal writings is that they time and again resort to ambiguous and indeterminate categories to facilitate the exercise of the police power. Foremost among such categories are ‘vagabondage’ and ‘vagrancy’, and these are pertinent precisely because they connect the police power to the process of primitive accumulation and thus the world historical struggles in question. Interesting as it is to focus on the police power in terms of ‘difference’ or ‘splendour’, to do so would be to miss what the law books tell us, which is that at the heart of police measures is the problem of work, albeit mediated by the problem of vagrancy. When Blackstone in his *Commentaries* discusses police offences, for example, we do indeed find issues of difference (‘outlandish persons calling themselves *Egyptians*, or *gypsies*’) and splendour (in the form of laws pertaining to luxury), but he goes to much greater lengths in specifying the problem of vagabondage, idleness and related ‘offences against the public order’.⁵ The reason for this is clear: at the heart of the problem of the police power are either slaves (in that slave laws were almost always counted as police measures), workers or, more generally, vagrants and vagabonds.

The power of categories such as ‘vagrancy’ and ‘vagabondage’ lies in the extent to which they open the space for the exercising of an all-encompassing police power. Take, for example, a text such as Christopher Tiedman’s 1886 *Treatise on the Limitations of the Police Power*, one of the leading law texts in the field for many years.⁶ ‘The vagrant has been very appropriately described as the chrysalis of every species of criminal’, Tiedman comments. ‘A wanderer through the land, without home ties, idle, and without apparent means of support, what but criminality is to be expected from such a person?’ And yet it is not so much the potential crime committed by actual vagrants that is important. Rather, it is the opportunities afforded to the police power by the

5 W Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England, Vol. 4: Of Public Wrongs* (University of Chicago Press, 1979) [1769] 161-76.

6 C Tiedman, *A Treatise on the Limitations of the Police Power in the United States* (FH Thomas Law Book Co., 1886).

category ‘vagrancy’ itself. ‘The vagrant act is specially intended to reach [the] class of idlers, as a means of controlling them and ridding the country of their injurious presence. But there is no crime charged against them’. The main issue is that the vagrant ‘is without *visible* means of support’. Especially useful, Tiedman notes, is that people can be arrested under vagrancy laws ‘on mere suspicion’ and ‘the whole method of proceeding is in direct contradiction of the constitutional provisions that a man shall be convicted [only] after proof of the commission of a crime’. In contrast, the vagrant ‘may never have committed a crime, but he is arrested on the charge of vagrancy, and since by the ordinary vagrant acts the burden is thrown upon the defendant to disprove the accusation, it is not difficult in most cases to fasten on him the offense of vagrancy, particularly as such characters will usually prefer to plead guilty, in order to avoid, if possible, a too critical examination into their mode of life’. The important point being registered by Tiedman, and it is a point reiterated in more or less every legal text on the police power, is that vagrancy laws allow the prosecution and persecution of people simply on the basis of ‘a status or condition’.⁷ Vagrancy is at the very heart of the police power (and, apropos of Aradau’s reading of Foucault on Trosne, Tiedman treats mendicancy as ‘some-what akin to the evil of vagrancy, and growing out of it’⁸). On the one hand, the Vagrancy Acts allow for anyone to be stopped and arrested: ‘in some of our States, in connection with the punishment of vagrancy, provision is made for the punishment of... “*any suspicious person who cannot give a reasonable account of himself*”’.⁹ On the other hand, ‘if vagrancy could be successfully combated’, he claims, ‘if every one was engaged in some lawful calling, the infractions of the law would be reduced to a surprisingly small number; and it is not to be wondered at that an effort is so generally made to suppress vagrancy’.¹⁰ Suppress vagrancy, then, to get people engaged in some kind of ‘lawful calling’ such that they can give a ‘reasonable account of themselves’. Which is a way of saying: suppress vagrancy and people will be put to work.

The reason a category such as vagrancy is so central to the police power is because such a category connects the police power to the struggles for the systematic colonisation of the world by capital. These struggles have been understood for a long time, at least since Marx spent several hundred pages of *Capital* spelling out the process, and much of my argument is that they need

7 Ibid 116-26.

8 Ibid 122.

9 Ibid 125 (emphasis added).

10 Ibid 117.

to be understood through the lens of police and the role of the police power in the fabrication of bourgeois order. If we accept that point, then what we have to also accept is the fundamental connection between the police power and class.

Now, this is not the same connection made between police and class by critical legal scholars and criminologists, whose concept of the police power is reduced to *the* police and who tend to operate with categories such as ‘discrimination’ (hence the key question they tend to ask runs along the lines of ‘do the police discriminate against certain social groups?’). The problem of discrimination has long historical roots which are related in complex ways to the politics of discretion. But it is discretionary authority that is a key feature of the police power; without discretion the police power cannot function. This is the reason why ambiguous and indeterminate categories such as ‘vagrancy’ are so important, for they facilitate the exercise of discretionary power. Any critical theory of the police power must thus tackle the question of *discretion* (rather than discrimination, which has different theoretical connotations) for it reveals not only a much more expansive concept of police but also, and much more obviously, the police power as *class war*. This folding of police into war was a field also left fallow in my first attempt to consider the question of police power, in *The Fabrication of Social Order* and which I try to make good in *War Power, Police Power*.¹¹

Aradau suggests that the real issue is perhaps not so much that of the relation between war and police, but that between war and technologies of power. Maybe. But to just say ‘power’ raises the danger of being criticised for being the kind of ‘theory of power’ for which Foucault was once known and for which he often came under fire. Let me put that thought on the backburner for a moment and come back to it via one of Wall’s questions and points. Wall suggests that when war power folds into police power, the class politics of war re-emerge, but very little remains of the sovereign’s war power; indeed, very little remains of sovereignty. Behind this lies the issue of what I hope is one of the book’s central challenges, which is to wrench ‘war’ away from the places and spaces in which it is usually studied (‘War Studies’) and to situate it at the heart of critical theory. This is not the same as situating it at the heart of a ‘critical theory of war’ (or ‘Critical War Studies’), for that is precisely to start at the very place ‘War Studies’ wants us to start, with itself as the master discipline and the rest of us following in its trail and aping the interests and concerns of ‘War Studies’ itself. Rather, to say we should situate ‘war’ at the heart of critical

11 See M Neocleous, *The Fabrication of Social Order: A Critical Theory of Police Power* (Pluto Press, 2000).

theory means to situate it at the heart of our concept of capital, which means thinking about capital as war.

To think about capital as war is by no means the same as the ‘militarisation’ thesis or the argument about the ‘military-industrial complex’, though it surely overlaps with them and shares their concerns in various ways. Rather, it is an attempt to think of capital’s violence in the production and reproduction of its order. Now, this does a number of things. One thing it does, at least by implication, is throw down a fairly substantial challenge to the ways in which international law thinks about war, because the challenge points to something beyond the traditional problems of the justice *of* war and justice *in* war. But a second thing it does, to take us back to Wall’s point, is that it undermines the approach to war which begins with sovereignty, either in terms of states defined as formally equal sovereign powers facing one another as such or states somehow lacking that status (‘terror states’, ‘rogue states’, ‘pirate states’, and so on) but which are nonetheless still somehow regarded as legitimate targets in war. To start with capital as war challenges the centrality of sovereignty to the study of war. Hence Wall’s fear that sovereignty gets lost. I am not entirely convinced that it does, but that’s not my main thought here. My main thought instead is: what kind of fear is this? What does it matter if we lose sovereignty in the fold?

War Power, Police Power refers to the concept of sovereignty on many occasions, but most of those occasions are quotes or citations from those asserting the logic of violence which the book seeks to explore. The obvious example is in the discussion of air sovereignty: most of the references to sovereignty come precisely in the two chapters on air power as police power, where sovereignty figures as the core of the debate between two forces in what we might call the classical conception of war, namely in the form of ‘who is sovereign over this air space?’. For example, with regard to the long discussion of no-fly zones in the book, the point is that where these zones have been considered by international lawyers or political geographers it is largely in terms of a ‘crisis in sovereignty’. The implication of the growing body of work on air power as a crisis of sovereignty tends to be that what we need to do is to come out of the crisis, to get sovereignty on track again. Is this helpful? I’m not convinced it is. In fact, I think it’s the question that we are encouraged to ask so that we remain on the terrain laid down by classical conceptions of war and law and by the mainstream way of interpreting these issues; rather than challenging the centrality of sovereignty, we end up reinforcing it. In contrast, the point of thinking about air power as *police power* is that it shifts us away from any so-called ‘crisis in sovereignty’ and opens the space instead for an understanding of the kind of order being fabricated in those places where no-fly zones are in operation. This is also why what is important in discussing no-fly zones is

to show that they are used on the domestic front far more than on the international. And of course, to state the obvious, when no-fly zones are used on the domestic front—such as for major political events such as NATO and G8 summits, for major sporting events such as the Olympics and the Wimbledon tennis tournament, during Presidential visits to towns and cities, during the transportation of hazardous substances, over disasters zones, during police hunts for missing children, over the area in which Chelsea Clinton's wedding took place, the list could go on and on—there is no 'crisis of sovereignty' at all, which is why international lawyers have kept remarkably quiet about them and why they are of no interest at all to those in 'War Studies' (including its 'critical' wing). Moreover, domestic no-fly zones are far more common than international ones and are especially important when one considers their conjoint development along with drone technology and the use of this technology domestically. To put it bluntly: looked at through the lens of sovereignty one can make no sense of something like the domestic no-fly zone and very little sense of the no-fly zone internationally either. Looked at through the lens of the police power, in contrast, such zones begin to make sense and, moreover, help us develop a reading of drone technology as part of that police power.

Such a claim won't be very useful in helping Wall and others who worry about what happens to sovereignty; indeed, it will no doubt intensify their concerns. But its broader implications are quite profound, for it suggests that a critical theory of war power and police power is a critical theory beyond sovereignty. Or let us put that in another way entirely but which perhaps makes the point more directly: the class war is not a war over sovereignty. And we might want to ratchet up the worry of Wall and others even more and suggest that we forego the language of sovereignty entirely. But what happens if we do that? Who is waiting for us at the end of that argument? Foucault of course, reminding us that it was he who encouraged us to give up the debate about sovereignty for something else instead. We might say, in the manner of Foucault the 'anti-Hegelian' writing about Hegel, that to make a real escape from Foucault requires a real appreciation of what it costs to detach ourselves from him: 'an ability to gauge how much our resources against him are perhaps still a ruse which he is using against us, and at the end of which he is waiting for us'.¹² It also returns us to the point we put on the backburner: an attempt to think through the technologies of power.

12 M Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse' [1970], in R Young (ed.), *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader* (Routledge, 1981) 74.

What is the nature of the police's war power? Such a question takes us back to the argument concerning the political implications of thinking of class war as *war*. The question to ask, then, one identified most directly by Lanci, is 'what is the nature of the civil war of capital?' There is a hesitancy on the Left to really consider capital as war. But why does this hesitation exist? It is clear that Marx and Engels wanted us to think of capital and war in this way: Marx writes time and again of the 'protracted and more or less concealed civil war' or the 'more or less veiled civil war' between the capitalist class and the working class, and uses the same idea of 'civil war' to describe the struggle of the Parisian working class in the Commune of 1871. Engels, a man well-versed in military history and nicknamed 'The General' by Marx and his family, also points to the civil war of capital time and again. And both of them several times make the point that this permanent civil war is conducted by the bourgeoisie under the guise ('concealed' or 'veiled' as Marx puts it) of 'peace', 'security', 'law and order' and 'civilization'.¹³ It is interesting to note in this regard just how many commentators are willing to now cite Foucault rather than Marx when making the polemical point that 'peace itself is a coded war',¹⁴ a reflection perhaps of the fact that citing Foucault tells us very little about what the war is about, whereas citing Marx would make the point clear and simple: that the war is a war of accumulation.

So, given that we have plenty of very good reasons for thinking war in this way, why is there so much hesitation in doing so? Many contemporary international lawyers shy away from doing so because more than anything else they want to bring law to bear on the problem of war and this is more or less impossible to do when the war in question is understood explicitly as a war of accumulation rather than the actions of sovereign states or the protection of 'civilians', which is one reason why in *War Power, Police Power* I draw attention to the unwillingness of even critical and Marxist international lawyers to say very much about accumulation. But more generally, why is it that we are constantly talking about resistance and, relatedly, struggle, conflict, agonism

13 See, e.g., K Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, vol. 1, trans. B Fowkes (Penguin, 1976) [1867] 409, 412-13; K Marx & F Engels, *The Manifesto of the Communist Party* [1848], in K Marx & F Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 6 (Lawrence & Wishart, 1984) 495; K Marx, *The Civil War in France* [1871], in K Marx & F Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 22 (Lawrence & Wishart, 1986), 309-55; K Marx, 'The June Revolution' [1848], in K Marx & F Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 7 (Lawrence & Wishart, 1977) 147; F Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England* [1845], in K Marx & F Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 4 (Lawrence & Wishart, 1975) 329, 331, 554, 502, 512; F Engels, 'Speech at Elberfeld' [1845], in Marx & Engels (1975) 248.

14 M Foucault, 'Society Must Be Defended': *Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-76*, trans. D Macey (Allen Lane, 2003) 15-16, 46-48, 50-51; M Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. A Sheridan (Penguin, 1977) 168; M Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, trans. R Hurley (Penguin, 1979) 93.

and antagonism, but not class war? I know these things are not the same—and we can here tap into what might be going on behind Aradau's differentiation between war and struggle—but that is not the point. The point concerns the ways in which many thinkers ask about the positive possibility for resistance but not about the positive possibility of fighting—or indeed of even actually winning—the war of accumulation. One reason I think the Left has shied away from really considering the idea of class war is because a certain kind of pacifistic mode of thinking has been allowed to dominate any thinking about the relations between classes. But a second reason connects us back to Wall's question about the police's war power, and that is because once we accept the idea of capital as war then the concept of police and its class function and thus its relation to war becomes even more compelling.

Part of the argument in *War Power, Police Power* is that we need to grasp the powers in the title in terms of their unity. Approaches to war and police that currently predominate tend to speak of two main issues: the discussion concerns either the idea of 'war-becoming-police' or of 'police-becoming-militarised'. Yet these do very little to genuinely bring the concepts of 'war' and 'police' together, shed little light on either, and encourage us to presuppose that they are really two very different practices, technologies or institutions. My argument is that critical theory needs to work on and with the nexus of war power and police power, that presupposes that war and police are *always already* together, that treats the war power and the police power as predicative on one another. By thinking through the war power in conjunction with the police power and the police power as dealing with a condition of *disorder*, the war power can more easily be read in terms of the fabrication of order. At the same time, it draws attention to the fact that police treatises, texts, speech and action never cease telling us of the constant police wars being fought (against crime, disorder, drugs, indecency, disobedience and lawlessness). These wars are by no means reducible to the class war, but they certainly play off of it and contribute to it as they facilitate an ordering and reordering and—the phrases picked up by Holmqvist—transforming subjects and changing tempers in the name of bourgeois law and order. Moreover, these wars remind us that war is a constitutive force behind the institution of order. Just as we must avoid reducing the police power to 'the police' and must keep in mind the whole range of technologies which form the social order and which we must include under the idea of the police power, so we must avoid reducing the war power to 'the military' and must keep in mind that the war power depends on a whole range of technologies operating as the principle of social formation. And what is always under formation is *order*: social order, international order, the order of accumulation. (We might note in passing that this argument coincides with one of the themes of 'Critical War Studies' which points to the 'order' that war itself

creates¹⁵ but which, symptomatically and in tandem with ‘critical security studies’ with which it is otherwise in productive tension, has virtually nothing to say about the police power.)

In contrast to the lack of discussion about social or civil *war*, what we do have today is an abundance of discussion about resistance. Except, perhaps, in *War Power, Police Power*. What is it that might bring about real change today and in the future, asks Holmqvist, a question which reveals a concern made more explicit elsewhere, namely the ‘impossibility of resistance’ she perceives in the book. In asking the question Holmqvist notes the final lines of the book, in which I comment on the ways in which the new jargon of authenticity renders obsolete the key categories of critical theory and replaces them with the key tropes of contemporary bourgeois thought: trauma replaces alienation, anxiety replaces exploitation, resilience replaces revolution, and all the while the war machine and the police power roll on and on as capital expands its empire and tightens its control. But Holmqvist’s question about what it is that can effect change today must surely have a prior question: what change are we fighting for, exactly? The problem is that it is not at all clear that the mantra ‘resistance’ has much in the way of an answer.

In general, I am both wary and weary of arguments asserting ‘resistance’ every time power is mentioned, or which suggest that ‘as soon as we say power, we say resistance’, as though that tells us all that we need to know. It doesn’t. Critique and resistance are by no means the same kinds of exercise, and the question ‘what about resistance?’, as an automatic question posed to every critical thought about capital and the state, recalls one of the fundamental gestures of the police power itself: of an official of the state demanding to see your papers.¹⁶ It is perhaps a little too close to being an inverted form of police power: ‘Let me see your ID!’ transmogrified into ‘Let me see your resistance!’ Politically we must of course hold to the idea that resistance reconfigures the war-police junction in ways that keep alive the possibility of politics, but I think there is also a requirement for a certain critical pessimism—or, if you prefer, a melancholy dialectics—of the kind which seems to be detected by Holmqvist and Aradau.

Take, as an example, an issue that would appear to be at the heart of the concepts of war and police that we have already mentioned: the ‘militarisation’ thesis concerning the police power. And within this take two forms of technology: water cannon and drones. In 2014 a debate took place in the UK about the

15 T Barkawi, ‘From War to Security: Security Studies, the Wider Agenda, and the Fate of the Study of War’ 39 *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* (2011) 701; T Barkawi & S Brighton, ‘Powers of War: Fighting, Knowledge, and Critique’ 5 *International Political Sociology* (2011) 126.

16 T Adorno, ‘Marginalia to Theory and Praxis’, in *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords*, trans. HW Pickford (Columbia UP, 1998) 276.

possible use of water cannon by the Metropolitan Police in London. The ‘resistance’ was underpinned by the idea that this was part of the militarisation of police power. Aside from the obvious historical point, namely that one looks high and low for water cannon appearing on any ‘battlefield’ as understood in the classical military sense, what is the nature of this argument, one which is intended to provide the grounds of resistance? Likewise, there is a common argument now that drone technology is being used by police forces and this also constitutes the ongoing militarisation of the police power. Again, we might make an obvious point, one which I make in *War Power, Police Power*, that as a form of air power drone technology has always been police power, but the same question also arises: what is the nature of an argument that ignores history and simply shouts ‘militarisation’? To ask one of the fundamental questions ‘what is it that we hope for?’ or, better still, ‘what is it that we are fighting for?’ and end with an answer that runs ‘police technology which isn’t so obviously violent that it makes us feel like we are in a war zone’, is not asking for much. It is also to miss a couple of obvious points.

First, it misses the fact that the ‘militarisation of police’ thesis presupposes that there is some kind of ‘better’ policing, less obviously ‘militarised’ perhaps. What is usually pointed to here is something along the lines of ‘community policing’? Yet any serious analysis shows that community policing is no less problematic and no less part of the war power than water cannon. There is a good reason why counterinsurgency theorists from General Galliéni and Colonel Lyautey through to Frank Kitson and then on to the recently published US Army and Marine Corps *Counterinsurgency Manual* never stop telling us how important community policing is. And why do they do so? Because if any instance of the police power could be described as core to capital’s war of accumulation, it is what passes as ‘community policing’. The second obvious point being missed is that we are always already in a war zone called ‘capitalism’. Yet, obvious as these points are, they are by no means the main one.

The main point is that water cannon or drones have a real specificity: it’s new, it looks like something military, we don’t like it, let’s resist. But what is also at stake is the ubiquity of the thing we might be fighting and I sense that both Holmqvist and Aradau know this. Why? Because Holmqvist’s question about resistance comes with reference to my discussion of resilience in the last chapter and Aradau raises the same issue by pointing to the difference that resilience makes. Given the enormity of what is now happening in the name of ‘resilience’, let me get at the ubiquity that way.

As is well known, resilience has rapidly become the ‘new big idea’ of contemporary capitalism. With its stress on learning techniques for ‘bouncing back’, resilience has become a key resource to get us ready to prepare and recover from whatever shit capital and the state throw our way. My argument

about resilience in *War Power, Police Power* is that it absorbs us into the logic of security by rendering us more active subjects of war preparation: we become part of the war power itself. How do we resist that? How do we resist an ideological manoeuvre on the part of state and capital that integrates us more and more into the discursive terrain laid out by those forces? When writing the book I drew on some of the material and published a short piece as a Commentary in *Radical Philosophy*, called ‘Resisting Resilience’.¹⁷ It had quite a lot of readers and more than a few whose position was that finally someone has articulated some of the fears they had about the language of resilience. But there were also a fair number of people who just said ‘you can’t do that, we have to accept resilience for what it is and work with it’. Such a view has given birth to a new academic cottage industry producing work on resilience (and I would guess that it will be followed pretty soon by the birth of ‘critical resilience studies’). If I had published an article called ‘Resisting Water Cannon’ or ‘Resisting Drones’, those who disagreed with me about resilience would have agreed with me about water cannon. My point is that it is one thing to resist this or that new technological development which we find problematic, but quite another to resist the whole ideological terrain on which the powers of war and police carry out their work. Any such resistance has to begin with a *critique of this ideological terrain*, for the terrain is key to the ways in which the core concepts of the police power and the war power—the concepts of law and order, peace and security—are hammered into us time and again, aided and abetted by new concepts such as resilience. My sense is that the rapid growth of ‘resilience’ and its adoption by those who want to hold on to the label ‘critical’ and who like to talk about ‘resistance’ is probably a reaction to the complete inability to think of more radical and collectively defining political possibilities. One sees this in the way that they have entirely uncritically bought into the lingua franca of resilience by accepting one of the main claims made about it: that the opposite of resilience is fragility and so if we are *against* resilience then we must be somehow *for* fragility, with the implication that no-one in their right mind would want to be for fragility. The opposite of resilience, however, is not fragility. The opposite of resilience is revolution. The point is that if we are going to ‘resist’ then we must surely resist the ubiquity of those powers in their entirety, the way they seep into our lives—transforming subjects and changing tempers—and in the process rendering us part of those very powers themselves. And for that we need a different critical vocabulary, as Aradau notes, and it must be forged through the project of critique.

17 M Neocleous, ‘Resisting Resilience’ 178 *Radical Philosophy* (2013) 2.

The question ‘what about resistance?’ has a touch of the ‘Eleventh Thesis’ about it and, to be sure, the eleventh of Marx’s theses on Feuerbach in which he insists that the point of the world is to change it and not just to interpret it is always worth keeping in mind.¹⁸ But it is also worth recalling that Marx’s point in that particular thesis is meant polemically and, more to the point, we must not forget that just two years previously Marx had been far more circumspect, insisting in a response to Ruge published in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* that the main task before us is not to change the world in the way envisaged by some socialists but, rather, the *ruthless critique of all that exists*. For Marx, such a critique had to target law and religion first and foremost.¹⁹ For us, now, the critique of law must surely be coupled with the critique of a new religion: ‘security’. The powers of war and police are now exercised under the sign of security, the supreme concept in the ideological terrain of bourgeois society, and *War Power, Police Power* was envisaged as a continuation of the critique of security begun several years before.²⁰ It is by now abundantly clear that given how prevalent it is to describe the problems the world faces as problems of and for security—most obviously and most ridiculously the problem of hunger represented to us now as a problem called ‘food security’ but we might also add to that more general claims about the need to learn resilience in the face of ever more insecurities—the ruthless critique of all that exists could do a lot worse than start with security and the sanctity with which it is regarded. Such a critique, however, is to invite nothing less than a hiding, not only from security itself and all the powers of war and police at its disposal, but also from those who insist on asking *that* question: ‘what about resistance?’ For how does one resist security?

It is some time now since critical theory first pointed out that as much as there will always exist forces and tendencies which have the potential to break the war power and resist the whole logic on which the police power exists—that is, to bring about a qualitative change, a new direction for human creativity and production, and thus new modes of human existence beyond capital—it is also nonetheless very much the case that contemporary society has introduced mechanisms of containment capable of undermining social change. As Herbert Marcuse puts it in *One-Dimensional Man*, the containment of resistance is perhaps the most singular achievement of advanced industrial society: the long-standing and general collusion of capital and organised labour within

18 K Marx, ‘Theses on Feuerbach’ [1845], in K Marx & F Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 5 (Lawrence & Wishart, 1976) 5.

19 K Marx, ‘Letters from *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*’ [1843], in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3 (Lawrence & Wishart, 1975) 142.

20 M Neocleous, *Critique of Security* (Edinburgh UP, 2008).

the police power (or even *as* the police power) and the more recent and particular acceptance of austerity measures and shock therapy testify to the capabilities of integration that now exist.²¹ Let's be honest, if there is one thing that is obvious about the capitalist polity right now it is its success in both containing resistance and suppressing critique. Or, better still, its success in creating limited spaces for either resistance or critique, in such a way that delimits critical theory and precludes anything other than a return to the same. Holmqvist understands this predicament. Her citation of Jarvis Cocker's 'It's the end, why don't you admit it?' suggests a certain futility or impossibility of resistance, though she also insists that this is less a flaccid resignation than it is a real political predicament: can we ever be other than who or what we are, and if so, how do we do so given the all-encompassing war-police machine that we face? Since she makes the point with reference to the words of one melancholic class-conscious songwriter, we might follow suit. During the late-1970s, when young working class people in Britain and elsewhere were the main target in an intensification of the class war carried out by the neoliberal police power, Ian Curtis of the band Joy Division tried to capture the terrible claustrophobic feeling of being the target of a power that seems so omnipotent that one can only wonder where any fight against it might start. 'We're living by your rules, that's all we know', he observed.²² Living by the rules of the enemy is a 'nightmare situation' in which the war power 'infiltrates imagination', as Curtis puts it.²³ Living by the rules of the enemy is perhaps the definition of containment.

Containment is a security concept *par excellence*. It is this very containment of resistance that lies at the heart of the powers of war and police. This has to be the starting point of any genuinely critical theory. Such a starting point will for many sound too negative, akin to resignation. Yet it is surely the demand that critical theory be translated into an effective political action called 'resistance' that is the true moment of resignation. Why? Because it tends towards making critical theory fit the practical demand in question, and so tends towards an optimism of the slogan—a cruel optimism²⁴ at that—rather than the pessimism of the critique. One can be fundamentally pessimistic while simultaneously committed to 'open thinking' and against the demand of immediate 'practicality', which is in the end far more productive than being engaged in practical action but 'closed thinking'. Those who so quickly call for 'resistance' are more often than not the

21 H Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (Beacon Press, 1964) xv.

22 I Curtis, 'Candidate' on *Unknown Pleasures* (Factory, 1979).

23 I Curtis, 'Leaders of Men' on *An Ideal for Living* (Enigma, 1978).

24 L Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* (Duke UP, 2011).

ones who have resigned their fate to the powers of war and police *as a whole* and who compensate for it with a simple reform here and there (stop the water cannon, end the drone flights).

What then of being on the ‘cusp of something new’ or ‘imagining ourselves as something different to what or who we are’, as Holmqvist has it? We live in a world in which the powers of war and police are already powerful enough and yet which also appear to increase day in and day out, a world in which class power, racism and patriarchy are ubiquitous and often carried out by those very same powers of war and police, a world in which challenges to this situation are either quickly crushed or easily bought off, and a world in which the possibilities of critique are folded into the bureaucratisation of reason in the form of ‘university research’. This does not feel like being on the cusp of something new. With security subsuming everything under its hegemonic force, the police power rolling on and on, and capital never ceasing to be victorious, ‘the present situation is highly discouraging’, as Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari put it in their own account of the war machine.²⁵ What we can say for sure is that if we think of the possible and the new solely through the concepts set out for us by the state and capital (again, think of resilience here) then we are in real trouble. So much trouble, in fact, that we might want to note the comment made by Deleuze and Guattari immediately after their observation about the discouraging situation:

We have watched the war machine grow stronger and stronger, as in a science fiction story; we have seen it assign as its objective a peace still more terrifying than fascist death; we have seen it maintain or instigate the most terrible of local wars as parts of itself; we have seen it set its sights on a new type of enemy, no longer another state, or even another regime, but the ‘Unspecified enemy’.²⁶

As I argue in a forthcoming book, this ‘unspecified enemy’ has been named anew by the security state, and the name it has been given is ‘The Universal Adversary’.²⁷ And as the security state has made clear, at the heart of the Universal Adversary are human beings that it calls ‘disgruntled’. The Enemy turns out to be . . . the disgruntled. That’s you and it’s me. The police power is confirmed as being ranged against . . . us. The war power is confirmed as rolling on and on over . . . us. Far from imagining ourselves as something different to what or who we are, this feels more like being dead men and women on leave.

25 G Deleuze & F Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. B Massumi (Athlone Press, 1987).

26 Ibid 422.

27 M Neocleous, *The Universal Adversary: Security, Capital, and ‘The Enemies of All Mankind’* (Routledge, 2016).